

BROSICRUCIAN BEACON

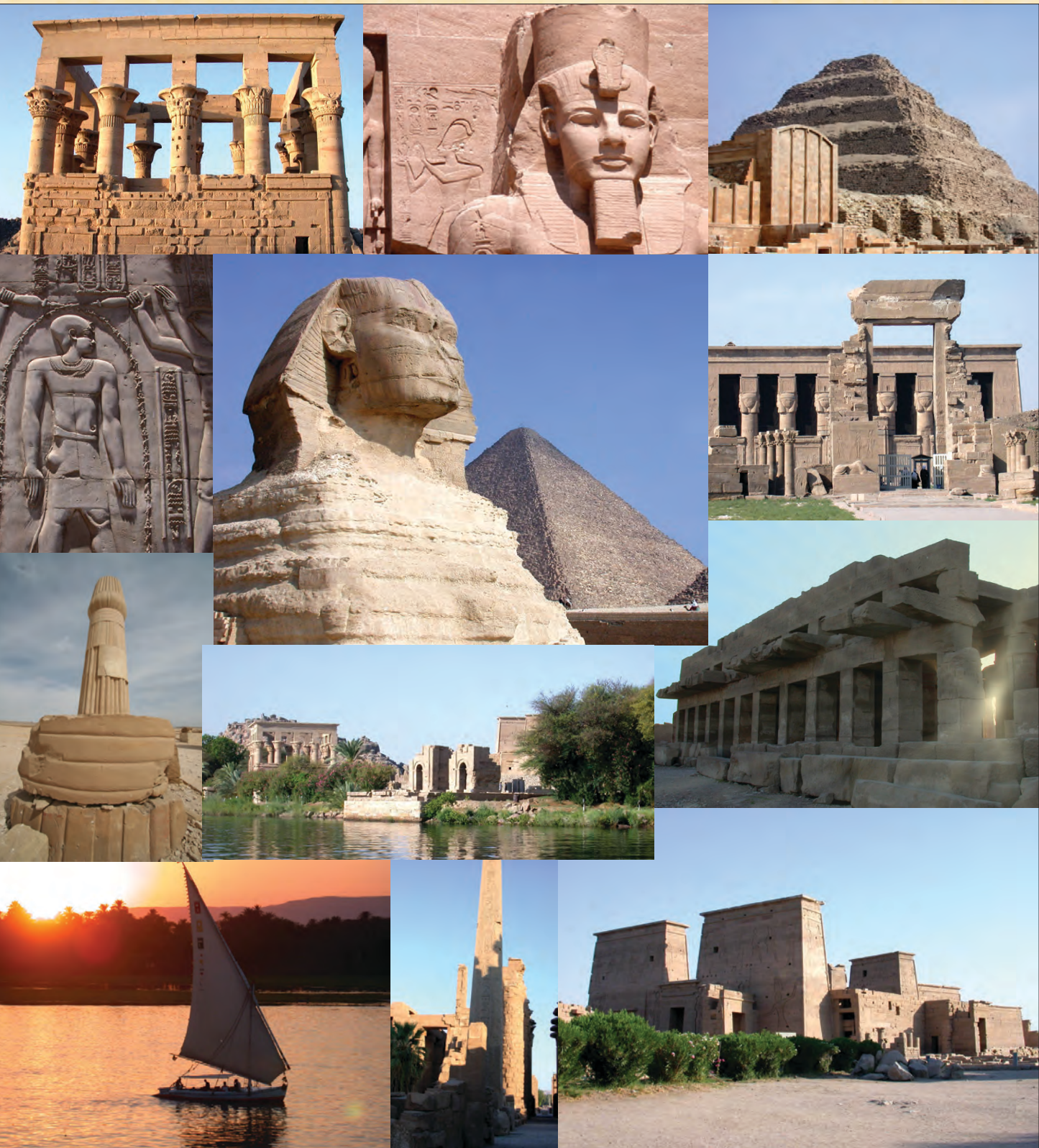


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COVER SPREAD

“Egypt the Eternal”





KOPAN MONASTERY KATHMANDU

by Shirley Ellsworth, SRC

THE FLOW OF THOUGHT HAD ceased as ripples on a pond which, with energy expended, had finally come to rest. The calm, still, clear surface remained,

mirror-like and tranquil, within which the note of the roaring silence echoed throughout the familiar peace.

Somewhere in this timeless eternity, the gentle tinkle of the bell had rung. Sensations started to impinge upon consciousness once more, bringing their reminders of that other mundane material reality, the slight ache in the back and the tingling annoyance of a fresh mosquito bite on the exposed ankle. The evening meditation was over and around the room the others were also stirring to a similar reality. The heavy haze of incense smoke had thwarted all but the most determined and hungry mosquitoes.

"Poor females," the Lama had said, *"all they need is food to make their eggs, and every living thing must feed."* Smiling, he had stood before us, sharp eyes gleaming in the candle light, betraying an even clearer mind illuminated with a fiercely brilliant light. The saffron robed arms had dipped and swooped in demonstrative flight as he waxed philosophically. In enthusiastic detail, he had described the love that drove the desperate mother insect to brave death, time and time again, to gain those precious drops of blood. The monkey of the mind had grasped at a strange sequence of thoughts

originating from that idea. Did Mother Earth feel oil wells in the same manner? Do big fleas have little fleas? And so it had flowed, until the discipline of meditation had intervened to still the torrent.

Leaving the meditation room, we passed through the marginally too low portal with its ornately carved, but ill-fitting, wooden doors. Outside, the faded sign requested silence, a black and white Buddha's head, with finger pursed against the stylised lips in the universal gesture of "Silence please!" High on the steep terraced banks of the central monastery hill, the nuns were chanting. The waves of rhythmical sound rolling down the hillside through the web of tangled prayer flags, now hanging limply for lack of vital breath of wind. Along the lower path-side edge, the clumps of bamboo speared the post sunset sky, their dark silhouettes forming a geometric pattern of nature's mind against the sky bowl's darkening blue. Here and there the first few brave evening stars punctuated the ether, while high above the bamboo spears floated the perfect silver orb of the night's full moon.

The moonlight's pale ethereal illumination gave a blue wash to the monastery and the beckoning rough stone path. Here and there the rhythmical iridescent flashes of fireflies weaved a dance above the path-side grass and through the nearby trees. Down on the plain below the monastery hill, a tapestry of electric sequins



betrayed the structures of man by their night-time illumination. Clusters of artificial ground-stars, plucked by science from the fruits of nature's storehouse, to brighten the often ignoble deeds of men. Beyond the sequined tapestry of the valley floor, the torn black outline of the encircling mountains ripped the edge of the darkening sky-bowl. On the far eastern edge of this bounded world, flashes of lightning played around the distant Himalayan peaks, testimony to a tumult of nature's forces, too distant for even the great peals of thunder to wash against these monastery walls. The monsoon season surely approached, when drowned dust would again receive the kiss of torrents of celestial tears.

The rhythmic AUM of the chanting nuns filled the ether of this magic space and moment. Far away, across the valley, a dog barked, to be answered briefly by another at some distant peasant farmstead. The AUM returned, the names of God filling the space and moment created by this brief cessation of mankind's activities. Up on the hill, a portion of the chanting separated itself in space from the main body of sound, as a seed detaches from its parent form. Crunching down the hillside path appeared two saffron robed nuns, one small child, accompanied by her older spiritual sister. Chanting as they walked, they passed alongside on their way to the nearby tin shack to answer the call of mother nature. With a screech of agonised metal, the doors opened, then clanked shut, as ill-fitting wooden frames

The rhythmic AUM of the chanting nuns filled the ether of this magic space and moment.

collided with corrugated iron. The chanting continued, strangely resonant from the cubicle acoustics.

I walked on down the path, picking my way carefully between the various obstacles illuminated by the pale blue moonlight. Ahead, the pagoda roofs of the temple *gompa* stood proud above the bushes atop the path-side wall. Ornate gold and brass-work offered a dull sparkle beneath the silver moon, the solar embraced by the gentle lunar. The floating iridescent pulsations of fireflies drifted across the path, giving a moving depth to this tranquil sea of moonlight. Around the distant streetlight of the corner wall swarmed countless mosquitoes, dancing to the chorus of crickets and cicadas. Curled up on the concrete and basked in electric radiance was one of the monastery's dogs, asleep and murmuring in dog dreams. The ancient monastery jeep was parked in its usual place, the bubbles in its stained metallic silver paint betraying the ravages of



Flapping on the pole at the entrance to the temple gompa steps were two tall, thin, and frayed prayer flags, their printed prayers now faded on the cloth.

hidden rust. The sooty dark stain on the stone beneath evidenced the wear and tear of engine oil seals and the lack of that all too unaffordable maintenance. A bald rear tyre rested against a large stone and a bent bumper rounded off the picture completely.

Flapping on the pole at the entrance to the temple gompa steps were two tall, thin, and frayed prayer flags, their printed prayers now faded on the cloth. The prayer wheels stood in their brightly coloured cubicle beside the path, the legend "AUM MANI PADMI HUM" embossed in ancient script in their metal rims. Beside these offerings to spirit, the ancient, venerated 25-gallon white painted water drum rested on the capstone of the step-side wall. Around the drum, in uneven script was painted the legend: "*Todised for drinking. Good for thy mind, better for thy speech, best for thy body.*" It was here that the monks or nuns stopped to bend, open mouthed, below the refreshing drinking water tap.

It was here too, at this fount of the greatest of blessings, that this quiet, contemplative traveller stopped. Spiritual and physical thirst briefly merged into one, as the inner and the outer man stopped to drink beneath the shimmering moon. Across the silence, the Himalayas tore at the sky, while the spangles in the night-sky twinkled at their lesser electric kin laid across the valley floor. Macrocosm met microcosm and there was peace profound. The flow of thought had ceased, as ripples on a pond which, with energy expended, had finally come to rest. The calm, still, clear surface remained, mirror-like and tranquil, within which, the note of the roaring silence echoed throughout the familiar peace profound. And in the calm, still, clear water was reflected the secretive, smiling face of the night's full moon.

Aum Mani Padmi Hum

We are never more discontented with others than when we are discontented with ourselves.

-- Amiel --



Spirituality & Mental Tranquillity

by Joan Franklin, SRC



ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF LIFE are governed by various forms of Sir Isaac Newton's Third Law of Motion: *for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction*. In its most general form, we could call it the "universal law of cause and effect," and it has a great bearing on how we find spiritual and mental tranquillity.

As you sow, so shall you reap; or to put it another way, what we give to life is what we receive from it. No one can escape the operation of this fundamental law, yet the sorry fact is that very few appear to realise it. We can't be healthy for any length of time if we transgress nature's laws. If we eat the wrong foods and fill our bodies with all sorts of artificial rubbish, we will suffer the consequences in the form of obesity, creaking joints, high level of uric acid, cholesterol etc. and we won't be terribly happy about it. Similarly, when we allow our minds

to be filled with senseless violence from TV and the cinema, how do you think we can avoid starting to behave in similar ways?

We can't expect to be full of life if we don't exercise, if we don't have quiet moments to ourselves, if we never meditate or if we never indulge in creative things. Obvious as it may seem to us who are already on the path of inner development, it is not obvious to the many billions on our planet, that we can't manifest the joys of living if we allow ourselves to hate or dislike others. Spiritual and mental tranquillity does not come for free. It takes effort and hard inner work to achieve such a state of being, and here is how we do it.

Forgiveness

Peace cannot enter the life of someone who is full of selfish motives, trying to "get their own back"





As you sow, so shall you reap: We can't expect to be full of life if we don't exercise, if we don't have quiet moments to ourselves, if we never meditate or if we never indulge in creative things.

on others. To some extent we are all guilty of these negative emotions and need forgiveness, just as much as we need to forgive others. We know that only when we have forgiven others, can we justifiably be forgiven ourselves. And furthermore, we are forgiven only to the extent to which we have forgiven others.

In the Bible, it was reported that Jesus often said to a sick person he was about to heal, "your sins are forgiven." Why? What do sins have to do with being ill? But, two thousand years ago in the Roman province of Judea, illness was believed to be the work of "evil spirits" and if someone was possessed by one of these "spirits," it was his or her own fault for letting them in. In the minds of so-called primitive people, a sick person must have done "something wrong" to have become sick in the first place, to have allowed those evil spirits in, and the first thing needed therefore, was forgiveness for whatever they had done wrong.

Ridiculous as it may seem to us today to believe in these things, because sick people were perceived as being the guilty party, not only by society in general but by the people themselves as well, patients first had to be freed of all guilt before they could become better. If people are conscious of some personal guilt, they cannot find tranquillity until forgiveness has been fully and inwardly realised. And before personal forgiveness becomes possible, the sufferer must freely forgive others. All human beings are blessed to some extent with an innate sense of natural justice; and that inner understanding mandates us to forgive before we expect to be forgiven. To live in a state of continual hatred or strife towards anything is to be in perpetual misery. It's surprising that so many hate-filled people manage to survive as long as they do.

Moreover, we shouldn't just forgive, but also give of ourselves as we do. Forgiving is a mental and

emotional outpouring, but the giving of yourself, in some material way, is a lot more, and helps to cement the thoughts of forgiveness we hold. At the very least, we are able to prove to ourselves just how sincere or insincere our forgiveness is. A famous psychologist said that a well-adjusted person is one who has discovered that there is more happiness and fulfilment in the act of giving than in receiving. And what does that mean in practical terms? It means putting into practice the basic laws of your esoteric inner journey. Give and you will receive, forgive and you will be forgiven.

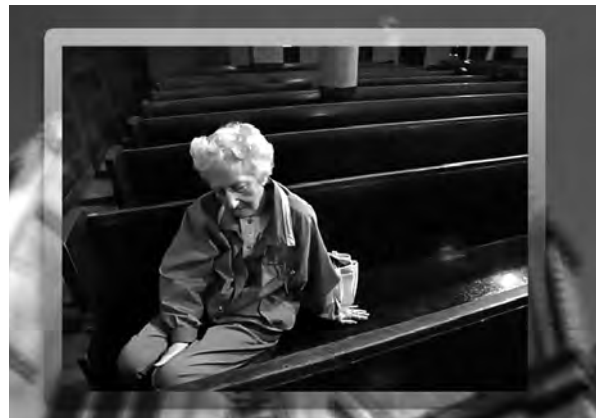
The golden rule of "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" will always hold good. Do not blame others. Do a little self-examination instead and you will find that you also make mistakes. Someone who never errs is no longer a mere person, and we hardly ever find such unique people. Be

To live in a state of continual hatred or strife towards anything is to be in perpetual misery.

honest with yourself and remember that in the sight of your highest concept of goodness, we are all equal. It is easy to be a hypocrite and not be aware of it. It is much harder to be inwardly alert to our thoughts and true motives, and to control them before they control us.

True Spirituality

Many people seek peace and inner tranquillity in a place of worship, and to be frank, entering a church, mosque or temple with deep, inner conviction still



Many people seek peace and inner tranquillity in a place of worship, and to be frank, entering a church, mosque or temple with deep, inner conviction still works for many of us.





Pain in the physical body is Nature's warning that something is wrong; by the same token, mental pain is also a warning that something is wrong with the way we are thinking.

works for many of us. But more and more people are becoming dissatisfied with the outer, rigid forms of formal religions. They see them as poor substitutes for true spiritual food.

Those asking for "spiritual bread" receive "spiritual stones" in return; hardly digestible "spiritual food." They turn to priests, imams, rabbis and gurus who often have an outward form of godliness only, and purely because of the prestige of the high offices they bear. Seldom however, do those seekers of solace receive the inner relief they are looking for. Sadly, they often turn to cynicism of all religious beliefs instead. At their cores, all religions have precisely the deep spirituality that everyone is seeking innately; though those centres are hidden from the view of all but the most determined and sincere seekers.

No wonder then that places of formal worship are so empty nowadays! Of course, there are those who show the fruits of true spirituality: love, joy, peace etc., but true spirituality is neither understood nor practised by the vast majority of religious adherents, because they just don't understand what it means to "be spiritual." Spirituality is the practice of love towards all things in the universe, indeed love for the universe itself, and the holding of an inner attitude of confidence that love really does unite things that otherwise could never co-exist.

