

Rosicrucian Heritage



March 2014, Vol 21 No 1

Find the Deeper YOU

Finding out who we really are and what incredible things we can achieve is one of the few really important things we should accomplish in life. It takes surprisingly little to understand the privileged state of our existence on earth, and how precious our limited time is. How many people truly take time to treasure it, and use their hidden talents for the good of all life on our precious planet?

If you seek a closer connection with all that surrounds you..., if you seek a deeper appreciation of all things on earth..., if happiness, peace and justice for all is what you seek..., then learn to commune with your deeper self.

By reading this magazine you have an open mind, and this message was meant for you! To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order contact us at...

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Cover spread

**Mathematical Hall,
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Sanctum Musings



by Kenneth U Idiodi, FRC

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Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC*

The Light Entrusted to You

A LABEL QUESTION frequently used on web pages as a means of drawing our attention to popular issues that other persons are viewing on the internet is “*What is trending?*” These are usually classified into trending items in politics, sports, celebrity gossip, developments in health, science, technology, etc., and going to any of the many trending links is an easy way of finding interesting matters on the worldwide web.

When a large number of persons are interested in a development or news item it is very likely that many more persons would be similarly interested or excited. This is because we share a lot of the same interests and attractions with other people. We are even influenced by other people’s interests in that we are often urged to like something by the mere fact that most people we know seem to like it.

We Are All Copycats

Our tendency to imitate one another is probably the most dominant feature of the human personality. We are all copycats in one way or another, regardless how we look at it. This is not necessarily a bad thing of course, for humans, like many animals learn most naturally and easily

through copying. We can observe it easily in babies and young children. As they grow up, their speech mannerisms, gestures and expressions are easily traced to persons around them who they are mimicking involuntarily. This tendency continues into adulthood as can be seen in popular trends in clothing, music, religion, politics, etc., which sweep through groups of people across the world.

The pressure of customs and tradition on the human consciousness are so great that they practically mould the average mind into their image. We follow the line of least resistance when we do the same things that others do. A kind of ‘herd mentality’ develops in most people, resulting in the suppression of arising thoughts that do not fit in with the prevailing philosophy of our peer group. In this way, thinking becomes limited and boxed in within certain rigid mental boundaries.

Thinking Outside the Box

Fortunately, not everyone is like this. Some people have dared to think outside the box, such individuals become pioneers in new fields of human endeavour. They are our inventors, our founders of religion, our creative artists and leaders of political revolution. Nelson Mandela like



other oppressed South Africans felt the indignities of the apartheid system that was in place in his country. In reference to this he said:

“A steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people.”

However, when he was released from prison he did something very unusual and so profound that he earned the love and respect of people all over the world, cutting across tongue, tribe and religion. Madiba, as he was affectionately known, sincerely and unconditionally forgave his captors and oppressors. This was due to a deep inner realisation which he explained in the following words: “As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.”

The progress of the human society rests squarely on the contributions of these somewhat unconventional people who incidentally form a very minute percentage of the human population. It would appear that most of us are incapable of original thought. The ideas most people convey seem to be merely unedited playbacks of things they have heard somewhere. Certainly we all have the ability to formulate thoughts that have their source in our innermost being. No other person has access to your inner self. The thoughts thus formulated could therefore be described as original and will have a freshness and novelty associated with it. Original thoughts are ‘created’ and people who therefore produce original thoughts, are said to have a creative imagination.

What do persons who belong to this small exclusive group of creative thinkers have that others lack? The answer is nothing much really. Everyone is inwardly a creative thinker since every individual has something unique to offer the world. While it is true that we are all one and the same in essence, it is also true that each of us occupies a unique position in space and time, thereby providing each person with a special perspective that no other person could possibly have.

The Joy of Creative Service

It requires courage and conviction to be the only one to put forward a position that has never been considered before. There is an exhilarating feeling of self-worth and gratitude that comes to those who put forward new ideas that change the course of things for the better. Few experiences can compare with the joy of creative service. Life is always worth living when we employ our natural

creativity to our daily living. The philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson encouraged everyone to express their innermost thoughts even in the presence of opposing views. In his own words:

“To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, — that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment.

“Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men wished but what they thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his.

“In every work of genius we recognise our own rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humoured inflexibility and mostly when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else, tomorrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.”

Identifying Creative Thought

A note of warning must be sounded here that original or creative thinking is not just about being different. There are a lot of different ways of doing things that are many times worse than what is conventional. Our ideas must be put through a careful and intellectual scrutiny. Sometimes a little refinement may be needed, at other times we may have to keep our ideas to ourselves for a more appropriate time. When we have not learnt how to connect to our real self we may mistake some stray idea as a creative thought just because it is different. We must not be desperate about seeking out our original thought streams. The discordance of anxiety thus produced would be counterproductive to our endeavour.

It is one thing to receive an inner Cosmic impulse and quite another to translate it into an idea. It is yet another matter to know how to present a good idea to other persons. Who you present your ideas to and the timing of it, must be right. It has been said there is nothing more



powerful than an idea whose time has come. The actions we take towards facilitating the working out of our ideas are also important. In all of these we can be guided when we turn our thoughts inwards for direction.

To think creatively we must develop the technique of effectively turning our thoughts inwards to reconnect with our real self. This involves being able to relax the body and silence any random thoughts that may be racing through the mind. When we find our true self we must have the courage to express whatever is revealed to us. Let us remember the old saying: “...*dare to do, and you will be given the power and ability to do it.*”

Our Cosmic Mission

The discovery of self and original thinking can be put to use in our immediate environment. You can start right in your home. What is your inner concept of an ideal home, and what can you do to bring your home closer to this ideal? In your place of work you may also seek inner guidance on how to carry out your duties and assist your colleagues to make the office function in the way you feel it should.

In your community or in your country, you may not be satisfied with the way some things are being done by the government. Even if you are not a government worker, you can make a difference if only you permit the Divine Intelligence to function through you. The negative habit of suppressing our God-given creativity will be neutralised when we cultivate the positive habit



of seeking always to facilitate the expression of the Divine force within our being.

So let each of us look upon our peculiar vantage point in the Universe as a special gift from our Creator. We stand as sentinels at specific positions in time and space through which Universal Intelligence monitors the activity of creation. If you are receptive you can become a conscious channel through which the Cosmic Mind performs its work. In other words we each have entrusted to us a sacred light which we can only be worthy of when we let it shine into the world. By doing this, we will be fulfilling our Cosmic mission. May we ever be worthy of the sacred Light with which we are entrusted.

He Who Does Not Learn Is Not Wise

We have made inquiries about the rules of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire and the Indian states. We have never rejected anybody because of their different religion or origin. We have not jealously kept away from them what we affirm. And at the same time we have not disdained to learn what they stand for. We should not forget the fact that to acquire knowledge of the truth and sciences are the most important aspects of life by which a king can adorn himself. And the most disgraceful thing for kings is to disdain learning and be ashamed of exploring the sciences. He who does not learn is not wise!





Be a Thinking, Active and Responsible Mystic



*by Christian Bernard
(Imperator of AMORC)*

YOU WILL BE READING this magazine either because you are a member of the Rosicrucian Order or you are interested in Rosicrucianism. You are a present-day mystic therefore, with your personal values, hopes and dreams. I put forward this article for you to reflect upon. It is taken from a message I delivered at a Rosicrucian Convention and has been adapted for this publication.

What does being a mystic mean? What is the place of mystics as the millennium begins? Can mystics of the 21st century exist and resist the ever-growing pressure of materialism? Who are such people? What role can they play in society? Can they still peacefully experience spirituality in these crazy times? Some say the constant and rapid progress of science is making such an abstract quest unnecessary; others say our society and its dictates are destroying our deeper values and stifling our mystical inclinations.

In the face of the breakdown in conditions, the unmitigated corrupting of moral standards, the deterioration of the environment and our way of living, is there still a reason for us to be mystics, and to conduct ourselves properly? I know you have your answer, just as I do, even if at some point in your life doubt, or a flicker of it, may have crossed your mind when you asked yourself this question.



Admittedly, what I'm saying is perhaps not going to tell you anything you don't already know, especially since all human archetypes and behaviours are inscribed inside us all, in our 'memory chromosomes'. At any moment, we can locate all the information we have registered in our present life and even in our previous incarnations, once we put ourselves into a deep meditative state. If we concentrate, tune into all our cells, and listen to the 'Master Within', it's possible for us to get in touch with the so-called 'primordial truths'. They are buried deep within us..., body, mind and soul, and remain forever engraved inside the human 'computer'.

In all periods and cultures, men and women have lived at the margins of their world, and have chosen to push back the frontiers of the commonplace, and break through into the mysterious. These individuals have asked themselves fundamental questions, the same ones which still occupy our minds. Where does Humankind come from? What is the reason for our existence? In what direction, and towards what goal, are we heading? Those who have asked themselves these questions have had what may be called a 'mystical opening up'. Such questioning has often been experienced, but is only rarely spoken of for fear of being judged, misunderstood or even ill-treated. But on occasion it has managed to make real sense for those I call 'free souls', among them Rosicrucians, now, just as in the past.

What is a Mystic?

But what is a mystic? Let's look first of all at an official definition:

"Mystic: A person subject to mystical ideas, with an intense religious faith and interested in the mysteries of religion. A person of fanatical character, whose ideas know no bounds."

On reading this last sentence, there is certainly good reason not to want to be regarded as a mystic. Fortunately, as members of the Rosicrucian Order we have another concept of mysticism. We know that a mystic is neither a blinkered, sectarian visionary, nor a fanatic. Those who have crossed our portals with such a mindset, through ignorance of our ideas and the teachings our Order transmits, will have had their real motivation found out in time, and will have long since left us. I have known a number of people like this, unfortunately, and do not envy what has become of them.

True mystics are not sheep in a bleating flock, quite

the opposite. They are first and foremost thinking, active, responsible individuals, whose thought processes are free from all bias. Within the Rosicrucian Order we see ourselves as permanent living question marks. That is all well and good, but only as long as we get answers, and in my view the best way to get them, as I was saying before, is to be thinking, active and responsible.

Think indeed, but think well! We must question ourselves about the soundness of what we do, what we say, what we feel. Thought is the foundation of the life we are constructing, now and in the future. We must know how to master our thoughts so as not to be on the receiving end of the destructive impact that inevitably results from negative reasoning and thinking.

While mystics are therefore thinking individuals, they must also be active ones. Fully aware of what

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purpose their lives are, their behaviour comprises service, tolerance, generosity, understanding, compassion and love, so as to set an example for Humankind. To be such good examples, and therefore positive testimonies

to the principles referred to as 'mystical', mystics must throughout their lives seek within themselves all that needs to be strengthened and improved. We are all a long way from perfection, but we can be radiant and show the way, providing we don't try to reform the conduct of others at any price, tempting though this may be when we see our fellow humans losing their way and embarking on dangerous paths.

Being an active mystic can be straightforward. All that is required is first of all to be genuine with oneself and with others, to be true in all circumstances. And being true does not mean speaking brusquely or rudely, or showing a lack of politeness or tact; it means being a true reflection of what we are, and not playing on the feelings of others, or saying one thing and doing another.

