

— ROSICRUCIAN —  
BEACON



December 2015, Vol 25, No. 1





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### Cover spread

Medieval Iberian flowering  
of culture, science and religion.





# MAIMONIDES

## A Guide for the Perplexed

by Mary Jones



### *The Oath of Maimonides*

*Eternal providence has appointed me to watch  
over the life and health of your creatures.  
May the love for my art actuate me at all times.*

*May neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory  
or for a great reputation engage my mind;  
for the enemies of truth and philanthropy  
could easily deceive me and make me forgetful  
of my lofty aim of doing good to your children.*

*May I never see in the patient anything  
but a fellow creature in pain.*

*Grant me the strength, time and opportunity always  
to correct what I have acquired, always to  
extend its domain; for knowledge is immense  
and the spirit of man can extend indefinitely  
to enrich itself daily with new requirements.*

**D**URING THE rule of the Berber Almoravid dynasty, Moses Maimonides, known to his contemporaries and the Muslim world as Musa ibn Maymun, was born on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1138, the eve of the Passover holiday, in Córdoba in Andalusia, southern Spain. He was the son of the outstanding scholar Rabbi Maimon ibn Yusuf, a judge of the rabbinical court of Córdoba. His family home, a book-filled Moorish-style house, stood near the Guadalquivir river.

At this time there were few material differences between Muslim, Christian and Jewish lives; they all spoke

Arabic and lived peacefully together. Jews and Christians both wrote Arabic poetry, composed and played Arabic music and served, sometimes in high positions, in the government. It was only later, under the Almohad dynasty, that the Jews were corralled into the area of Córdoba still called the Judería.

His first playmate, when he was scarcely four years old was called Ali. At an early age therefore, he learned the rudiments of the Arabic language which became his native tongue and which was renowned throughout the Western world as the language of science and culture, with Córdoba as a pivotal seat of learning.





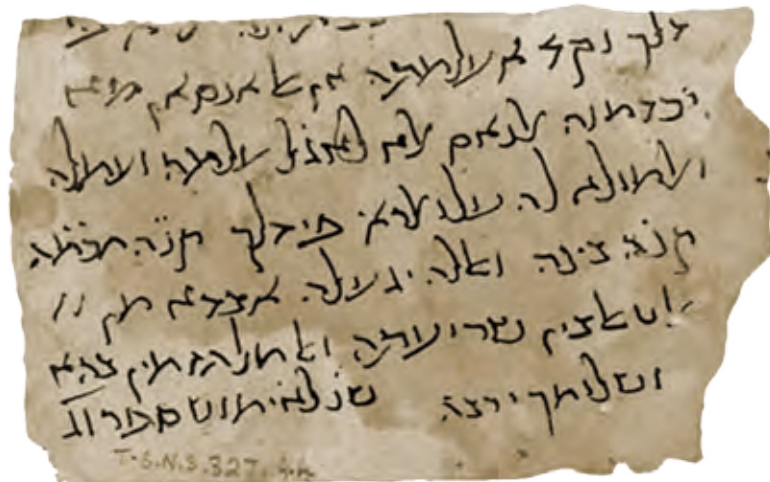


The "Guide for the Perplexed" was completed in 1190 and was originally written in Arabic. This manuscript is from a Hebrew translation made by Samuel Ibn Tibbon (died c.1230). It was produced in Spain around 1350. The text is written in a cursive Spanish hand and adorned with some two hundred illuminations, displaying mostly floral and vegetal designs in vibrant colours. (British Library: Collections).

The years passed peacefully until Maimonides was of age to celebrate his Bar-Mitzva. This was a joyous and happy time for him, though all too quickly his life changed due to the illness of his mother Rebecca. She became increasingly feeble in spite of the great care taken by Ali's uncle, Abbas, the Mufti of Córdoba. Abbas prepared the medicinal plants for Rebecca although it was Maimonides who brought and administered the medicine to her. Her illness proved too strong however, and

A rare fragment of a short, previously unknown message by Maimonides. Measuring 11.7 x 7.3 cms, the text is written on paper in semi-cursive Judaeo-Arabic. The reverse of the leaf contains some honorific titles, presumably intended for the recipient (Solomon ben Yefet), and five words in Arabic that are difficult to decipher. It reads: "...in this; and I have already indicated that a man is respected by people only for his knowledge and his deeds, and the Lord has said: 'Get wisdom, get understanding' [Proverbs 4:5]. May God make him [i.e., you] ever one of the seekers of the law and those who adhere to it [see Psalms 119:31 and 44], as it is said: 'May this book never cease to be, etc.' [Joshua 1:8]. May your well-being increase."

(Translated by Avihai Shitvli of the T-S Genizah Research Unit at [www.lib.com.ac.uk/](http://www.lib.com.ac.uk/) Taylor-Schechter/GF/44/).



she passed away without much suffering.

It was this sad event that persuaded Moses to become a doctor, and brought to the fore in his mind one transcendent question: What becomes of the soul? This formed the basis of his mystical quest and became a driving force for the rest of his life.

## Advent of the Almohads

*If you're finding the good at fault,  
you're in the dark all alone.  
If you can't see the kindness of others,  
there isn't much hope for your own.*

There was another event that troubled the Jewish community at this time and that was the threat of invasion by the Almohads. The Almohads (*al-Muwahhidun* or Unitarians, believers in the unity of God) were another Berber dynasty from North Africa who had conquered Morocco and al-Andalus by 1150.

Their founder Ibn Tumart taught that God was pure spirit, absolute and one. He proposed the complete separation of the sexes, the banning of music and musical instruments and the abandonment of luxury. The guardians of his doctrines were known as the *Talaba*, interestingly reflecting the tragic past of Afghanistan and its fundamentalist Taliban. The Almohads made Seville their regional capital in Spain, while Marrakech remained their capital and centre of power.

With them however came a strict regime of religious reformation. Maimonides' father Rabbi Maimon contacted the Jewish community in Fez, Morocco, considering it an intellectual haven and a possible place of exile. He needed to send a message, and it was Kadir, the son of Abbas, who was just about to depart for Fez, who carried it for him.



Years passed during which Maimonides studied hard at medicine. He was an avid reader. His medical writings show a profound knowledge of the ancient Greek authors in Arabic translation as well as Islamic medical works. But he also had time to reflect on esotericism and spirituality, the Talmud and the Torah being the two pillars on which he based his researches.

On the day of his majority, he suddenly left the family home and went to Samuel, the rabbi who had officiated at his Bar-Mitzva. He stayed in a small house near his mentor while pursuing his medical studies in collaboration with the local sufis. After two years he returned to his family in Córdoba.

Kadir returned from his long journey with the awaited response. The information confirmed their worst fears: the Almohads, having taken Fez, were already at Gibraltar from where they intended to conquer northwards into the Iberian Peninsula. Rabbi Mainmon therefore took the decision to leave Córdoba with his family; but when? Samuel ibn Shoshan, who had written the reply from Fez, estimated that it would take the Almohads two or three years to arrive at Córdoba. During the following

Instead of fleeing to the Christian north, as many Jews did, they went south into the heart of Almohad territory. The first stage took them from Córdoba to Granada, where Maimonides ran into the sufi, al-Mansur, a celebrated and much respected doctor. A letter from Abbas brought them acceptance by al-Mansur, who suggested they take lodgings in a house near his own, as the transmission of his alchemical knowledge would take several weeks.

During this time, David used his natural talents for business to negotiate help for the onward journey. When they arrived at Almería, not yet occupied by the Almohads, their first job was to find a ship that would take them across to Morocco. Thanks to the important commercial traffic

with Tangier, they were able to journey on quickly. The decision to voyage into the heart of Almohad darkness was taken because, for educated Andalusians, the Islamic world was that of civilisation and light; it was the culture in which you could read Aristotle and it was the home territory of the language of civilised Jews of recent memory.

The journey from Tangier to the great city and intellectual centre of Fez lasted about ten days (1160). The warmth of the reception in Fez by Judah ibn Shoshan and his friends assuaged the rigours of the journey and ushered in a happier time, albeit one in which they outwardly had to pretend to be Muslims. He introduced Maimonides to the Jewish and Muslim scholars with whom he would continue his education. Very quickly, Maimonides made contact with Ali ibn Hajj who had been recommended by his friend Abbas in Córdoba. Maimonides forced himself into a tough regime of study; of medicine under Ali, as well as a profound study of the Talmud, and his own afternoon consultations. His first works: the *Book on Logic* and the *Treatise on the Jewish Calendar* were written here. He also began his *Kitab as-Siraj* or *Commentary on the Mishnah*.

Some weeks later, Kadir decided to visit his father in Córdoba. It was a dangerous journey and they fervently hoped they would see each other again. A year later, Rabbi Maimon remarried, and Maimonides became the godfather to the child born of this union.

One freezing morning in December, some Almohad troops came to look for Maimonides to treat their prince, Omar, who was bedridden near Mèknes. Maimonides' was already widely known as a great doctor and healer. Having no option but to go, Maimonides went to the prince and



The tomb of Maimonides in Tiberias, Israel.

### Maimonides was introduced to Jewish and Muslim scholars in the city of Fez.

year, Maimonides continued to work with Abbas and the sufis. His studies made him fluent in both Arabic and Hebrew. He participated in secret meetings with a sufi, during which they studied and commented on the philosophy of Aristotle.

### From Córdoba to Fez

*Soul opens inside you on beauty,  
then tells you to seek in the  
world and ignore its flaws.*

The family left Córdoba in April 1148, a time of year when nature is truly at its best, making it that much more difficult to leave. It was Kadir, together with his servant Rashid who acted as guides. Sarah and Leah, two servant girls who were attracted to Maimonides and his brother David also went along. Abbas looked after all the arrangements and procured some tents, ten donkeys and five horses for them. On the eve of the departure, Maimonides father offered his house to Abbas, sure that one day it would be passed on to Kadir.



looked after him for five weeks. Omar regained his health and in order to thank his doctor, offered him a large sum of money. Maimonides refused, preferring to ask Omar to protect his family and all the Jews of Fez. Omar agreed to the former request, but declined the latter. The new Caliph Abu Yakub Yusuf wanted to show that he was a “propagator of the faith.” He had Judah ibn Shoshan, leader of the Jews of Fez, executed on charges of reverting to Judaism after converting to Islam. It was a dangerous time for Maimonides and his family, when they were suspected of apostatising from Islam.

After this, in 1165, Maimonides and his family decided to leave Morocco and headed for Palestine. Thanks to a pass that Omar sent to Maimonides, they were able to leave Fez and made their way to Ceuta, further along the Mediterranean coast where they rested for a while. It was here in Ceuta that Maimonides met one of his correspondents, the young scholar and physician Joseph ibn Aknin, who was to become his spiritual son.

On 18<sup>th</sup> April, the family left on a fast ship calling at Syracuse in Sicily. David, who was always on the lookout for business opportunities, went into the town to make contact with the locals. In a tavern, he met some Christians who were looking for a good doctor to heal their king. David had the king taken to the ship where Maimonides looked after and healed him. Following this, Maimonides received a document dictated to a scribe, the text of which stated: “*By the grace of God, in the year 1165, the 25<sup>th</sup> day of April, I deliver to Moses ben Maimon and his party a pass to Jerusalem. The Very Christian Richard the Lionheart orders that everyone aids them on their journey and by any means.*” Whether this story is true or not is debatable, but legend has it that in later years Richard the Lionheart did ask Maimonides to become his own personal physician, but Maimonides declined the offer.

## Egypt

*Man's wisdom is in what he writes,  
good sense at the end of his pen.  
And using his pen he can climb to the height  
of the sceptre in the hand of his king.*

Some days later, the ship continued its journey and on 16<sup>th</sup> May, arrived at the port of Acre in Palestine. From there they quickly reached Jerusalem, which at that time was in the hands of the Crusaders. Thanks to their pass, they were able to spend a few days in the city and also visit the Wailing Wall.

It was impossible to stay there indefinitely, and they did not want to return to Acre. So they decided to

travel to Egypt, where there was an important Jewish community. They journeyed by ship to Alexandria in 1166 and were received at an enthusiastic reception. Under the Fatimids, Egypt enjoyed an economic prosperity and cultural vitality which even eclipsed that of contemporary Baghdad. During the voyage to Alexandria, Moses prepared the outlines of his magnum opus *Dalalat al-hairin* or *The Guide for the Perplexed* which was written in Arabic. It was in Alexandria too that Maimonides finished and published his *Commentary on the Mishnah*.

After their arrival David, with his customary celerity, found them all a comfortable house where they thought they were destined to remain. But once again sadness overtook them. Maimonides' wife died in childbirth, giving birth to a daughter called Rebecca in memory of the mother of Moses and David. But the latest news from Morocco and Spain did not make the situation any better, for the number of forced conversions to Islam had dramatically risen. Joseph ibn Aknin had been forced to convert to Islam on pain of death. However, this sad news

**The Sultan named Maimonides his chief physician and asked him and his family to move to Fustat, close to the royal court.**

only made Moses work all the harder. His fame as a doctor grew until it reached the ears of Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt (1171-1193) via his Vizier al-Fadil who was cured by Maimonides.

After the last Shi'ite Fatimid Imam-Caliph al-Adid died, Saladin, the Kurdish vizier and general, abolished the Fatimid caliphate and became Sultan under the aegis of the Sunni Caliph in Baghdad. He called on Maimonides to come and treat his favourite Yasmina. The diagnosis came quickly; Yasmina was asthmatic, an illness Maimonides knew well and also knew how to treat. The medication worked better than was hoped and a few months later Yasmina became pregnant. The Sultan named Maimonides his chief physician and asked him and his family to move to Fustat, a suburb of Cairo close to the royal court. In 1171, Maimonides was also named *ra'is al-yahud* (Arabic) or *Nagid* (Hebrew) i.e. national administrator of the Jewish community in Egypt.

A happy period now began in Maimonides' life. Kadir, his friend from Córdoba, came over to join them. He brought with him a manuscript telling of the latest discoveries of his father Abbas in alchemy and medicine. Maimonides, by now in his forties, married Rachel, the daughter of the sultan's librarian. From this union came a son whom they named Abraham. It was at this time that Moses edited his works *Commentary on the Mishnah* and







*A page from a medieval edition of the Sefer Mada (The Book of Knowledge) forming part of his religious law work, the Mishnah Torah. It is pictured here with a modern edition.*

*The Guide for the Perplexed.* But the period of happiness came to an end when Maimonides' brother David died at sea on the way to India in 1174. A few years later Maimonides was pleasantly surprised by the arrival of Joseph ibn Akin in Fustat. In the more tolerant land of Egypt, he was able to practise his own religion.