To banish those things that are opposed to peace from the mind is to take an enormous stride towards true health and happiness. To be frank, most people need some help with this. What better way then to helping them than to live your life in an attitude of peace and goodwill towards all things. The

amazing thing is that with the correct inner motive, with the right blend of humility and positive action, help is always forthcoming, if asked for sincerely. People who have learned to let peace rule their hearts are the happy. They haven't allowed their thoughts to be dominated by the chaos of greed, revenge and selfishness.

The American literary critic and biographer Van Wyck Brooks (1886-1963) wrote: *"How delightful is the company of generous people, who overlook trifles and keep their minds instinctively fixed on whatever is good and positive in the world about them. People of small calibre are always carping. They are bent on showing their own superiority, their knowledge or good breeding. But magnanimous people have no vanity. They have no jealousy. They have no reserves and they feed on the true and solid wherever they find it. And what is more, they find it everywhere."*

Little minds are wounded by hosts of little things that don't matter, while larger minds take it all in with welcoming arms. They observe everything with impartiality and a sense of justice for all. They aren't injured or hurt by anything that life throws at them. On the contrary, they are grateful for the lessons they derive from all situations they end up in, whether pleasant or unpleasant.

Facing Adversity

Adversity is a great character builder. It is the abrasive that gives a sharp edge to courage. Pain and suffering have their virtues, for pain in the physical body is nature's warning that something is wrong. By taking

Living in the past is a waste of time, because yesterday is dead, unless we deliberately keep it alive in our minds.

heed of the pain we can eliminate the cause which, if not removed, can result in more serious disease or even death.

Mental pain is also a warning that something is wrong with the way we are thinking. The remedy is to find out the cause of our inner pain and to remove it by the roots. In order to accomplish this, self-help and courage, together with self-honesty are needed. In accordance with a spiritualised version of Newton's Third Law of Motion, we are always



rewarded, eventually, for our sincere efforts. The process of betterment takes time and patience to manifest, but it surely does manifest in the end.

Humility

Many people long to be as good as, or even better than someone else they know. But few who say “*I am as good as you*” really believe it fully in their heart. The claim to be as good as anyone else is made because in some way we feel ourselves to be inferior. This claim suggests a painful, smarting awareness of our own inadequacies which we refuse to recognise.

To be hurt by an awareness of our own inferiority produces a dangerous state of mind both to the self and to others. We all have something in our nature that's inferior to the qualities in someone else. The cure is to be honest and to accept the facts without shame. It's hard to develop talents we don't possess, but we can all improve on what we already have. It's a satisfying course to find out what our talents really are and then to concentrate on them. Thus, we bring out into the light of day abilities we never thought we possessed.

Possessions and some sort of attainment are the goals of most people, but possessions alone never bring true happiness. They're often the cause of sorrow instead. The more we have, the more we want; and the more we have to lose! The more we have, the more there is to worry about; the more responsibility we have to look after our possessions. The happiest people I have ever met, with few exceptions, have been those who are poor in material goods but rich in spirit.

On the other hand, seeking to attain something is good; if what we aim for is high, noble and for the good of humanity, and not just for the good of ourselves. We may fail over and over again, but there's virtue to be found in rising up after every fall and going on living one day at a time. Living in the past is a waste of time, because yesterday is dead, unless we deliberately keep it alive in our minds. Worrying about tomorrow is just as foolish, because tomorrow hasn't come and shouldn't we love the present moment and not the past or the future? Tomorrow will take care of itself, if we do our best today.

The hallmark of a mystic is that when they take a fall, they don't wallow in self-pity, but get straight up and continue on their chosen path,



Maintaining a smile will make us conscious of feeling better, rather than looking miserable which will have detrimental effects on our being.

bruised perhaps, but mainly unhindered by the unpleasantness of the fall.

Good Thoughts

The human brain with its complex neurological tentacles spread throughout the body, is constantly changing. It doesn't really have a choice for it must either adapt or die; it cannot remain still. Change can be for the better or for the worse, according to how we think and live. It's been said that what comes out of the mouth contaminates us far more than what we put into it. In other words, the words we utter are verbalised thoughts, and evil words have the unpleasant habit of feeding back through the ears to the mind from which they originated. There they “poison” the speaker's mind as much as they poison the minds of others, or even more so!

Good thoughts promote good deeds. They cleanse the mind and invigorate the body. It is quite easy to demonstrate the effects of misery and morbidity of mind on the physical body. For example, stand in front of a mirror and deliberately look miserable. Can you possibly imagine the face you are looking at in the mirror inviting peace and happiness? Maintain the expression of misery for any length of time and I can guarantee that you will actually begin to feel exactly as you appear.

Smile in front of the mirror, look your best without being ostentatious. What a difference! Surely it is not the same person? Maintain that smile and continue looking your best. If you are honest with yourself, you will become conscious of feeling better in both mind and body. Being a mystic means



controlling how you feel about yourself. Mystics don't just wait for things to happen, they make them happen. This is what you must do with your life.

Living in the Present

In a landmark study, the psychologist William Marston asked 3,000 people what they had to live for. He was shocked and astonished to hear that 94% were simply enduring the present while they waited for something better to happen in the future. They never realised that all that matters is with them today. Contentment and tranquillity can't come about until we have learned to accept life as we find it, and stop blaming others or "fate" for our misfortunes.

Why allow the bad conduct of someone to determine whether we are sad or happy? Self-possession is the best possession, for self-possessed people are in command of themselves. All around there is fear, discontent, rudeness, anger, greed and pessimism. Every action film on television or in the cinema, without exception, is filled to overflowing with this negativity. But, here and there, we encounter some soul who is above it all; someone who possesses the quality of radiating the peace and contentment personally acquired through hard personal effort. This person is a happy person, a person at peace. Imitate this person and don't allow yourself to be contaminated by the negative and destructive words of others. As the old nursery rhyme goes: "*Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me!*" Make that your daily affirmation.

Someone I once knew, after many years of self-inflicted illness, finally reached the stage where she gave up the struggle. An amazing thing then happened. Her health started improving! Why? I can't be sure of course, but I suspect it was that she stopped fighting both herself and others. By "giving up," by releasing everything and allowing the inner spiritual forces to take charge, her mind became quiet and at rest. Her body, for the first time in years, had a chance to adjust itself to a reality she had fought against for so long.

It's the same with unquiet mental states: stop fighting, struggling, moaning and complaining and the mind will relax. Things will start to sort themselves out and you will find that all things have worked together for the greater good. It's up to us then to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The power and ability to do this resides in every cell of the brain and body. Allow this power to become active again.

Tranquillity is a most desirable state of mind

and body, but if mental and physical peace is desirable, we must be prepared to do something about it ourselves. To take medicines isn't enough. To obtain a real and lasting tranquillity we must learn to dwell on thoughts that are true, honest, good and beautiful. Mystics, and Rosicrucians in particular, are alchemists of the mind. They make good things happen. They don't wait till it's too late. And most importantly of all, they govern their minds and regulate the intensity and quality of all thoughts emanating from them.

Virtues according to Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. A noted polymath, Franklin was a leading author and printer, satirist, political theorist, politician, scientist, inventor, statesman, soldier and diplomat. In his autobiography, he set out what he considered to be the virtues every person should possess. They have inspired many people all around the world.

- *Temperance*: Eat not to dullness. Drink not to elevation.
- *Silence*: Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself. Avoid trifling conversation.
- *Order*: Let all your things have their places. Let each part of your business have its time.
- *Resolution*: Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve.
- *Frugality*: Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e. Waste nothing.
- *Industry*: Lose no time. Be always employed in something useful. Cut off all unnecessary actions.
- *Sincerity*: Use no hurtful deceit. Think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
- *Justice*: Wrong none, by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
- *Moderation*: Avoid extremes. Forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
- *Cleanliness*: Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes or habitation.
- *Tranquillity*: Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.
- *Chastity*: Rarely use venery but for health or offspring; never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.
- *Humility*: Imitate Jesus and Socrates.



LIGHT OF THE WORLD



by Robert Daniels, FRC

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS always a hope in the hearts of those who seek a greater role in the world. There is an inner conviction for those who have awakened their spiritual sight; a conviction that the day will come when certain spiritual leaders will appear on the world scene who will raise the spiritual consciousness of humanity by their individual efforts in various fields.

Many who believe they recognise this trend in

world affairs, point out the growth of interest in occult phenomena and in subjects related to parapsychology which catch the public eye. But popular interest in occult and psychic phenomena does not equate to a spiritual awakening of humanity. There may be a peripheral awakening, but psychic phenomena and the occult in themselves, can exist entirely devoid of any real spiritual content.

There is a trend however on the part of many good people, to be concerned about the spiritual,



emotional and material welfare of underprivileged communities. This deep concern for others reveals a spiritual awakening in many people who give no thought to the phenomena of so-called psychics and occultists. Their only concern is to do something *now* for those needy people who have been cut off from the mainstream of life. They are the outcast, handicapped and underprivileged masses who have been cast aside by society because they don't or can't conform. Many are children, unwanted and without the love and guidance of parents or friends. In their eyes, nobody cares.

Dedication to Service

If scientists and politicians directed their attention to lifting a little of the burden of humanity, the light of the world would stand revealed. But we're still waiting

Service is the keynote of all mystical work.

while we direct our attention to the sufferings of others in need. Although we may feel powerless to help the many people in their plight, we must hold fast to the knowledge that what little we can do is needed and help is on the way. We must persist in the knowledge that our good works and prayers are helpful and achieve worthwhile results, even though we sometimes see little evidence of it. There is a gradual awakening on the part of many who dedicate themselves to service. Their concern is for more human values which reveal spiritual insight and deeper values.

Those who have dedicated themselves to helping the needy, whether in the fields of medicine, sociology or many other spheres, aren't necessarily mystically inclined; but they do reveal a deep spiritual motivation which is greatly needed today. It is to be hoped that those who are mystically inclined will also become involved by radiating a spiritual love to all humanity. Service is the keynote of all mystical work. For preparation in the mystical life we must sooner or later feel the stirring of our deeper spiritual self which urges us to serve the interests of raising

humanity to a higher level of thought and conduct.

Without the slightest doubt, there is a new spiritual awakening today. Small though it is, it can be seen here and there where dedicated people are prepared to stand against all odds and be counted for the advancement of humanity, and especially to assist the underprivileged in society. This trend shows that the light of the spirit of humanity can be rekindled and that there is hope for the future destiny of mankind as long as there are men and women who place their spiritual qualities above their material desires.

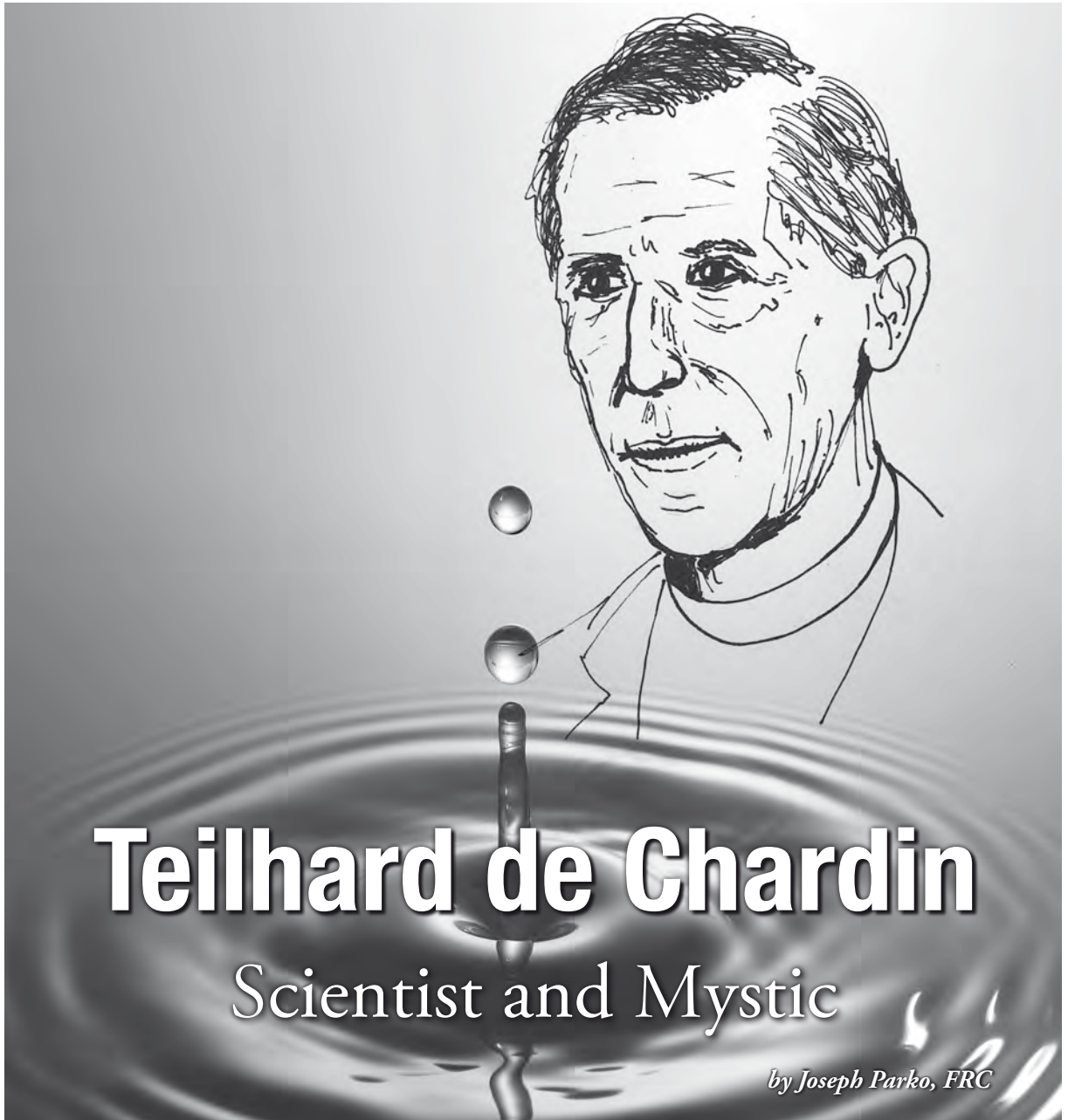
There will always be something we can do, no matter how small and inconsequential it may seem. The helping hand we give to someone in need will encourage them to share in the needs of others. Service is the key to a better understanding of life, for as we give of ourselves and share our lives with others, as fully as possible, so will our lives be enriched. It is in giving that we receive, and to receive the greatest rewards in life we must be prepared to put aside many of our self-interests and be more concerned for others. What we share will be returned to us in greater measure.

The more we give thought for each other and have the willingness to give some help to one another, the more the spiritual light will grow in the hearts of men and women, gradually bringing a new dawn of greater light and understanding between all people. Then will come to the fore those spiritually enlightened people of all races who will point the way to higher advancement, not by what they say, but because they will be living examples of the spiritual way of life.



Although we might feel we are not in a position to help others on a large scale there will always be something locally we can do, no matter how small and inconsequential it may seem.





Teilhard de Chardin

Scientist and Mystic

by Joseph Parko, FRC

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN (1881-1955) the world-famous geologist and paleontologist, theologian and philosopher, was one of the most original mystical thinkers of the 20th century. He was born at Sarcenat in southern France, the fourth child among eleven in a devout, well-to-do family. Teilhard entered the Jesuit Order when he was eighteen and because of his life-long fascination with rocks, he combined the study of theology with a passion for geology. Upon completion of his studies, interspersed with

numerous geological field trips, he was ordained a priest in 1912. After service in World War 1 as a stretcher-bearer (where he received the Legion of Honour for his courage), he completed his studies for a doctorate in geology.