Personal Responsibility

As well as being thinking, active individuals, mystics must in addition be responsible people. When they have understanding, when they know something, they have an obligation to use that knowledge responsibly. This concept of responsibility is absolutely vital. Mystics are aware of the consequences of their behaviour. They understand how deep the import of their thoughts, words and deeds are, and know the outcomes they will produce. The more we advance on the path, the more we will be participating, and the greater the responsibility we must bear. We have





Why be surprised at being robbed or deceived financially if you are not vigilant and careful?

no choice other than to continue with our journey, for stopping would only defer our arrival, and in no way exempts us from the path to be travelled.

Mystics, or aspiring mystics, therefore have no alternative but to work harder and to become more aware. People who have not consciously embarked upon the path of life and its laws may, if they stray, hope for a certain leniency, particularly if they learn the lesson. But those who know, and who despite that knowledge act deliberately, are exposing themselves to more serious karmic consequences. While this does not exclude either side from being forgiven, the responsibility is evaluated in a different manner, along with the outcomes that result.

Where responsibility and understanding are concerned, we can take the well-known example of a car. It is a useful and even enjoyable means of transportation, but can become a thing of death and misery. It all depends on the way we drive, and this is what a sense of responsibility is.

In closing this most important concept of personal responsibility, I would like to tell you how much it shocks and saddens me when I notice in conversations or in correspondence that when misfortune comes their way, some members of AMORC, who have sometimes been on the Rosicrucian path for many years, are continuing to blame some person or other, neighbours, members of their family, colleagues, and so on; as if simply claiming that an imaginary enemy is practising witchcraft can

take away all responsibility from ourselves. Even young children, including babies, are being accused of being evil. Some are claiming that their wife or their husband is casting spells. And when it comes to mothers-in-law, is there any crime they are innocent of?

Behaviour such as this always alarms me, but you are aware of how much I endeavour to show a sense of humanism in all situations. Such instances often concern Africa and the West Indies, the traditions and ways of whose inhabitants I understand and respect, for do not think that I have any wish to stigmatise them. What goes for people in Africa and the West Indies also goes for far too many people throughout the world, including those in the West. India, South America, certain parts of Russia and China, and many other regions of our planet are affected also.

People who have many children shouldn't complain they're unable to feed them or give them an education. Children are not livestock we breed in order to be useful for us later on. Every single soul with whom we are associated through the little body of a child should receive our most careful attention. As in all things, it is quality, and not quantity, that must take precedence.

The churches have always advocated liberal reproduction; this has ensured a plentiful reservoir of the faithful and, until the recent past, a good supply of chattels, this nowadays being a lucrative godsend for those who sell armaments and medicines, the pharmaceutical laboratories, and so on. If you engage in extra-marital relationships don't be amazed if your husband or wife is angry and leaves you; or if you contract an illness, that it might be fatal.

Why be surprised at being robbed or deceived financially if you are not vigilant and careful? Is a road accident so surprising if you are driving badly, or if the condition of your vehicles and roads are substandard? No, you will surely agree. I'm not being hard on you, but these are the facts. Road accidents are not caused either by voodoo witches or by some wrong or evil thought. Why for instance would this be more the case in Africa than elsewhere in the world? Certain situations in life are difficult, and will be for a long time to come, if we refuse to change. Many people have a vested interest in populations vegetating away, caught between superstition and ignorance: I am not one of them!

Take Your Destiny in Your Own Hands

The years pass by and I am getting older. The time will soon come when I will be leaving my post as an Officer within AMORC, and then, as long as possible afterwards I hope, will come the time of my transition. As I do not





Be thinking, active and responsible to help acquire true understanding.

want to increase my karmic load, may I be reproached for not having made the most of the opportunity given to me throughout my term of office, in order to do good. As Emperor and as your brother, I implore you to evolve, and to take your destiny in your own hands; not by means of wars that bring delight to those who sell armaments, but by a revolution of consciousness, by bringing your thought processes under control, by refusing to be dragged downwards in the name of customs and traditions that are at times degrading.

Let us be modern, ground-breaking and innovative. How do we expect to benefit from progress if we simply think, speak and live exactly as our ancestors did? If we make a different choice though, let's accept the consequences of it; but let's also not be full of contradictions. I advise you to take on your responsibilities and to stop transferring your mistakes to other people. Think clearly about yourself, your capabilities and your surroundings. Some of you are no doubt finding me very harsh and are perhaps having negative thoughts about me, or at least not understanding me. As I was saying before, however, I am getting to an age where I cannot only speak to you as a brother, but also as a loving father. I would not be worthy of my office if I did otherwise.

Were I dishonest and of evil intent it would be easy for me to take advantage of all of this and manipulate people's minds. Over the course of human history so many people have exploited the weak and the distressed, that I feel ashamed for them. Yet I feel the same for their

victims, who have indeed been deceived, but who have also frequently displayed stupidity and irresponsibility. The famous French poet Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695) concluded his fable *The Crow and the Fox* by saying: "Every flatterer lives at the expense of those who listen to him." The meaning of this is that we must master our ego, for when it finds itself being flattered, we lose all notion of reality and can then easily be tricked. Unfortunately this is what happens far too often, and while we should certainly retain within us that quality known as 'trust', we must not be gullible. In absolute terms, we can understand and even forgive all who are in a state of ignorance, and who deceive others or are themselves deceived. Whether you are members of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis or simply reading this magazine, you will most likely have learned about this and already know of it.

To sum up the three concepts in this message up to this point: Be individuals who are thinking, active and responsible. True mystics acquire understanding but do not wallow in superstition; not to be confused of course with history, myth or tradition. Mystics also have their feet on the ground, look directly ahead of themselves, and have their eyes wide open to reality. And mystics are free individuals who have very often been through confrontation in order to fully experience the freedom of conscience and faith that they carry deep within themselves. History is unfortunately filled with many examples of this.

Mystics vs Religion

In contrast to mystics, religious people are part of groups with defined beliefs. These beliefs are in the tight grip of dogmas that are often very limiting and constraining, and have their laws, prohibitions and taboos. And this is where we may ask ourselves questions about what is normal. Who is normal, and who is not? Where do people stand in relation to what is normal? So-called 'normal' individuals are apparently those who fit into a plan set out by the society in which

they live. The moment people come out of this system and leave the established path to go in another direction, the moment they ask themselves questions and become interested in things other than the ones being presented to them..., they become abnormal; outside the norm.

When we look at the evolution of Humankind, it is clear that these so-called abnormal or non-conformist individuals are the ones who have moved things forward.

Mystics are free individuals who have often been through confrontations in order to fully experience the freedom of conscience and faith they carry within themselves.





Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695).

Inventors, researchers, scientists, philosophers and artists don't conform with the classic model of their time. Mystics may also be said to be outside the norm. I'm not referring here to religious people. The mystic's path is less of a straight line, but so much more interesting and stimulating.

As this article is primarily about mysticism, I'm now going to differentiate two categories of mystic for you, even though there are almost as many categories as there are mystics, since everyone is on their own quest. Firstly, there are those who are fully conscious of the esoteric enquiries they are undertaking; they have made considered choices and we might call such people conscious mystics. And then, secondly, there are the unconscious mystics who don't even know they have the attitudes of mystics. How they act is natural, innate. Whether they define themselves as atheists or mystics, they feel within themselves a passion, an inner feeling, a sort of latent energy that only seeks to express itself at certain times, which may be very short-lived, or may last several days or weeks. Deep within us we feel a sort of passion that could be defined as an illumination, a call to the heights, a sort of ecstasy or energy that is only seeking to express itself. I'm sure that during your life you've felt this sort of emotion and inspiration. This state of mind brings with it a fulfilment, a physical and mental well-being, a longing

Inventors, scientists, philosophers and artists do not conform with the classic model of their time.

for change, or the desire to give a new sense of direction to how we're living and what we're doing.

Throughout history, men and women have felt this inner passion, and it has led them to achieve great works. They have become guides for those of their times; like beacons of light for succeeding generations. There is a profound significance in each achievement, feat or concept that such men and women have left us, because these are works of their subconscious mind, of what we may call the inner being, the real and innermost self. This particular expression of the world comes alive and finds its outlet through their talents in the arts and many other fields. But it's not necessary to be an artist, poet, musician or painter in order to undergo this spiritual transformation. Neither do we need to be a philosopher, scientist or inventor to feel the fire within. Every person can experience this realisation, this positive change. Maybe the transmutation or alchemy to which I'm referring has acted as a trigger for you, a key which gave you access to the Rosicrucian path, or, at any rate, to a desire for something else.

Coming to the Surface from the Soul

Once we've grasped this mystical concept and assimilated it through our own experience, we at times experience the strange and elusive feeling that the physical, material world is unreal, merely an illusion. We may even experience a loss of contact with the things of everyday life, though it is fortunately only short-lived. It is as though principles and feelings not connected to our material world were coming to the surface from deep within our soul.

In this mystical surge, doubts can creep in, leading to a questioning of certain established things: our sense of values change, and we get their importance and benefit into proper perspective. We learn to ease off, to let go, to see life from another, more interesting, angle. An experience such as this can be a great step towards the acquisition of wisdom, and it's not as rare as we may imagine. There's no doubt

that everyone experiences this type of deep feeling at least once, hears the inner call and is sure to be disconcerted by how peculiar it is.

Once again though, we must accept it, and be honest enough to acknowledge that we have received this blessing and had this remarkable experience. This is what so-called atheists, who subscribe to absolute materialism, refuse to do. They believe that everything that can't be worked out or measured by the sense faculties is only an illusion,



Those who have been bold enough to push on the door and cross over its threshold have experienced what may be called 'illumination'; this light will ever be in their mind and heart in this present life and, beyond time and space, will be in their soul forever.

whereas the person who is open to spirituality accepts every mystical experience and inner sensation as a reality. Faced with all the richness of a mystical experience, the atheist will conceal what they are feeling, and decline to open the door that is before them, for fear of discovering beyond it a truth that goes against their principles; those principles which have been inculcated in them since they were born, or which they have fashioned for themselves over time. And for an atheist, this truth would constitute a calling into question, an insurmountable inner upheaval which they could not bear. It is as if the light, hidden away behind this particular door, would blind them forever.

Those who have been bold enough to push on the door and cross over its threshold have experienced what may be called 'illumination'; this light will ever be in their mind and heart in this present life and, beyond time and space, will be in their soul forever. A mystical experience of this nature is both most fundamental and most wonderful, at the same time. This opening of the door and the crossing of its threshold are, of course, simply a state of perception that leads to a greater state, whose development comes about through a continuous expanding of consciousness.

This can be depicted by the idea that we as human beings are able to be in contact with God. This type of experience happens often during our childhood, but the feelings brought about by it remain asleep a long time in the secrecy of our heart, and either do not re-awaken, or emerge only much later. Every person is a mystic without knowing it, yet who is likely at any moment to find a door which leads to a field of consciousness that is the Infinite.

This quest, often unconscious and not admitted to, can be difficult to complete on one's own, even if each individual is by definition single-handedly responsible for their decisions, thoughts, words and actions. It is something that members of the Rosicrucian Order recognise, for they have chosen to join with others journeying towards the same goal, under the protection of the same 'egregore'.

No Master and Pupil

In the illustrious Rosicrucian school, there is no master and pupil. There are just men and women who share the same ideal, and who have made the decision to open the door and move forward. Do we not say there is strength



in unity? By virtue of your own journey, you can describe yourself as a mystic, because a mystic is someone who lives in harmony with their objective consciousness, intuition and feelings. Being a mystic does not mean being perfect; it merely means being aware of what needs to be done in order to become perfect.