## Philosopher and Mystic

Your manuscript shines like inlays of emerald, its margins arranged like a robe well-embroidered; a feast for the eyes like a tree's first figs, its scent like myrrh on the perfumed bride.

In his magnum opus, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, an enduringly great book, Maimonides tries to reconcile those who are philosophically minded like the dedicatee of the book, Joseph ibn Akin, with those who wish to remain religious Jews. The work comprises three books.

In the first he begins with an analysis of the descriptions of God in the Hebrew Bible, showing how they are to be taken allegorically rather than literally, e.g. God's Hand, God's Eye, etc. He then argues that God cannot be accurately described using language. He reasons against the various Islamic contentions about the nature of God by their theological schools and then includes several arguments for the existence of God.

In the second book, he considers the creation of the world and Aristotle's demonstration that matter is eternal. He then goes on to analyse the nature of prophecy and the need for ethical perfection by a prophet.

In the third and final book he begins with a

philosophical analysis of the most mystical section of the Bible: the description of the heavenly chariot at the beginning of the book of Ezekiel. He treats this entire section as an allegorical representation of Aristotle's thinking in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. He then moves on to the consideration of the problem of evil, which comes from the material nature of the world, and then to the nature of Divine Providence and an analysis of the book of Job. He then goes on to consider the 613 commandments from the Torah of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which regulate the social and religious life of the Jews. The book concludes with an analysis of the varying forms of human perfection.

The book may not be what it seems, for it is full of inconsistencies. But this may have been deliberate, in order to disguise the fact that Maimonides' views were heretical and that the reader was required to read between the lines to understand the full meaning. Indeed, the title of the work may in some sense reflect these obscurities. It is true that the Vizier al-Fadil confirmed that Maimonides had never actually converted to Islam when the Almohads were forcing it on Jews and Christians alike, so there was no danger of him being killed for apostasy.

A number of Kabbalists over the centuries have seen the *Guide for the Perplexed* as a work of mysticism. They argue that even given the introduction and all the

**His *Guide for the Perplexed* spread throughout the Mediterranean world and received an enthusiastic reception.**

contradictions contained in the book, Maimonides could not have been ignorant of the Kabbala, being so well informed about all other areas of Judaism. And they point to the fact that his son and grandson both wrote mystical books. One of the greatest medieval Kabbalists Abraham Abulafia even talks about the 36 kabbalistic concepts enunciated within its pages.

## Jihad

*I quartered the troops for the night in a fortress  
which soldiers destroyed long ago.  
And they fell asleep at its walls and foundations  
while beneath us its masters slept on.*





During this time Saladin was building a powerful army. In 1187 he attacked the Crusaders, using as a pretext the violation of a treaty concluded the previous year with Renaud de Châtillon, the Prince of Antioch. The decisive Battle of Hattin in early July 1187 near Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee, was the beginning of the end for the Crusader states in the Middle East.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October of the same year, Jerusalem fell to Saladin's forces. Unlike the Crusaders' bloodbath of all Muslims and Jews following their conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, Saladin, being magnanimous by nature, spared the lives of the vanquished. He decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and freely practise their religion as "People of the Book."

A few years later, Saladin was looking for a new way of firing up the popular imagination. He proposed to conquer Iraq, where he had been born, and the neighbouring regions. But his vizier and Maimonides proposed something different. Now that he had accomplished the Jihad of the first degree by the reconquest of Jerusalem, why not go for the Jihad of the second degree; that of the soul and spiritual elevation? They suggested he organise a peaceful religious crusade, this time to the three holy cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. If he was to create an immense popular movement, it would have the added advantage of making people forget about their everyday cares. After going on the journey, they would all be able to add the name *Hajj* to their own name, usually only those who had made the required one journey to Mecca in their life could do this.

By now, Saladin was Sultan of Egypt and Syria and he instructed his vizier, al-Fadil, to proclaim that the sultan was going on this pilgrimage, and that as many of his subjects as possible were to join him. While Saladin was away, Maimonides used the time to complete *The Guide for the Perplexed*.

By the time Saladin returned, the book was finished. Written in Arabic, it soon spread throughout the Mediterranean world and received an enthusiastic reception. Samuel ibn Tibbon, one of the most erudite rabbis of Syria wrote to Maimonides praising him and asking to translate his book into Hebrew. Maimonides agreed and asked him to bring his translation to Cairo



*The many kingdoms of medieval Spain during the period 1037 to 1270.*

first before he published it.

Saladin, now approaching his 60<sup>th</sup> year, finally contracted malaria. This time, Maimonides had no cure, and unable to prevent it, Saladin died on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1193 at Damascus in Syria with Maimonides' friend and his faithful Vizier al-Fadil at his bedside. It is said that when the imam, reciting from the Koran, reached the words, "there is no God but God and in him do I put my trust," Saladin smiled; upon which his face cleared and he surrendered his soul to god. Saladin's chosen successor as sultan was his son al-Afdal, who governed Syria from Damascus for his father. He also enjoyed the full confidence of the Vizier al-Fadil, while another son al-Aziz governed Egypt, and yet another son az-Zahir governed Aleppo.

## Death of Maimonides

Due to ill health, Maimonides never read the translation of his book into Hebrew, and he passed away on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1204. The Sultan al-Afdal ordered three days of mourning for all the people, Muslims, Jews and Christians of Egypt and Syria and decreed that Maimonides, now revered as the "second Moses," should be interred in the Holy Land.

Maimonides had been supremely educated and was heir to the long tradition of Andalusian intellectual freedom. Having lived all his life in the *Dar al-Islam*, the Muslim world, he was deeply attached sentimentally to al-Andalus and died in exile far from his home, tinged with bitterness.





*The Mishnah Torah (British Library: Collections).*

Sea of Galilee, for this was the birthplace of the great Kabbalist Rabbi Simon bar Oharai. The Sultan had a text penned by ibn Aknin and the rabbis engraved it in gold on his tomb:

*From Moses to Moses  
There has never been  
another Moses.*

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He had mastered nearly everything then known in the fields of theology, mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, ethics and medicine. Known from then on as the acronym RaMBaM i.e. Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, to the Jewish people he symbolised a high spiritual and intellectual achievement. All the great rabbis of the realm were consulted and they proposed that he be buried in the holy Jewish city of Tiberias, on the western shore of the

*Morning Prayer*  
by Francis of Assisi  
(1181 - 1226)

*Lord, in the silence of this new day  
I have come to ask you for peace, wisdom and strength.  
I wish to see the world today with eyes filled with love,  
be patient, understanding, gentle and wise;  
and see beyond appearances, your children as you see them,  
and see only good in everyone.  
Close my ears to all calumny  
and guard my words from all malevolence;  
that only blessed thoughts reside in my spirit,  
that my benevolence and joy are so great  
that all who approach me, will feel your presence.  
Cover me Lord in your beauty,  
that throughout this day I reveal you.*







# Tapestry

by *Trina Winters*

**I**MAGINE a splendidly intricate, richly embroidered tapestry whose harmony of forms and content includes even the discordant; a magical tapestry of an unknown Merlin. The origins of this tapestry are obscure. Whence did it come, what is its age, what is its real nature?

But it is indeed magical, for not only does it have the detail, scope and beauty of a Flemish tapestry or a Persian rug, it also changes enchantingly before your eyes in miraculous and infinitely varied ways, much like a magnificent kaleidoscope.

Amazingly we are in fact intrinsically a part of this tapestry of life, participants as well as myopic observers, adding to its richness, contributing both balance and imbalance within the overall harmony. While we are the living threads of this tapestry of infinite hues and textures, our own limited imagination can still discern a glimmer of its greatness.

Being of sturdy stitch, a lovely glint and a particular colour, we each add to the marvellous Cosmic Tapestry, a never-ending creation of which every small pattern fulfils the Creator's design.





# the Alhambra

by Bill Anderson



**M**EDIEVAL SPAIN fostered for a time an enlightened culture in which the three great Abrahamic traditions Judaism, Christianity and Islam co-existed, interacted and flourished. Its cities such as Córdoba, Seville, Toledo, Zaragoza and the subject of this article Granada, were veritable “*Cities of Light*” that shone out like a beacon of learning and refinement in the Dark Ages that predominated through most of the rest of Europe.

It can be difficult to shake off the pernicious influences of everyday life; nevertheless the effort to do so is worthwhile. When a large-scale event happens in a short span of time, we give the period a name, calling it sometimes a *revolution*, sometimes a *conquest*, and in some cases *genocide*. The Moorish influence in Spain can accurately be described in certain periods by any of these words, but there were other, less violent and oppressive changes taking place too, and we can comfortably call





them periods of true *evolution* of consciousness.

Despite the violence of the times, a violence that was not unique to Moorish Spain but existed in many other parts of Europe as well, I believe the major part of the lasting changes that came about through the hundreds of years of Moorish influence in Spain, was on balance good, a period of cultural, intellectual and artistic evolution which has left a cultural heritage of great value for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Europe.

I once had the opportunity to ponder this as I sat in the rose garden of the Alhambra Palace complex in Granada, with the snow-covered Sierra Nevada as a backdrop, in the province of Andalucía in southern Spain. It was a beautiful day in late Spring, the sun was shining and the temperature was higher than normal. Sitting there contemplating my surroundings, I was dumbstruck by the superb restoration work that had been done to the wonderful palaces and ruins that remained from a once mighty period of great cultural and intellectual florescence..., now but a distant memory.

And as I sat on a step in the shade of an intricately carved arch, I opened a small book of verse by the Andalusian Sufi mystic and philosopher Ibn Arabi, and randomly turned to a page which to my astonishment resonated perfectly with my feelings at that moment..., the transience of life, so brief, so intense, so precious, and his words were as if meant to be speaking to none other me, surrounded by the great and now beautifully restored monument called the *Alhambra* (from the Arabic *al-Qal'at al-Hamrā'* or The Red Fortress):

*These crumbling houses are kindled by the last streaks of the declining sun. Not a single dweller you see around, only emptiness. Mourning over the ruins are the birds who have come here from afar; now they sing, now they fall silent.*

*I asked one of them whose song filled my heart with anguish and sorrow: "What are you crying and complaining about?" It replied: "I cry over the time that is gone and is never to return."*

## Enlightenment

Over a thousand years ago, Europe experienced one of its greatest periods of cultural enlightenment. For more than three centuries in medieval Spain, during Europe's Dark Ages, a beacon of light shone in a thriving multicultural and multi-religious civilisation. Although overwhelmingly dominated by Islam in all walks of life, there existed as well, side by side with Islamic scholars, remarkable individuals from the other two predominant



Late Medieval Spain.



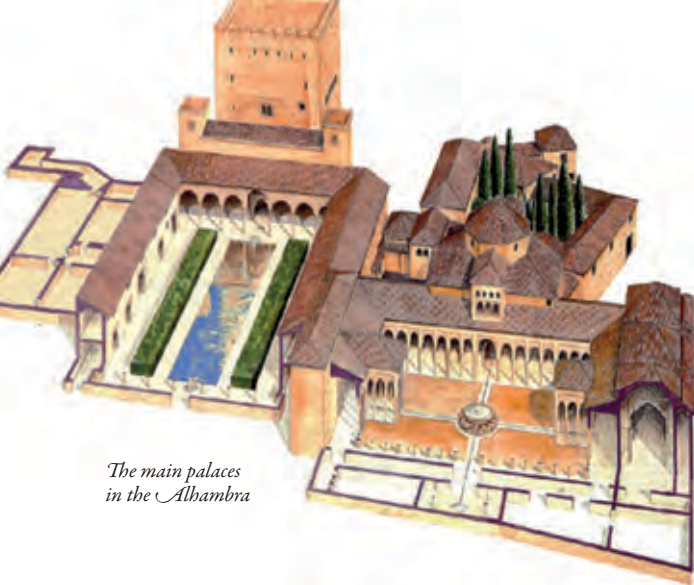
Nasrid Kingdom

faiths of southern Spain, and they, with their Islamic counterparts, made lasting contributions in such areas as poetry, art, architecture, music, dining etiquette, science, agriculture, medicine, engineering, navigation, textiles and hydraulic technology.

The lands of southern Spain were home to three 'peoples of the book.' Living together and flourishing through their separate expressions of faith, their cultures and beliefs intertwined and to a degree found a commonality of purpose in what they all believed was a life meant as a preparation for an eternal hereafter. The knowledge of the ancients of Greece, Rome and Persia, was gathered here and reborn. There was a resurgence of interest and fascination with the wisdom of the past, and the wise approach to knowledge that had existed during the golden age of the Caliphs of Córdoba (929 – 1031) greatly influenced the new ideas that the Granadine Emirs tried to promote during the three centuries of the construction of the Alhambra. But their world was eventually swept away by less refined generations filled with greed, fear, religious fanaticism and intolerance of the thoughts and beliefs of others.

Granada was like a microcosm of Islamic Spain during its heyday. It was a place of ethnic diversity where people of Spanish origin mingled with people from every part of North Africa and the Near East. The vast majority of the population was Muslim, but there





The main palaces in the Alhambra



were significant communities of Jews and Christians as well.

Although the glory of Granada and the Alhambra came late in the history of Islamic Spain, we can still glimpse tantalising hints of one of the greatest cultural achievements of humanity. The crown of the Sabika Hill is a mixture of ruins and beautiful palaces, (*Sabika* in Arabic means virtuous or pious.) Throw into the mixture the palace built for Charles V as King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor (1500 – 1558), and a modern-day *Parador* or hotel for those wanting to stay on the site, and you can build the scene in your own mind. Complete the scene with trees and gardens and you have the Alhambra. It's no wonder that busloads of tourists descend on it every day, to marvel at the merest trace of what once was there.

The Alhambra's true period of splendour, when it was converted into a veritable palatine city, occurred during the reigns of the Emir Yusuf I (reigned 1333-1354) and his son Muhammad V (reigned 1354-1359 and 1362-1391). It was during the reign of the latter that the Vizier, Ibn Zamrak (1333-1393), wrote a poem about the Alhambra, the "Evocation of Granada and its Alhambra", part of which is quoted below.