In 1923, Teilhard made the first of his many paleontological expeditions to China. He was involved in the famous discovery of Peking man's skull and greatly enlarged our knowledge of Palaeolithic cultures in China. During this period Teilhard's scientific training and mystical insights into



the processes of evolution combined to produce his magnum opus, *The Phenomenon of Man*, in which he unveiled a new “hyperphysics” which bridges the gap between physical evolution and the evolution of the spirit. Teilhard’s study of evolution had convinced him that underlying the process was a mechanism designed to increase and collect the psychic energy of the universe. In his book, he contends that evolution is not a random physical process arising out of the probabilities of large numbers but is, instead, an intentional psychical process which is converging toward an eventual cosmic apotheosis. The aim of evolution, according to Teilhard, is to generate increasingly complex forms of consciousness which ultimately converge upon an “Omega point” which fuses and consumes them within itself. The Omega point represents the unity toward which all levels of existence converge through the design of “*a distinct Centre radiating at the core of a system of centres.*” Human consciousness is thus seen as “*...gravitating against the tide of probability towards a divine focus of mind which draws it onward. Thus something in the cosmos escapes from entropy and does so more and more.*”

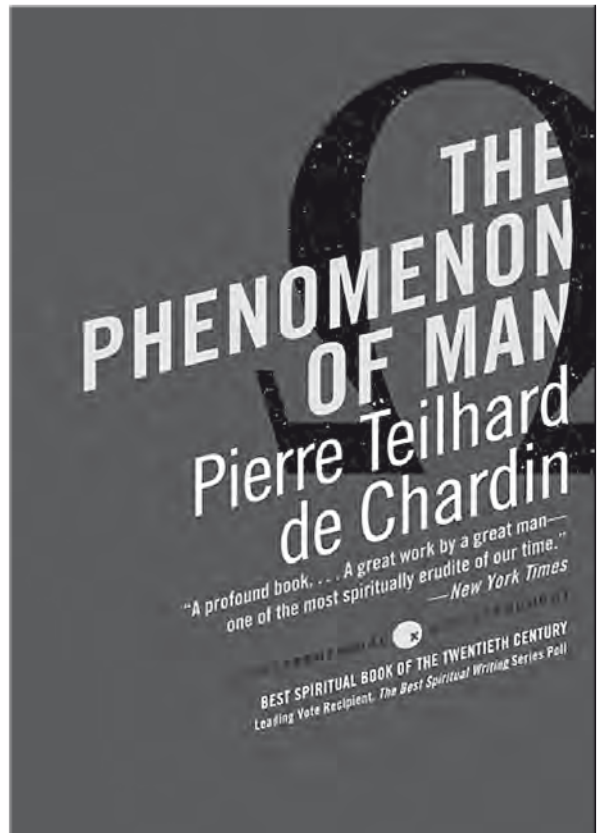
Cosmic Evolution

In Teilhard’s concept of cosmic evolution we are not simply face to face with change in the world but with genesis, which is something quite different. From now on, he contends, the evolutionary process continues its development not so much in the sphere of life, the “biosphere,” as in the sphere of mind and spirit, the “noosphere” or “thinking layer,” which since its germination in the Tertiary period has spread over and above the physical world. Mankind, he says, is

Evolution is an intentional psychical process which is converging toward an eventual cosmic apotheosis.

now in the “psychozoic” era. To extraterrestrial beings “*...capable of analysing sidereal radiations psychically no less than physically, the first characteristic of our planet would be, not the blue of the sky or the green of the forests but the phosphorescence of thought.*”

According to Teilhard, evolution to this point is seen as essentially an ascent towards man and reflective consciousness. The formation of the noosphere continues this advance toward Omega, the ultimate manifestation of the Divine Mind’s tendency to gather consciousness into itself. But, warns Teilhard, this process of cosmic evolution is not



Teilhard’s study of evolution had convinced him that underlying the process was a mechanism designed to increase and collect the psychic energy of the universe.

deterministic. The rise of consciousness also creates the freedom to choose between either convergence with or divergence from the psychic energy flow moving towards Omega.

The Power of Love

For Teilhard, love is the only form of psychic energy capable of moving mankind forward toward convergence with the Supreme Consciousness. Love alone unites human beings in such a way as to complete and fulfil them, for it alone joins them to what is deepest in themselves. In order, therefore, for humanity to continue to evolve towards that psychic unity which is its highest destiny, the power of love must gradually develop until it is capable of embracing the whole of mankind.

A common objection against such an idea is that man’s capacity to love does not carry beyond the radius of a select few, that to love all is contradictory, a false gesture which will lead in the end to loving



no one. "To this I would answer," responds Teilhard, "that if, as you claim, a universal love is impossible, how can we account for that irresistible instinct in our hearts which leads us to unity whenever and in whatever direction our passions are stirred? A sense

Love is the fundamental energy which binds the universe together.

of the universe, a sense of the all... these seem to be an expectation of a Great Presence. A universal love is not only psychologically possible, it is the only complete and final way in which we are able to love."

Love, contends Teilhard, is therefore the key to the whole cosmic order; it is the fundamental energy which binds the universe together. In a universe undergoing spiritual evolution, the supreme law of morality is that evil consists of a limitation of this love energy. "Love in all its subtleties is nothing more and nothing less, than the direct trace marked on the heart of the element by the psychical convergence of the universe upon itself."

When Teilhard speaks of "the planetary maturation of mankind," he means the psychic growth resulting from the pressure of man's tighter contraction around the surface of the earth. What the pessimist perceives as increasing international tension and an approaching apocalypse, Teilhard sees as the necessary crisis of growth in the evolution of mankind. What we have been experiencing for some time now, without being aware of it, is in reality the beginning of a new phase of noogenesis, the phase of contraction in which humanity is coiling itself up around the globe into a single inter-thinking group in which man will so far transcend himself as to demand some new appellation. Physical interdependence is the necessary first step towards psychic interpenetration.

Through technology we are impelled toward a more complex exterior organisation of humanity, a kind of "mega-synthesis," while at the same time producing a correlative intensification of the psychic temperature of the noosphere. "Are we not experiencing the first symptoms of an aggregation of a still higher order, the birth of some single centre from the convergent beams of millions of elementary centres dispersed over the surface of the thinking earth?"

Teilhard's assurance to modern man is to point to the pattern he has uncovered through his generalised physics of evolution.

Time, space, matter and mind are terrifying only if they are thought to be random and blind; they immediately become understandable as soon as a definite movement appears which shows them to be part of a developing whole. "Man is not the centre of the universe as we once thought in our simplicity but something much more wonderful, the arrow pointing the way to the final unification of the world in terms of life." The entire ascent towards life,

that of life towards spirit and of spirit towards Omega, this whole movement is not due to some mindless mechanical thrust from below but to an attraction from above. It is, according to Teilhard, an inverse form of gravitation.

For Teilhard then, the ultimate explanation of evolution is that the universe is converging upon a pre-existent cosmic centre. The Divine Mind is therefore to be found at both the beginning and end of the universe as well as interpenetrating all that lies between. But each man must still exercise his freedom to align himself with the Divine Mind. "Universal love would only vivify and detach finally a fraction of the noosphere so as to consummate it, the part which decided to 'cross the threshold,' to get outside itself into the other."

Ultimately, then, the end of the world is to come about not through some cataclysm in the physical realm but through a paroxysm of joy in the psychic realm. In the end, concludes Teilhard, Being shall engulf beings. In the midst of a becalmed Ocean whose every drop of consciousness shall be aware of both itself and the Infinite Other, the extraordinary adventure of the world shall reach its climax. The dream of every mystic shall have become the final reality.



What the pessimist perceives as increasing international tension and an approaching apocalypse, Teilhard sees as the necessary crisis of growth in the evolution of mankind.





Tai Chi Meditation

by Charles Tease, FRC

TÀIJÍQUÁN, ALSO KNOWN AS *Tai Chi Chuan*, is not historically of great age although its origins lie in concepts, movements and exercises which have a written history of almost 5,000 years. Two texts of the *Neijing* survive, the earliest extant works of Chinese health and medicine, credited to the reign of the Yellow Emperor, Huángdì, said to have lived 2697 – 2597 BCE. To quote: “*The means whereby man is created, the means whereby diseases occur, the means whereby man is cured: the twelve meridians are the basis for all theory and treatment. The meridian is that which decides over life and death.*” Philosophers practising meditation and natural living, created systems of exercises which linked to their understanding of

health maintenance and medical treatments. That such systems have survived millennia suggests they have value in our modern age.

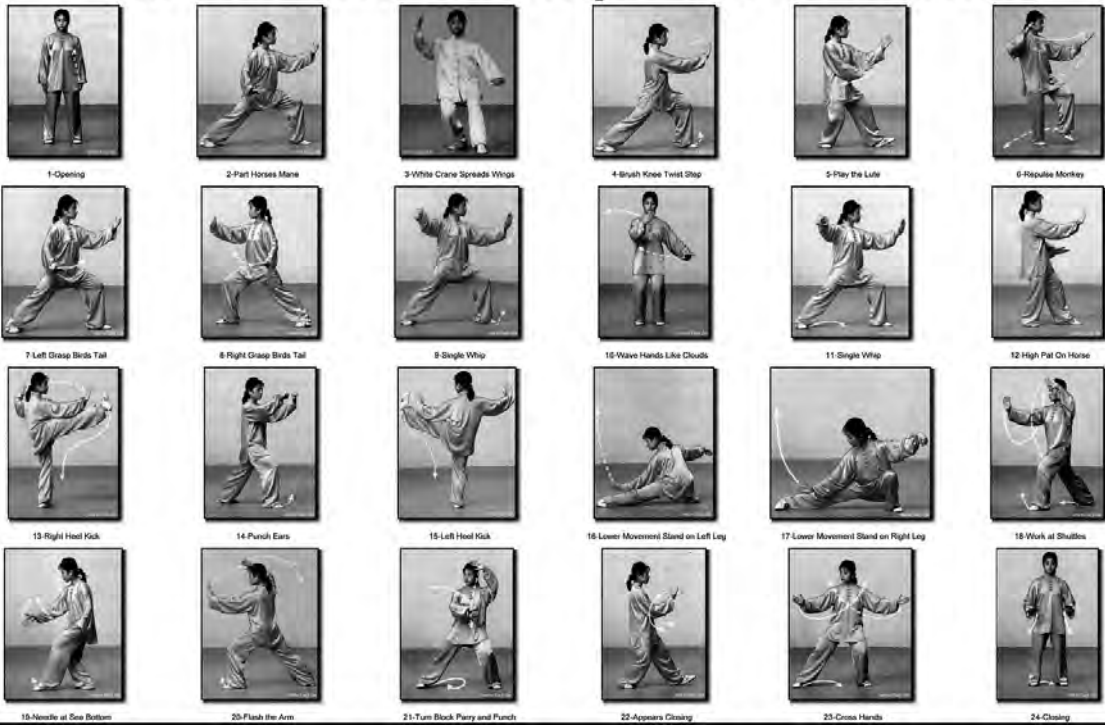
The Yellow Emperor is also given credit for establishing martial arts which follow similar principles. At its most basic, *Tàijíquán* means Tai Chi boxing, and is a form of martial art although mostly performed for health and exercise. In the present age “Tai Chi” is also promoted as a method for the elderly and infirm to reclaim the natural vigour of youth.

Qì

Although literally meaning air or breath, *Qì* or “Chi” is the vital energy which we breathe in. *Qìgōng*, working



Tai Chi Chuan Simplified 24 Forms



The practical aspect of Tai Chi involves a set of movements to facilitate proper breathing and awareness of power points on meridians.

with Qi, is a 3,000-year old system of exercises, proper breathing and awareness of power points on meridians. Through specific movements, the flow of energy is directed around the body, ensuring that blockages are freed. Flow, no pain: Pain, no flow!

Tàijíquán utilises Qigōng exercises for the same purpose, and positive results are felt fairly quickly. At this stage Tàijíquán means working with the universal energy. There is a Daoist practice expressed as *Jing Qi Shen Wu Dao*. *Jing* is the life force which gives rise to *Qi*; *Qi* is vital energy which leads to *Shén*; *Shén* is spirit which achieves *Wu*; *Wu* is emptiness which leads to *Dao*; *Dao* is the root of all things. These statements may seem empty and circular, but they allude to deep, indeed profound, concepts.

Dàodéjīng

One of the greatest and best known of ancient Chinese texts is the *Dàodéjīng* or “Tao Te Ching,” the book of *Dao*, said to have been written by Lǎozǐ (Lao Tze) whose date of birth is traditionally given as 604 BCE. This sage

concluded that behind all the many workings of nature there exists an Ultimate Reality which is unknowable, but which manifests in perpetual laws such as those which cause the sun to rise and set, those that allow human beings to live and die, etc. Having no name for it, he called it the *Dao*.

There is a view that the *Dàodéjīng* was written as a handbook for initiates. The Chinese character for *Dao* (Tao) translates as “Way” or “Path,” and seems to carry the same meaning as *Dharma* in Buddhism..., the Path of Awakening or Ultimate Truth beyond worldly things. This would

make sense, given that a Chinese legend states that Lǎozǐ, as an old man, travelled to India where he became a teacher of Gautama who, on enlightenment, became the Buddha. *Dé* (Te) is a fascinating word with at least twenty meanings. But in this context it seems to refer to the force which maintains what Tao has created. *Jing* (Ching) in this context refers to a classic work or, as was adumbrated above, the life force leading through *Qi* to *Shén* or spirit..., also meaning mind, consciousness or concentrated attention.

Dào is the root of all things.



Wuji

The practitioner of Tai Chi commences in the position known as *Wuji* (Wu Chi), the empty circle. He then moves to Tai Chi, the circle with a dot in it, or more commonly, the Yin – Yang shape. Teachers say frequently that all one ever needs to know about Tai Chi is contained in that one movement, and philosophically speaking this is correct, as it contains the great mystery of the move from “No Thing” to “All Things Possible.” The Limitless (Wuji) produces the Delimited or Absolute (Tai Chi) which in its turn produces Yin and Yang, and so on to *bā guà*, the eight trigrams, thence to the 64 hexagrams of the *Yi Jing* (I Ching).

Wuji also means the primordial universe prior to Tai Chi, the Absolute or the Supreme Ultimate. Thus *Tàijíquán* also comes to mean the search for the Supreme Ultimate; perhaps the aim of all meditation. It is interesting to compare this with the Rosicrucian definition of Cosmic Consciousness, which is the ability to have an awareness of the whole of reality; to be One with the Absolute, to achieve union with the essence out of which the multitude of forms arise. Taoists maintain there is a major difference between the eastern Supreme Ultimate and the western notion of a Supreme Being. But this may depend on one's definition of what “Being” is.

Pursuit of Wisdom

For those of us not brought up in Chinese culture, it is necessary to spend some time studying unfamiliar concepts, though without losing sight of a key teaching of the *Dào dé jīng*:

In the pursuit of learning, every day something is acquired.

In the pursuit of Tao, every day something is dropped.

Less and less is done

Until non-action is achieved.

(Tao Te Ching XL, VIII).

The final stage of the Taoist system is the awakening of the inner eye when the practitioner becomes *Xiān* (Hsien), a wise and immortal person, “one who knows the secrets of the universe by being in complete union with the Tao, or God.”¹

Tai Chi meditation is often performed standing in Wuji position with the hands addressing one of the three *Dāntián* (Tan Tien) centres. The lower point, at

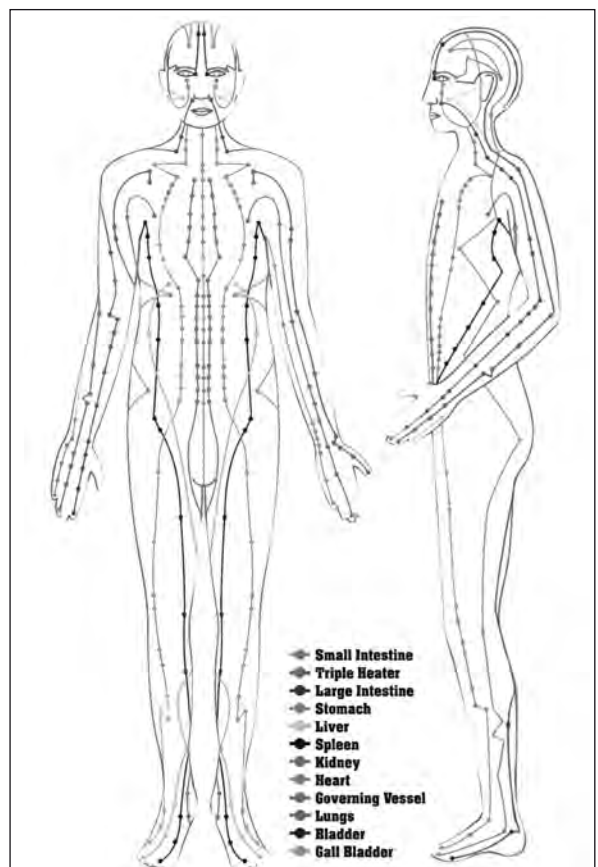
the solar plexus area, is said to be the physical centre of gravity and the seat of internal energy. The middle by the heart corresponds to the thymus gland, and the upper at forehead level, the third eye, corresponds to the pituitary gland. These are important points for internal meditative techniques.