As well as using our objective faculties of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch, being a mystic is listening to our inner senses, and knowing how to use other forces and accessing other potentialities. How might someone become a mystic? Well, we might ask, what interest has the person had in spirituality? Why, and through what sort of questioning have they been led to a dialogue with God? This may have come about by means of specific circumstances that were pleasant and happy, but most often it is as a result of difficult or even tragic ordeals, which have brought about a change in state of mind and attitude within them.

Fear, suffering, pain, distress and illness are, like love, catalysts which mould people and temporarily close their objective consciousness. It is then that the miracle can occur and a fire, the sacred fire, can rise up from the deepest part of themselves and release their fervour, their creative power and desire for more, and for the better. It's rather like giving birth, for after the period of gestation there is born life and fulfilment.



That is why it is said: “the Word became flesh.” Our mind will have become creator, and our thoughts will have materialised in a work that reflects our deepest aspirations: our true self connected to the universal consciousness. The putting into effect of these natural, universal laws results from the combining of straightforward actions and processes, as in the construction of a building which is put up stone by stone. All we need is to know the laws, and how to put them into practice.

This understanding and methodology is what constitutes the difference between a consciously mystical person and one who is not, or one who is only occasionally consciously mystical, not yet being completely convinced. The conscious mystic experiences every thought and act to the full, whereas others will put up with things without understanding what is happening to themselves. Yet the cosmic laws are the same for everyone, whether they believe in them or not. The potentialities presented by the subconscious are so immeasurable, extraordinary, unlimited, that it is difficult or even impossible for our objective consciousness to have an appreciation of what they are.

Ask and it Will be Given to You

If you are reading this article as a Rosicrucian, you know that when you encounter a problem, you just need to put all the information or data concerning it into what I referred to at the beginning of this message as your personal ‘computer’, in other words, into your consciousness, and then ask your Inner Master to come back to you with the best solution: “Ask and it will be given to you.” But we must be sure that we ask with conviction, and that we are ready to attentively listen for the reply. And to hear the reply, you also know that you must ‘let go’ for if you hold on to your thought, it will not be able to rise up and be ‘received’.

If you follow this procedure properly, you will get a reply very quickly, in various and unexpected forms. For some this might entail coming across someone apparently by chance. For others, it might be reading something, hearing a song, a vision of something, a dream. When things ‘click’ like this, the mind often thinks “Why didn’t I think of this before?” Yes indeed! Everything seems easier when we know that the accomplishing of something, even if it is something complex, can be split up like a jigsaw puzzle and then put back together again; for while life may be considered as a single whole it is essentially composed of a succession of simple acts. It is the mind, often convoluted and seeking over-perfection, that complicates what we experience at every moment of our existence.

Unfortunately, we are too frequently outside of the reality of the present moment. We either remain in the past, buried in our memories and regrets, or we project ourselves into an imaginary future that is completely out of reach. This is why, as I said, it is always best to make the most of the present moment, even though we habitually recall the past and contemplate the future. Let us not miss, however, that which is all important in our life. That is what being alive is. That is what being true is. That is also what being a mystic is.

But why is it, and how is it, that we have moved away from this crucial principle? Quite simply, it is that we have allowed ourselves to be taken over, externally and internally, by what in a general sense is called the ‘consumer society’. We are enslaved to it, and in order to appease it we put a gag on our conscience, ordering the most positive side of our deeper self, our very nature, to be silent.

Denying the importance of the material aspect of life is, of course, out of the question. It is necessary and is a reality which faces us at every moment. But alongside this constant and unavoidable preoccupation we must also allow ourselves to be lulled not by the Sirens’ song, but by the music of those virtues and emotions which bring about a love of one’s fellow beings: kindness, courage, fairness, loyalty and a sense of sharing.

Taken over By Silence

Let us again show that we can allow ourselves to be taken over by silence, Peace Profound and inner joy. Let us be able to be in communion with God, with others, and with our Self. Let us use our intuition more, rather than blindly believing the sugar-coated words of advertising patter which exaggerate and deceive in every sphere, whether in commerce, politics or spirituality.

Mystics apply the understanding they have acquired, and know that intuition is an internal expression of themselves. They stay on their guard and take care not to get lost in an illusory world that will sweep them away into a frantic and pointless race, leading them nowhere. To go where, one might ask? To look for and find what? As perceived by a mystic, the state of Utopia is not an illusion; it is a goal to be attained, a search for the absolute, a hope, and a wish expressed.

The text Rosicrucian Utopia serves as a perfect example of this. But we can do better than just hope. This may perhaps not come about in our current incarnation. But without waiting for better times, we can set in motion the forces which are within us, while living, as I have said, in the present. Let us be thinking, active and responsible, and not the puppets of decadent forces and the playthings



of a society that is overly materialistic. Being a mystic also means cultivating intelligence and energy, even if this is done clumsily and imperfectly. An expression that I like and often use says, we should be able to 'push onwards.'

Never forget that every time we move onwards, the whole of Humanity does so with us. Let us walk on into a life that is real, one that is not limited to our own, nor to the time that we have in this incarnation. Let us walk on into that infinite space where everything becomes possible. In our 'real' lives, we have unlimited access to a great universal power, an everlasting and more reliable 'package' than what the phone companies are selling us. Once we become aware of what this 'real' life is, we are holding the key that grants us access to all the answers we are looking for, as well as to happiness.

But here again this concept relates to each individual and is therefore a very personal one. While in a general sense we can say that happiness is a state of perfect inner contentment, joy is a feeling of fulfilment, a strong and delightful emotion that bursts forth like a spark from within the deepest part of our being. Joy and happiness are not outside of us. They are the reflection of a facet of the Divinity that we carry within us, and there are several ways of feeling, experiencing and manifesting them. Some people may be extremely happy to find themselves in good health after a long and difficult illness. Others experience immense joy on receiving an undreamt-of sum of money, enabling them to get themselves out of a difficult situation. These instances are many and varied. We must understand, accept and take on board the joy and happiness that comes our way, for they are nothing other than the outflowing of life's essence within us, which we become conscious of by living the moment.

Picture yourself in a desert, totally parched with thirst. Wouldn't the greatest treasure in the world for you, at that moment, be a glass of cool water? Wouldn't you give all your material goods in order to avoid certain death? At such a time, nothing except this glass of water would be in your thoughts. But in your daily life, do you think of this when you quench your thirst? And yet this act is a source of a well-being, and leads to one kind of happiness.

The same applies to the air we have been breathing since the day we were born. Are we aware it is an ultrafine, subtle emanation of the Cosmic Consciousness?

Picture yourself in a desert, totally parched with thirst. Wouldn't the greatest treasure in the world for you, at that moment, be a glass of cool water?

Air is a link that connects us all: men, women, animal, vegetable and mineral. The air and its vital energy take their sustenance from the Earth, the oceans, lakes, rivers and streams. Everything that goes into creating its substance is returned to us, which is why we should show respect for our environment. That too is being a mystic!

By becoming aware of the importance of water and air, we are paying tribute to our Mother the Earth, to the whole of Nature, to Life, to God. There is complete harmony between the natural elements and human beings. Avoiding separation of oneself from the great All is to be wise and to have a responsible mystical attitude. And being a mystic is living in harmony with one's three bodies: the physical, the psychic and the spiritual body. And it is, therefore, by remaining in harmonious communication with the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, that we maintain our awareness that we are one, and cannot be separated.

Our Daily Conduct

How should mystics conduct themselves in everyday life? This is both a very simple and very complex question. Being a mystic means consciously shouldering one's responsibilities in one's family life, working life and spiritual life. Thinking, active, responsible mystics do not feed on what is negative and unhealthy. They choose wisely their relationships, which television programmes to watch, websites to visit, books to read, and so on. Nor do they make hasty judgments, and condemn without having tried to understand the why and how of things and events. The attitude of mystics is open; respecting everyone's right to be different and to exercise freedom of expression. They can give assistance, bringing calmness and speaking in a fraternal manner to whoever is in need of it. They accept philosophically, without becoming



disenchanted, the tests they undergo during life; for mystics are not exempt from lessons, they just find it a bit easier to learn them.

Mystics know they are the architects of their own happiness and of what they can expect from the future, avoiding many of their troubles. In their 'active' part they are helpful and cultivate this quality throughout life in accordance with their age and abilities, for of course no-one is expected to do the impossible. Mystics do not live outside the world but in it, through it, and for it. There is not much in everyday life that distinguishes a mystic from others, other than their humble, thoughtful and kind attitude. Mystics pray, meditate and thank the God of their heart for their blessings and lessons alike. They have no fear, though it does not stop them from being prudent and sensible. They know that a day of woe can still finish with a blazing sunset; they know that change is the only thing that goes on forever, and that this can lead to something better; if not better, then at least something else, a new adventure.

But the greatest change, an inevitable one that's frequently dreaded, is that of transition. It is in total peace of mind that mystics prepare themselves for this final initiation, which remains a painful mystery for those who do not know where this change, which seems like an end but is not, is leading them to. It is singularly from ignorance and fear that people must free themselves and push back the shadows, the boundary of the unknown. Being a mystic is therefore to have no fear of one's own death, and to prepare oneself for this state of consciousness which is to come. Having just referred to the fear and alarm which too often dwell within us, I would like to turn to an expression that will have escaped no-one in the last few years: the 'crisis'!

Ever since the world began, this concept has always existed and it will continue to exist, because everything is change; nothing goes on forever, everything passes. This famous 'crisis' does not really exist; we have put it in our minds ourselves, greatly helped by our politicians and the media. To speak of the crisis is to create it, to move into it. Why say to ourselves that catastrophe is irreversible and inevitable and is leading us to disaster, when what is going on is our continuous and natural transformation as Humanity. Were things really easier for our ancestors? Will they be more difficult for our descendants? Nothing

Mystics know that duty, well carried out, is an act of love and of service, and that for service to have its full meaning, it must be selfless, it must be a gift of oneself to others, joyously agreed to, and not undergone as a great sacrifice.

is certain, nothing is written! The destiny of Humankind and of the Earth that shelters us is going to continue its cyclic evolution. It is difficult at the moment to predict whether things will be better or worse; but what we can say with certainty is that they will be different. Mystics are aware of this, and therefore do not wallow in self-pity. They observe, analyse, adapt, agree to question themselves, tackle things, create and move forward. They use their knowledge and energy to develop within society, and all without agreeing to simply put up with things.

Responsibility

That brings us back to the concept of responsibility which I went into earlier. This responsibility is what we require, for we alone make our choices, and it is a mistake to count on the help of others or society to get us out of our difficulties. It is vital to take charge of our own affairs, yet without neglecting the fact that it's our duty to abide by the concepts of solidarity, fraternity and sharing.

Mystics also use their intuition a great deal, and endeavour to see into the future and to look beyond appearances. They read the souls and hearts of others, and do everything they can to rise up above suffering and despair, going past the clouds and glimpsing the sun. Being both on their own and connected to the great All,



they never forget that to accomplish great things we must first be able to do small things perfectly. Mystics know that duty, well carried out, is an act of love and of service, and that for service to have its full meaning, it must be selfless, it must be a gift of oneself to others, joyously agreed to, and not undergone as a great sacrifice. Love and giving should not be likened to suffering and renunciation, quite the reverse. Were this the case it would no longer be a question of love, but of masochistic behaviour. True service only gives rise to good feelings, and expects nothing in return.