*The Sabika proudly wears a crown, which the glittering stars might well envy if they wanted ornament: The Alhambra, may God keep and preserve it, a ruby set atop the crown.*

*Its towers put the zodiac to shame. For all its stars, its beauty has nothing to compare, and these palaces, so elegant and stately, knock the paltry stars right down to earth.*

*His eye is godly, who has been blessed to see its graceful minarets at dawn, as the delicate first rays of day gleam in the East and set the stars to flight.*

It was too hot to remain in the rose-garden so I sought some shade, all the better to contemplate my surroundings and to wonder what life was like here in its heyday, before the tide of the Christian *Reconquista* swept away practically everything. As the Spanish writer Francisco Villaespesa Martín wrote and which is now on a plaque beside the Gate of the Pomegranates:

*Though the shadows of these walls have long since gone, the memory of them will live on as the final refuge of dreams and art. And then the last nightingale to breathe on this earth will build its nest and sing its farewell song among the glorious ruins of the Alhambra.*

### The Palaces on the Sabika

On top of the Sabika Hill was a small town, the *Madinat al-Hamra* with palaces for the Emirs and nobility, mosques, garrisons, stables, schools, a *Maristan* or hospital devoted mainly to the care of the mentally ill, baths, cemeteries, gardens and the houses and shops for the ordinary people who provided their services as workers and artisans for the nobles, and the administration offices. Of these latter, little remains but the foundations.

The shape of the hill is said to resemble a boat sailing to the west, with the Alcazaba or fortress at its prow. It is some 700 metres from stem to stern and approximately 200 metres wide at its widest point. It covers some 13 hectares in total and is enclosed by more than two kilometres of walls guarded by 30 towers. Visitors to the Alhambra are awe-struck by its architectural beauty.







But even more remarkable is remembering that in its heyday, this and other palaces like it in Al-Andalus, were not the bare structures they are today, but bustling hives of activity with dignitaries, courtiers, wives, cooks and children constantly going about their chores. Although completely empty today, we cannot help but admire the Alhambra purely for its architectural beauty; what a masterpiece it once was, and still is. Titus Burkhardt described it as follows:-

*The smooth, weightless surfaces of the walls are perforated. The walls, windows and arches, which should manifest their own structural solidity, dissolve into subtle honeycombs, into shimmering light. And the columns in the arcaded rooms are so slim that the structures rising above them seem to be lighter than air.*

How different the “subtle honeycombs” and arches must have seemed when the rooms were lavishly decorated with carpets on floors and walls, colourful curtains veiling the cool interiors from the fierce heat of the outside midday sun, *azulejo* tiles covering the walls, and wooden beds, sofas and chairs with cushions provided comfort for the Emir and his entourage. There were brightly painted alcoves and ceilings, creating a kaleidoscope of colour. Gardens and fountains added



*Comares Tower*



*Coat of Arms of the Emirate of Granada (1013-1492).*

texture and visual splendour, both indoors and outdoors. Aromatic plants and flowers were planted in strategic locations to provide fragrant scents. And the sound of trickling, bubbling water in fountains abounded everywhere. Open doorways and windows helped unify interior space with the surrounding environment.

The three main palaces that remain from those times are now called the *Mexuar*, the *Comares* and the *Leones* or Lions. When visitors came to see the Emir, this is the path they would have trodden, passing through one palace after the other, before reaching the summit of opulence, the Hall of the Mexuar containing the royal court of justice with a tile on the door reading “*Enter and ask. Do not be afraid to seek justice for here you will find it.*” Thus the supplicant crossed the threshold into a world of dazzling light and beauty, beyond which lay the Golden Chamber where supplicants would wait to be admitted into the presence of the Emir.

At the appointed time, the supplicant would be led from the Golden Chamber into what is now called the *Patio de los Arrayanes* or Courtyard of Myrtles, a beautifully minimalist courtyard with a mirror of water or infinity pool in the centre bordered once by rows of sweet-smelling flowers but now with myrtle bushes, giving it a sense of simplicity before the wonders of the inner palace. Again Titus Burkhardt wrote:

*Water forms the mysterious life of the Alhambra. It allows the gardens to grow exuberantly green, it gives birth to the splendour of flowering shrubs and bushes, it rests in the pools reflecting the elegantly arcaded halls, it dances in the fountains and murmurs in rivulets through the very heart of the royal residence.*



*Above the doorway into the palace is an inscription: "My position is that of a crown and my door is a parting of the ways: The West believes that in me is the East. I await his coming just as the horizon ushers in the dawn. May God adorn his works with the same beauty that resides in his countenance and his nature."*

Yusuf I, of the Nasrid family, wanted the decoration of his private residence to amaze visitors, so he ordered his architects to build and adorn it in an exquisite way. When his son Muhammad V ascended the throne he turned the Comares Palace into the focal point of the diplomatic and political activity of the Alhambra. This is where the



*Courtyard of the Lions.*

great receptions were held and important people waited to be received by the Emir. Thanks to the writings that survived the Spanish takeover of Al-Andalus, we can see what happened at a *majlis* or reception in the palace.

*The guests entered the palace, flanked by rows of servants formed by white eunuchs, pages and other servants. The guests were made to sit in a room that had a pool in the centre. When all had entered they were conducted into another large salon where the vizier called them one-by-one into another salon with great respect and dignity.*

In the Hall of the Ambassadors we come to the throne room, the symbolic centre of Nasrid power where everything speaks of refinement and elegance. In the middle of the three windows sat the Emir, with the light streaming in from behind him illuminating the gold leaf and plasterwork of the hall but keeping him in symbolic darkness, and giving him a psychological advantage over the supplicants in the room.

In the Comares palace we begin to see the mystical complexity of Islamic art on the walls where ornamental designs and motifs follow each other in reiterative rhythms towards infinity as a metaphor for eternity which fills the whole of space. The result is complete harmony and tranquillity, an art at rest where all tension is dissipated. Leaving the Comares Palace you would then enter the Palace of the Lions, the inner sanctum of the whole complex. This was the special place of Muhammad V.

## The Lions

The Courtyard of the Lions is exquisitely beautiful.

Words can scarcely do it credit. Walking through a forest of gilded pillars you enter into a vision of paradise symbolised by the four streams meeting at the fountain in the centre of the courtyard. It is an oblong courtyard, 35 metres in length and 20 metres wide, surrounded by a low gallery supported on 124 white marble columns. A pavilion projects into the courtyard at each end, with filigree walls and a light domed roof, elaborately ornamented.

The square is paved with coloured tiles, and the colonnade with white marble, while the walls are covered 1½ metres up from the ground with blue and yellow tiles, with a border above and below enamelled blue and gold. The columns supporting the roof and gallery are irregularly placed, with a view to artistic effect, and the general form of the piers, arches and pillars is most graceful. They are adorned by varieties of foliage, fruit and birds; above each arch is a large square of arabesques; and over the pillars is another square of filigree work. In the centre of the courtyard is the celebrated Fountain of Lions, a magnificent alabaster basin supported by twelve lions carved out of white marble.

There is a poem inscribed on the basin in the *Court of the Lions* by Ibn Zamrak:

*We have here in this garden a work so beautiful as to be unrivalled in all god's creations? The glistening pearls of which she is made have overflowed into her very substance.*

*Liquid silver, incomparable in its whiteness and brilliance, flows between her jewels. To the eye the molten silver and the solid jewels become entwined so it is impossible to say which of them is flowing. See how the water laps against the rims of the channels,*





*to be hidden moments later underground.*

This was the inner sanctum of the whole palace complex. In one of the rooms to your left as you enter the Courtyard of the Lions, called the Hall of the Two Sisters is a poem:



*Basin in the  
Courtyard of the Lions.*

*How much pleasure there is here for the eyes! In this place the soul will find idyllic reveries. The dreamer will be accompanied by the Pleiades and will wake to the gentle morning breeze. An incomparable cupola shines with beauties both hidden and open to the gaze. Seduced, Gemini holds out her hand to you and the moon comes with her to converse. The portico is so elegant that the palace itself challenges the celestial firmament. The marble throws its serene light to brighten the dark corners hidden in shade, and despite their size their reflections to be iridescent pearls.*

## Philosophers and Poets

Granada became a meeting-place of illustrious people, poets, scientists and artists. Not because the regime that governed the state was that popular, but because the rest of Muslim Al-Andalus had disappeared too quickly, that the only real options open to the Muslims who fled the Christian advance was to emigrate to Morocco or to Granada. It is easy to imagine how some of the most famous philosophers and poets of the time gathered here to discourse with the Emir. Viziers like Ibn al-Khatib, Ibn Zamrak and Ibn Khaldun would have gathered here in the Court of the Lions or when it became too hot in the Hall of the Two Sisters in their search for enlightenment.

The polymath Ibn al-Khatib in particular is said to have followed the teachings of the Sufis. He accepted a cyclical view of history rather than a linear one. He wrote an account of Granada and its rulers called *The*

*Shining Rays of the Full Moon*, a rather poetic name. He also wrote a book on Sufism entitled *Garden of Instruction*. Although all three of the above men were at various times friends and enemies, it did not stop them from reconciling and trying to do what was best for their homeland.

Granada, the last remaining “*City of Light*” which the Al-Saundi of Córdoba praised as being *nourishing to the eye and uplifting to the soul* in an encomium of Islamic Spain, has passed into the pages of history. Its complex culture reached a high point in the Mediterranean Middle Ages. However, larger forces in conquest of land and power brought about puritanical judgments, absolutism and religious extremism. And the conflict they triggered extinguished the shared learning that once flourished in this enlightened land.

*The very stars have lost their way.  
Oh flower withered all to soon,  
Could the heavens not have been generous,  
Could the very breeze not stir?*

-- Poem by Ibn al-Hammara of Granada --

The history of Islamic Spain demonstrates that when religious diversity is accommodated within a social and political system, problems and tensions may still exist, but society is able to manage them, generally to the benefit of all. But when governing powers and religious movements reject complexity and insist on a single cultural and religiously centred point of view, then society is likely to see widespread loss for everyone.

*There is nothing left but Christian bells and crosses.  
Homes are now empty and have been converted into  
pagan dwellings, mosques have been converted into  
churches. Even the mihrabs made of stone and the  
mimbars made of wood are shedding tears.*

-- Lament of Ibn al-Abbar of Valencia.

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# Notre Dame de Chartres

*by Betty Main*

**T**HE TOWN of Chartres, which is the capital of the Department of Eure-et-Loir, is situated about 100 kilometres (62 miles) southwest of Paris. It is not only the seat of a bishop, but also the centre of the rich agricultural province of Beauce. Leaving from the Gare de Montparnasse in Paris, the train journey only takes about an hour, travelling through a countryside filled

with carefully cultivated fields, typical country houses and small flocks of sheep and grazing cattle.

As you near the town, you catch sight of the first outlines of the Cathedral, one of the largest in Europe. It towers above the town. Construction began on it in 1020, in the Romanesque style, but it was destroyed in 1194 by a huge fire, which left only the south tower, the west façade and the crypt. It was rebuilt in the Gothic





style between 1195 and 1220, motivated principally by the miraculous survival of the relic of the “Veil of the Virgin”, displayed inside the cathedral. After 1250, there were few alterations. It survived various religious wars and the French Revolution, during which its destruction was planned, though not carried out. During the two World Wars, its windows were carefully removed and placed in the cellars, and it even survived two air-raid attacks.

Down through the centuries, the Cathedral of Chartres became not only a cultural, artistic and historical monument, but also an important centre of religious pilgrimage. The west façade (1140-1160) constructed in the Gothic style, is dominated by two great towers. The right hand or southern tower, known as the Old Tower, was finished in 1170, and the left hand or northern tower, known as the New Tower, was built by Jehan Texier between 1507-1513. Its flamboyant Gothic style contrasts with the solemnity of the older tower.

The Gothic cathedrals are typical of the splendour of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. The characteristics of this style of architecture are primarily, the search for height, in contrast to the Romanesque style that was dominated by horizontal lines in both the interior and exterior. The external features of Gothic style utilised pinnacles, towers and arrows pointing to Heaven, transmitting a sensation of lightness. Another important characteristic was the participation of the townspeople in the construction of these monuments, to the extent that there was great rivalry between towns as to who could erect the highest and most grandiose cathedral.

According to Joseph Campbell, the noted professor and specialist in mythology: *“When one enters a cathedral, one is penetrating into a world of spiritual images. It is the maternal womb of your spiritual life, the mother-church. Every part is full of spiritual values.”* Throughout history, the feeling of spirituality that is present in all cultures has encouraged people to create sacred places through the realisation of its initiatic or religious ceremonies, and by worshiping the divine principle that they revere. At the very beginnings of the human race, this sacred place was established in caves decorated with paintings of natural creatures and everyday scenes. This evolved gradually into the creation of sacred woods, the construction of megalithic monuments such as Stonehenge in England, the grandiose temples at Luxor in ancient Egypt, and also in Jerusalem at the time of Solomon. In our own time, we can visit monumental Christian cathedrals, richly decorated Muslim mosques and fantastic Buddhist temples that translate not only the feelings of devotion of the faithful but also constitute centres of reference for different cultures.

## Windows: Illumination of the Spirit

The Cathedral of Chartres possesses diverse symbols that express the relationship between the human and the divine, thus creating the necessary conditions for meditation, reflection and contemplation. The majority of modern churches were constructed as theatres, allowing the public to see the altar and its ceremonies. In Gothic cathedrals there is no such preoccupation with visibility, the spectator, depending on where he was standing, may not have been able to follow the rites in their totality. It was the symbol that was important, not the spectacle, and this was understood by all those present.

During the Middle Ages, the majority of the European population was illiterate. This condition, allied to the scarcity of books, whose circulation was restricted by their production, meant that the faithful had very little access to the Bible. Thus, windows were incorporated into the structure of the Gothic cathedrals to satisfy two objectives. Firstly, as a way of allowing a lot of light into the interior of the church, in contrast with the enclosed space and gloom of Romanesque churches. Secondly, they were used to transmit Bible stories to the population at large by means of images and figures in coloured glass, without any text, something incredible for those times. In agreement with the words of Ruskin: *“...the translucence of glass is the best way for the Holy Spirit to penetrate the human heart.”* The beauty and the colours of the biblical scenes, illuminated by the rays of the sun through the windows continues to enchant observers down to our own day, transmitting a dimension of spirituality through the architecture.

**At the very beginnings of the human race, this sacred place was established in caves decorated with paintings of natural creatures and everyday scenes.**

This cathedral has around 186 windows, donated, for the most part, by guilds between 1210 and 1240. The windows deal not only with religious motifs but also with everyday life in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Each window is divided into panels that are meant to be observed in sequence from left to right and from bottom to top. The number of figures or abstract forms obeys a symbolism: 3 symbolises the church, squares and the number 4 symbolise the material world and the four elements, while circles symbolise eternal life.