There are many texts written by Tai Chi masters over the last three centuries which aid inspiration. One which is well suited to meditation is by *Wang Zongyue* who lived in the 18th century:-

*In the practice of Tàijíquán
Yin and Yang must be understood.
To know Yin and Yang
You must know Tai Chi.
To know Tai Chi, you need
To comprehend the Tao.*

Endnote

1. Stephen Chang, Chinese Yoga (1983).

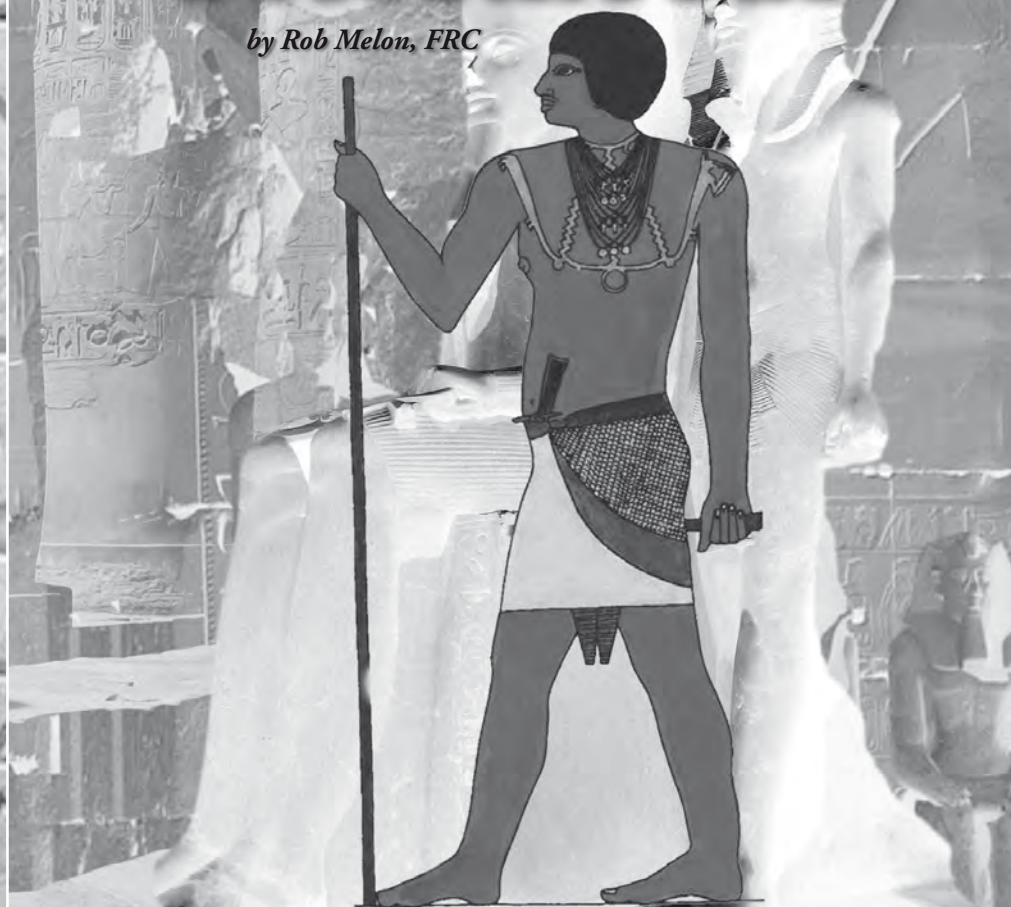


The system of meridian points in the body as taught in tai chi and oriental medicine.



Ancient Priesthoods

by Rob Melon, FRC



THE ORIGIN OF PRIESTHOODS goes back to the very earliest of societies. The word “priest” does not do justice to what was meant though, for priests in those days were not representatives of organised religions as they are for example today. In the earliest of times, priests were what we would term sorcerers, magicians or shamans, dealing extensively with the realm of the psychic, and in some cases mastering the art of communicating with the so-called “afterworld,” the world of the dead. Ancient priests were a breed apart, a class of individuals who acted as mediators between

people and supernatural powers which only they could communicate with. Without doubt, in some cases there emerged men and women of supreme psychic accomplishment and amongst a few of them, some reached the highest regions of human spiritual attainment.

The Egyptian Priesthood

When we think of ancient priesthoods, Egypt comes readily to mind; for their priesthood reached a high state of development as an organisation



which ultimately served the interests of the pharaoh in enhancing his magico-religious powers to control the Nile flood. The pharaoh's entire purpose was to preserve order in the world, in other words to be the ultimate defender of Maat. The organisation of the Egyptian priesthood influenced other priesthoods far and wide, and in reviewing their beliefs and practices, some notable, many otherwise, we can see the syncretised development of the prominent priesthoods of today from such beginnings.

In early Egyptian dynasties, the pharaoh was the high priest, the highest earthly representative of the gods. He was primarily identified with Ra, the sun god of Heliopolis, though he was also heralded as the manifestation of Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, and several other gods. The pharaoh was of course not able to perform both his administrative duties as well as officiate in the many sacerdotal requirements at temples throughout Egypt. It was physically impossible and he therefore deputised most of these religious duties to various members of the priesthood. This delegation of power was on several occasions in the 3,000 year history of ancient Egypt to challenge the authority of the pharaoh.

There were two main classes of priests in ancient Egypt: (a) the Servant of the God, the *Hm-nTr* (hem-netjer), who was of a higher category, (b) a lower class of priest called the *wa'b* (wab), meaning the "pure one." From papyri inscriptions we know that these priests formed the staff of the



In early Egyptian dynasties, the pharaoh was the high priest, the highest earthly representative of the gods. The statue here is Senusret III (c.1878-1839 BCE) of the 12th dynasty.

This inventory was handed over to their successors: the incoming phyle.

An example of the administrative efficiency of these phylae is the fact that both parties certified the list. The list had clay attached to it upon which was impressed a seal of the chief priest and the names of the members of the phyle. This same papyrus relates that there were certain permanent functionaries such as the High Priest or Overseer, the *Hm-nTr-tpy* (hem-netjer-tpy) and the "chief lector" or reader, the *Xry-Hb* (kheri-heb) who was in effect an orator. A third class of priests known as the *it-nTr* (it-netjer) or "Father of the God," walked in front of the cult image at processions, purifying the way by sprinkling purified water on it. There were of course several other lesser levels of priesthood, one of them being the *sm* (sem) or mortuary priests, whose function only came into prominent and crucial use for the upholding of order in the kingdom (the preservation of Maat), when they were called upon to embalm the body of the deceased pharaoh in accordance

with the correct magical rites that would allow the pharaoh to pass through the underworld unharmed so he could eventually take his place among the fixed stars of the night sky.

It is interesting to observe the similarity of titles conferred upon the ancient Egyptian priests to those assumed by modern sects. The priest was believed to be a son (one amongst several sons) of the particular god he served and to whose temple he was attached. In the renowned liturgy entitled "Opening of the Mouth," of which more will be said later, the priest had the title, "Son, beloved of the god." At Edfu in upper Egypt, the pharaoh was the incarnation

of Horus while the priest was a son of the Horus, one whom the god loved because of his service to him.

The Memphite priesthood was one of the most learned. Their god was *Ptah*, the patron god of artisans and craftsmen. The chief priest was known as "Chief of the Artificers." Ptah himself was later revered as the "Architect of the Universe." Also, in the ritual of the "Opening of the Mouth," the high priest of Memphis is referred to as "he who is great in directing craftsmen." The priests of Ptah were therefore the directors and instructors of craftsmen. Before their

The organisation of the Egyptian priesthood influenced other priesthoods far and wide.

temple in which they served. They were divided into four groups of service. In fact, we note that the priests of the royal mortuary temples were divided into what the Greeks called *phylae*.¹ Each *phyle*, or group of priests, served one lunar month. This was done by rotation. The papyri relate that each priest was afforded an interval of three months of non-service between two periods of service. An interesting papyrus from Illahun of the Middle Kingdom shows that each phyle, upon the completion of their term of service, drew up a complete inventory of temple property.





The Sem priest was usually depicted wearing the leopard skin. His function was usually associated (in conjunction with that of other classes of priest) with the "Opening of the Mouth" rituals in the mortuary temple.

religio-magical doctrines evolved into a coherent philosophy, the rituals of the priesthood were regularly performed in the workshops of craftsmen throughout their working day.

The chief title of the high priest of the god Ra, the sun deity at Heliopolis, was "The Great Seer." He was described as being "over the mysteries of heaven," or he "who sees the mysteries of heaven." This signified that the high priest in his capacity as mediator between ordinary mortals and Ra, was blessed with an unrestricted vision of the mysteries of the universe. This "vision" did not allude to physical sight but to inner vision, the faculty of prognostication, foreseeing future events. The high priest of the *Aten* at Akhetaten, the "City of the Horizon" at modern-day Tell el Amarna, was also called the "Great Seer."

The Role of Women

Although not nearly as prominent as men, women also functioned as religious dignitaries in ancient Egypt and their titles and duties were recorded in official documents. Concubines were assigned to the temple of Amun where they served as

wives of the god. From the Fifth Dynasty on, the Pharaoh was believed to be the physical son of the sun-god, Ra. The queen therefore, was called "the god's wife," *Hmt-n-Tr* (hemat netjer). A papyrus relates that her principal duty in service to the god was to rattle the *sistrum*, a musical instrument, consisting of loose metallic rods in a U-shaped device. This rattling, we are told, was done "before his beautiful face," alluding

Priests were deputies of the king.

to the face of the god. Musician priestesses received the special title of "playing with the sistrum in front of him," the god.

The chief priestess was in most cases the wife of the high priest and her duties included rattling the sistrum in a formal manner, no doubt accompanied by chanting and a form of sacred dance within the private confines of the temple. In the Middle Kingdom, women of noble birth bore the title of prophetess and served as functionaries in the temple. And by the New Kingdom, priestesses were divided



Sandstone statue of Khaemwaset, son of Rameses II and High Priest of Ptah at Memphis. The Memphite priesthood was one of the most learned. Their god Ptah was the patron god of artisans and craftsmen.

into phylae as were the priests. The chief priestesses of these phylae were known as the *phylarchs*. Priestesses of the god Hathor bore the title, "Confidential Royal Favourite." In Thebes (modern Luxor), religious see of the god Amun, a priestess was known as the "wife of the god," and also as "worshiper of the god." Although their main duty was the playing of musical instruments in the temple, priestesses were also required to pour libations to the god and the making of offerings and performing of mortuary rites or funerary ceremonies. They were required to meet almost the same qualifications of purification as were demanded of the priest, but never reached the levels of temporal power that the priesthood held.

A Position of Power

Priests were deputies of the king. The king was divine and a pure person. Therefore, the chief priest was often assigned a name that meant "pure." The investiture or ordination of a priest was a highly solemn and dramatic event, many of the elements of which have passed into similar rituals today. Egyptian priests were however generally married and had children, and the priestly profession



was often a hereditary one. Having passed through a ritual of lustration or rite of purification, the neophyte priest was crowned and solemnly conducted into a sanctuary or naos of the god, a innermost part of the temple where the effigy of the god was housed. In this ritual, he was “embraced by the god.” It was necessary, by sacred and symbolic gestures and acts, to show that he had been accepted by the god. In ancient inscriptions it is stated that the priest, during the investiture of his office, “took communion.” In other words, at some point in the ritual, he was fed sacred food which had a symbolic relationship to the substance or nature of the god whom he was to serve.

An interesting account relates the investiture of the chief priestess of Amun. A silver container for the libation of milk, to be offered to the god, was held in her right hand. In her left hand she held a silver sistrum. Hung around the neck of both priests and priestesses were their jewels of office, indicating their rank. The high priest of Ptah wore a curious chain which depicted his obligations, duties and powers. It suggests similar devices worn today by mayors in many parts of the world when officiating in some function. Although many priests acquired their office through heredity (from father to son), some were appointed from non-priestly families. All high priests however had to receive their appointment from the Pharaoh. In practice though, appointments were often discharged through the office of local governor who acted on behalf of the Pharaoh.

In religious matters, the Egyptian priest was a human representative of the god. His functions were numerous, highly structured and adhering strictly to tradition. He was an attendant of the god in a physical sense, laying before the physical carving of the god the symbolic sacred food. If this seems exceedingly primitive, recall where similar symbolic rites are performed in our modern churches. The priest was also required to dress and bathe the image of the god. Although the priest’s primary duty was to the deity, his secondary duties



It is related on a papyrus that the Queen’s principal duty in service to the god was to rattle the sistrum, a musical instrument, consisting of loose metallic rods in a U-shaped device. Pictured is Nefertari, the wife of Rameses II.

were ministering to the needs of the people of the Pharaoh’s realm. He was a physician and counsellor of men, an intermediary between the divine realm and the earth.

Priestly Service

In the loose collection of papyri and temple and coffin inscriptions collectively known as the *Book of the Dead*, the temple is referred to as the “house of the god,” a term still in use in modern Christianity for example. Consequently, priests were looked upon as domestic servants in this “house of the god.” Tombs were referred to as the “House of the Ka,” *ka* being one of the Egyptian words for soul. In other words, the tomb was a place where the soul dwelt until its journey into the after world had been completed. The mortuary priest was the servant of the ka, namely a servant to the soul of the deceased.

It was similarly the duty of the priest to sprinkle the god with water.

This is the simulated bathing, referred to previously. This ceremony was no doubt derived from the custom of a servant bathing his master. The symbolic (and sometime physical) cleansing of the god was then followed with a rite of fumigation, that is, the burning of incense. After the anointing, the priest arrayed the image of the god in various ornaments. This custom too, with some modification, is perpetuated today in modern religions in connection with images of sacred persons. Part of the ceremony required the opening of the shrine housing the god’s physical image, the ceremonial bearing out of the god’s statue to various

Part of the ceremony required the parading of the god’s image to various stations.

stations, and then ceremoniously placing it back in its shrine. An inscription alluding to this relates that the priest was “performing the ceremonies for him with two arms.” This was not much unlike the parading for example of an image of the Virgin Mary on various feast days in some Catholic countries.

What took place in each sacerdotal event was





Rituals were performed each day by the priests to maintain order from the chaos of existence. The centre of activity was on a statue of the temple god that was kept in a naos or bark shrine in the chapel of the temple's inner sanctuary. These statues were around 50 centimetres high and produced with only the most permanent or symbolically significant materials. Like the mummies of the deceased, once these statues were completed by the craftsmen, they underwent a ritual called the "Opening of the Mouth" which transformed the statue, allowing it to be used by the god to manifest itself and in which the divine ka and ba could take up residence. It should be noted that the statue itself was not the subject of worship. These were simply objects through which the gods could receive worship.

Pictured here is the Egyptian deity Ptah who had a strong priestly cult at Memphis (men-nefer) the early capital of Egypt. He is usually depicted as a mummified human wearing a skull cap with a straight beard and holding the djed and was instruments that symbolise stability and wealth. This statue dates from the reign of Amenhotep III c.1386-1349 BCE during the 18th dynasty.

recorded by the temple priest-scribe. It was his duty to keep all important records. Also officiating were the lectors or orators who directed the chanting of the sacred words. The mortuary priesthood had the responsibility of seeing that the ka was prepared for the great judgment hall of Osiris. Priests performed ceremonies in the temple and would then accompany the body of the deceased pharaoh to the tomb where the last rites were performed. According to the records of these scribes, the oldest temple or shrine for which the deity is reported is the goddess Neith, during the reign of Menes, the first king of the First Dynasty around 3100 BCE. And the earliest sanctuary specifically mentioned is that of Horus, in the Third Dynasty.