Mystics do everything they can to cultivate and maintain four primary virtues, thereby warranting being called mystics: understanding, service, compassion and love. These virtues flow into one another and end up merging into a perfect unity, forming a single entity, and thereby moving us closer to the state of the Rosy Cross. But the road is long, and the ascent an arduous one, with its tests like so many stones on the track. Willpower, perseverance and trust are three further virtues that need to be manifested if we wish to achieve our spiritual elevation. We can do this together under the aegis of the sacred symbol of the Rosy Cross, thanks to all the experiences, pleasant and unpleasant, that we have already lived through, and will continue living through. The choice is ours, for we have our free will.

Three Questions

In summary and in conclusion, here are brief answers to three questions concerning what I have said.

- *Is it possible to be a mystic and to live in the 21st Century?* Yes, and not only is it possible, we have to be mystics. It is the only alternative that presents itself to Humanity.
- *What are mystics seeking?* To merge their souls into the absolute, to live in permanent communion with God; not by running away from the world and what is happening, but by mastering their lives in everyday things, even the most ordinary ones. Mystics allow the great light of their consciousness to illuminate their lives and actions. Their minds are not in a muddle, quite the reverse, they are lucid and clear. They have confidence in themselves and respond to problems by displaying courage.
- *How is a mystical person recognisable?* If you meet someone who is energetic, industrious in their work, compassionate, generous, respected by their friends, tolerant in religious and many other matters, able, through their approach and with a few simple words, to have you glimpse the cosmic splendour and power in all things, then you will have come in contact with a mystic.

Being a mystic is all of this, and more! Let us therefore be thinking, active and responsible! Let us also be enlightened and fraternal towards each other. And let us live in collaboration and in harmony with our fellow human beings, with Nature, the Cosmos, and with God. With feet on the ground and head in the stars, let us truly be mystics!

The eye through which I see God
is the same eye through which
God sees me.

My eye and God's eye are one eye,
one seeing, one knowing,
one love.

-- Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-1327)





Window on the World

by Shirley Elsbey

WE PROBABLY ALL KNOW people who turn dramas into crises, people with dour attitudes who see the glass not only half empty but virtually dry. It is very likely we also know people who buoy up those around them by making light of difficulties and spreading the warm glow of optimism.

One of the most destructive qualities a human can give way to is that of jealousy, believing they should have the good fortune which befalls others. Clearly they don't yet understand the 'Law of Karma.' The following heart-warming story has been reproduced many times over, especially since the internet arrived with the handy tools of cut and paste. We publish it here so you may ponder on it yourself, and perhaps find food for thought.

The Hospital Room Window

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window.

The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on holiday. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one

hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every colour of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band he could see it in his mind's eye as the man by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Then, unexpectedly, a sinister thought entered his mind. Why should the other man alone experience all the pleasures of seeing everything while he himself never got to see anything? It didn't seem fair.

At this first thought the man felt ashamed. But, as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and found himself unable to sleep. *He* should be by that window. That thought, and only that thought, now controlled his life.

Late one night as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit room as the struggling man by the window groped for the



button to call for help. Listening from across the room he never moved, never pushed his own button, which would have brought the nurse running in. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped, along with the sound of breathing. Now there was only silence; deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window she was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take him away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch and, after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all for himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed.

It faced a blank wall; only a blank wall. The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you," she said.

The story is often reproduced as being by an unknown author. A similar but greatly extended and embellished version, *The Man By the Window*, was published by Brooklyn-born Harry Buschman.

The American newspaper *The Morning News* ran an article in July 2011 suggesting the original was penned by writer Allan Seager and published first in the *London Mercury* of 1933 and then in *Vanity Fair* in 1934 under the title "The Street". The article credited British journalist Quentin Crewe with contacting Mr Seager, then a professor at Michigan University, and asking him if he wrote it. He confirmed that he did, revealing that it came from his personal experience. He was quoted as saying in the conversation:

"It happened to me. I was in a TB hospital. I was the guy without the window. The only difference was I always pressed the button."

**"Do not overrate what you have received,
nor envy others. He who envies others does
not obtain peace of mind."**

-- Gautama Buddha



JUXTAPOSITION

by Martha Pingel

WAITING ROOMS, whether they are in Airport terminals, railway stations, or bus depots, have one thing in common; namely, a curious mixture of composition and confusion. It is this 'juxtaposition' that forms the substance of an interesting lesson in life.

When we examine these two seeming opposites, we find that confusion precedes composition, and that composition is frequently the prelude to more confusion. One is meaningless without the other.

Composition is wholeness, unity, a prevailing sense of calmness and repose that means no inconsistent elements and no incongruities. Confusion, on the other hand, is disintegrative and inharmonious. Placed in juxtaposition, say in the personality, they become a strange force which we may utilise for good or ill.

A mob is a picture of confusion; left to itself it damages not only property but also the sanctity of the individual. A group acting together to fight a forest fire or to accomplish a rescue mission may seem confused, but actually paints a picture of composition, and illustrates humans as they should be.

Understanding little of the inner motives that make us 'confusion oriented' or 'composition oriented', we are pushed and pulled both ways, and become as changeable as the weather, filled with tension and anxiety.

Through practise we may as mystics learn to take the elements of confusion and redirect them into a more orderly, composed state. By our own efforts we create for ourselves that Peace of Soul which allows us to live in the world, and at the same time to transform a small part of it.



The Lessons of Life



by TKO Obih

FOR MANY PEOPLE, including students on the path, life is a series of ceaseless conflicts and difficulties, involving the trial of personal adjustment. For many, the spiritual path provides the only real escape from these continuous problems. But problems of one kind or the other will always cross our paths until we have come to realise their true value to us as valuable lessons of life that we must learn, assimilate and rise above.

These conflicts are very real, and never too far from us, for the fact of the matter is that we all need them if we are to grow and progress in life both spiritually and materially. Millions of people spend large amounts of money, time and effort in finding a certain elusive happiness through alcoholism, drugs, holidays, tourism, etc., which they hope will take them away from their difficulties and the problems they face each day. But it is a grand illusion, for the problems faithfully follow them wherever they go.

Ascension of Consciousness

Actually our problems are blessings in disguise, if we see them in their true perspective. Mystical ascension means that by facing our daily problems with insight and composure, we learn to raise our consciousness to a higher level of understanding, permitting a broader and more detached view of our daily situations so we see how best to deal with them.

Accepting the circumstances of our present life and of the universe in which we live is imperative. We so often try to place the responsibility for our problems upon others, blaming them for all our difficulties and the restrictions which have been placed on our so called freedom. We suddenly turn superstitious, and exhibit behaviours that suggest that someone somewhere must be doing this or that to either ruin our lives or harm us



in some way. But these problems, when viewed from an elevated consciousness, are clearly seen to be of our own making, even if by association, because we share in the karma of those around us, one then more readily adjusts to the lessons inherent in the problems themselves.

A Flexible Approach

One of the causes of many of our daily problems is the rigid and inflexible attitude we hold towards some of our circumstances. The lessons of life teach that we must learn to adjust to all events and conditions confronting us. This is not to suggest that we must bend the way the wind blows, but it does mean that by holding an open mind and a loving heart we will see all the more wisely how to act and respond in any set of circumstances.

Problems in life often arise because of things we do or don't do. In other words, a lot of the time, we are wholly responsible for the situations we get into. Therefore, facing them with an open mind and solving them is a form of compensation. We are constantly influenced by the thoughts, words and actions of others, whether in our immediate circle of colleagues or even just the people we see on the TV news. As we aspire to live a more spiritual life, we gradually become more aware of the suffering of others. If we remain inflexible, or worse still, if we become antagonistic to such exposure and influence, we will as a result experience more and more problems in our daily affairs, as a direct karmic response to our refusal to accept good naturedly the evolutionary lessons we are being given.

Detachment

Ascension of consciousness which comes about by mystical aspiration and the study and practice of higher spiritual laws, allows us to rise above these influences. We can never be indifferent or be totally free from the challenges of life, for it is our destiny in this incarnation to face various issues and master them, not run away from them. We may have set into motion various karmic reactions on ourselves through our own actions or inactions, either in previous incarnations and or in the present one, but one thing is certain, we are in the end the true architects of our present destiny, and must therefore with good humour take responsibility for what we do or fail to do.

Our only escape is to aspire to reach ever higher and more inclusive states of consciousness, where harmful influences no longer have any power over us, so that we become not indifferent to them but impersonal and fully detached from them. In other words, the temptations

presented by harmful influences no longer present a challenge of conscience for us; in fact they are no longer temptations for us at all. What happens though when we do not detach ourselves from harmful influences? What happens if we fall for them by simply ignoring them, and thereby go against our conscience? We are likely to find ourselves being thrust back into their influence, because life is a school of discipline, a temporary school which prepares us for the real and greater life of service, and only by living life to the full, experiencing all its problems and rising above them, can we attain mastership.

Growing in Understanding

Many of us are always asking and looking for the so called principle to resolve even the simplest of life's challenges without any effort on our part to learn the lessons from such challenges. Under such circumstances, the so called problems of life keep repeating themselves because we have failed to make any conscious effort at understanding the lessons which they try to teach us.

The Cosmic influences always bring change in the upward spiral of evolution. We are part of the Cosmic and must become receptive to its benevolent influences. With a flexible and open mind devoid of superstition, and a sensitive and loving heart, we can grow in consciousness and understanding in preparation for the greater life that awaits us.

The dedicated heart opens the door to mystical revelations in its aspirations to the highest envisaged ideals. It serves as a channel through which the aspirant assists himself and humanity in general. Life is the school where we learn these lessons which are necessary for our individual progress and it is the area where we give back to the world that which is being expressed through us, and express the love and the spiritual benediction which God has granted us.

Life is not all struggles if it has been so with you. Look at life from a positive perspective. Desist from seeing the lessons of life as problems that have been placed on your path to make you suffer. Rather, try to learn the lessons such problems have come to teach. Learn the lesson once and for all so that you don't go through such problems again.

**“The secret of life though, is
to fall seven times and
to get up eight times.”**

-- Paulo Coelho, Alchemist



The Mystical Lincoln and his Mission

*“The foundations of his character more
than any man’s in history were
mystical and spiritual.”*

-- Walt Whitman --

by Alpha L Wolfe

AS WE REVIEW the facts given in various biographies on the life of Lincoln, we find much that is of interest to one who seeks spiritual revelation. Abraham Lincoln is revered by the average American because of the mission he fulfilled for humanity, preserving the national unity of the United States, and abolishing slavery. To us who are more concerned with the foundations of his mystical personality, there is much to be found that is characteristic of the mystical nature which can be traced to the source so as to view the man as a mystic.

Like that of the great master Jesus of Galilee, Lincoln’s lowly birth and tragic death are two outstanding events in a life of service for humanity; for a mystic is first of all a lover of humanity and devoted to a life of service in a great cause. The specialised subjects of Lincoln’s education might be said to be a knowledge of the common people



Lincoln's greatest moral and humanistic victory was delivering African people from the bondage of slavery.

and their government. He believed that God loved the common people "because he made so many of them." He understood their thoughts, emotions and motives. Their emotional weaknesses often led to difficulties at critical times, but Lincoln had great patience with their egotism and false pride. His own attitude was expressed in a favourite poem, "*Why Should the Spirit of Mortals be Proud?*" and his deep humility is one of the strong marks of mysticism in his character.