The majority of medieval professional activities were controlled by guilds that determined the prices for products and services, and also the training of apprentices.





They also exercised a lot of influence in the local politics of the towns, and this is the reason why the donation of windows to a cathedral was a form of public relations practised by both the ordinary people and the powerful clergy.

The Western Rose Window, situated on the façade of the cathedral, dates from 1215, and portrays the Last Judgement, with Christ in the middle. Around this are a series of biblical scenes, New Testament parables and various saints and prophets revered by the church. Below the Rose Window, three windows portray the Tree of Jesse (genealogy of Jesus), the history of the Incarnation including Christ's Passion and Resurrection. On the north side are representations of various saints such as St. Nicholas, St. Joseph and St. Eustace. The North Rose Window portrays the glorification of the Virgin, surrounded by the kings of Judah. To the east are St. Theodore and St. Vincent, St. James, Aaron, Ezekiel, David, the Virgin and Child, Isaiah and Moses, the Life of the Virgin and a zodiac window. In the Southern Rose Window is a scene of the Apocalypse with Christ in majesty.

It had been thought that the windows were the product of alchemy or of some secret manufacturing process. The colours of the stained glass are of a unique luminosity, the Chartres blue that even today has foiled

scientific attempts to discover its composition. The most famous of the windows of Chartres is known as "*Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière*" or the "Blue Virgin." Here the Virgin Mary is portrayed as the Queen of Heaven, seated on a throne and wearing a crown. The baby Jesus

**In psychological terms, the labyrinth represented a well-trodden path in the direction of the centre, being a return to unity, to the self.**

is seated on her lap, and both are surrounded by angels bearing candles. This window was one of the few to escape the fire of 1194. In this window, of the two main colours used, the blue symbolises royalty, and the red is associated with the virtues, especially charity. The process by which this type of window was made reached its climax in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, only to disappear at the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

## The Labyrinth

It was the custom, on the floor of medieval cathedrals, to design a labyrinth for the use of pilgrims, who generally followed it on their knees, as a form of sacrifice alluding to the passion of Christ. The labyrinth of the Cathedral of Chartres is situated in the central nave, some metres





behind the main entrance. It is constructed of 11 concentric circles whose central point has the form of a six-petalled rose. The pilgrim, in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, would take about one hour to travel along its 262 metres. In psychological terms, the labyrinth represented a well-trodden path in the direction of the centre, being a return to unity, to the self. The practice of walking as a form of meditation was traditionally used in medieval Europe, as a means of searching for union of the personal centre of the pilgrim with the centre of the universe, which is God. It depicts, metaphorically, the spiritual journey that the seeker must undertake, using his intuition. He must not turn away from the correct path when he encounters obstacles that may appear and try to make him deviate from his goal. Generally, labyrinths take the

**He must not turn away from the correct path when he encounters obstacles that may appear and try to make him deviate from his goal.**

form of a circle whose symbolism is associated with the “self”, expressing the totality of the human psyche in all its dimensions; it also deals with the relationship between man and nature. In Zen Buddhism, the circle represents enlightenment, illumination and human perfection.

The term “self” was used by Jung to represent the centre or nucleus of the absolute totality of the psyche in a form different from the “ego”, which constituted another part of the psyche. This central regulator caused the permanent development and maturity of the personality. For this process to be completed, it is necessary that the human being consciously submit himself to the power of the unconscious, with the aim of comprehending the inner self, and attaining full realisation of his potential. This life is a labyrinth; and so that the journey might be safe, you must have faith in God, and possess a pure heart.

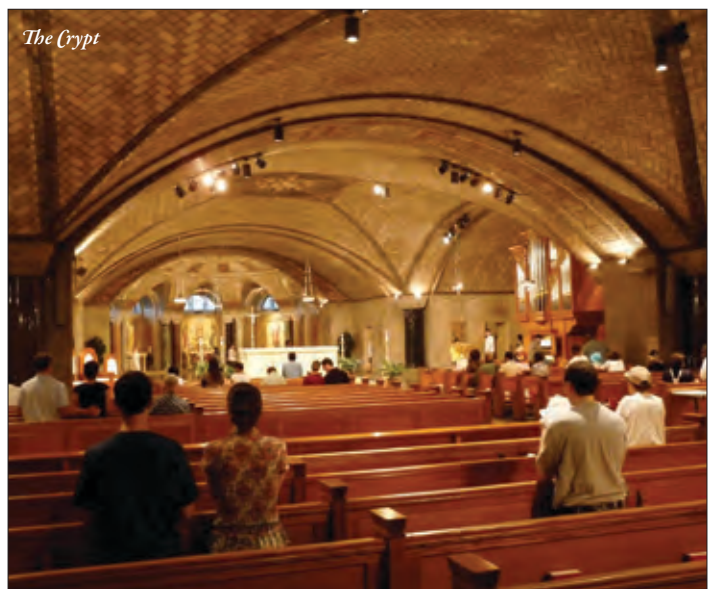
The cathedral used two main stratagems to attract the greatest number of visitors, thus enabling it to turn itself into a major centre of pilgrimage. Its high towers could easily be seen from a distance, and especially from the pilgrim routes that had sprung up. Relics were another way of getting the attention of passing pilgrims. Chartres was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and held some of her relics such as her veil that was donated by Charles II in 876 CE. It can still be seen in a chapel near to the High Altar. Only one French king was ever crowned in the cathedral, that was Henri IV, who was crowned on his way to Paris, on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1594.

## The Crypt

The crypt of Chartres Cathedral is the largest in France and one of the largest in the world, being slightly smaller than St. Peter’s in Rome and Canterbury Cathedral in England. It was constructed in 1020 by Bishop Fulbert. In the crypt are various chapels, among which is the chapel of Notre Dame de Sus Terre, which was said to have been the goal of pilgrims from the most ancient times. Unlike other cathedrals, there are no tombs inside the Cathedral of Chartres. The visitor is reminded that this was a building dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin. In another part of the crypt, the Chapel of St. Clement retains some multi-coloured paintings from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Chapel of Notre Dame de Sus Terre is the part of the crypt most visited; it contains an image venerated by generations of pilgrims. This chapel was profaned and attacked during the French Revolution, when the cathedral was renamed the “Temple of Reason”. It was restored in neo-medieval style in 1855 and again in 1976. The wooden statue of the Virgin is a copy of the one that was burnt by the revolutionaries.

The site of the Cathedral has been revered since ancient times. For those who are interested in ley-lines, there are still discernable lines of power that have been incorporated into the building. They flow across the chancel and nave, as well as down the spine of the building. The most important of these lines lies across the chancel between the two windows of the Virgin, (the blue and the black). Visitors with mystical leanings find it beneficial to meditate along these lines.







# Shams' Forty Rules of Love

by Adam Halstead

*Shams-e-Tabriz, a 13<sup>th</sup> Century Persian mystic (1185–1248), is credited with having passed on a deep spiritual heritage to the Persian Muslim scholar and mystic Rumi, who originally came from Balkh in modern Afghanistan. In one of Rumi's poetic collections "The Works of Shams of Tabriz", Shams is spoken of with reverence. Before ostensibly fleeing to Damascus to avoid persecution, Shams passed his wisdom on to Rumi in Konya (in modern-day Turkey) over a period of 40 days, very likely a symbolical rather than an actual period of time. The tomb of Shams in Khoy, Iran, is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site.*





**K**ONYA, PERHAPS more famous as the Roman city of Iconium, had become the capital of the Seljuk Sultans of Rum (1077 - 1307). They were a Turkish dynasty who, in their journey from Central Asia had adopted Persian culture and Persian as their court language, thereby attracting Persian scholars from all over the Muslim world. In their realm the Seljuks promoted the Persian concept of *javānmardi* or the Sufi form of chivalry, which we were introduced to in Chapter 7 of the book *Rosicrucian History and Mysteries*.

Shams, it is said, entered Konya on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1244, dressed fully, head to toe, in black. When asked what his business was, he said he was a merchant seeking something he believed he would soon find in the city. When he saw Rumi reading a text next to a pile of books, he asked him politely what he was doing, to which Rumi replied: “*Something you cannot understand.*” This was in reference to knowledge that cannot be understood without proper training and specialised learning.

When he heard Rumi’s reply Shams immediately threw the stack of books into a nearby pool of water and Rumi desperately scrambled to retrieve them before they were permanently destroyed. To Rumi’s amazement however, they were all dry. Shaken by the experience, he asked Shams why he had almost destroyed such a valuable compendium of knowledge. To this Shams replied, “*Mowlana, [Master] this is what you cannot understand*”, indicating that his callous action in almost destroying a form of written learning that Rumi clearly treasured, was a form of knowledge that could not be understood by the type of academic enquiry Rumi was engaged in through his books.

And that, it appears, was the beginning of the transfer of a deep corpus of mystical knowledge from Shams to Rumi. Below now follow extracts from two books attributed to Shams of Tabriz.

### The Discourse of Shams

A book entitled “*The Discourse of Shams-e Tabriz*” contains Persian prose believed to have been written by Shams himself. Although its true authorship is disputed by some scholars, others believe it was written during Shams’ last years in the manner of an old man narrating to his disciples something precious and to be remembered. The word “*Shams*” is Arabic in origin and alludes to the Sun, daily emerging from the East, symbolical source of all spiritual Light. Below are four excerpts from this book:

Blessing is an excess of everything. Don’t be content with being a *faqih* [religious scholar]. Say instead I want more..., more than a Sufi, more than a mystic, more than each thing that comes before you.

A good man complains of no-one; he does not look to faults.

Joy is like pure clear water: wherever it flows, wondrous blossoms grow. Sorrow is like a black flood: wherever it flows it wilts the blossoms.

And the Persian language, how did it come about? The abundance of elegance and goodness found in the Persian language is not found in Arabic.

### The Forty Rules of Love

But the largest volume by far attributed to Shams is “*The Forty Rules of Love.*” Below are the 40 most important rules for living that Shams passed on to posterity. Once again it is worth noting that 40 was almost certainly of deep symbolical rather than practical value. Had there existed a number which Shams considered of greater significance than 40, then that would no doubt have been the number of rules for living we would be reading today.

When reading the rules it is remarkable how they resonate with Rosicrucian philosophy and its way of life, demonstrating that the true search for the divine exists in every religious tradition and every part of the world. Reading through them brings to mind the ancient Egyptian “*Confession to Maat*” and the “*Rosicrucian Code of Life.*” We are truly all brothers and sisters in a Cosmic sea of Light, Life and Love.

**Rule 1:** How we see God is a direct reflection of how we see ourselves. If the idea of God evokes mostly fear and blame, it means there is too much fear and blame inside us. If we see God as full of love and compassion, so are we.

**Rule 2:** The path to the Truth comes from the heart, not the head. Make your heart your primary guide, not your mind! Meet, challenge and ultimately prevail over your *nafs* (self, psyche, soul) with your heart. Knowing your ego will lead you to the knowledge of God.

**Rule 3:** You can study God through everything and everyone in the universe, because God isn’t confined in a mosque, synagogue or church. But if you still need to know where exactly His abode is, there is only one place to look for him: in the heart of a true lover.

**Rule 4:** Intellect and love are made of different materials. Intellect ties people in knots and



risks nothing, but love dissolves all tangles and risks everything. Intellect is always cautious and advises, 'Beware too much ecstasy', whereas love says, 'Oh, never mind! Take the plunge!' Intellect doesn't easily break down, whereas love can effortlessly reduce itself to rubble. But treasures are hidden among ruins. A broken heart hides treasures.

Rule 5: Most of problems of the world stem from linguistic mistakes and simple misunderstanding. Don't ever take words at face value. When you experience love, language, as we know it becomes obsolete. What cannot be put into words can only be grasped through silence.

Rule 6: Loneliness and solitude are two different things. When you are lonely, it is easy to delude yourself into believing that you are on the right path. Solitude is better for us, as it means being alone without feeling lonely. But eventually it's best to find someone who will be your mirror. Remember only in another person's heart can you truly see yourself and the presence of God within you.

Rule 7: Whatever happens in your life, no matter how troubling things might seem, don't despair. Even when all doors remain closed, God will open up a new path only for you. Be thankful! It's easy to be thankful when all is well. A Sufi is thankful not only for what he has been given but also for all that he has been denied.

Rule 8: Patience does not mean to passively endure. It means to look at the end of a process. What does patience mean? It means to look at the thorn and see the rose, to look at the night and see the dawn. Impatience means to be short-sighted, not to see the outcome. The lovers of God never run out of patience, for they know that time is needed for the crescent moon to become full.

Rule 9: East, west, south or north makes little difference. No matter what your destination, just be sure to make every journey a journey within. If you travel within, you'll travel the whole wide world and beyond.

Rule 10: The midwife knows that when there is no pain,

the way for the baby cannot be opened and the mother cannot give birth. Likewise, for a new self to be born, hardship is necessary. Just as clay needs to go through intense heat to become strong, Love can only be perfected in pain.

Rule 11: The quest for love changes us. There is no seeker among those who search for love who hasn't matured on the way. The moment you start looking for love, you start to change within and without.

Rule 12: There are more fake gurus and false teachers in this world than the number of stars in the visible universe. Don't confuse power-driven, self-centred people with true mentors. A genuine spiritual master won't direct your attention to himself or herself and won't expect absolute obedience or utter admiration from you, but instead will help you to appreciate and admire your inner self. True mentors are as transparent as glass. They let the light of God pass through them.

Rule 13: Try not to resist the changes, which come your way. Instead let life live through you. And don't worry that your life is turning upside down. How do you know that the life you are used to is better than the one to come?

Rule 14: God is busy with the completion of your work, both outwardly and inwardly. He is fully occupied with you. Every human being is a work in progress that is slowly but inexorably moving toward perfection. We are each an unfinished work of art both waiting and striving to be completed. God deals with each of us separately because humanity is fine art of skilled penmanship where every single dot is equally important for the entire picture.

Rule 15: It's easy to love a perfect God, unblemished and infallible that He is. What is far more difficult is to love a fellow human being with all their imperfections and defects. Remember, one can only know what one is capable of loving. There is no wisdom without love. Unless we learn to love God's creation, we can neither truly love nor truly know God.





Rule 16: Real faith is the one inside. The rest simply washes off. There is only one type of dirt that cannot be cleansed with pure water, and that is the stain of hatred and bigotry contaminating the soul. You can purify your body through abstinence and fasting, but only love will purify your heart.