Priestly Revenue

Hundreds of priests were engaged for the various sacerdotal and therapeutic duties involving the god. Most of them devoted their entire lives to the obligations of their office and contributed little to the material and economic welfare of the state. They therefore had to be supported from temple revenues. Ancient inscriptions reveal that the income for the temples came from two principal sources. First of all, every person who entered a temple was obliged to make an offering, which invariably entailed bringing something edible (such as a cow or sheep) or something of a pecuniary value. A portion of such "offerings" went directly to the priesthood. The second source of revenue, as for example in Thebes, came from the lands belonging to the god, Amun. The revenue from these sources was "divided into 100 equal portions." Twenty portions, or one-fifth, was received by the chief priest, while one portion went to each of the 80 priests serving under him. These were received as an annual stipend.

There were many advantages and special privileges associated with the priestly profession of ancient Egypt. Then, as now, it was a privileged and preferred occupation. Herodotus, the Greek historian, relates: "they consume none of their own property and are at no expense for anything, but every day bread is baked for them of sacred corn, and a plentiful supply of beef and of goose's flesh is assigned to each, and also a portion of wine made from the grape." They were not allowed to eat fish, beans or pork but also paid no taxes whilst all other people in the Pharaoh's realm paid for his upkeep. At a few periods in Egypt's history however, the temples were liable for imposts and had to furnish government officials and armies with supplies. That



was no doubt because temple lands were so extensive and produced such a large proportion of the food of Egypt.

For example there is the royal decrees granting immunity to the temple of the god Min, at Koptos, in Upper Egypt. “*The chief prophet and subordinates, prophets of Min in Koptos, all servants of the activity of the House of Min, the acolytes, the followers and watch of Min, the people of the workhouse, and the two architects of this temple; my majesty does not permit that they be put upon any activities of the pharaoh, whether herds of cattle, herds of donkeys, any time, labour or any forced labour to be credited in the House of Min in the course of eternity.*”

Such concessions by the pharaoh to the phylae or staff of the temple, were political manoeuvres meant to win the support of powerful priesthoods. Most of the priesthoods became very wealthy over time. The

Most of the priesthoods became very wealthy over time.

priesthood of Amun of Karnak is an example. For a period during the New Kingdom, this priesthood became overly burdened with priests and temple property, and in the reign of Rameses IV especially, the annual incomes of the Temples were enormous, a clear parallel to conditions which existed in large parts of medieval Europe. Taxes imposed by the temples came in two forms. First were the agricultural taxes where income was measured in grain: “the grain of the taxes of farmers.” And secondly there was income measured in units of silver, “silver in property and in labour of people given for the divine offerings.” Further advantages of the priesthood were the rite of asylum, and exemption from the pharaoh’s poll tax, a uniform amount levied on every living person, except of course priests and priestesses.

Teachings: Outer and Inner

The priesthood of Egypt were the most learned class in society. If anyone from any other class of society wanted knowledge, there was no better place to acquire it than from the priesthood..., indeed much as it was for centuries in medieval Europe. The mystery schools, schools of religious drama and initiation into secret gnosis, were not however composed exclusively of the priesthood. On occasion, specially selected persons were chosen to receive the preserved, sacred wisdom without having to devote the remainder of



Most of the priesthoods became very wealthy over time, particularly those of the temple of Amun at Karnak. This photograph shows a section of the great hypostyle of the Amun temple at Karnak.

their lives to the priesthood. Usually this was with the intention of allowing such initiates to transmit the Egyptian wisdom to parts of the world outside Egypt, as happened for example with Pythagoras.

The ethics of the priesthood were not all the same. Some manifested a greater discipline and higher principles and wisdom than others. There were priesthoods that had two presentations of doctrines. One set of doctrines was expounded for the people at large who attended the outer precincts of the temples. These were the teachings for the masses, immersed as





The ceremony of the "Opening of the Mouth" was an important function carried out by the priesthood. It enabled the deceased to breathe and speak.

they were in superstition and emotional appeal. They constituted the *exoteric* or outer teachings. Then there were the *esoteric* or inner teachings which included the secret revelations, the profound knowledge of the sciences and the arts of the time. This knowledge was extended only to senior members of the priesthood and to chosen initiates.

The most senior and accomplished priests of Ptah at Memphis, and those of Ra at Heliopolis, were undoubtedly deep philosophers of life and at times, they were as well representatives of the numinous heights of human spiritual experience. As with all organised methods of finding the Sacred, it is certain that in ancient Egypt, as today, holy men and women always existed in some strata of the priesthood, sometimes hidden from all others and at other times very much known and loved by many and even attaining the heights of temporal power. And at other times they would remain for the entire duration of their lives among the lower ranks of the priesthood whilst carrying out their special work of maintaining at those levels and amongst the common people, the high spiritual traditions of Egypt. Of course temporal power in the priesthoods were often controlled by men and women of far lower spiritual insight and accomplishment than this..., as indeed exists in several religions today.

At Memphis, when the god Ptah spoke his word "went forth," thereby objectifying his thoughts. This is very interesting and is almost certainly a precursor and ultimate source of the much later Christian doctrine of the *logos*. The principles of democracy also appear in what were known as the "Coffin Texts," a loose collection of spells found in

various sarcophagi. A series of these relate to the utterances of the sun-god: "I have made the four winds that every man might breathe thereof, like his brother during his time." And again, "I have made every man like his brother, and I have forbidden that they do evil [but] it was their hearts which undid what I had said."

Herodotus relates that the priesthood were instructors in divination and astrology. "The Egyptians also discovered to which of the gods each month and day is sacred; and found how from the day of a man's birth what he will meet with in the course of his life, and how he will end his days, and what sort of man he will be." Herodotus further relates that the

priests practised medicine. Each priest-physician was a specialist, "and treats a single disorder, and no more; thus the country swarms with medical practitioners."

The duties of the priests and their knowledge were of course not confined to temporal matters. Their responsibility also concerned the *ka* or soul and its trials and tribulations in the next world. In a group of texts known as *The Book of Opening of the Mouth*, and *The Book of the Liturgy of Funerary Offerings*, rituals and spells are enumerated which were believed to enable the deceased to breathe, think, speak and

The influence of the priesthood, was all pervasive, extending over the entire community.

walk in spite of the fact that the body was bound in funerary linen wrappings. The second book of these books also contained spells for the continuance of the "life" of the deceased in the next world. During these ceremonies for the dead, the shaman-priest or *kheri heb* presented to the statues of the deceased offerings such as meat, drink, unguents and clothing. Literally translated, the title *kheri heb* means "the holder of the papyrus roll," and his knowledge and power were very great.

Personal Life and Power

The personal customs and dress of the priesthood demonstrate an interesting human touch to their otherwise exalted sacerdotal office. Herodotus informs us: "priests shave the whole body, every other day, so that no lice or other impure things may adhere to them when they are engaged in the service of the gods." The priests



were dressed entirely in linen. Their shoes were made of papyrus and it was unlawful for them to wear shoes of any other material. They were obliged to bathe twice every day in cold water and twice each night; “besides which they observe, so to speak, thousands of ceremonies.” The priests personally inspect their foods and bless them. “If the animal is pronounced clean in all these various points, the priest marks him by twisting a piece of papyrus round his horns and attaching thereto some sealing clay which he then stamps with his signet ring.”

Of course sections of the Egyptian priesthood often abused their power by exploiting the faith, ignorance and fears of the common people they were meant to serve. The *Book of the Dead*, a collection of funerary liturgies, mentions many charms sold by the priesthood to the people to protect them, and special spells could be purchased for set prices. This is reminiscent of the corrupt practices of Christian Europe of the middle ages and later, where the priesthood sold indulgences. The common people of Egypt, seeking security and protection from danger, were sold amulets and charms that had supposedly been infused with spells that would protect the wearers through the influence of one or other deity. As the people’s confidence gave the priests the opportunity to exploit them for gain, more and more spells were formulated to sell to credulous buyers.

The influence of the priesthood, was all pervasive, extending over the entire community and even into the next world. It was believed, and the priests encouraged the idea, that they had the power of veto after death. A powerful enough priest could prevent the deceased from being buried in a properly consecrated tomb (the House of the Ka)

and could instead consign the deceased’s name to lasting infamy. In other words, if they wanted to, priests could refuse the equivalent of the Christian “last sacrament,” and thereby consign the soul of the deceased to complete annihilation..., a terrifying thought for any average Egyptian.

The power of the various priesthoods as very real and dangerous political forces led Thutmosis III in approximately 1449 BCE to appoint the High Priest of Amun as the Primate of all priesthoods of Egypt, thereby uniting them into a single state religion presided over by a single high priest. Behind the sanctuary of Amun at Karnak, Thutmose III built a special *Temple of a Million Years*, the *Akh Menu*, where it is related that special ceremonies of initiation were performed both during his reign and afterwards. The office of the Primate became the chief sacerdotal office of the kingdom but Pharaohs were increasingly from then on robbed of power and income by the effective grip of the High Priest of Amun who exercised more and more power over the civil affairs and finances of the state. The priesthood managed its finances exclusively for its own affairs and withheld revenues from the Pharaoh, resulting in due course in the emergence of “a state within a state,” an ulcerous condition which was stopped dead in its tracks for 17 years by the precipitate, though only temporary action of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, also known as the “heretic pharaoh” Akhnaton.

With few exceptions from then on, and for several centuries, the priesthood, once a pious conglomeration of servants of the Divine, gradually enslaved the minds of the people through their rigid doctrines. The priesthood created for themselves a preferred class at the expense of social progress, on the pretext of assuring the security of the soul of the individual in the next life. But it was a charade by then, even for the believers. But it was sufficient to preserve the power of the priesthood for several centuries to come.



Behind the sanctuary of Amun at Karnak, Thutmose III built a special “Temple of a Million Years,” the Akh Menu, where it is related that special ceremonies of initiation were performed both during and after his reign.

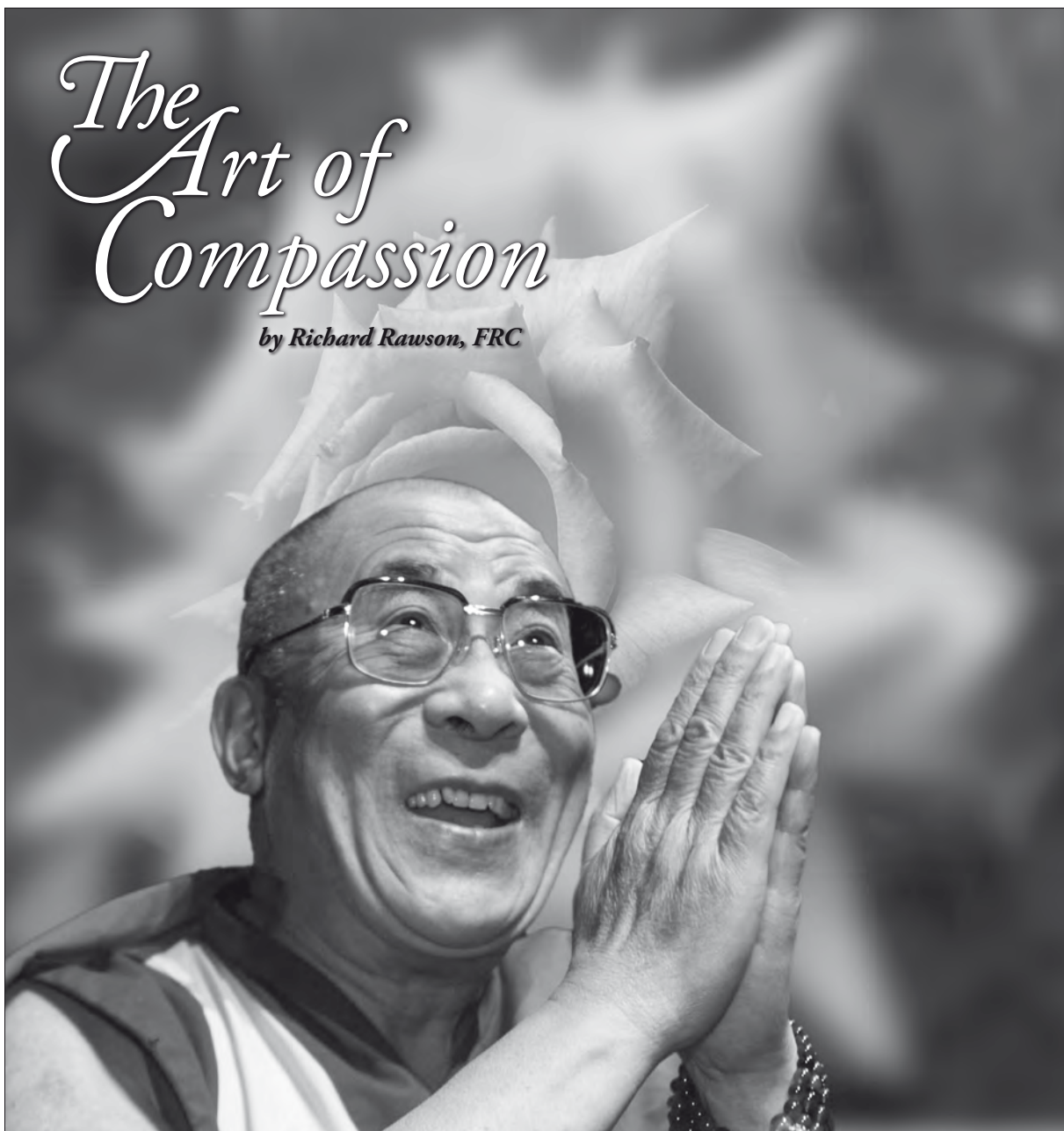
Endnote

1. From the Greek meaning an organisation based on kinship, constituting the largest subdivision of an ancient Greek city-state.



The Art of Compassion

by Richard Rawson, FRC



THE WORD "COMPASSION" DERIVES from the Latin words *com* (together) and *pati* (suffering or feeling). This has generally been taken to mean the feeling of sorrow or deep pity for the suffering of others. Compassion is not so much an uncommon word as an uncommon experience in Western culture. As a word, it is difficult to define. As an experience, it is often confused with pity and sympathy.

Compassion is neither an emotional nor a mental state, but a quality of consciousness beyond

ordinary awareness. Yet it operates through ordinary awareness. It can be likened to emotions, or rather to qualities of consciousness which relate to the emotions of passion, sympathy or love, feelings of regard for or toward another person. Compassion is an attribute of the higher self, the personality of the soul itself.

Compassion Transforms

In Western culture, the connotation of compassion has developed from concepts developed in the Old



and New Testaments. In more contemporary terms coined by a modern-day Rosicrucian: *Compassion lets the other person know they're not alone, that we're connected, not isolated, that there's another person who understands, who's not judging us or other people involved, and that no matter what we do, they'll be here for us, supporting us to be where we most want to be, that is, where we (the Inner Self) most want to be. Those who have compassion for me, support me to be free of regrets and guilt, resentments and blame, all fears that hold me locked into fixed and compulsive attitudes and behaviour. Compassion supports genuine freedom, growth and evolution, unity with self and others; love.*

The essence of compassion is that of a truly extraordinary quality of emotion.

The act of *sympathy*, and its refined cousin *empathy*, is the basis for a caring regard for others. We may feel consoled by sympathy and empathy. To a degree, the distress felt in a painful situation may be cushioned by sympathy and empathy, but the distress remains. The essence of compassion, however, is that of a truly extraordinary quality of *emotion*. Compassion transforms and makes whole the narrow and often painful personal experience. The recipient of compassion finds the experience virtually divine, a "gift from God." We can pray that we might be blessed

with such a divine grace. Can we ever hope to exhibit truly toward others this exalted quality of love?

A Divine Quality

Implicit in the connotation of compassion is the idea of the divine source of this emotion. To achieve the capacity for compassion toward others, we ourselves must in some way become more fully affiliated with the Divine. In practice, conventional wisdom dictates that affiliation with the higher self and the Divine is achieved by becoming more religious. In mystical tradition this is accomplished through identification with the Infinite.