It is said of Lincoln that he became the leader of the people at a time of crisis, through the supreme power of his personality. What had contributed to power of personality is best understood as we review his early life of adversity and his hunger for knowledge. We might say that great aspirations are the source of any great personality. "*I will study and prepare, for my time will come*" must have been the guiding light for his seeking spirit as it grasped every opportunity for knowledge which was presented, and made the most of it. His great suffering for lack of mental food was more than compensated for by the habit of entering the silence which was considered one of his most outstanding personality traits as president. He became an original thinker as he persistently dug to the foundation of facts, and rearranged and classified them in his memory for quick recall when new suggestions were presented. Nothing seemed to escape his observation and analysis, as he went below the surface to the first origin and cause of facts and principles observed.

His great love of Truth and his terrible pursuit of error were clearly a source of worry to his legal and political opponents. What appeared to be the dreamer's attitude in Lincoln was the manifestation of this weighing, calculating and viewing of the subject from all its angles in search for a satisfactory understanding for his acceptance. It is also said that his reason ruled all his other faculties with clearness, force and comprehension.

Commentaries

Mr Dubois, an intimate associate of Lincoln for 25 years, found the depths of the foundations of his character and personality hard to understand. He felt he never really knew the man whom we regard as a mystic. He had this to say concerning his habit of entering the silence, a beautiful commentary:

"These mystical moods isolated and exalted him above his ordinary life. The unapproachable grandeur of this man was remarkable when he was in the mood of inner silence. He seemed to live by himself, yet outside of himself."



Mr Herndon, a law partner for 20 years, also pays a great tribute to him in the following:

"Nature had burned into him the holy fire and stamped him with her seal of greatness. With great calm of mind and serenity of soul he viewed the whole of life's orbit with clearness of vision where others fretted over accidental happenings and minor details."

If we seek the source of this inner serenity and peace, we can find it in the tenets of mysticism as revealed in his deep conviction that everything exists for a purpose in the 'Divine Order of Things'. It is said that he neither sought experiences nor forced issues, but calmly awaited the course of events disposing of each in the light of intuitive understanding, with reason and judgment guiding all his decisions.

He awaited with outward calm the turn of events in the most trying times of the war, trusting in the invincible providence to carry forward the 'Great Purpose'. At one time when in doubt as to the outcome of the Civil War he said "*There is nothing left for the heart of man but to take up faith and believe where it cannot reason.*" At another time he expressed himself: "*I do not know anything about God being with us, but I am fearfully interested to know if we are with God.*" We might say that Lincoln bore the marks of a mystic up to the time of his nomination, after which he became an occultist, placing all his trust in Divine Providence for guidance where he had before been relying on the God-given powers within himself to meet issues as they arose.

The Mission

One writer states that Lincoln knew why he occupied the White House and was fully conscious of his mission long before his nomination. In his early twenties he took a trip to New Orleans as a flatboatman. As he viewed the inhumane treatment in the slave market, he made this threat: "*If ever I get a chance to hit this thing, I'll hit it*



hard.” This seems to be the time of dedication of his life to the ‘Great Purpose’, while still far from knowing the means to accomplish it.

As we review the course of events in his life it might seem that Providence shaped the course of events and saved him for the great, almost miraculous achievement of delivering slaves from further physical bondage. Another incident touching upon his mission is the event when he attended a camp meeting in Salem, Illinois, and listened to a speech which lasted three hours, delivered by Dr Akers. In this address, a forecast was given of the Civil War which was to put an end to slavery. He gave the prophecy: “*Who can tell but that the man who shall lead us through the strife may be standing in your presence.*”

On the return trip home, Lincoln was silent until asked for his opinion. He showed his mystical vision when he remarked on the power of the speaker whose words were from beyond him. He also stated that he was as if in second sight during the address and that he himself would be bearing an important part in the strife. It was reported that the following morning his features bore marks of deep suffering. He was unable to shake himself free from the conviction that he was to be involved in the terrible war which had been forecast in the address.

“With Malice Toward None...”

There is certainly not a single touch of ego in his second inaugural address which is said to have been written on the spiritual heights of patriotism, a psalm for the blessing upon his country. He accepted his re-election as God's promise of victory for the cause he was soon to give “*the last full measure of devotion.*” As he looked into the future,



the aftermath of war, he could see the outcome of hate, revenge and cruel punishment that would follow in the period of reconstruction. His message “*With malice toward none, and charity for all*” is closely akin to the words of the Great Master, “*Peace on Earth, Good will to men.*” He urged an enlarged view of life above the petty, selfish motives of sectional feeling.

The closing words of his last deliverance to the American people might read as handwriting on the wall at the present time when many are occupied with the thought of reconstruction after the Second World War. He urged that the American people do all that may achieve a lasting peace among themselves and with all nations. He would have hailed with joy a possible treaty of world peace, but no compromise of right or justice would have been tolerated to obtain such peace. There may be great need for Lincoln's point of view: “*Put ourselves in their place.*” And the aftermath of this war may show the same need for his creed of “*malice toward none and charity for all*” that existed at the end of the Civil War.

The final mark of the mystic is shown in the fact that Lincoln had no fear of death, although repeatedly warned of the possible danger he was in. He dared to do his duty to the end as he understood it. What higher tribute can be paid this great mystic than that he gave his life for a noble cause and accepted a martyr's crown just as the Great Master accepted his crown of thorns. We of the present generations have our attention focused upon the new freedoms which are to be ours at great cost and sacrifice. The mystics of the present have each a mission, but the foundation of mysticism in our character and personality must be built up year by year if we are to be prepared when our time and call shall come.

“Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves and under a just God cannot long retain it.”

--Abraham Lincoln 1809 - 1865 --





Living With Public Opinions

by TAT Wahua

MOST HUMANS BASE their beliefs and actions on public opinions, namely what others say and do. Yet, they believe they are 'free thinkers.' Even well educated people in the print and electronic media business start asking questions about the Rosicrucian Order with sentences usually beginning with statements like: *"It is believed that...; people say that...; it is known that..."*

A while ago, a relation of mine complained of body weakness. I showed him how to increase body vitality through a special Rosicrucian deep breathing exercise and

he quickly reacted by saying: *"People say it's dangerous to breathe deeply."* The first question that arises in the mind when one hears such a statement is: who are these 'people'? Who is it that makes up what we call 'the public'? And the second question is: how does a public opinion arise?

Personal Identity

We live in communities, urban or rural. And every community is made up of a number of people with common historical, cultural and ideological identities. That is to say they have their ways of doing things or thinking, based on their experiences in their immediate environment. Over time, they generate ideas and beliefs about things that baffle them in life. For instance, they have a way of interpreting dreams or explaining the causes of certain natural phenomena such as life, death or disasters. But despite this, every person has a way of life quite unique to him or her.

There is a special 'something' that gives a person his or her unique, one-of-a-kind identity. A father who knows his children, on hearing about an event that happened during his absence, will know with a fair amount of certainty which of his children must have been involved. This implies that there are certain things that modify culture, customs and norms in society. The behaviour and opinions of every person are influenced by a number of factors, and it is the collectivity of personal opinions that cause public opinions to be born.



Let us examine those factors to determine how reliable public opinions can be. Every person's judgements are influenced by heredity, culture, education, religion, social position, friends or company kept, mental and physical health, and state of spirituality. So, let's examine these one by one.

Factors that Influence Judgement

Heredity and inheritance factors are those carried at birth. They are tendencies which can usually be modified by the environment. For instance, there are families known to be hot tempered, while others produce men and women of great humour and mirth. The art of astrology tells us that the time and place of a person's birth can influence his or her attitude towards life. Such potentials can be controlled or modified by the person in order to make correct judgements later in life.

Education, formal or informal, does a lot to transform a person's way of life. The basic informal training in the home moulds a child's life within the first seven years of life. What we learn at school and the subjects we take also affect our thinking. How a medical doctor looks at dreams and body pains differs from how a farmer sees them. The more educated a person is, the greater the ability to think logically and scientifically. Few things look mysterious or magical any longer. Superstition is replaced with knowledge. Curiosity is satisfied through experimentation rather than by wild assumptions.

Social positions and the company we keep definitely affect our judgements. Highly positioned individuals and those with personal wealth have a particular way of reacting to the events of life. If a man for example associates with certain business people who believe that business performance must be a dog-eat-dog affair, he would surely neglect business ethics and cheat by all means. To him, the public opinion is that you exploit every situation to your own benefit, regardless of what happens to the society.

The *religion* a person is born into often influences the person's thoughts and behaviour tremendously. While some see forgiveness and tolerance as key to societal peace, others feel that every action must be met with equal force, including killing in the name of God. A good number may see every unpleasant event in life as the work of Satan or some unspecified evil forces. For such people there is no need to examine one's life to correct attitudes that attract painful experiences. To them, the public opinion that someone somewhere is always after them must be true.

For those pursuing *spiritual development* however, life is a stage where the law of attraction dictates the scenes, regardless of public opinions. So, they embark upon

systematic studies and practices to make them understand some events of life. The result is that they can take control of many aspects of life without sheepishly following public opinions that are coloured by many factors. In fact, what people call public opinions may just be individual opinions made public through campaigns.

Self Determination

What people say about you may not be what you are. What they say about you may not even be what they know about you. It may depend on circumstances and hidden objectives. The truth is that our Creator does not relate to us according to what people say. God sees us as we actually are. It is what we are that creates the body of light in which we live.

And it is this light that determines the planes of existence where we operate during and after our life on earth. Only we, through our thoughts, words and actions, can determine that. It's not our culture, not our religion, and not public opinions. It is good to know what public opinions are since we live in human society and must interact with it according to established societal norms. But such opinions should not dictate our life judgements. Our purpose on earth is to assist in the elevation of humankind, and to accomplish that, we must consider all shades of opinions and ideas, and tolerate those we want to carry along with us on the path of spiritual evolution.

The Rosicrucian Order teaches millions of people throughout the world how to evolve to a way of life that will help them attune with the most constructive forces available to them. As we direct our consciousness towards the Light, so shall we be illuminated. So Mote It be!



Those who place importance in their social position may often neglect business ethics and cheat by all means.





FROM BOHEMIA

Prague, Rudolf II and the Genesis of the Rose-Cross

by *Bill Anderson*

IN CHAPTER NINE of the book *Rosicrucian History and Mysteries*¹ by Christian Rebisse, “The Rose in Bloom,” the author tells of the celebrated scientists and esotericists who gravitated to the imperial court of the Holy Roman Emperor in Prague around the time of the first Rosicrucian Manifestos. What follows is a brief survey of that sphere of esoteric and Rosicrucian influence generated around the figure of Rudolf II.

It is worthwhile to understand the background to the institution known as the Holy Roman Empire or *Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation* in German, as

that entity no longer exists. On Christmas Day 800 CE, the King of the Franks, Charlemagne, was crowned by Pope Leo III in Rome as the first Holy Roman Emperor in a political act of opposition to the Roman (Byzantine) Emperor in Constantinople. The empire managed to survive until Napoleon Bonaparte forced the last Holy Roman Emperor, Franz II, whose daughter Napoleon married, to dissolve the Empire in 1806, thus ending the original ‘thousand-year Reich’.