Rule 17: The whole universe is contained within a single human being: *you*. Everything that you see around, including the things that you might not be fond of and even the people you despise, is present within you in varying degrees. Therefore, don't look for *Shaitan* (devil) outside yourself either. The devil isn't an extraordinary force that attacks from without. It is an ordinary voice within. If you set to know yourself fully, face yourself with honesty and hardness.

Rule 18: If you want to change the ways others treat you, you should first change the way you treat yourself, fully and sincerely, there is no way you can be loved. Once you achieve that stage, however, be thankful for every thorn that others might throw at you. It is a sign that you will soon be showered in roses.

Rule 19: Don't worry where the road will take you. Instead concentrate on the first step. That is the hardest part and that is what you are responsible for. Once you take that step let everything do what it naturally does and the rest will follow. Don't go with the flow! Be the flow!

Rule 20: We were all created in His image, and yet we were each created different and unique. No two people are alike. No hearts beat to the same rhythm. If God had wanted everyone to be the same, He would have made it so. Therefore, disrespecting differences and imposing your thoughts on others is an amount to disrespecting God's holy scheme.

Rule 21: When a true lover of God goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his chamber of prayer, but when a wine bibber goes into the same chamber, it becomes his tavern. In everything we do, it is our hearts that make the difference, not our outer appearance. Sufis do not judge other people on how

they look or who they are. When a Sufi stares at someone, he keeps both eyes closed instead opens a third eye – the eye that sees the inner realm.

Rule 22: Life is a temporary loan and this world is nothing but a sketchy imitation of Reality. Only children would mistake a toy for the real thing. And yet human beings either become infatuated with the toy or disrespectfully break it and throw it aside. In this life stay away from all kinds of extremities, for they will destroy your inner balance. Sufis do not go to extremes. A Sufi always remains mild and moderate.

Rule 23: The human being has a unique place among God's creation. "*I breathed into him of My Spirit*," God says. Each and every one of us without exception is designed to be God's delegate on earth. Ask yourself, just how often do you behave like a delegate, if you ever do so? Remember, it is up to each of us to discover the divine spirit inside and live by it.

Rule 24: Hell is in the here and now. So is heaven. Stop worrying about hell or dreaming about heaven, as they are both present inside this very moment. Every time we fall in love, we ascend to heaven. Every time we hate, envy or fight someone we tumble straight into the fires of hell.

Rule 25: Each and every reader comprehends the Holy Koran on a different level of tandem with the depth of their understanding. There are four levels of insight. The first level is the outer meaning and it is the one that the majority of the people are content with. Next is the *Batin* – the inner level. Third, there is the inner of the inner. And the fourth level is so deep it cannot be put into words and is therefore bound to remain indescribable.

Rule 26: The universe is one being. Everything and everyone is interconnected through an invisible web of stories. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all in a silent conversation. Do no harm! Practise compassion! And do not gossip behind anyone's back; not even a seemingly innocent remark! The words that come out of our mouths don't vanish but are



perpetually stored in infinite space and they will come back to us in due time. One person's pain will hurt us all. One person's joy will make everyone smile.

Rule 27: Whatever you speak, good or evil, will somehow come back to you. Therefore, if there is someone who harbours ill thoughts about you, saying similarly bad things about them will only make matters worse. You will be locked in a vicious circle of malevolent energy. Instead, for 40 days and nights, say and think nice things about that person. Everything will be different at the end of 40 days, because you will be different inside.

Rule 28: The past is an interpretation. The future is on illusion. The world doesn't move through time as if it were a straight line, proceeding from the past to the future. Instead time moves through and within us, in endless spirals. Eternity does not mean infinite time, but simply timelessness. If you want to experience eternal illumination, put the past and the future out of your mind and remain within the present moment.

Rule 29: Destiny doesn't mean that your life has been strictly predetermined. Therefore, to live everything by fate and to not actively contribute to the music of the universe is a sign of sheer ignorance. The music of the universe is all pervading and it is composed on 40 different levels. Your destiny is the level where you play your tune. You might not change your instrument but how well to play is entirely in your hands.

Rule 30: The true Sufi is such that even when they are unjustly accused, attacked and condemned from all sides, patiently endures, uttering not a single bad word about any of their critics. A Sufi never apportion blame. How can there be opponents or rivals or even 'others' when there is no 'self in the first place? How can there be anyone to blame when there is only One?

Rule 31: If you want to strengthen your faith, you will need to soften inside. For your faith to be rock-solid, your heart needs to be as soft as a feather. Through an illness, accident, loss or fright, one way or another, we are all faced with incidents

that teach us how to become less selfish and judgmental and more compassionate and generous. Yet some of us learn the lesson and manage to become milder, while some others end up becoming even harsher than before.

Rule 32: Nothing should stand between you and God. No imams, priests, rabbis or any other custodians of moral or religious leadership. Not spiritual masters and not even your faith. Believe in your values and your rules, but never lord them over others. If you keep breaking other people's hearts, whatever religious duty you perform is no good. Stay away from all sorts of idolatry, for they will blur your vision. Let God and only God be your guide. Learn the Truth, my friend, but be careful not to make a fetish out of your truths.

Rule 33: While everyone in this world strives to get somewhere and become someone, only to leave it all behind after death, you aim for the supreme stage of nothingness. Live this life as light and empty as the number zero. We are no different from a pot. It's not the decorations outside but the emptiness inside that holds us straight. Just like that, it's not what we aspire to achieve but the consciousness of nothingness that keeps us going.

Rule 34: Submission does not mean being weak or passive. It leads to neither fatalism nor capitulation. Just the opposite. True power resides in submission a power that comes within. Those who submit to the divine essence of life will live in unperturbed tranquility and peace even the whole wide world goes through turbulence after turbulence.

Rule 35: In this world, it is not similarities that take us a step forward, but blunt opposites. And *all* the opposites in the universe are present within each and every one of us. Therefore the believer needs to meet the unbeliever residing within. And the nonbeliever should get to know the silent faithful in him. Until the day one reaches the stage of the perfect human being, faith is a gradual process and one that necessitates its seeming opposite: disbelief.

Rule 36: This world is erected upon the principle of reciprocity. Neither a drop of kindness nor





a speck of evil will remain unreciprocated. For not the plots, deceptions, or tricks of other people. If somebody is setting a trap, remember, so is God. He is the biggest plotter. Not even a leaf stirs outside God's knowledge. Simply and fully believe in that. Whatever God does, He does it beautifully.

Rule 37: God is a meticulous clock maker. So precise is His order that everything on Earth happens in its own time. Neither a minute late nor a minute early. And for everyone without exception, the clock works accurately. For each there is a time to love and a time to die.

Rule 38: It is never too late to ask yourself, "*Am I ready to change the life I am living? Am I ready to change within?*" Even if a single day in your life is the same as the day before, it surely is a pity. At every moment and with each new breath, one should be renewed and renewed

again. There is only one-way to be born into a new life: to die before death.

Rule 39: While the parts change, the whole always remains the same. For every thief who departs this world, a new one is born. And every decent person who passes away is replaced by a new one. In this way not only does nothing remain the same but also nothing ever really changes. For every Sufi who dies, another is born somewhere.

Rule 40: A life without love is of no account. Don't ask yourself what kind of love you should seek, spiritual or material, divine or mundane, Eastern or Western. Divisions only lead to more divisions. Love has no labels, no definitions. It is what it is, pure and simple. Love is the water of life. And a lover is a soul of fire! The universe turns differently when fire loves water.





# The Silver Cord

*by Shirley Elsby*

**O**NE OF the downsides of extreme old age is that many people face a long and difficult journey to the end of their terrestrial life. Having once been vibrant, inquisitive, busy, perhaps full of joy, perhaps the movers and shakers of their generation, the unfortunate ones find

themselves trapped by painful, degenerative illnesses and disabilities. Their eyesight and hearing may diminish, their mobility seize at the joints and their organs turn against them in producing pain instead of pleasure.

One of the most common maladies is the painful, restrictive stiffness of arthritis, leaving





bones seizing up like rusty taps, leaving people struggling to complete the most basic tasks. For some, the end of life is a miserable journey involving the loss of the senses and faculties which provided the means by which life is enjoyed. Help is needed to wash and dress, perhaps to eat and drink or deal with personal hygiene.

Parts of the body give up, leaving the person subject to indignities which make them cringe, and leave them,

**For some, the end of life is a miserable journey involving the loss of the senses and faculties.**

perhaps, unable to continue living in their own precious home and make their own individual choices. Life becomes an ever diminishing circle, the scope of each day smaller and smaller, less and less enthralling, less and less appealing. A long, lingering death is a sad path to tread.

Over the years a number of people have confided in me that being in such conditions, perhaps ravaged by cancer, left straining for breath by treacherous lung conditions or afflicted with other painful and deadly conditions, they are ready, now, to depart. They have squared things with their families, said whatever needed saying, arranged whatever needed arranging.

They have finished fighting too, and though they have no choice for the moment to continue taking oxygen in and out, they have made it known that they are ready to move on; they would welcome slipping into the final sleep. Although it may horrify the relatives trying to bolster their spirits with a daily diet of pep talks and positivism, having lost virtually everything which gave them their *joie de vivre*, they long to step away from their mortal remains and see what comes next.

The following poem is about the very final part of such a journey.

## The Silver Cord

*Tug! Tug and jiggle.  
Work it, work the trappings so!  
Now yank! Yank the root and wiggle.  
Ease it, squeeze it, don't let go!*

*This body does not suit me,  
It's a prison, not a shrine.  
Its strength ebbs out entirely!  
It's a husk, it does not shine.*

*Oh silver cord which binds me,  
I beg you, set me free.  
I'm a spirit, not a relic,  
Let me go and let me be!*

*I am bird chip-chipping shell  
To breathe the joy of open space.  
I am milk tooth easing loose  
To let another take my place.  
I am crystal taking shape  
From rock and water, fed by air.  
I am sapling stretching sunward,  
My unborn leaves to bear.*

*This body is so tight and seized.  
It rules my days with pain.  
Its supple frame is now diseased  
And every move a strain.*

*It served me well for many years  
So sturdy, strong and willing.  
But now its light fast disappears,  
It's ready for the killing!*

*Sweet silver cord which binds me,  
Loose your hold and let me soar!  
Ghostly tendon that entwines me,  
Let me roam the planes once more!*

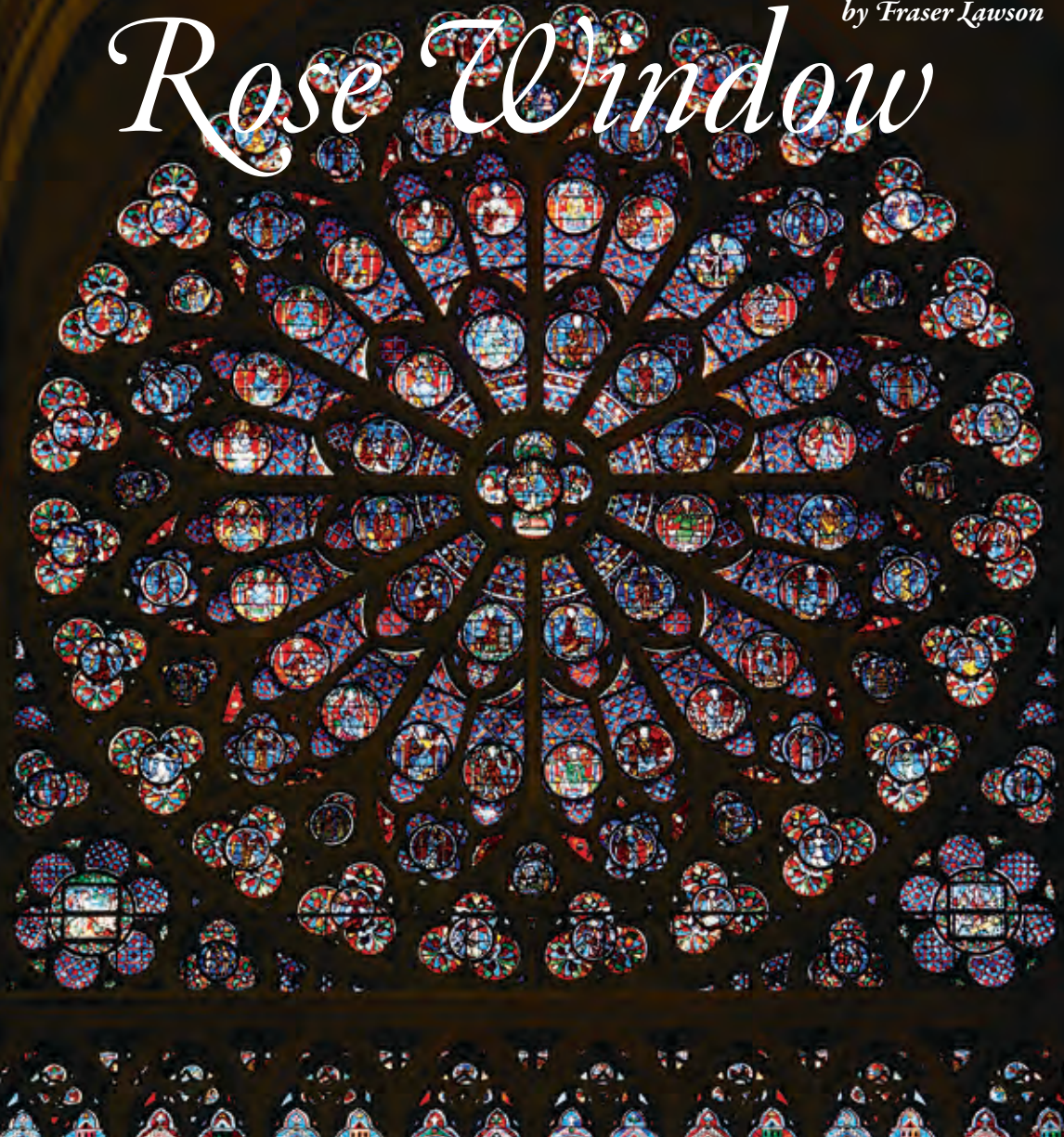
*Oh prise! Prise and niggle.  
Grasp hard and lever from beneath.  
Rip, rip! Tear and squiggle,  
Sever now the cord's flesh sheath.  
Yes, yes, it's really time!  
The cord breaks loose and pings me free.  
It's done, I'm in a spiral climb,  
No body now, just me!*

*I am sound escaping scales  
To soar on high, quite unrestrained.  
I am wind traversing dales  
Liberated, unconstrained.  
I am lazy perfume drifting  
To delight a passer-by.  
I am love, I am a soul,  
And I am free. Yes, that am I!*



# The Mystical Rose Window

by Fraser Lawson



**I** STOOD mesmerised while staring at the marvellous south rose window in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. Behind me, Vespers had just started, the scent of the swinging censurs and the beautiful chanting of the choir transported me to a higher realm. What was this wonderful burst of colour and light before me? What was the deeper

meaning and why did it have such a powerful effect on me?