It may be observed that the outward act of pity or of cultivated empathic behaviour doesn't assure attainment of the quality of compassion. The conscious desire to be exalted in our emotion and dignified in our behaviour doesn't necessarily result in the attainment of these goals. With practice, we may become quite skilful in *simulating* the appearance of a spiritual demeanour and compassionate regard, but the experiential result is still short of the desired level. As the aspiring artist may desire to achieve greatness but finds her creative strokes burdened by that desire, we too, as aspiring mystics, are burdened with the self-consciousness of our imperfection. This same burden of imperfection is what we would hope the blessing of compassion would relieve.

Eyes Fixed On Him

by Hariram Khusial

*Keep your eyes fixed on him
and your life never grows dim.
Your path may be granite-strewn
but to you his light will be shown.*

*Keep your ears attentive to him,
listening to the small voice within.
"Be still and know I am God...
abiding with you if you abide by my word."*

*Keep your thoughts attuned to him,
being pure without and within.
"For as a man thinks so is he,"
and I'll assure you of steady victory.*

*Let your tongue always speak of his glory;
each heartbeat revealing his mystery.
And may each deed be inspired by him,
and your life never grows dim.*

*He's only a thought away
and watches over you night and day.
Keep your eyes fixed on him
and your light never grows dim.*



SOCRATES

“THE UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING”

by Jean Ewing

Know Thyself!

MICHELANGELO SAID TO THE young sculptor, “Don’t trouble yourself too much about the light on your statue, the light of the public square will test its value.” Truth comes forth to speak for herself; finding no audience in the masses, she stands eternally, waiting to be recognised by the few. So it is with the truth of Socrates.

The Enigma

Most of what we know about Socrates and his quotations that we read comes from the dialogues of Plato. These dialogues resemble plays, with

Socrates featured as the main character. Through his conversations with others, Socrates comes to life, a mystic engaged in a mission given to him by the Greek god Apollo.

Socrates (Σωκράτης) c. 469-399 BCE was a classical Greek philosopher, who is credited as one of the founders of Western philosophy. He is an enigmatic figure, known not through his own writings, but through those of his pupils Plato and Xenophon, and through Plato’s pupil Aristotle but also through sideswipes from the comic dramatist Aristophanes. According to Plato, Socrates’ father was Sophroniskos and his mother Phainarete. Though said



to be unattractive in appearance and short in stature, Socrates married Xanthippe, who was much younger than he was. She bore him three sons, Lamprokles, Sophroniskos and Menexenos.

He lived during a time of transition from the height of the Athenian hegemony to its decline with the defeat by Sparta and its allies in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE). At a time when Athens sought to stabilise and recover from its humiliating defeat, the Athenian public may have been entertaining doubts about democracy as an efficient form of government. Socrates appears to have been a critic of Athenian democracy, and some scholars interpret his trial as an expression of political infighting.

Dialectic

In the dialogue entitled *Ἀπολογία* (Apology), Socrates tells the court that at first he was puzzled because the oracle of Apollo at Delphi said that no one was wiser than he. *“What can the god mean, for I know I have no wisdom,”* he said. *“Yet he is a god, and cannot lie.”* Socrates set out to find a man wiser than he, but finding none concluded about each one he talked with, *“I am better off than he is, for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know.”* The truth of the riddle, he decided, is that *“God only is wise. The god is only using my name by way of illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing. And so, I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of anyone who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle, I show him he is not wise.”*

Socrates demonstrated through his dialectic method of teaching that people were not wise. *Dialectic* is defined as the art or practice of examining statements logically, as by question and answer, to establish validity; but in the dialectic of Socrates much more can be seen. He comes across as a man with a good sense of humour who knows much, pretends to know nothing, and uses wit and irony to their fullest.

When someone enquires as to the nature of

Socrates appears to have been a critic of Athenian democracy.

something, Socrates pretends to know nothing about it; he replies with a question. Thus he continues until, with his clever enquiries, he has led the other person



Socrates and other great thinkers of the age; Socrates himself did not write a single word of philosophy. His ideas are preserved in the writings of four individuals: his pupils Plato, Aristophanes and Xenophon; and Aristotle, who never knew him.

to answer his own question. When Socrates sees someone showing off, pretending wisdom, he points out the folly of his words, again, using questions. He blatantly leads the pretender to what's true by showing him what's not true. He called himself an intellectual midwife, and said that anxieties are labour pains. He didn't have the ideas, he said, he helped others have them, or find them.

To Know Truth

Socrates believed absolute truth, knowledge, beauty and goodness exist eternally, and that we know and recognise these qualities on Earth because we remember them from a previous existence in which we dwelt with them. In another dialogue, *Φαίδων* (Phaedo), he says, *“After descent to earth, soul has its reminders of the world of*



true being. Our learning is often remembering what we once knew in another life.” With his questions, Socrates helped the enquirer remember his answers.

The two most famous quotes of Socrates are probably “*Know thyself*” and “*The unexamined life is not worth living*.” His major concern was “the good life.” Before him, philosophers had been mainly concerned with the nature of the heavens and earth, but Socrates said he wasn’t concerned with how or of what the universe was made, but *why* it was made as it was. He focused his attention on the inner self and on the acquisition of happiness. Believing that true goodness and happiness are one and the same, he believed that we can become rational, and that through a process of ἀρετή (arete: moral excellence or virtue, or just becoming expert at something) we can find fulfilment. Everyone, he thought, should live up to his or her full innate potential.

The *absolutes* spoken of by Socrates are essences, forms or ideas remaining after the thing that represents them has departed. He believed that we are able to partake of these absolutes because we remember them. An example is the idea of beauty that remains after the flower we thought beautiful has wilted. This idea of beauty is also the flower’s true nature, and knowing its nature, one can also know its purpose. It is no accident that there is such variety in the universe, thought Socrates; everything has its purpose in relation to the whole. There is one

function that each person or thing performs better than any other person or thing..., and that function is its purpose, its reason for being.

Knowledge is a Virtue

If a man seeks knowledge and learns what is truly good, he will act in his own best interest. Socrates believed that knowledge breeds understanding leading to goodness and a good life. Mistakes are made because of a lack of information. If one knows what

Socrates wasn’t concerned with how the universe was made, but why it was made as it was.

is best, one will do what is best. No person harms him or herself intentionally. Consider a woman who steals. She must believe that the acquisition of the thing she steals will bring her happiness. Does a man who kills not believe that either he or the world will somehow be better off without his victim? “Knowledge is virtue,” said Socrates.

Our true nature is good. We have a built-in safety mechanism that gets us back in the flow when we leave it. No person or group can continue indefinitely behaving in a manner that is harmful to his or her personal interests, or for that matter the interests of others. If one tries it, things do not turn out right. So, to find true happiness, one must find true goodness.



A stylised view of Socrates teaching the Athenian statesman, orator and general, Alcibiades. (from The School of Athens fresco (1510) by Raphael)

Trial by the People

As with many of the great teachers throughout history, Socrates was unpopular with the masses. His life ended in Athens in 399 BCE, the same place it had begun 70 years before. He was ordered by the court to drink the poison hemlock after being found guilty of not worshipping the state gods, of introducing new and unfamiliar religious practices, and of corrupting the youth of the city.

At his trial, he was given the opportunity of changing his ways, but he would not. He said he believed his trial and its results were in his best interests. Speaking of his δαίμων (daimon or inner



companion), he says: *“This sign, which is a kind of voice, first came to me when I was a child; it always forbids but never commands me to do anything that I am going to do. Hitherto the divine faculty, of which the internal oracle is the source, has constantly been in the habit of opposing me, even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now, as you see, there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is good, and that those of us who think death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.”*



Socrates saw the activity of rational examination and pursuit of truth and virtue as the essence of what a human being is and the highest expression of human nature. That is why he chose to die by drinking the poison hemlock rather than to go into exile. “The unexamined life,” he said in his defence speech, “is no life worth living for a human being.”

Enter Plato

The concept that life necessarily follows death, because opposites spring from opposites, is believed to be that of Plato, although Plato attributes it to Socrates. Many believe it is impossible to truly separate Plato’s philosophy from the philosophy of Socrates in the dialogues. In many instances it is believed that Plato used Socrates as a mouthpiece through which he expressed his own views. What does it matter? Is the message not the important thing? How often do

Socrates said that knowledge is virtue.

you hear a quote that you think wise, and in time remember the quote but not who said it? Truth does indeed speak for herself.

Perhaps Plato had a purpose for mixing his ideas with those of Socrates so as to render them indistinguishable. Somehow this seems to reinforce the philosophy of Socrates, namely, that it is a waste of time arguing over things all wise people disagree about, whilst searching for a knowledge that would do us no good if we had it. What good would it do us if we knew? It also protects us from the trap of respecting the teacher, but not the message. After all, if Plato wanted the credit, all he had to do was claim it. Plato loved Socrates like a father, who had been his

teacher for twenty years. The dialogues were written after the death of Socrates.

Could it be that Plato merely recognised truth standing, and wished to preserve her because Socrates, his beloved teacher, never wrote a line? Preserve her he did; she stands, still waiting. The light of the public square has not found her wanting.

Quotes from Socrates

- *An unexamined life is not worth living.*
- *Wisdom begins in wonder.*
- *I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that thing is that I know nothing.*
- *To live with honour in this world, actually be what you try to seem to be.*
- *If women were equal to men, they would be superior.*
- *If everyone’s problems were put in one big pile for everyone to take equal shares, most people would be happy to take their own and run.*





Silence

Inner Learning through the Power of Silence

by Jeanne Guesdon, SRC



SILENCE, ONE OF THE MOST difficult things to achieve in our busy world, was an important key to the Pythagorean Path. Before he would initiate a neophyte into the mysteries of his teachings, Pythagoras would subject the candidate to various ordeals which were designed to strengthen their character and which would allow Pythagoras to judge the neophyte. So, newcomers amid the sages of Kroton listened but were

not allowed to ask questions. For months on end, they were subjected to the discipline of silence, so that when they were finally allowed to speak again they would do so only with circumspection and respect. They had learned inwardly through introspection and personal experience, that silence is an almost divine power..., the mother of all virtues.

Alas, if only we were still under the genial authority of Pythagoras, for the main trouble with



today's world is the lack of silence. Not only is contemporary society literally poisoned by noise, it is literally saturated with loud and empty words. It is a question of who can speak the loudest, and who will tell her story in the most trifling details. How correct was Søren Kierkegaard, the great Danish existentialist philosopher, when he wrote: "*The world in its present state is sick!*"

If I were a doctor and was asked for advice, I would answer: "Be silent!" Yes, true Rosicrucians can be recognised by their oral temperance, among of course many other virtues. They speak only sparingly, but the words they speak are rich in meaning. They practise the following advice from a Sufi teacher: "*If the word you are going to speak is not more beautiful than silence you are about to break, then do not say it!*"

The main trouble with today's world is the lack of silence.

When we apply for initiation, we must remain silent not only toward others but within ourselves too. Let us understand this well. It is in silence that the Cosmic communicates with us and in order for us to hear the advice of our Inner Divinity, to receive intuitive flashes, we must know how to silence the profane voice within. In his famous treatise entitled *Maqāmāt-e Toyūr* or "The Conference of Birds," the Persian mystic Farid ud-Din Attār expresses the same truth in a different way. "*As long as they walked, they talked; but when they arrived, all talk ceased.*"

There was neither guide nor traveller; even the road had ceased to exist."

One of the greatest French mystics, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, was deservedly named "the Unknown Silent One" by his disciples. More than anyone else, he exalted the virtue of silence. "*Great truths*" he wrote, "*are taught only through silence.*" Better yet, he made this remark which unfortunately applies so well to our times: "*Is there a greater proof of human weakness than the multiplicity of our words?*"

Silence truly is a test for one who through habit or tendency does not know how to observe it. Tradition relates that the ancients had made a god out of silence... a male in Greece, where it was named Harpocrates, and a female in Rome, where it was called Tacita... well named as it is derived from the Latin *tacere*, which means, "to be silent."

This demonstrates to what extent our ancestors worshiped this virtue.

As explained, the discipline of silence is a power. It allows us to maintain

within us a vital flux that useless words would waste away. Before you speak therefore, try to evaluate if what you intend to say is worthwhile, if it can do some good, and especially if it is not going to cause any harm. You will notice that the effort you exerted in repressing a useless word causes a reaction within, a struggle against temptation. Each victory will give you new power. That is why it is wise to follow the Sufi's advice, and if what you are about to say is not more beautiful than silence, then be silent. Great truths emerge from silence.

*Look
to this
Day*

Ancient Sanskrit Poem

*Look well to this day,
for it is life, the very best of life.*

*In its brief course lie all
the realities and truths of existence;
the joy of growth,
the splendour of action,
the glory of power.*

*Yesterday is but a memory
and tomorrow is only a vision.*

*But today, if well lived,
makes every yesterday
a memory of happiness,
and every tomorrow
a vision of hope.*

Look well therefore to this day.



CIUDAD PERDIDA

The Lost City

by Connie James, SRC

Only one thought
Only one Mother
Only one word
reaches upwards
Only one trail
leads heavenward
-- Kogi prayer --

The "Light of the Cosmic" was never the sole domain of one person or one civilisation. In the New World of the Americas, cut off from the rest of the world for so long, Light was present..., in abundance..., long before the white man appeared. In this article we read about a people for whom the "benefits" of Western civilisation passed them by, and who remained in touch with the same world of the spirits as their ancestors well into the 20th century. It is sadly only now that we can begin to appreciate the deep spirituality of those people of the New World whose civilisations were destroyed by the coming of the Europeans.

COLOMBIA, A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY in the north-west corner of the South American continent may be famous for other things nowadays. But in the past, before the European conquests, the country was home to several unique civilisations. This article is about the descendants of one of those civilisations known as the *Tairona*.

Colombia has one foot in the Pacific Ocean and the other in the Caribbean Sea. It is on the Caribbean coast and its hinterland that the Tairona flourished. The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, where

this story takes place, is an isolated mountain range, apart from the Andes chain, that runs through Colombia. Reaching an altitude of 5,700 metres above sea level just 42 kilometres from the Caribbean coast, the Sierra Nevada is the world's highest coastal range.

The Chibchas

The *Chibchas* were one of successive waves of migrating groups. The Mesoamericans (natives originally inhabiting Central America), who





The range of the Chibcha in the north-west of South America before European contact; other local tribes are also indicated.

arrived in approximately 1200 BCE, introduced the cultivation of corn, and were followed by a second wave in 500 BCE. Between 400 and 300 BCE, the Chibchas migrated from Nicaragua and Honduras and reached Colombia shortly before the *Arawaks* arrived from the south. Near the end of the first millennium CE, the warlike *Caribs* migrated from the Caribbean, supplanting the Chibchas in the lowlands and forcing them to move to higher elevations. By the 1500's, the Chibchas were divided into two principal groups: the *Muisca*, located in the plateaus of Cundinamarca and Boyacá, near the Colombian capital Bogotá, and the *Tairona*, who settled along the northern spur of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the present-day La Guajira Department or Province.

The origins of the famous legend of “El Dorado” started with the Chibcha Confederation. Their *Zipa* or king used to offer to the goddess Guatavita, gold and other treasures. To do so, the Zipa covered himself with gold. This tradition was well-known outside the Confederation as far as the Caribbean, and the Spaniards were attracted by the fascinating stories of a “city of gold,” a city that never existed outside the realm of legend.

The Chibcha-speaking *Tairona* chiefdoms formed a confederation of two groups..., one in the Caribbean lowlands and the other in the highlands of contemporary Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Tairona civilisation is most renowned for its distinctive gold work. The lowland Tairona population produced fish and salt, trading these for cotton cloth and blankets from those in the hinterland, where they specialised in the fruits of the hot jungle. Still higher up the mountains were those who produced cotton and

maize. All groups lived in numerous, well-organised towns connected by stone-paved roads in the present-day Cesar, Magdalena and La Guajira Departments of Colombia.

Ciudad Perdida

One of the best-known Tairona archaeological sites is *Ciudad Perdida* (Spanish for “Lost City”); it was a major place of habitation of about 13 hectares (32 acres). It was discovered in 1972 by local treasure hunters who found a series of stone steps rising up the mountainside and after ascending them discovered the abandoned city. It is now under the care of the *Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History*. Recent demographic studies suggest that it was inhabited by approximately 1,500 to 2,400 people that lived in at least 11,700 square meters (124,000 square feet) of roofed space in 184 round houses built on top of stone paved terraces. There are many other similar sites connected to it of varying size.