The Habsburg dynasty had ruled the empire since 1438. This empire was a strange medieval entity: a federation of states in Central Europe, mainly in what



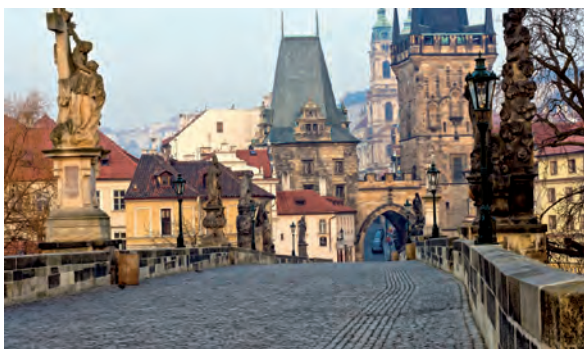
Europe in 1570: Prague was not only the ancient capital of the kingdom of Bohemia; twice in its history it became the capital city of the Holy Roman Empire.

we now call Germany. It was never governed by an absolute ruler like Russia; instead the emperor was elected by a small electoral college, but since one of them was the King of Bohemia, the Habsburgs had an inbuilt advantage. However there was a mystique attached to the empire and to the imperial idea itself. It was envisaged as an earthly image: with God and his angels in Heaven, and on Earth the Emperor and his household: 'As above, so below'.

The empire had a mission: to create peace, peace in the empire and peace because of the empire, with the emperor as a shepherd-king. It was this 'Great Peace' that was the goal of all the emperors, kings, imperial princes and bishops, and of all the ecclesiastical and secular lords, whether in the Imperial Diet (parliament) or fighting their wars. Many great thinkers of the past also supported this ideal, men such as Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa, Leibnitz and Goethe.

Prague

Prague, the capital of the modern Czech Republic, with its medieval architecture, is a popular tourist destination. The city though, is much more than that. It played an important role in the history of Rosicrucianism in Europe. It was not only the ancient capital of the



Looking across the Charles Bridge with its statues of saints on either parapet, while the stately river Vltava flows beneath.



kingdom of Bohemia, but twice in its history, both referred to as a golden age, it became the capital city of the Holy Roman Empire. The first time was under Charles IV (reigned 1355–1378) who was the successor of Ludwig IV, the builder of the Monastery of Ettal.² The second occurred when Rudolf II moved his court to Prague from Vienna.

Listening to the Czech composer Smetana's beautiful tone poem "Vltava" you can transport yourself mentally to the Old Town. Looking across the Charles Bridge with its statues of saints on either parapet, the stately river Vltava flows beneath you. In front are two hills upon the right of which, towering above the city, is the imposing Prague Castle, the setting for much of this story.

The Marvellous 16th Century

Throughout the world, the 16th century was a vigorous, creative and productive age of great strides in the field of architecture, literature, culture and education. We are all familiar with the Elizabethan age in England and the English Renaissance with such great figures as Sir Francis Bacon, William Shakespeare and Thomas Tallis coming readily to mind. It is even said that we can detect the beginnings of Rosicrucianism here in England, though the Rosicrucian Manifestos appeared in Germany at a later date.

Looking around the rest of the world, in Central and South America, the Aztecs and Incas had reached the apex of sophistication and culture before it was all destroyed during the European conquests. In China, the Ming dynasty under the Emperor Wanli saw the social and economic transformation of the country into a modern state. Population doubled, new food crops were



introduced. There was an economic boom and cities like Běijīng, Nánjīng, Sūzhōu and Hángzhōu, with their elaborate mansions and gardens became great centres of intellectual activity.

In Turkey, the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent reached its zenith. He also presided over a renaissance. During his reign the master architect Sinan erected his incomparable buildings. The fine arts flourished, with an important school of miniature painters, half of them European, creating a new aesthetic direction. It was a golden age for poetry, not least of which was that of the Sultan. The sciences, theology and the judicial system flourished. Süleyman is still revered to this day in Turkey as *Ḳanûnî* 'the Lawgiver'.

In Persia, Shāh Abbās the Great of the Safavid dynasty turned his country once again into a centre of trade and business for the Middle East. He moved his capital to Esfahān (Isfahan), making it one of the most beautiful cities in the world at that time. He was also a great patron of arts, sciences and architecture. Although he made Shi'a Islam the religion of his country, he even used to attend church with his Christian subjects at Christmas. He also supported miniature painting. It was said that in his reign, Iranian art revived after a thousand years of decline. Great philosophers and scientists were attracted to his court.

In India, the Mughal Emperor Akbar prized learning and culture. He not only collected books but actively created libraries, having books translated from Persian, Sanskrit and even Latin. He was interested in mysticism and, unusually in that age, tolerated other religions. Under him, the Mughal tradition of painting began, which was a mixture of Persian and Hindu. Architecture flourished too. Under him the empire was stable and at peace.

At the Castle Gate

Prague is a modern 21st century city at the heart of Europe. As well as its outer, visible appearance, Prague also possesses an inner aspect, epitomised by the royal castle on the hill overlooking the river and the old city. Most visitors to Prague cross the famous Charles Bridge over the river Vltava and wind their way up the hill to the castle.

But when I visited this city I decided to journey on the road less well travelled! I took the metro to Malostranská station in the Malá Strana or Lesser Town and made my way up the hill towards the castle. It was a hot and sunny day and took quite an effort to climb up the steps, but near the top of the hill, just outside the castle's East Gate, there is a place where I was rewarded with magnificent views over the city, with its red-tiled roofs and many church spires. Such was the scene that would have greeted Rudolf as he looked out of the windows of his apartments.

After passing through the gate, I first passed the yellow Lobkowitz palace and, next to it, the light green Rožmberk or Rosenberg palace, named after a Bohemian magnate family who also played a part in this story. I walked into the courtyard of the newly refurbished palace and sat in the café to soak in some of the atmosphere. Afterwards, I made my way past the Golden Lane or 'Alchemists' Lane, as it is better known (though there is some doubt as to whether any alchemists actually lived there) to St George's Square where I sat down in the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Beyond that, in the Third Courtyard is the statue of St. George vanquishing the dragon, a statue full of esoteric meaning. My thoughts turned to the man most associated with Prague castle. This was Rudolf II. Why had his reign as emperor been so important in the birth



Prague Castle, or Hradčany Castle, is part of a vast complex that includes St. Vitus Cathedral, the Romanesque Basilica of St. George, the Renaissance Archbishop's Palace, a monastery, defense towers, and other structures. The royal complex, called the Hradčany, perches on a hill overlooking the River Vltava.





Reflecting not just his larger than life figure but also his interest in the arts and sciences of the day here is Rudolf II portrayed as as the character of Vertumnus, the Roman God of plant life, growth, and the change of seasons. The Italian artist Arcimboldo created Rudolf's image by compiling vegetables and fruit to build up the portrait.

of Rosicrucianism and why Prague? Sitting there, in the middle of the home he loved so much, I contemplated this remarkable time in European history.

Rudolf II

On 18th July 1552 in Vienna, into a world of reformation and renaissance was born Rudolf, the eldest son of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. Maximilian was a humanist who wanted to learn as much as possible about the world he lived in. He had a sharp intellect and refined artistic tastes. His belief in mutual tolerance in religious matters attracted mystics, Neoplatonists and Kabalists, amongst others, to his court. Maximilian was a patron of the arts and a great linguist. It was his love for Prague, and all his other qualities that he passed on to his son Rudolf, in spite of the latter's upbringing in Madrid at the rigid and intolerant court of his uncle Philip II, the head of the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs.

Rudolf II was not only Holy Roman Emperor (1576-1612), but also Archduke of Austria (1576-1608), King of Bohemia (1575-1611), King of Hungary (1576-1608) and King of Croatia and Slavonia (1576-1608.) His grandfather was the Emperor Charles V who, as king of Spain, lamented the building of a church inside the amazing Great Mosque of Córdoba.³ Rudolf's great, great grandparents were the Spanish king and queen Ferdinand

and Isabella, the conquerors of Granada, and the sponsors of Christopher Columbus in his search for the new world.

Rudolf's Austrian Habsburg realms spread over a great deal of Central and Western Europe but Austria remained the heart of the *Erblande* or hereditary lands. From 1526 the Habsburgs also became kings of Bohemia (part of the current Czech Republic) and Hungary. Some Habsburg domains even lay outside the empire. The Austrian Habsburgs' interests were closely linked to the senior Spanish branch of the dynasty and during the 16th century it was the custom for the Austrian Habsburgs to receive an education in Spain; and this is what happened to Rudolf and his younger brother Ernst.

Rudolf's period in history, the 16th century, came between the Renaissance and Reformation on one hand, and the Thirty Years' War on the other. The first half of the 17th century was a disastrous period of death and destruction throughout Europe. But it was as well an age of great learning and accomplishment, an age of exploration in every sense, the age when Rosicrucianism in its modern form came to the notice of an eagerly anticipating Europe. Rudolf had an amazing set of contemporaries: Elizabeth I of England, Philip II of Spain, Henry IV of France and Ivan the Terrible of Russia.

Prague Castle in the Hradčany district was more than comparable to the Hofburg palace in Vienna, from where he had moved his court. Rudolf moved there in the 1580s when the castle was further expanded and embellished. It was the home for his numerous collections of all kinds of art, which he housed in the so-called *Kunstskammer* (Chamber of Art) as well as his illustrious scholarly guests.

Rudolf may have believed in *Gottes gnadentum* or "The Divine Right of Kings" as did so many other rulers of the time, but no matter what we may think of him as a ruler, he was hungry for knowledge and was a magnificent collector. His court in Prague became a pan-European centre for the arts and sciences.

With Flanders also under Habsburg rule, many of the most talented Flemish painters were drawn to the imperial court or 'Hofstaat'. This included not just the courtiers but the many artists and fortune-seekers that gravitated to the court offering their services and vying for the emperor's patronage. Artists such as Hans Vredeman de Vries, Aegidius Sadeler and Bartholomeus Spranger



amongst many others flocked to Prague. Rudolf's famous picture collection in the Kunstkammer, included works by Dürer, Brueghel, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Correggio, Parmigianino, Veronese and Tintoretto.

Protector of Arts and Sciences

Despite the Vatican and his strict Catholic upbringing in Spain, Rudolf made no distinction between Catholic, Protestant (which most of his Czech subjects were), Jew or Muslim. During his reign, Prague was tolerant and a great centre of learning. He allowed his subjects to follow their intellectual and spiritual investigations wherever they might lead them and welcomed anyone who could push forward the frontiers of knowledge. Rudolf's artists and scientists, partly because it was the spirit of the time and partly because they were encouraged by their patron, all strove to transcend the everyday world with its constant change and infinite variety to perceive a universal and eternal Unity.

Rudolf was certainly interested in spirituality and the mysteries of the universe. It is known that his library contained copies of the *Pymander*, *Asclepius* and the *Picatrix*. His interest in occultism resulted in his sponsorship of many alchemists, whether real or fraudulent, who flocked to Prague. He set aside a group of houses inside the castle, next to St. Vitus' Cathedral

to house them. These alchemists sought not only the transmutation of metals and compounds through the Philosophers' Stone, but also the moral and spiritual rebirth of mankind. In this, they were very close to the Rosicrucian writings and to those of Jacob Boehme and Dr. John Dee.