I was not the only person affected by this vision. The young French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), who is famous for his restorations of the city of Carcassonne, when taken to Notre Dame in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century described his experience:





*The cathedral was shrouded in darkness. My gaze was focused on the stained glass in the south rose window through which the rays of the sun passed, sparkling with great subtlety. Suddenly the great organ came to life; for me it was the rose before my eyes that was singing. As I looked I came to believe in my imagination that some of the panes of glass produced the low sounds and others the high ones. I was seized by so beautiful a terror that I had to be taken out.*

## The Window

The term “rose window” is often used to mean any circular window containing stone tracery radiating in a symmetrical pattern from and around the centre. But it refers especially to the circular windows found in

**But the term “rose window” is reserved for those windows, sometimes of a highly complex design, which look like a multi-petalled rose.**

Gothic-style churches. The term itself was not in use before the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, before which they seem to have called them “wheel windows” because it was divided by structural spokes radiating from a central opening like a wheel. The structural strength in virtually all rose windows derives primarily from the outer rim of the circle, or in some cases by an arch placed around the circle. The intricate lacework within does not contribute much to the windows structural integrity.

The image of the wheel seems to be deeply ingrained in human consciousness. It often appears in Buddhist art and architecture, as well as in ancient Greek and Babylonian art. But the term “rose window” is reserved for those windows, sometimes of a highly complex design, which look like a multi-petalled rose. In Italian churches you can find a slightly different type of circular window referred to as an “ocular window” or “oculus”, and it is still in wide use as a skylight or small circular opening high up on a wall or in the centre of a dome.

Rose windows are particularly characteristic of Gothic architecture and can be seen in all the major Gothic Cathedrals of Northern France. Their origins are much earlier and rose windows may be seen in various forms throughout the Medieval period. Their popularity was revived during the Gothic revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

*Left: South Rose Window at Notre Dame in Paris. As with the North window, its centre is a representation of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus, and surrounding them in several circles are representations of various prophets and saints.*

so they can now be found in Christian churches all over the world. Interestingly, in Italian churches, rose windows are sometimes better appreciated from the outside than inside.

For those interested in the structural ingenuity of rose window designs, viewing them from outside is often the only way of understanding how the window does not collapse under the weight of the structure above it. For those interested in ethereal multi-coloured beauty of rose windows, viewing them from the inside is usually the only way to fully appreciate their intended meaning.

## The Symbolism

The philosopher, theologian and mystic Hugues de Saint-Victor (Hugh of St. Victor 1096-1141) wrote in his opus the *Didascalicon de studio legendi* about rose windows:

*The foolish man wonders only at the beauty in these things; but the wise man sees through that which is external, laying out the profound thought of divine wisdom.*

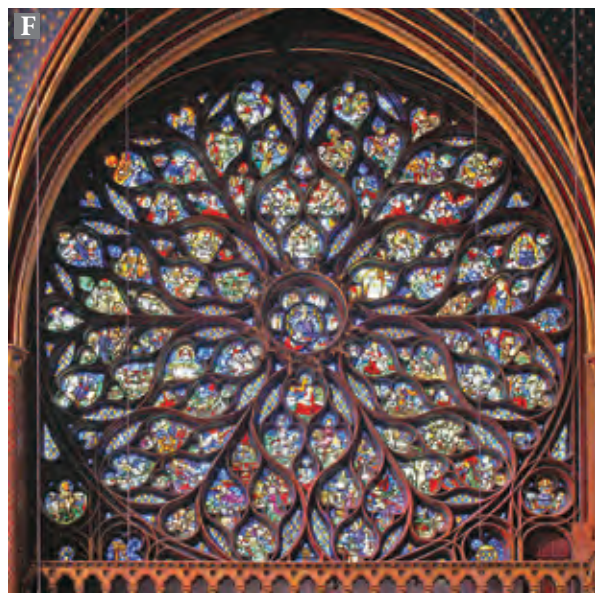
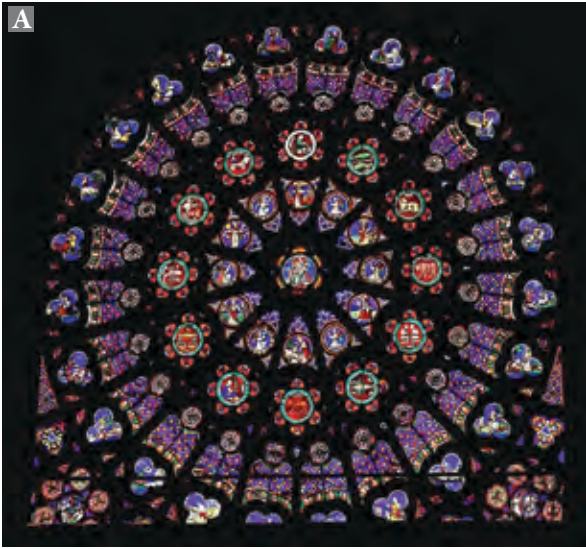
These strangely mystical and beautiful webs of glass and stone were woven into flowers of light. The rose windows are one of the most spectacular of all the creations of the Gothic Era. In medieval cathedrals and churches a rose window is often found above the West Door. The rose window frequently symbolised divine order and in its roundness could also stand for the universe.



*North Rose Window at Notre Dame in Paris. At its centre is a representation of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus. Surrounding them in four circles are representations of various prophets and saints.*









## Chartres Cathedral

The most common subject of the stained glass that it contains is the Last Judgement, which by a long tradition is depicted either in mural or glass on the western wall of the building. In these windows Christ the Pantokrator or Ruler of All is shown seated in the centre “light” and within the lights around him are the symbols of the four

**When rose windows are used in the transept ends, then one of those windows is frequently dedicated to Mary as the Mother of Jesus.**

Evangelists, Apostles, Prophets, Saints and Angels. Some windows show God’s dominion over Heaven and Earth by including Zodiacal signs and Labours of the Months.

When rose windows are used in the transept ends, then one of those windows is frequently dedicated to Mary as the Mother of Jesus. In modern Catholic thought, the rose window is often associated with the Virgin Mary because one of her titles, referred to by St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) is the “Mystical Rose.” With the revival of the Gothic style in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, many new rose window installations, both in new churches and as restoration in old churches, were dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Chartres Cathedral, also known as Cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres, is a medieval Catholic cathedral of the Roman Church in the town of Chartres, France, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) southwest of Paris and not too far from the French Grand Lodge and the Château d’Omonville at Le Tremblay, Omonville. The cathedral is considered one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The current cathedral was constructed between 1194 and 1250. It is in an exceptional state of preservation. The majority of the original stained-glass windows survive intact, while the architecture has seen only minor changes since the early 13<sup>th</sup> Century. The building’s exterior is dominated by heavy flying buttresses which allowed the architects to increase the window size significantly.

Since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> Century the cathedral has been an important destination for traveller, and remains so to this day. The cathedral attracts large numbers of

### Left: Captions to Windows A-F

*A Rose Window from the Abbey of St. Denis in Paris. In the centre is a representation of God as the creator of all things, surrounded by 12 circular panels, six of which represent the days of creation. Outside that is a further circle containing 12 circular panels depicting the signs of the Zodiac, known as the “Order of the Heavens.” Outside that is another circle with 24 circular panels representing the “Labours of the Month.” Curiously, the month in this case is represented by six days of labour per week and four weeks in the month, making 24 days, plus 4 days of rest, giving 28 days, or an approximate lunar month. In the bottom left and right corners are representations of the “Fall of Man.”*

*B Interior of the Rose Window at Strasbourg Cathedral. Unlike most other rose windows, this one has no religious iconography at all, but is made up instead by regular repeated geometric designs containing meaning more in the realm of symmetry and mathematics than religion.*

*C Exterior of the Wheel Window of the Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio, Italy (completed approx 1287). Here the structural integrity of the window is clearly seen to be the outer rim of the “wheel.”*

*D Exterior of the Rose Window at Strasbourg Cathedral. Apart from its elegant architectural beauty, the structural strength of the window is clearly seen to lie in its much embroidered wheel rim.*

*E Exterior of the Wheel Window of the Basilica Cathedral of Iqdi in Lombardy, Italy is in the form of an oculus and clearly shows the massive strength inherent in its wheel rim (completed approx 1163).*

*F Rose window in Sens Cathedral. Apart from the multicoloured intricate beauty of the design, the inherent structural strength of the window is clearly revealed as the three layered supporting arch above and on either side of the window’s rather flimsy wheel rim.*





*The labyrinth plan.*



*The labyrinth candle-light service.*

tourists and Christian pilgrims, many of whom come to venerate its famous relic, the *Sancta Camisa*, said to be the tunic worn by the Virgin Mary at Christ's birth, as well as large numbers of secular tourists who come to admire the cathedral's architecture and historical merit. It is also where you can find the famous labyrinth, the beautifully preserved pavement labyrinth in the cathedral was constructed during the second decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

The labyrinth is 12.9 metres (42.3 feet.) in diameter and fills the width of the nave. While much has been written about the purpose of this labyrinth, little contemporary documentation survives, although it is known that labyrinths in French cathedrals were at one time the scene of Easter dances carried out by the clergy. It is also popularly assumed that they symbolise the long tortuous path that pilgrims would have followed to visit this, and other shrines and cathedrals during the

medieval period. A scaled down version of this labyrinth was recently constructed at Rosicrucian Park in San José, California.

The western rose, made c.1215 and 12 metres in diameter shows the Last Judgement. A central oculus showing Christ as the Judge is surrounded by an inner ring of 12 paired roundels containing angels and the Elders of the Apocalypse and an outer ring of 12 roundels showing the dead emerging from their tombs and the angels blowing trumpets to summon them to judgement.

The south transept rose (10.5 metres diameter, made c.1225–30) is dedicated to Christ, who is shown in the central oculus, right hand raised in benediction, surrounded by adoring angels. Two outer rings of twelve circles each contain the 24 Elders of the Apocalypse, crowned and carrying phials and musical instruments. The central lancet beneath the rose shows the Virgin carrying the infant Christ. Either side of this are four lancets showing the four Evangelists sitting on the shoulders of four Prophets.



*Western Rose Window at Chartres Cathedral.*







*South Rose Window at Chartres Cathedral.*



*Oscar Fredriks Church in Gothenburg, Sweden (late 19<sup>th</sup> Century). Like many rose window designs from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, the symbolism represented by the various coloured glass panels contains little or no direct religious imagery, and is more difficult to interpret. For Rosicrucians though, it is interesting to note the double five-petaled rose in the centre.*

## Divine Geometry

Rose windows utilise geometry on three levels: manifest, hidden and symbolic. The visual impact of the rose window is manifest. Every space is defined by another smaller geometric figure..., a trefoil, a quatrefoil, rosette or spherical triangle. The hidden geometry defines the exact placement of every major feature of the rose

window relating to the radial elements, concentric divisions and all to the centre.

The symbolic geometry is found in the circles, squares, triangles, stars, and the 12 major divisions typically found in rose windows. They all point to the finite and the infinite, earth and heaven, or matter and spirit. However, the geometric significance is rather an intellectual one and probably lost on most people other than in the pleasing proportions and the way the window draws the eye.

No matter what we consider the material aspects to be, there is no doubting that beautiful rose windows attract us by their colour and the light that streams through them to illuminate our minds and make us contemplate the divine scheme of things.



*The two photos above are from Santa Maria del Pi, Barcelona (14<sup>th</sup> Century). As with many early rose window designs, the structural strength of the wheel rim is clearly visible. This is unlike the more modern versions.*

# Your Mental Garden

*by Eve Morgan*



**E**ACH OF us has a mental garden with thoughts of our choosing that have grown within its confines. If we plant the most positive thoughts our minds can comprehend, then we have a beautiful mental garden, a plus in the world of thought. We must





keep cultivating this garden however, in order to keep negativity on its outer periphery. Negative thoughts, though eradicated from the mind, can return if we're not careful. Like weeds, negative thoughts can encroach upon lovingly planted thoughts of higher ideals.

**Finally, we can reach a point where we will no longer go back to old negative ways; they just don't hold any appeal any longer.**

To make the most of your mental garden, work on becoming a master gardener. The wild rose climbing up a fence is a beautiful creation. But the cultivated rose, brought about by loving care and knowing ways, has the most beautiful essence. Let us strive to become masterful in our techniques by cultivating beautiful thoughts comparable to prize-winning roses.

As we endeavour to maintain a positive mental approach, we must be tolerant of those who do not yet value positive thought. It is not so much the negative acts of others that cause problems for us; it is our reaction to such acts. We harm ourselves by allowing irritation in trying situations to cause us to slip back into old, negative thought patterns. Pessimistic attitudes, once put aside, can again confront us, but such steps backward need only be temporary excursions. After each return trip, we again travel forward on our path, a little more quickly and with greater ease. Finally, we can reach a point where we will no longer go back to old harmful ways, for they don't hold the same appeal they did before.

In developing the habit of increasing positive mental activity, we become more harmonious within; and harmonious living can create a pocket of calm in our environment. As we see terrible and confusing situations in the world around us, inner harmony can give us a fortress of forbearance. We can see the overall situation and seek ways of helping the human condition. In meditation periods, we may ask for more tolerance in the world, or send mental messages of peace to world leaders. We can ask for cosmic guidance for survivors of disasters, that they may have proper judgment in their dark house, and that their sorrows will not overwhelm them.

Daily life will be much easier when loving thoughts take root in the soil of our mental garden. When needed, we can draw upon these loving thoughts from within and put them into action. The inner being must be allowed to guide us in knowing where and how we may help those we meet upon this human voyage. We all need aid and comfort from someone at some time. Through sharing knowledge, experience and love, we join hands in a positive human chain of care that reaches beyond all physical bonds.

When we begin to achieve some of what has been sought, what we needed and applied ourselves towards, we find some measure of happiness. Peace comes to us with different meanings at different stages of consciousness. For me, peace comes after inner struggle, when I have striven to bring about a more harmonious condition between myself and all positive elements which I can comprehend. Tomorrow I may find it necessary to begin yet another struggle, yet at its conclusion I am confident I will come to know greater peace.