Known locally by the native tribes of the Arhuaco and Kogis as *Teyuna*, Ciudad Perdida is believed to have been founded about 800 CE; some 650 years earlier than *Machu Picchu* in Peru. It consists of a series of 169 terraces carved into the mountainside, a net of tiled roads and several small circular plazas. The entrance can only be accessed by climbing up some 1,200 stone steps through dense jungle.

Ciudad Perdida is located at the heart of a network of smaller villages and hamlets connected by stone-paved paths, which made up a very robust exchange network of specialised communities. The

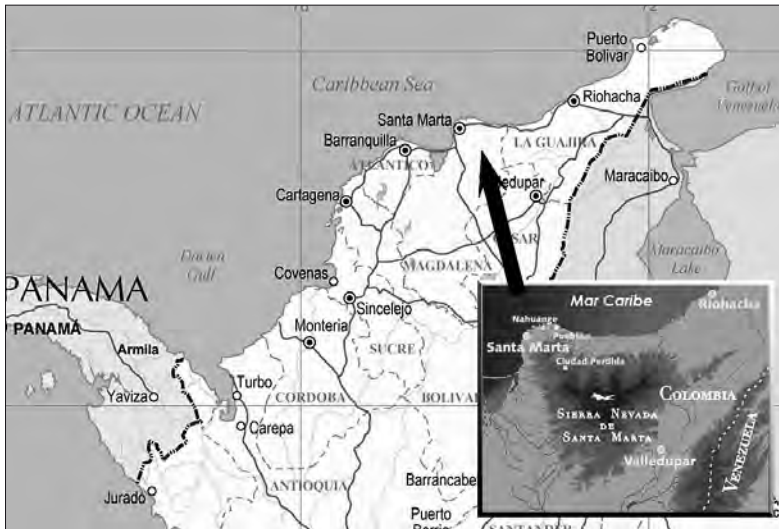
Ciudad Perdida is believed to have been founded earlier than Machu Picchu in Peru.

village of Chengue, for example, contains at least 100 terraces and was inhabited by about 800 to 1,000 people by 1400 CE. Apart from these stone built terrace platforms, the Tairona are known to have constructed house foundations, stairs, sewers, tombs and bridges. Ciudad Perdida was eventually abandoned in 1501, around the time of the Spanish conquest.

The Survivors of the Lost City

“You scratch another mosquito bite as you head deeper into the Colombian Jungle. Sweat pores down your face





Location of Ciudad Perdida.

saturating your stinking clothes. Your back aches from sleeping in a hammock while you take another stride in soaking wet shoes. For a moment you feel a sense of isolation as your mind drifts. You lose your concentration and slip once again in the thick mud. Blisters become painful as you wade through fast flowing rivers and over spectacular mountain passes.”

Alan Ereira, in his books *The Heart of the World* (1990) and *The Elder Brothers* (1992), documented his visits to the Kogi people of Colombia. The Kogi asked Ereira to make his films about them in order to warn the rest of the world (and particularly the West) that it needs to radically change its way of living, and its exploitative attitude to the natural world, if it is to avert a catastrophe.

On the 9th May 1992, a team from a French TV company reported on a group of people who spent three weeks with the Kogi. The Kogi are a deeply spiritual people, dressed from head-to-toe in white (one is reminded in the manner of the Essenes), who live some two thousand metres up the mountain and who claim to guard the equilibrium or balance of the planet.

Both the indigenous Arhuaco and the Kogi stated that they used to visit the site of Ciudad Perdida regularly before it was widely discovered, but kept quiet about it. They believe the Lost City was the heart of a network of villages inhabited by their forebears, the Tairona. Following its abandonment the native inhabitants emigrated to the high mesetas and were ignored by the Spanish conquerors. Their

life continued “as a large tranquil river,” which lasted for some 500 years.

The Arhuaco and Kogi now number about 20,000 people and live in isolated groups. The Lost City serves only as a place to come together to meditate and for rituals such as weddings and funerals.

The Arhuaco

The Arhuaco are a deeply spiritual people who follow their own unique philosophy that tends to globalise their surroundings. They believe in a “Creator” or “Great Father” named *Kakü Serankua*, who engendered the first gods and material living things, as well as other “fathers” like the sun and the snowy peaks and other “mothers” like the earth and the moon. They consider

The Lost City serves only as a place to come together to meditate and for rituals.

the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to be the heart of the world.

They believe that nature and society, as a unity, are ruled by a single sacred law: immutable, pre-existent, primitive and survivor to everyone and everything. The material world can exist or cease to



Ciudad Perdida is located at the heart of a network of smaller villages and hamlets connected by stone-paved paths, which made up a very robust exchange network of specialised communities in its heyday. Tourists who are fit enough to make a visit here are guarded by soldiers as a security measure against kidnappers (see inset).



exist but this law is believed to continue without being altered. This universal law called *Kunsamü* is represented by a boy, *Mamo Niankua*. The law of nature is an explanation to the origins of matter and its evolution, equilibrium, preservation and harmony,

The Kogi base their lifestyles on their belief in “The Great Mother,” whom they believe is the force behind nature.

that constitutes the fundamental objectives and the reason for being of the Mámo; the spiritual authority of the Arhuaco society.

Each Mámo is selected among different candidates; boys ranging eight to ten years old that will receive training for a minimum of nine years to fifteen years in average and are free to determine if they want to continue with it to further the training period. They specialise in certain knowledge areas such as philosophy, medicine and practical community or individual counsellors. Their influence is decisive in their society.

The Kogi

The Kogi claim to be descendants of the Tairona culture and after the destruction of the Tairona cities they escaped into the highlands, where they have been living in relative isolation for generations.

Their mythology teaches that they are “Elder Brothers” of humanity, living in the “Heart of the World” (the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta). Those not living in the Heart of the World (generally people from the West) are called “Younger Brothers.” Their mythology suggests that these Younger Brothers were sent away from the Heart of the World long ago. In response to infringements on their homeland by Westerners, a legend arose claiming the Younger Brothers had now found their way back, and were reaping their destruction on the land.

The Kogi base their lifestyles on their belief in “The Great Mother,” their creator figure, whom they believe is the force behind nature and who provides guidance. The Kogi understand the Earth to be a living being, and see the colonisers’ mining, building, pollution and other activities as damaging the Great Mother.

From birth the Kogi attune their priests, called Mámos, to the mystic world they know as Alúna. It is in this “spirit-realm” that the Mámos operate to help the Great Mother sustain the Earth. Through deep meditation and symbolic offerings, the Mámos believe they support the balance of harmony and creativity in the world. It is also in this realm that the essence of agriculture is nurtured: seeds are blessed in Alúna before being planted, to ensure they grow successfully.

The Kogi people live largely in peace amongst themselves and their environment. They use slash and burn farming methods; each family tends farms at varying altitudes of the Sierra, producing different crops to satisfy the range of their needs, they also raise cattle on the highlands. Their community is closely knit and centred on the Mámos, under whom the work of the community is directed.

Alúna

The Kogi have determinedly preserved their way of life because they truly believe that this is necessary for the survival of life on earth.

The Mámos’ work is performed at what they call “sacred sites.” These are the places where they have direct contact with the “spiritual parents,” who they describe as the mothers and fathers of all living things. These are aspects and personifications of Alúna. Now the most important sites are themselves being destroyed.



The Kogi are one of three closely related tribes living on the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in northern Colombia. All three are deeply spiritual, and believe they are the “Elder Brothers” who hold the world in balance through a complex system of payments to the earth. They refer to outsiders as the “Younger Brothers.”



The most vital of these places are the *eizuamas*, extremely delicate locations high in the Sierra Nevada which they believe most immediately connect with specific parts of the life-energy underlying nature. The manipulation of this communication involves engaging with precisely placed stones, tiny offerings and small precious beads. The *eizuamas* are out of bounds to visitors and are protected by hereditary lineages of Mámós whose lives are intimately bound up with the sites; the “spirit of the place” is expressed directly to them. Now the *eizuamas* too are being destroyed.

At the core of the Mámós’ understanding of the world is their belief that the mountain itself and its sacred sites are living and fully conscious, as are other key parts of the planet. They are under the conviction that if those living the western lifestyle cannot be brought to understand this, then dire consequences are inevitable as the life-energy of the world will be affected.

They believe that the material world is the physical trace of a thought-world sustained in “Alúna;” that we live in a world shaped in spirit. Every tree, stone or river has a spirit form. Alúna is not just a spirit-world but the thinking and active life-force. It embraces intelligence, soul and fertility. The material world is underpinned, shaped and given life in that realm. The role of the Mámós is to mediate between the physical world and “Alúna,” trying to ensure that dangerous and destructive forces are held in check.

Sayings of the Mámós

Ideally, future priests are chosen by divination and undergo their training from birth. Full education lasts



Three of the original tribes, *Arhuaco*, *Kogi* and *Wiwa* managed to preserve their ancestral traditions while the *Kankuamo* were assimilated by western influence. Sadly, the threats to their culture have not only remained but intensified with time.

18 years, split into two periods of nine years each, with puberty in between, at which point either the Moro, or his teacher, can decide to discontinue the process. It used to be the case that girls would be educated too, but within the last three or four generations, this seems to have lapsed, only some girls given a basic education “in the manner of the ancients.”

Future priests are chosen by divination and undergo their training from birth.

Throughout their training, emphasis is on moral education, self-control and purity. Only the pure, the morally untainted, can acquire the divine wisdom to control the course of the sun, or the change of the seasons and the times for planting and harvesting. Punishment for any lapse may have historically been sharp and painful; long periods spent kneeling on broken shells or frantically working a loom with the admonition “*I shall yet make you respect the cloth you are wearing.*” In society generally, overindulgence, physical aggression, disrespect, theft and cruelty to children and animals are all condemned, and a Mámó must be above all that. Here are some sayings of the Mámós which will resonate with Rosicrucian students:

- The world of thought is a world of communion with the gods, a world of knowledge,*
- Meditation increases our mental powers. It stimulates our perception of the sacred world. Through it we learn about the origin of the world and living beings. We understand why there are such things as plagues, epidemics and why there are different races.*
- To the Mother Goddess of the creation, the Sierra Nevada is the heart of the world. Here began the life that was to spread outwards all over the earth.*
- When the world was created, the first spirits incarnated in the Native Indians and we became the Elder Brothers, the caretakers of humanity. Then the Mother Goddess engendered the different civilisations, the newly born, and the immature people who are only concerned with material things. They were given the worst parts of the world to live in.*
- The Mother Goddess wants to re-establish universal harmony, and she has confided in us survivors the power to protect nature from the errors of the Younger Brothers.*



The Earth, our Mother Goddess is fertile and generous. We give it life.

Those who call themselves civilised are just ignorant. They don't know how to invoke the invisible forces to care for nature and mankind.

We have to give offerings to repair the damage done by the Younger Brothers; we do this by returning to our caves where we find that spirituality is more intense.

It takes two years to be initiated by a High Priest and you then stay in a cavern for nine years without seeing daylight. There you learn about the tradition and its rituals.

We learn to watch throughout the night and sleep during the day in order to become the master of my own spirit. So, we commune with the Mother Goddess and obtain the power which permits us to care for and protect Nature.

The mental energy that cures everything is not controlled by hand or with other instruments, only by thought alone.

Younger Brother, open your eyes. Because of the things you have done, the world is heading into shadow. You are profaning the fundamental laws of the universe.

The materialism of the Younger Brothers is leading the world to chaos. They have no respect for anything. By pillaging the riches of the earth, they incur the anger of the spirits and destroying Nature. The Mother Goddess has been violated. We are nearing a dawn of destruction and catastrophes during which the world runs the risk of disappearing.

Younger Brothers, Our spirit lives in communion with the natural order of things. If you persist in your errors, you will disappear. But we, the survivors, we are immortal.

Polarity

In Kogi cosmology, there are seven points of reference (North, South, East, West, Zenith, Nadir and Centre) and within these points is encompassed the cosmic egg created by the Great Mother, our world being the fifth, or centre, of nine horizontal belts which constitute it. The seven points are associated with innumerable mythical beings, animals, plants, minerals, colours, winds and many highly abstract concepts.

The four cardinal points are under the control of four mythical culture heroes who are also the ancestors of the four primary segments of Kogi society

and are associated with certain pairs of animals that exemplify the basic marriage rules. Thus the rules prescribe that a man from the Puma *patriline* will marry a woman from the Deer *matriline* and so on; this teaming of natural opposites being another example of how balance is maintained in the society. Dualities, opposed yet complementary, are recognised everywhere; for example the village which is divided by an invisible line, known to all, into two sections, or another being the sun dividing the sky into a right and a left side.

In every village there is a larger structure known as the *nuhue* or "world house". Its architecture is different to other huts being larger and having two entrances, each opposite to the other. This too is divided into two parts by the line running between the two entrances, each with its own central post and each designated either male or female.

Only men can enter the *nuhue*. It is here that the business of the village is discussed and confession takes place. The architecture of the *nuhue* is highly symbolic and represents, in fact, the nine worlds which make up the cosmos

The story of the Kogi and Arhuaco reminds us that we are an integral part of the universe, not people who stand outside and watch. Everything we do affects everything and everyone else. They remind us that we are the guardians of this world; we are not here to exploit it for our own selfish ends. All are a part of the greater Cosmic whole.

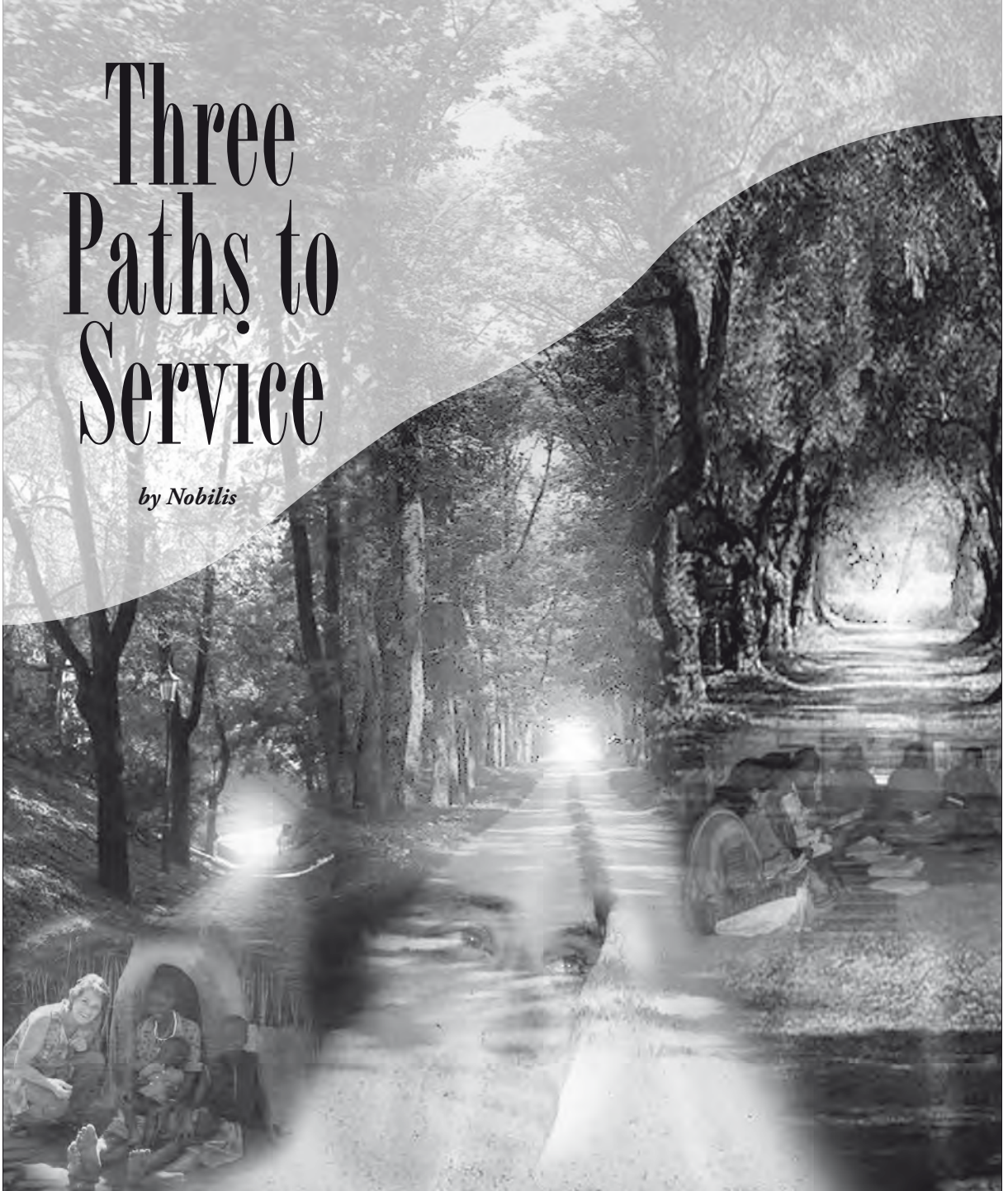


A dated photo of a group of Mámos.