The craving for universal knowledge found expression in the hermetic doctrines made accessible by the Italian Renaissance philosophers Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, with their stress on the unity of mankind. This universal knowledge was also found in the study of the Kabala which took place in the Jewish Josefov district of Prague. It was also to be found in the 'art' of Ramon Llull and in the occultism of the Paracelsians and the alchemists.

Late Renaissance Prague was a centre of research into the wonders of nature. Famous scholars, alchemists and philosophers flocked to Prague to partake in the ambience of the place, protected by the emperor and his court. Neoplatonic, Hermetic and Kabalistic studies found favour at Rudolf's court. So it was not unusual to find a host of the most famous and greatest thinkers and scientists of the day visiting Prague. This included people such as the German alchemist and physician Oswald Croll, Rabbi Judah Loew, the Chief Rabbi of Bohemia, a renowned scholar and Kabalist, the Polish alchemist Michał Sędziwój better known as Michael Sendivogius,⁴ the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe as well as the German astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler. Kepler worked in Prague on the movements of the planets and produced the *Tabulae Rudolphinae*, detailed astronomical tables based on Brahe's observations. He dedicated them to Rudolf II.

Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), who died after dining in the Rosenberg palace in the castle, is currently interred in a tomb in the Church of Our Lady before Týn, in the Old Town Square near the famous Prague Astronomical Clock. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) came to Prague to work for the emperor. The first cosmological publication of the young Johannes Kepler, his *Mysterium Cosmographicum* of 1597 was intended as a new justification of the principles of Pythagorean harmony. As the essayist J B Bamborough stated in his *The Little World of Man* (1972):

"The cosmology of the 16th Century was a tightly-knit coherent system of aphoristic correspondences. The study of nature and man which followed from it must be set against a background where all science, despite its compartments of psychology, medicine, botany, metallurgy and the rest, was intimately linked with the whole cosmic hierarchy.





The German astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler worked in Prague on the movements of the planets and produced the Rudolphine Tables based on Brahe's astronomical observations. The tables were dedicated to the great patron Rudolf II.

Psychology studied the soul and the body, and the effects of the one on the other; the soul, with its division into vegetable, sensible and rational, paralleled in microcosm the division of the macrocosm into mineral, animal and spiritual. The body was a little world made cunningly of the same elements which formed the world beyond it."

Rožmberk

After Rudolf's Prague the most famous centre for the study of alchemy was the court of Wilhelm von Rosenberg. The Rosenbergs ranked among the most important, oldest and most noble and influential Czech aristocratic magnate families. I use the German form of the name, instead of the Czech *Rožmberk*, as German was the language of the court and of many people in Prague generally. Rosenberg housed alchemists at his palace in Prague Castle, next to the royal palace, as well as his estates in southern Bohemia, especially at Krummau, now Český Krumlov. The family's crest, a five-petalled red rose, can still be found all over southern Bohemia. Amongst other famous guests was the famous Hermetic philosopher and alchemist Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605) who became Wilhelm's court physician.

The brothers Wilhelm and Peter Vok von Rosenberg, were both highly cultured men and patrons of the arts. The latter even owned two giant manuscripts of the theological writings of Paracelsus. The Rosenbergs kept themselves very well-informed and had a special service of newsletters, copies of the most topical reports from all over Europe and beyond. They possessed various residences

apart from the palace inside Prague Castle; most notable of these were at Treboň and especially the castle at Český Krumlov in the south of Bohemia, which, with 300 rooms, was the largest in the country after Prague castle. In 1602 it was bought by Rudolf II.

The brothers had a passion for collecting books and documents that amounted to some 10,000 volumes. The Rosenberg library, famous in its day, has been dispersed. After the death of Peter Vok von Rosenberg, his library was acquired by the crown and moved to Prague Castle. We know that both brothers were interested in the Kabala and alchemy. They kept in close contact with many of those active in alchemical and esoteric circles.

Rudolf was interested in the bizarre, erotic, esoteric and the occult, and the environment he produced in Prague proved highly fertile. So it was not unusual that Dr. John Dee (1527-1608), the famous English mathematician, astronomer and astrologer turned up in Prague in 1586 and stayed for about six years. He was one of the most learned men in Europe who was steeped in the Kabala and Neoplatonic and Hermetic traditions. Like the early Rosicrucians, he believed in cosmic harmony and hoped for the moral and spiritual reform of the world through the spreading of ancient wisdom. He was accompanied by another alchemist Edward Kelley, altogether more notorious. In 1586 both of them were allowed to continue their studies at the Rosenberg castle at Wittingau, now Třeboň in southern Bohemia.

Unfolding of the Rose

Under Rudolf II, Prague became the glittering hub of European and intellectual life. His patronage had given considerable impetus to the Rosicrucian movement which emerged shortly after his death. The three Rosicrucian Manifestos expressed the strongly Hermetic and alchemical ideas that had circulated in Rudolphine Prague.



It was into this era that the Rosicrucian Manifestos appeared. Here was what appeared to be a group calling for a universal reform of society. This call was couched in the language of alchemical transmutation or rebirth. The most imaginative of the Rosicrucian Manifestos was *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*, which was composed by Johann Valentin Andreae, whose circle of friends at Tübingen included many Kabalists and Hermeticists. A leading defender of the Rosicrucians was Count Michael Maier (1568-1622) who was prominent at the court in Prague. There were also the Bohemian and Silesian circles. Rosicrucian beliefs as put forward in the Manifestos were close in spirit to Bruno, Dee, Khunrath, Boehme and Robert Fludd, all of whom worked at some time in Rudolfs Prague.

As Peter Marshall pointed out in his book *The Mercurial Emperor* (2006):

“...it was through his patronage of the arts and sciences that Rudolf had helped to change the perspectives of humanity at a crucial stage in their history. As a Christian, he advocated religious tolerance, and as a seeker after truth, he defended freedom of enquiry and expression. His greatest achievement was to have created a positive and tolerant environment and then to have had the wisdom to let things happen. He provided just the catalyst required to fixate the boiling crucible of ideas that was lighting up Europe. Under his patronage, he turned Prague into the principal cultural and intellectual centre of the West.”

Epilogue

It was time for me to leave. I walked past the houses where Rudolf allowed the alchemists to live and work, passed the

Cathedral of St. Vitus, with its marvellous rose window, past Rudolf’s Kunstkammer, through the three courtyards and out of the Giants’ Gate into the massive Hradčanské Square in front of the castle. From here the road wound down to the river and the Charles Bridge. I walked across the bridge, as so many generations had done before me, and disappeared into the maze of the Old Town.

Endnotes

1. Published by *The Rosicrucian Collection* series.
2. See “The Monastery of Ettal” in the *Rosicrucian Beacon*, December 2000.
3. See *Rosicrucian Beacon*, September 1999.
4. See *Rosicrucian Beacon*, March & June 2001.

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“I have become so accustomed to think ‘scientifically’ that I am afraid even to imagine that there may be something else beyond the outer covering of life. I feel like a man condemned to death, whose companions have been hanged and who has already become reconciled to the thought that the same fate awaits him.”

-- P D Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe*



Life Lessons and Truisms

by *William Hand*

ALL OF US AT SOME STAGE in our lives have come across a particular phrase or sentence that seems to carry more meaning than may be apparent on the first reading. In this article I will share some of the sayings and truisms that have been meaningful to me. I offer some of my interpretations of each saying but also suggest that each is worthy of a few moments individual reflection and contemplation.

*The best things in life
are not things.*

There is a sister saying to this: “the best things in life are free.” Both are alluding to the same fact, that the acquisition of material goods by itself will not make you happy. This is not to say that desiring and acquiring a nice home, car or other consumer item is a bad thing; it is just that ultimately without your health, inner peace and the love of others, you will probably end up unhappy and somewhat unfulfilled as a person.

*Love begins when
judgement ceases.*

This is a personal favourite of mine. It is saying that as soon as we master the ego and take ourselves away from any value judgements, then love can blossom. Mystics over the centuries have realised that one of the great obstacles to enlightenment is paying too much attention to the self, which is what judgement is about. So the love referred to here is a mystical love. You could also argue that in affairs of the heart you can never truly love a person if you are always judging them!

*Don't anthropomorphise computers,
they may not like it!*

Computers are commonplace. Indeed you can't go to a bank, shop, airport, restaurant etc., without coming into contact with a computer of some sort. Even most watches nowadays have computer circuitry in them. They can do marvellous things very quickly but does a computer have a mind of its own? Can a computer make decisions and act like a human being? Well they certainly seem to make decisions sometimes. “Computer says no!”

But can we really compare computers to human beings? Do they have feelings or emotions for example, or other qualities that we call human, especially the awareness that they are aware? The accepted answer to this question by science is: no.

Having said that, perhaps in the future machines will be developed with as much or maybe more processing power than the human brain and then, just possibly, that may attract soul energy and turn a machine into a living expression of Soul. We would then be able to genuinely ask them whether they like being anthropomorphised or not.



If you think training is expensive, try ignorance.

I came across this one over 20 years ago when I was teaching meteorology to graduates. It is one of those glaringly obvious truisms, yet how many companies have you come across where (through ignorance) staff have not coped and possibly lost customers? I bet at least one!

Would you embark on a project, possibly investing a lot of time and money not knowing the first thing about it? Yes we can all learn eventually by our mistakes, but sometimes those mistakes can be very costly. A little bit of training can go a long way... Actually we, as Rosicrucian students, already know this. Imagine how much harder your lives might have been had you not had the benefit of our Rosicrucian studies.

There are two ways to become rich, make more or desire less.

Many people in today's world want to be rich in a material sense. However, the only way they feel they can achieve this goal is to work harder and try and earn more money. This causes problems with stress, family break-ups etc. But there is another way, and that is to take stock and really think about what you want and why you want it. By crossing non-essential items off the list and taking stock of what you have already, you quickly discover hidden riches in time, peace and money.

No rain, no rainbows.

This is a meteorological fact for sure. Everybody likes rainbows; they are beautiful objects but transitory in nature, and the opportunity to appreciate them must be seized quickly. However, according to the law of duality, before you can really appreciate a rainbow you must first experience some rain. Everything is dual in nature and all is relative.

Every silver lining has a cloud.

This saying is similar to the previous one and is usually quoted the other way round. By quoting it in this way however, we can more easily see that to every action there is a re-action. What to one person may be a "silver lining" is to another person "a cloud." There is no absolute value in life, only relative values.

Man created God in his image.

A truism if there ever was one! The only way we can talk about God, endeavour to explain God and to glorify God is in human terms. Nobody knows the true nature of God, as God is beyond enquiry. We can feel the presence of God but we can never ever say we understand God.

Predicting is very difficult, especially when it concerns the future.

This is a rather witty saying but one that holds a note of seriousness. How many times do we come across people who claim to know the future? Profess to know our individual fate or tell us that unless we change our ways then something terrible will happen to us? Almost all predictions of such sort end in failure as the predictions are more for the benefit of the predictor's ego than for the recipient. Indeed, the effect of false predictions can be upsetting for susceptible individuals. Life is continually evolving, there may be a master plan, but no individual can be aware of such a plan in much the same way as a single letter on this page can ever be aware of the meaning and intent of this article.

Smile, it's the second best thing you can do with your lips.

A friendly smile goes a long way, try it and see next time you want to do something with your lips!