As we acquire more awareness of our most cherished spiritual ideals, we are sometimes lifted to sublime heights. We may even reach into the great All of creative energy encompassing every mental garden in existence. But life's complexities are not over with such enlightenment; we simply receive the inner strength needed to better deal with daily situations as they arise.

Through the trials and errors of many incarnations, we have learned great lessons. If we wish to be master gardeners, handling our affairs in the best way possible, and giving our best in service to others, we must keep our mental mood attuned to high purpose at all times. A great Master once said: *"...many are called but few are chosen."* Those who are chosen have chosen themselves for the hard work upon self and dedication for service. Living in harmony with the creative forces of nature and ever searching for more truth, consciousness expands and becomes ever more all-encompassing. By living harmoniously we easily find the best place possible for us in our new world of Light. We can see what needs to be done, and we do it with gratitude that we are able to do what we know is right.

No true seeker will fail to unveil some truth. No honest worker will fail to receive some Cosmic blessings. For the Cosmic is indiscriminate, and such blessings automatically occur for those whose time has come through work within their own mental garden.



# THE PORTA ALCHEMICA

*by Connie James*



**M**ENTION ROME and historians will think of the ruins of the ancient city, metropolis of one of the greatest empires the world has ever known; for strewn throughout the city are ruins and gems of antiquity galore. For those of a more religious bent though, Rome means pilgrimage, the Popes, the Vatican and the ubiquitous churches.

It is easy to forget that Rome, during its long history, has also hosted philosophers and initiates such as Plotinus,





Porphyry, Tomasso Campanella, Giordano Bruno and Count Cagliostro. Little remains of esoteric Rome but there is one outstanding example that has survived..., the *Porta Alchemica* or Alchemical Gate.

## Serendipity

On my latest visit to the Eternal City I decided to walk from Termini Station to my hotel in a monastery attached to the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. It took longer than I expected. In one of those inexplicable but serendipitous occurrences I inadvertently took a detour and found myself in the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, lying on the Esquiline Hill, one of the seven hills of ancient Rome. In the square I caught sight of a Hermetic doorway.

The *Porta Alchemica* sometimes called the Magic Portal, was a monument built between 1678 and 1680 by the Marquis Massimiliano Palombara, Marquis of Pietraforte and author of the Rosicrucian poem *La Bugia* (The Candle). Originally, it was part of his residence the Villa Palombara, which was demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and one of his marble gates was moved to its present location. Sadly it is the only remaining one of five former gates of the villa.

At this time there was great interest in Rome about hermetic studies. The Marquis was said to have been a Rosicrucian whose wealth and social position allowed him to act as patron to a number of alchemists. In his villa he also held meetings attended by other important people who shared his interests. According to historians, his interest in the occult, Kabala and mysticism brought him into contact with Cardinal Decio Azzolino, at one time Cardinal of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and his confidant, Queen Christina of Sweden, who was living in Rome after her conversion to Catholicism.



*Villa Palombara.*

A story relates that between 1678 and 1680, the alchemist and doctor Giuseppe Francesco Borri (1627-95), known as Giustiniani Bono, along with Athanasius Kircher (1602-80), the German Jesuit scholar and polymath who died in Rome, and Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), the Italian artist and architect who designed St. Peter's Square, collaborated in the design and construction of the gate for the Marquis. Palombara developed a passion for alchemy in 1656 when he visited the alchemical laboratory in the Riario Palace on top of the Janiculum Hill in the Trastevere district. It is now known as the Palazzo Corsini. Today, the palace has some offices of the National Academy of Science as well as the Galleria Corsini.

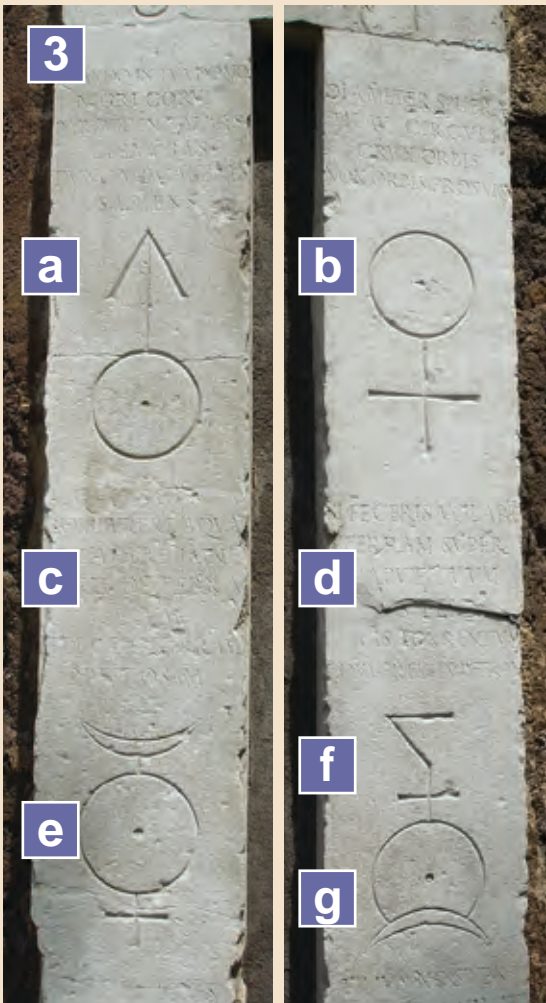
**The Marquis was said to have been a Rosicrucian whose wealth and social position allowed him to act as patron to a number of alchemists.**

The laboratory belonged to the exiled Queen Christina of Sweden, one of the most educated women of the 1600s. She was interested in religion, philosophy, mathematics and alchemy, and her laboratory was supervised by Pietro Antonio Bandiera, and Borri and Kircher once visited her to see her magnificent laboratory. The Queen was preoccupied with alchemy for most of her adult life. Her interest in alchemy also has some intriguing Rosicrucian connections. The original Rosicrucian pamphlets of 1614-16 had spread high expectations for a new age and a universal reformation of the arts, and were circulated among radical Paracelsians in Northern Europe, which is how she came to know about them. It's unclear whether Queen Christina was an adept involved in Palombara's circle, or merely a patron full of curiosity.

## Gate Inscriptions

The particular drawing on the pediment of the gate, with two overlapping triangles and Latin inscriptions, recapitulates the title page in the 1677 edition of the alchemical book *Aureum Saeculum Redivivum* by Adrian von Mynsicht. The seven signs are taken from Johannes de Monte-Snyder, *Commentatio de Pharmaco Catholico* (1666), and follow the sequence of planets, associated with the correspondents' metals: Saturn-lead, Jupiter-tin, Mars-iron, Venus-bronze, Mercury, Antimony and Vitriol. The monument has numerous symbols and inscriptions used in alchemy which are now hard to read from the monument itself. But on the following page are the English transcriptions.







1. Above the door is a circle in which you can see two intersecting triangles, a symbol that many mystics will be familiar with. Around the inner circle surmounted by a cross is the Latin motto: “*The centre is in the triangle of the centre.*” And around the large circle is the Latin inscription which translates as: “*There are three marvels: God and man, mother and virgin, triune and one.*”
2. The Hebrew inscription beneath it, *Ruach Elohim*, means “*Spirit of God.*” Beneath it is another Latin inscription which translates as: “*A dragon guards the entrance of the magic garden of the Hesperides, and, without Hercules, Jason would not have tasted the delights of Colchis.*”
3. There are six sigils on the jambs, each with its own Latin phrase:
  - (a) Saturn/Lead: “*When in your house black crows give birth to white doves, then will you be called wise.*”
  - (b) Jupiter/Tin: “*The diameter of the sphere, the tau in the circle, and the cross of the globe bring no joy to the blind.*”
  - (c) Mars/Iron: “*He who can burn with water and wash with fire makes a heaven of earth and a precious earth of heaven.*”
  - (d) Venus/Bronze: “*If you make the earth fly upside down, with its wings you may convert torrential waters to stone.*”
  - (e) Mercury: “*When azoth and fire whiten Latona, Diana comes unclothed.*”
- (f) Antimony: “*Our dead son lives, returns from the fire a king, and enjoys occult conjugation.*”
- (g) On the base, Vitriol: “*It is an occult work of true wisdom to open the earth, so that it may generate salvation for the people.*”
4. And on the doorstep, “*SI SEDES NON IS,*” an ambiguous Latin quasi-palindrome, meaning both “*If you sit, do not go,*” and “*If you do not sit, go.*”
5. The standing figures on both sides are of the ancient Egyptian god Bes, patron of the home, childbirth and infants. These statues were moved here in 1888.

## The Garden

The gate was once a part of a wider plan of garden design. The villa garden had to be an ideal place where people could commune with Nature. The concept of a garden as a place of peace and meditation was common during the Renaissance and then on into the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The alchemist was an allegory of the erudite, the garden was the place of meditation, and the door was a symbol of passage from ignorance to wisdom, the threshold.

The Villa Palombara garden in this sense represented an enclosed garden, a garden of Eden par excellence where could be found the perfect fusion of man with God through the medium of Nature. And the garden set the scene for the alchemical practices of the Marquis: a scene that cared for intellectual and philosophical speculation, a microcosm extending its links with the universe, the macrocosm. *On YouTube you can find the Porta Alchemica on the Italian Grand Lodge's film at 2:36 to 2:50 in the Convegno di Roma 2014. AMORC Italia has also translated it into English on its own YouTube site.*

*Make a note in your diary: Rome will be the venue for the next Rosicrucian World Convention in the summer of 2019. Plan to be there!*



# BOOK Review



by *Bill Anderson*

## Self Mastery and Fate With the Cycles of Life

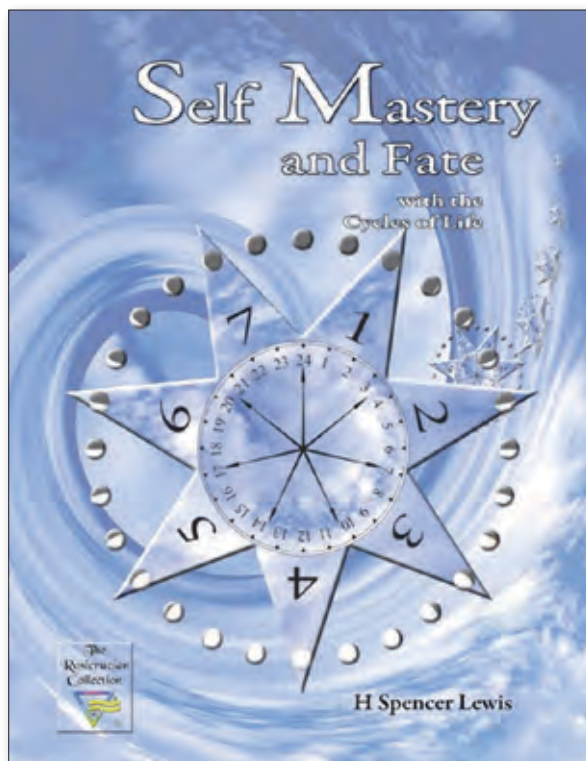
by *H Spencer Lewis*

**A**LTHOUGH not hard to absorb, this book is not for mere leisure reading. As the dedication suggests, it is aimed at those unique people who exist in all societies and countries of the world who actively seek to master their destiny. For those who dare take charge of their personal circumstances and to make things happen, rather than merely be swept along by the current, this book is essential reading.

During the century since the establishment of AMORC in 1915, the world has undergone a few key turning points, at least one of which could have led to the extinction of all human life. Today, although the world has reached levels of freedom far greater than ever before, it still faces several existential threats, all of which could have been avoided if sufficient people had understood the fundamental cycles that govern the affairs of all people, regardless of belief.

But despite the clear dangers which still exist, it is not too late to take positive steps to mitigate a future degradation of human life. We are at the beginning of what could be a new era of peace and prosperity for all, even for the poorest in society, and we're witnessing a long delayed bridging of the gap between the accumulated spiritual experiences of humanity and the theories and findings of modern science.

Over the past few decades, research has been going on into the study of the phenomenon known as synchrony. This concerns the harmony of the universe and the emergence of order out of chaos. Scientists marvel at the order and harmony at work seemingly everywhere, and see cycles and patterns fitting together like clockwork, and silently affecting our lives at every level. The tendency to synchronise is one of the most far-reaching drives in the universe, from atoms to people to planets. Steven Strogatz, a leading researcher in chaos and complexity theory, says in his book *Sync, Rhythms*



*of Nature, Rhythms of Ourselves: "...at the heart of the universe is a steady insistent beat, the sound of cycles in sync. It pervades nature at every scale from the nucleus to the cosmos."*

So, if there is an emergent science of synchrony at work now, why should we read a book that was first published in 1929, 86 years ago? The answer is simple. Like the Rosicrucian teachings themselves, the system explained in this book is timeless. It is as relevant today as when it was written. Its 17 chapters reveal how you can master the tasks and challenges you will face as your fate or karmic obligations unfold before you while travelling the highways and byways of life. You will have the basic tools necessary to learn how to direct your destiny using the principles behind the many and varied cycles of life. You need to read it. You need to live it.

Dr Lewis' book claims to have a unique and dependable system, and there is no shortage of explanatory charts and diagrams explaining in simple terms concepts which in other areas of life may seem quite daunting. Expressing themselves through cycles upon cycles of vibrations, Cosmic laws reveal a world of inherent simplicity and symmetry to anyone prepared to put Dr Lewis' system into practice. It is important to realise and observe that things always occur according to certain cyclical patterns, and that this periodicity of manifestation gives us golden opportunities to accomplish things in life. Nothing happens by chance and this then removes everything we do and everything that happens to us from the category of the unknowable. We have the means to take charge.

Readers are encouraged to very carefully digest the first few chapters of the book, for important though easily understood principles are revealed here. It is only through





understanding these principles, before applying the cycles to your own life, that you can reap the greatest rewards by living in harmony with the rhythms of the universe.

A mysterious universal rhythm produces the various cycles available for us to use. Rosicrucians are taught that all energy in the universe has a single source and that from this source, patterns in space-time emerge which manifest to us as vibrations. These undulations have degrees of complexity, from the elementary, as in music, to the highly complex as the neural electromagnetic energy given off by a human brain. The vast majority of vibrations are not in phase with each other except during special periods of time, short or long, when they operate for a while in lock-step with each other and become recognisable as cycles or vibrations which occur in ways that make certain things possible, and others either impossible or very difficult to accomplish. These are what Dr Lewis refers to as the "Cycles of Life", and his system allows us to grasp opportune moments when they arise and remain inactive as far as possible during periods when our the time is not right to act.