Three Paths to Service

by *Nobilis*



THE CONCEPT OF “SERVICE” IS at the heart of the mystic’s life and we might say there are three factors that determine the type and quality of that service in the mundane world.

Connectivity

First, humans have a unique and innate *connectivity* to what Rosicrucians refer to as “the Cosmic” or the “divine scheme of things.” When the idea of service

asserts itself, the aspiring mystic seeks avenues of doing good, thereby outwardly demonstrating an altruistic attitude, giving money to charities and physically supporting, through volunteer work, various schemes for the less fortunate in society. This is commendable work and there is merit to that in terms of karmic effect. There is also the fledgling connection with the mental idea of what service is.

Later it becomes increasingly apparent that the service being performed is not something that is meaningful in any higher sense. There is a perception



that these outward actions are not just self serving but only affect the fate of human beings temporarily, in this one lifetime, and is relatively meaningless in terms of bringing others toward a better understanding of a divine Reality in which homelessness does not exist.

During this cleansing and attunement with the Cosmic the whole act of service shifts to a higher level.

So “a higher purpose” is looked for that this desire to serve might be anchored to. It is eventually realised that there needs to be an inner connection to the seeker’s concept of Truth, and to be guided by it. We might deem this contact to be a calling from what Rosicrucians know as the “Master Within.” There is then a consequent response to the divine Plan, and service is being performed at a higher level. In this way we might say there is a connection with the “Heart,” the higher emotion, so that inner divine inspiration may follow.

Purgation

Secondly, there is a need for a purgation of what we might term our personality nature. The aspiring mystic is taught to be “equipped for service,” that is, to purify the emotions, build up the mind with knowledge, obtain virtues, and otherwise become a fit disciple capable of serving humanity. Maintenance of one’s personality nature is by control of the ego and this is achieved through constant attention, certainly in the early stages, and the adoption of a disciplined lifestyle as taught in the Rosicrucian Order.

During this cleansing, attunement with the Cosmic becomes more and more a part of life, and the whole act of service shifts to a higher level. The connection to the Master Within allows the energies of the Heart to be expressed. The mystic becomes guided by the Master Within through the ways of the Heart, and uses the personality instrument as needed to inspire, lift and aid. This can only be achieved through time but is certainly a fine and necessary quality that equips one for service in the mundane world.

Collective Service

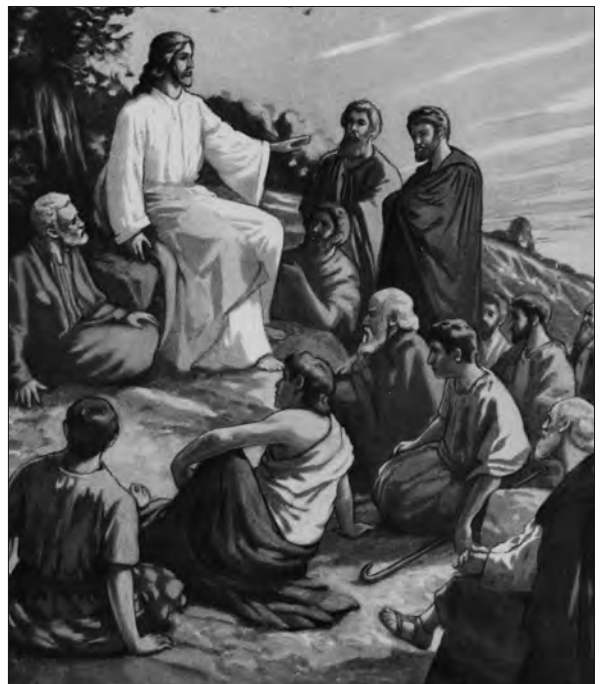
The third factor is *collective service*. As the desire to serve develops, there is a growing desire to come together with people of like mind and similar aspirations. This is reflected in the many religious

and mystical organisations that have emerged over the millennia. Each formed its own unique methods of serving humanity, with certain individuals being recognised as truly representative of their organisation through the service they give to humanity. While these

individuals are few and far between, they are examples from which the aspiring modern mystic will take lessons. This is the value of group work in its influencing aspect between its members.

Group work means collective service, and in this higher type of service, mystics are not doing things of themselves, based on the capacity of their own personality. They are acting as components of a collective, parts of a group; and the divine Cosmic influence moves each of them individually in such a way that the action of the whole group produces one united service effect. We might make the analogy of the group being like a hand and the fingers representing the individuals of which it is composed. A lone mystic cannot direct the hand, but collectively there is an accomplishment that none on their own could either see or achieve.

When Jesus, a wonderful example of service, said “Where two or more are gathered in my name...” he sounded the call to group work, and to united, collaborative action. What is certain is that the type of service that one is inwardly called to do is ultimately determined on how one inwardly stands in relationship to God.



Jacob Boehme

The Seer and the Vision



by Brian Aubrey

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY mystic philosopher Jacob Boehme is one of the most extraordinary figures in the history of ideas. Born in 1575 in a village near Görlitz, Germany, Boehme was by trade a shoemaker. Although he received only elementary schooling, and despite humble origins, Boehme has exercised an enormous influence on some of the most profound thinkers of the modern period. The German

philosopher Schelling for example, called Boehme “a miraculous phenomenon in the history of mankind,” and the English poet Coleridge declared him to be a “stupendous human being.”

Boehme’s exploration of the nature of existence, his astonishing insight into the laws which govern the universe, is indeed compelling. Nevertheless, he remains an obscure figure. Few have the patience or time to wade through his dense and difficult



German prose in order to grasp the splendour of his vision. But the effort, once made, is rewarding. Much of Boehme's knowledge came in a series of remarkable moments of illumination, which at the time surprised him as much as they later astonished his readers. Boehme wrote of these experiences, the first of which came in 1600 at 25 years of age, that he had learned more in a quarter of an hour than if he had studied for many years at a university.

It was from these experiences that he elaborated, in a series of lengthy volumes, his description of "eternal nature," the term he gave to what he thought was the very texture of existence itself in its most fundamental, unified and powerful state. He described it as being made up of the dynamic conflict between seven fundamental properties from which all existence takes its origin. He conceived these properties in terms of the opposites of fire and light, wrath and love, and declared that each property was necessary for the existence of the others, because he was convinced that nothing in the universe could know itself except through dynamic interaction with its own opposite.

A Dynamic State of Creative Tension

Everywhere about him Boehme saw this clash of opposites, of light and darkness, driving the universe on. But in eternal nature he saw the strife raised to a higher plane in which all opposing energies were held in a dynamic state of creative tension or equilibrium. He called it a "triumphing joyfulness", the universal mind rejoicing in itself in a *coincidentia oppositorum* of breathtaking power and majesty.

Everywhere about him Boehme saw this clash of opposites, of light and darkness.

This inspired vision of a dynamic harmony of fire and light at the very heart of existence is one of Boehme's most profound contributions to the history of ideas. It dominated his mind and he wrote of it again and again, at length and with compelling force. He was absolutely certain that he had penetrated to the creative centre of life itself. Christian mysticism had never seen anything like it before, although there is no doubt that Boehme was influenced by the Sephirothic tree of the Kabala.



An anonymous and more true to life portrait of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) together with a photo of his house in Görlitz, where he lived from 1590 to 1610.

One of Boehme's major contributions was to take the "dark" energies in creation and rehabilitate them. They became the burning fire from which the light of life emerges and without which there would be no existence. In eternal nature, these dark energies are not evil. In Boehme's universe nothing in itself is evil; everything takes its character from the position it occupies in relation to everything else. He therefore had no need for a Christian dualism. Nothing was to be excluded but simply transformed, realigned, put back into harmony; he sought to unify existence without destroying its essential polarity. It was a brilliant achievement.

Boehme was a practical man, interested in metaphysical knowledge only as a way of waking humanity to an understanding of its true status as a "child of eternity." He thought that eternal nature was of vital importance in this respect, because it made up the superior part of the human constitution. Before the biblical fall of Adam, he says, the primeval first man had known his origins, and his life had embodied the bliss of eternal nature.

He had enjoyed perfect health and happiness and would have continued to do so had his vision not become so clouded by ignorance. Sickness and death arose only when he chose to focus his mind on the fragmentary nature of the material world, rather than the wholeness of eternity. This upset the balance of the "properties" in his own constitution. His fall was a consequence of this loss of internal equilibrium and it resulted in a narrowing of his perceptual abilities.



Microcosm and Macrocosm

Yet the first man of Creation, and ancestor of all human life, retained the ability to become once more the master of his circumstances. His knowledge, passed on to us, now lies dormant, not lost. This can be further understood by looking at Boehme's distinctive treatment of the ancient idea, strongly emphasised in Hermeticism, of the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm. As above, so below.

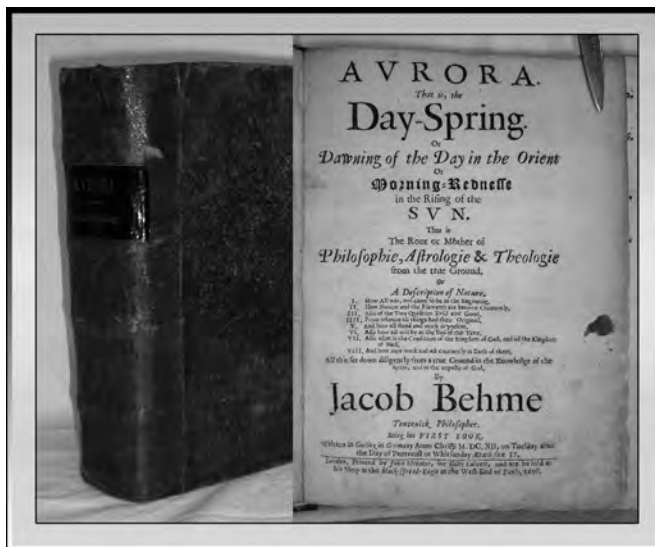
Although a commonplace of Renaissance thought, Boehme gives the statement the vibrant life and immediate significance of a philosopher possessing deep intuitive insight into the laws of nature. It rests first on what Boehme calls the "signature," meaning that in the outpouring of creative energy which gives rise to the material world, eternal nature "signs" itself in every aspect and detail of creation. To understand the "signature" of an object is to penetrate its essential qualities, to see it as a manifestation of its source in eternal nature. To connect all the signatures in one enlightened perception is to see everything taking its place in an ordered pattern of influences and relationships which make up the subtle texture of creation.

Related to this is Boehme's Hermetic idea that "all is in all;" every part of creation contains the totality. It is this vision which enables him to see, like

Boehme wrote that eternal nature "signs" itself in every aspect and detail of creation.

the English poet Blake, "a world in a grain of sand." For Boehme, it is an especially important concept, for all people contain the universe within themselves. The human mind always remains linked to its transcendent source in which the totality of knowledge is contained. By knowing ourselves, we can know everything in the universe, and Boehme means this quite literally. He envisages a mode of knowing through *direct cognition*, something he calls *Verstand* (literally, understanding). *Verstand* grasps the totality of existence and can intuit both the fundamental laws and specific details which structure the physical world. This is in contrast to *Vernunft* (reason) which sees only in part and cannot penetrate the deeper layers of creation.

Such, in brief, is a small part of the contribution of the shoemaker of Gorlitz to human enlightenment. Boehme was a deep thinker and a majestic seer. It was



Die Morgenröte im Aufgang, which we know today as Aurora, a title that reflects his vision of a dynamic harmony of fire and light at the very heart of existence, was his first book dating from 1612. Although ultimately it remained unfinished it is a work that uniquely introduces many of his ideas, and some of his explanations about nature. Pictured here is the 1st English edition printed in 1656.

not always easy for him though and he often suffered abuse from the defenders of religious orthodoxy; but he bore it patiently always. When he was forced to leave town for example, he said quietly, "Seeing it cannot be otherwise, I am content." Sometimes he gave a more spirited response. When one of his opponents sneered, "What ails the fool, when will he be done with his dreaming?" Boehme replied defiantly, "Well, well, we shall see what kind of a dream this turns out to be!" He guessed that his writings would fall into neglect after his death but said that they would blossom again in "the time of the lily," the lily being his frequent symbol of spiritual purity.

Impact of Boehme's Philosophy Today

Today, Jacob Boehme's time may finally have arrived, for there are so many signs about that we are moving away from what the Irish poet Yeats described as the "three provincial centuries" of scientific rationalism, towards a rediscovery of a holistic philosophy emphasising the infinite potential of human consciousness. Boehme is an inspiring guide and model for this transition.

Perhaps the trend can most clearly be seen in physics, in which previously absolute distinctions between subject and object, knower and known, have broken down, and human consciousness is understood to be intimately involved in shaping the way we see



the world. Particularly interesting is the inexorable drive towards the fulfilment of Einstein's dream of a unified field theory. The discovery of a state called supersymmetry, in which opposing elements in creation such as force and matter fields coexist in a "superfield" of unimaginable energy and dynamism, represents a major step forward in this quest.

Some physicists suggest that this unified superfield is the field of human consciousness itself, in its most simple and powerful state, which would make it an extraordinary parallel to Boehme's description of the coexistence of all opposites in "eternal nature." Both perspectives give to human consciousness an awe-

inspiring creative power. Boehme insists that we create our own reality according to our impulses, thoughts and desires. And what we have power to create, we have power to change. Perhaps the next evolutionary step for humanity is to shift the focus of human consciousness from "temporal nature," made up as it is of irreconcilable contradictions and limitations, to the perfection of "eternal nature," in which the world is experienced in its full value as a myriad of "signatures," a true "triumphing joyfulness." Such a leap, in which millions throughout the world would attain their full stature and power, would represent the fulfilment of Boehme's inspired vision.



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A selection of diagrams and emblems produced by Boehme to illustrate his ideas on the divine aspect of existence and its relationship to the soul and man.





HEREAS LIFE IS NOT ALWAYS A PERFUMED rose garden, one can't help but notice how for some, it almost could be. For them, everything seems to flow so harmoniously, and whilst not necessarily materially wealthy, they radiate an inner wealth of happiness and peace which is the envy of all. So how do they do it?

Well, one thing they all seem to have in common is that they long ago dared to take charge of their destiny! Examining *needs* rather than *wants*, and true *values* rather than *passing fads*, such people realised that more than anything else, what they needed to learn was to rely upon their *own insights* rather than those of others, come to their *own conclusions* rather than accept the conclusions of others, and above all, to take their *own decisions* in life and for better or worse, *live with the consequences of their own actions*.

The *Rosicrucian Order* assists people to find within themselves their own, personal "*higher wisdom*," something which exists as a potential in all human beings. Developing this inner understanding can lead to what sages and avatars of all ages have referred to simply as "*Illumination*," a pure state of joy, perfection and achievement beyond our fondest hopes.

Gaining this knowledge and experience is not merely an academic exercise, it is a *series of practical steps* needed in order to gain first proficiency and eventually mastery over our daily thoughts and actions. Instruction in the steps necessary to reach these goals is what the *Rosicrucian Order* has to offer. Its approach to inner development has brought happiness, peace and success into the affairs of thousands of people in the past and you too can benefit from it if you wish.

To find out more about the *Rosicrucian Order* and its unique system of inner development, write to the address below, requesting a *free* copy of the introductory booklet entitled "*The Mastery of Life*." Find out..., it could be the valuable turning point in your life.

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