Everything that possibly could exist, already exists in the so-called 'eternal present.' And the only reason we do not experience everything at once is because our linear consciousness cannot apprehend all time and all space instantly, or in a short span of time. We are 'in kilter' with only the minutest segments imaginable of all that exists both space and time-wise, and we need therefore to manage our efforts and guide them so as not to waste our precious, hard-won resources. Cooperating with the Cycles of Life therefore is a very useful thing.

All things manifest in accordance with clusters of cycles or rhythms distinctly their own, and humans and their activities are no exception. The cycles are known as the 'rhythm of life' when applied to our own lives or as cycles of progression when applied to our material affairs. Therefore each person has a cycle of existence that is divided into identical periods for all members of the same species. The cycle begins with the first breath of life and lasts to our eventual transition.

In the primary cycle, our life is divided into seven-year periods. The reason for this is discussed more fully in the book. Chapter 6 discusses the complex annual cycle of human life. The 365 days of the year are divided into seven equal periods, starting from your birthday. While the periods remain identical for every person, the start date is unique to each individual. Dr Lewis illustrates this calendar with a chart, using his own birthday, then goes on to explain the meaning behind each of the periods of this personal cycle. Through the ages people have observed that certain things tend to happen at certain periods in the personal cycle, and Dr Lewis gives a detailed but simple explanation of the influences in each period.

Chapter 7 deals with the business cycle. As with human lives, all businesses have 'lives' of their own, each with a beginning, a cycle of progression and inevitably one day and end. There are many inner and outer influences on businesses, which all have their own part to play in determining the positive or negative nature of a particular cycle. Chapter 8 encourages you to analyse the way things have gone in the past, recognise the validity of the outline given in this chapter, and if you see a concurrence, to act on it using the principles of the book.

In the following two chapters, chapter 9 deals first with the health cycle, and then chapter 10 deals with the illness and reproductive cycles, which, interestingly enough are lumped together in the same chapter. While the former chapter is based again on your birthday, the latter discusses the influence of the lunar cycle. Studies have shown that various phases of the moon coincide with changes in the human body as well as fertility. While this rhythm may be more noticeable in women, men too have their monthly cycles. As illness and sexual reproduction are dependent on the rhythms of the human body, this explains why a chapter is devoted to the two combined.

Chapters 11 to 13 discuss the daily periods. Your 24-hour day is divided into seven equal periods, and these chapters describe the various periods, their influences and how to use them to your best advantage. These are two very, very important chapters and it is well worth your while remembering them.

The Soul cycle is discussed in the last three chapters, 14 to 17. Each period is divided into two polarities, giving rise to 14 combinations of conditions. These affect the inner personality or nature of each individual and can be very subtle. There is another chart showing each of the periods and how to calculate the two polarities within each period. The hour of your birth, the place of your birth, or even the year of your birth has nothing to do with this particular system. The cycle always starts on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, which is incidentally a date of special importance to Rosicrucians. To find your own particular period of the Soul cycle, your period starts with the date of your birth. For example, I was born on 29<sup>th</sup> September, so that makes me period number 4, polarity B, which makes for an interesting read!

*Self Mastery and Fate* is a testimonial to the rare knowledge possessed by Rosicrucians down the ages, and to the high character, motives, ideals and activities of those who devote their lives unselfishly through the Rosicrucian Order for the benefit of all people. If you don't already have this book, it should be your next purchase. Do get it, read it and apply its principles.

**"Self Mastery and Fate"** is available from  
<https://www.amorc.org.uk>.





*by Bob Kogel  
Grand Administrator for the  
English Grand Lodge for Australia,  
Asia and New Zealand*

# Turmeric

**W**ATCHING MY mother cook Indonesian food was always an amazing sensory experience as each spice added would fill the kitchen with rich and varied aromas. However, the bright yellow Turmeric spice always had a particular fascination to me due to its colour. These days when I cook various curries I usually include turmeric

which you can now buy fresh from the supermarket as well as in the yellow powder form.

Turmeric grows wild in the forests of Southeast Asia. Plants are gathered annually for their rhizomes, and propagated from some of those rhizomes in the following season. When not used fresh, the rhizomes are boiled for several hours and then dried in hot ovens, after which







*The Curcuma Longa plant is used to make Turmeric.*



*Turmeric has many long term health benefits.*



## Curry May Slow Alzheimer's Disease

they are ground into a deep orange-yellow powder.

Turmeric has become the key ingredient for many Indian, Indonesian and Thai dishes and it is a significant ingredient in most commercial curry powders. It is also widely used as a spice in Middle Eastern cooking and many Persian dishes use turmeric as a starter ingredient for almost all Iranian fry ups. Turmeric has a distinctly earthy, slightly bitter, slightly hot peppery flavour and a mustardy smell.

Turmeric is commonly called *haridra* or *haldi* in India. Turmeric is popularly known in English as *Manjal* and turmeric powder is known as *Mañcal tũl* in the Tamil language. In Tamil Nadu in India, the city of Erode is the world's largest producer and largest trading centre of turmeric in Asia. For these reasons, Erode is also known as the *Yellow City*. Turmeric is considered highly auspicious in India and has been used extensively in various Indian ceremonies for millennia.

Even today it is used in every part of India during wedding ceremonies and religious ceremonies. In recipes outside Asia, turmeric is sometimes used as an agent to impart a rich, custard-like yellow colour. It is used in canned beverages and baked products, dairy products, ice cream, yogurt, yellow cakes, orange juice, biscuits, popcorn colour, sweets, cake icings, cereals, sauces, gelatines.

Turmeric (coded as E100 or Natural Yellow 3 when used as a food additive) is used to protect food products from sunlight and is used to colour cheeses, yogurt, dry mixes, salad dressings, winter butter and margarine. Turmeric is also used to give a yellow colour to some prepared mustards, canned chicken broths and other foods often as a much cheaper replacement for saffron.

Over many years there have been many scientific studies on various spices and herbs trying to find new cures or rediscovering old ones for many of today's ailments. Therefore, I was not surprised to hear that turmeric has been the subject of these studies and in 2001 the following news item appeared on the BBC News.

A spicy ingredient of many curries may be an effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease, say researchers. A team from the University of California at Los Angeles believes that turmeric may play a role in slowing down the progression of the neurodegenerative disease. The finding may help to explain why rates of Alzheimer's are much lower among the elderly in India than in their Western peers. Previous studies have found that Alzheimer's affects just 1% of people over the age of 65 living in some Indian villages.

Dr Richard Harvey, director of research at the Alzheimer's Society, said:

*Turmeric is found in everything from mild Kormas to the hottest Vindaloos. The crucial chemical is curcumin, a compound found in the spice. Curcumin has both anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.*

Alzheimer's is linked to the build up of knots in the brain called amyloid plaques. In the study, Turmeric reduced the number of these plaques by half and reduced Alzheimer's-related inflammation in the brain tissue. The researchers also found that turmeric had other health benefits and found it aids digestion, helps fight infection and guards against heart attacks.

The *U.S. National Institutes of Health* currently has registered 19 clinical trials underway to study use of dietary turmeric and curcumin for a variety of clinical disorders. A further search on the internet has also shown up the following interesting research. A molecule found in a curry ingredient can kill cancer cells. Reuters said:

*Researchers at the Cork Cancer Research Centre in Ireland treated esophageal cancer cells with curcumin – a chemical found in the spice turmeric, which gives curries a distinctive yellow*



# Twenty Reasons to Add Turmeric to your Diet

colour – and found it started to kill cancer cells within 24 hours. The cells also began to digest themselves, they said in a study published in the British Journal of Cancer.

*Previous scientific studies have suggested curcumin can suppress tumors and that people who eat lots of curry may be less prone to the disease, although curcumin loses its anti-cancer attributes quickly when ingested.*

*Sharon McKenna, lead author of the Irish study, said her study suggested a potential for scientists to develop curcumin as an anti-cancer drug to treat esophageal cancer. Cancers of the esophagus kill more than 500,000 people across the world each year. The tumours are especially deadly, with five-year survival rates of just 12 to 31 percent. McKenna said the study showed curcumin caused the cancer cells to die “using an unexpected system of cell messages.”*

*Normally, faulty cells die by committing programmed suicide, or apoptosis, which occurs when proteins called caspases are ‘switched on’ in cells, the researchers said. ‘But these cells showed no evidence of suicide, and the addition of a molecule that inhibits caspases and stops this ‘switch being flicked’ made no difference to the number of cells that died, suggesting curcumin attacked the cancer cells using an alternative cell signalling system.*

In Ayurvedic practices, turmeric has been used as an anti-inflammatory agent and remedy for gastrointestinal discomfort associated with irritable bowel syndrome and other digestive disorders. Some may use turmeric in skin creams as an antiseptic agent for cuts, burns and bruises. It is popular as a tea in Okinawa, Japan.

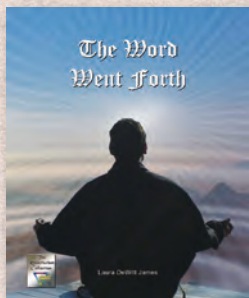
**Contraindications:** Turmeric should not be used by people with gallstones or bile obstruction. Though turmeric is often used by pregnant women, it is important to consult with a doctor before doing so as turmeric can be a uterine stimulant.

Turmeric can also be taken in powder or pill form. It is available in pill form in most health food stores, usually in 250–500mg capsules. The above should be enough information to convince you to eat and enjoy a curry dish containing Turmeric tonight with its many health giving properties!

1. It is a natural antiseptic and antibacterial agent, useful in disinfecting cuts and burns.
2. When combined with cauliflower, it has shown to prevent prostate cancer and stop the growth of existing prostate cancer.
3. Prevented breast cancer from spreading to the lungs in mice.
4. May prevent melanoma and cause existing melanoma cells to commit suicide.
5. Reduces the risk of childhood leukemia.
6. Is a natural liver detoxifier.
7. May prevent and slow the progression of Alzheimer’s disease by removing amyloid plaque build-up in the brain.
8. May prevent metastases from occurring in many different forms of cancer.
9. It is a potent natural anti-inflammatory that works as well as many anti-inflammatory drugs but without the side effects.
10. Has shown promise in slowing the progression of multiple sclerosis in mice.
11. Is a natural painkiller and cox-2 inhibitor (an enzyme responsible for pain and inflammation).
12. May aid in fat metabolism and help in weight management.
13. Has long been used in Chinese medicine as a treatment for depression.
14. Because of its anti-inflammatory properties, it is a natural treatment for arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.
15. Boosts the effects of chemo drug paclitaxel and reduces its side effects.
16. Promising studies are underway on the effects of turmeric on pancreatic cancer.
17. Studies are ongoing in the positive effects of turmeric on multiple myeloma.
18. Has been shown to stop the growth of new blood vessels in tumours.
19. Speeds up wound healing and assists in remodelling of damaged skin.
20. May help in the treatment of psoriasis and other inflammatory skin conditions.







### The Word Went Forth

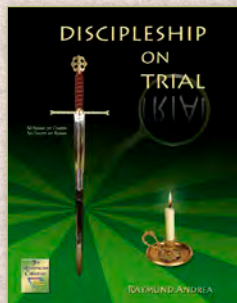
– by *Laura DeWitt James* - 88 pages / softback – Code: 1085 – £8.95

IN A STORY-LIKE manner, the author demonstrates from a physical and metaphysical point of view, the nature of reality through the medium of vibrations. Through simple examples and analogies involving repetitive motion, we are introduced to the fundamentals of creation. Elements such as light, sound and other forms of vibration are brought together to form the reality of the seen and unseen worlds in which we live.

### Flower of the Soul

– by *Raymund Andrea* -- 496 pages / softback -- Code: 964 -- £14.95

THIS BOOK is a collection of essays and private letters written by the author, one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's foremost mystics. The author corresponded with fellow mystics and wrote in many prestigious journals about an alternative world-view which challenged complacency and urged all seekers of spiritual revelation to call upon the inner core of goodness and strength that guides humanity to ever greater heights of spiritual discovery.



### Discipleship on Trial

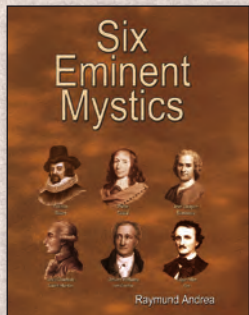
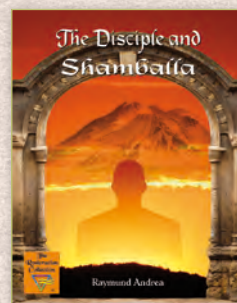
– by *Raymund Andrea* - 152 pages / softback – Code: 900 – £10.95

WRITTEN AGAINST the backdrop of the darkest days of the Second World War, when the author's home city of Bristol was being bombed daily, the momentous events of two world wars in the space of twenty five years had markedly affected the psyche of nations and brought humanity to a crossroads in history. What was also facing a crossroads was 'discipleship', a concept the author eloquently develops in this book.

### The Disciple and Shamballa

– by *Raymund Andrea* - 120 pages / softback – Code: 901 – £10.95

THIS BOOK gives an unsurpassed account of the highest altitudes of the mystic way, the universal path of spiritual enlightenment. Written in 1960 in the author's 78<sup>th</sup> year, one cannot help but be moved by the gentle urgency of his spiritual devotion to the highest realms of holiness, and his earnest attempts to inform the reader of the landscape of the highest realms of sanctity known to humankind.



### Six Eminent Mystics

– by *Raymund Andrea* - 280 pages / softback – Code: 1063 – £14.95

THIS COLLECTION of essays delves into the lives of six eminent literary figures of the past who, quite apart from mastering the art of writing, also conveyed clear signs of spiritual aspiration of the sort found only in the lives of eminent mystics and spiritual leaders. Each author brings one or more major contributions to the corpus of esoteric wisdom we take for granted as obvious truths today.



The Rosicrucian Collection is a catalogue of books devoted to Rosicrucian mysticism. All books in the collection focus on metaphysical, spiritual and philosophical topics aimed at serious students of mysticism, and those seeking enlightenment. The above books represent a selection of the many titles either in print or about to be published. If you wish to purchase any of them, contact us using the address details on the right, or purchase online at [www.amorc.org.uk](http://www.amorc.org.uk).

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The sun, going down, lays its cheek  
against the earth to rest.

The breeze lifts the coattails of the  
hills. The skin of the sky is as  
smooth as the pelt of the river.

How lucky we are to find this spot  
for our sojourn, with doves  
cooing for our greater delight.

-- Muhammad ibn Ghalib  
ar-Rusafi (died 1177)