The loudest voice in the room is not necessarily the clearest.

There is often strength in silence. Knowing when to stop talking and listen is an art and of great benefit. People who like the sound of their own voice are often too busy talking, and in doing so miss many learning opportunities. If they continue to go through life like this then their messages can become muddled with a lack of clarity as they will not have progressed.

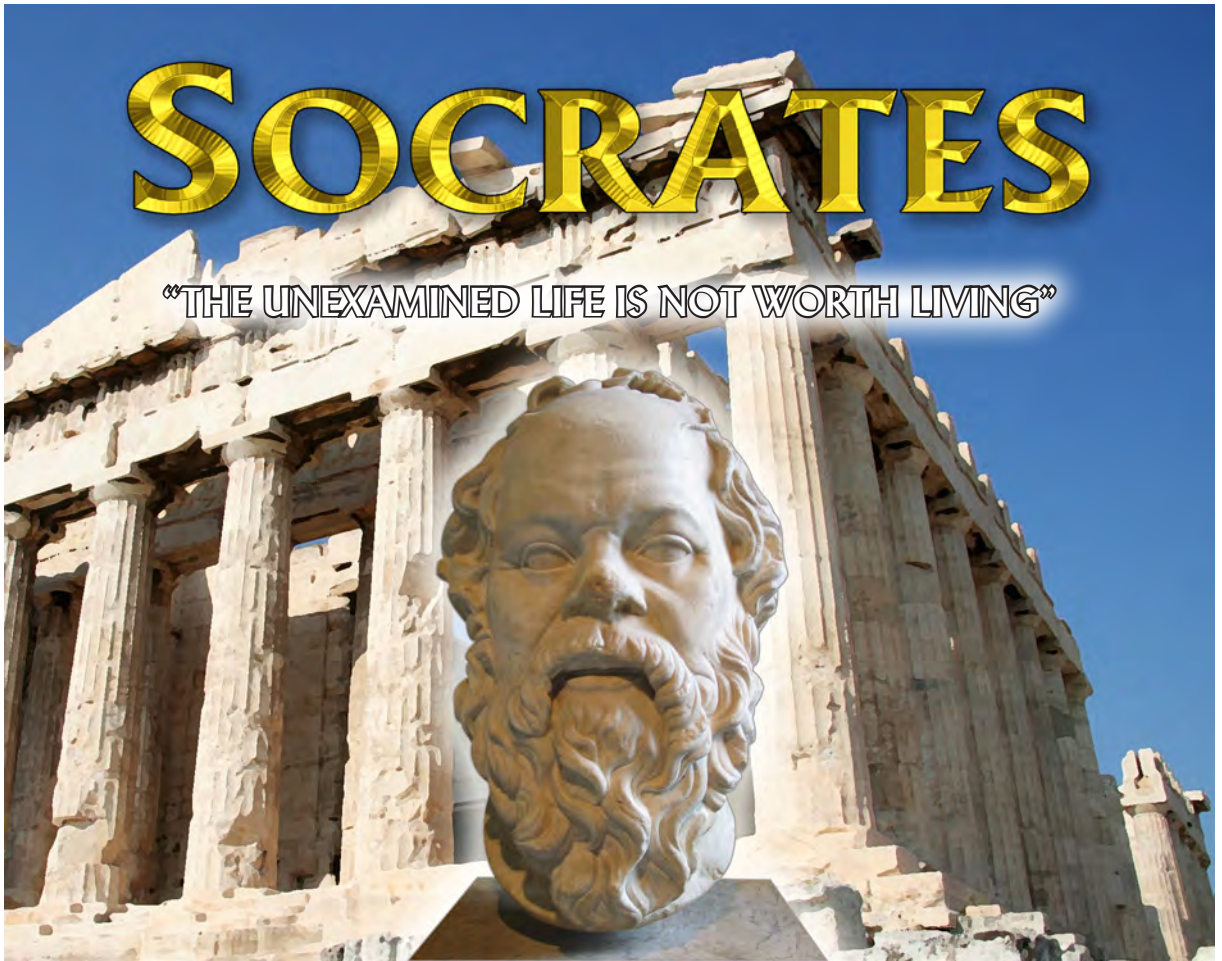
Luck is the meeting place of preparation and opportunity.

I love this one because I always tell people that there is no such thing as luck. Or, if I wish to concede a point, that everybody makes their own luck. Throughout life opportunities for advancement, wealth, peace and happiness will arise. If we are prepared, and the Rosicrucian studies prepare us admirably, then we will recognise and seize these opportunities. Others may think we are lucky. However, I'll tell you now, I'd rather be lucky than good any day!



SOCRATES

“THE UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING”



by Jean Ewing

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

Most of what we know about Socrates and his quotations that we read comes from the dialogues of Plato. These dialogues resemble plays, with Socrates featured as the main character. Through his conversations with others, he comes to life, a mystic engaged in a mission given to him by the Greek god Apollo.

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

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

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

Dialectic

In the dialogue entitled Apology, Socrates tells the court that at first he was puzzled because the oracle of Apollo at Delphi said that no one was wiser than he. “*What can the god mean, for I know I have no wisdom,*” he said. “*Yet he is a god, and cannot lie.*” Socrates set out to find a man



wiser than he, but finding none concluded about each one he talked with “*I am better off than he is, for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know.*” The truth of the riddle, he decided, is that:

“God only is wise. The god is only using my name by way of illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing. And so, I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of anyone who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle, I show him he is not wise.”

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

When someone enquires as to the nature of something, Socrates pretends to know nothing about it; he replies with a question. Thus he continues until, with his clever enquiries, he has led the other person to answer his own question. When Socrates sees someone showing off, pretending wisdom, he points out the folly of his words, again, using questions. He blatantly leads the pretender to what’s true by showing him what’s not true. He called himself an intellectual midwife, and said that anxieties are labour pains. He didn’t have the ideas, he said, he helped others have them, or find them.

To Know Truth

Socrates believed absolute truth, knowledge, beauty and goodness exist eternally, and that we know and recognise these qualities on Earth because we remember them from a previous existence in which we dwelt with them. In another dialogue Phaedo, he says, “After descent to earth, soul has its reminders of the world of true being. Our learning is often remembering what we once knew in another life.” With his questions, Socrates helped the enquirer remember his answers.

The two most famous quotes of Socrates are probably “*Know thyself!*” and “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*”

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

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

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

Knowledge is a Virtue

If a man seeks knowledge and learns what is truly good, he will act in his own best interest. Socrates believed that knowledge breeds understanding leading to goodness and a good life. Mistakes are made because of a lack of information. If one knows what is best, one will do what is best. No person harms him or herself intentionally. Consider a woman who steals. She must believe that the



The death of Socrates portrayed by the artist Giambettino Cignaroli (1706-1770): Socrates saw the activity of rational examination and pursuit of truth and virtue as the essence of what a human being is and the highest expression of human nature. That is why he chose to die by drinking the poison hemlock rather than to go into exile. "The unexamined life," he said in his defence speech, "is no life worth living for a human being."



acquisition of the thing she steals will bring her happiness. Does a man who kills not believe that either he or the world will somehow be better off without his victim? "Knowledge is virtue", said Socrates.

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

Trial by the People

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

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

"This sign, which is a kind of voice, first came to me when I was a child. It always forbids but never commands me to do anything that I am going to do. Hitherto the divine faculty, of which the internal oracle is the source, has constantly been in the habit of opposing me, even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter. And now, as you see, there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be the last and worst evil.

"But the oracle made no sign of opposition. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is good, and that those of us who think death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good."

Enter Plato

The concept that life necessarily follows death, because opposites spring from opposites, is believed to be that of Plato, although Plato attributes it to Socrates. Many

believe it is impossible to truly separate Plato's philosophy from the philosophy of Socrates in the dialogues. In many instances it is believed that Plato used Socrates as a mouthpiece through which he expressed his own views. What does it matter? Is the message not the important thing? How often do you hear a quote that you think wise, and in time remember the quote but not who said it? Truth does indeed speak for herself.

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

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

Quotes from Socrates

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



Of Master Kelpius



and Mozart

by Lucy E Carroll

JOHANNES KELPIUS was the acknowledged leader or ‘Master’ of the first group of Rosicrucians to come to America. The community he founded along the Wissahickon Creek in what is today Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park was founded on principles and practices set forth in the *Fama Fraternitatis*, an incredible 16th century Rosicrucian document. The community founded by Kelpius had a herbal garden and a telescope for astronomical study, and its communicants established a school, practiced healing and held meetings open to the public as well as secret mystical rites.

One of the most remarkable aspects of their legacy is a book containing original text and music entitled: *The Lamenting Voice of the Hidden Love at the Time When She Lay in Misery and Forsaken and Oprest [sic] by the Multitude of her Enemies*. It was erroneously labelled a ‘hymn book’ by early scholars. The book does not contain hymns however, but poems. While some of the poems concern sacred texts, most of them are philosophical and mystical studies. They are most probably a poetic form of Kelpius’ teachings, written by a woman, Christiana

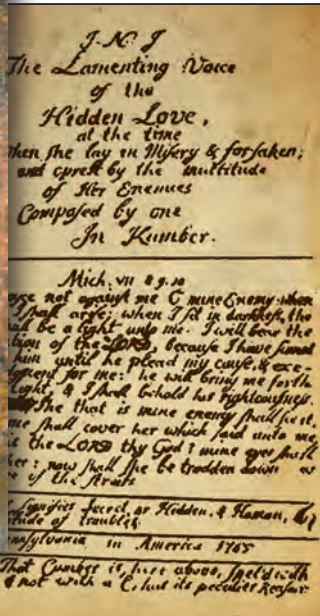
Warmer, whose signature is on the title page. The original German text, accompanied by English translation on facing pages, is probably by Christopher Witt, another member of the community.¹

These marvellous works are full of allegory, symbolism and mystical truths. The most remarkable is entry No. 8. Its English title is given as: *The Power of Love Which Conquers the World, Sin and Death, in a Pensive Poem Composed in 1705*.² There are 136 verses, with an involved story line, separate characters, different tunes and some sections where it is indicated that the lines are “to be spoken.” This is no hymn!

After fifteen years of intense research and study I have reached the conclusion that The Power of Love was a mystical music drama. Once this is accepted, a remarkable fact becomes clear: the story bears striking similarities to the story used by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in his opera “The Magic Flute” (*Die Zauberflöte*) composed 86 years later in 1791.

It is an allegorical epic, complete with a princess (a Soul, a feminine character) who undergoes trials,





Master Johannes Kelpius, from the original canvas
 by Dr Christopher Witt.

On the left is represented one of the few artifacts of Johannes Kelpius that has survived; it is a hymn book about Sin. x Tim., and likely bound by Kelpius' close friend, J.G. Seelig in 1705. About this unusual piece, Julius Sachse the historian wrote:

“This unique volume of seventy pages contains twelve hymns and melodies. It is evidently a duplicate of a similar manuscript collection, or else it is a compilation from loose sheets upon which were originally written such hymns as were in common use in the services at the Tabernacle. The hymns are written in German on the left hand pages, while on the opposite pages is an attempt at a metrical translation in English. The musical score as well as the hymns are all in the peculiar handwriting of Kelpius, and, like his diary, the book affords us an insight into his religious fervour.”

http://www.middletonbooks.com/html/witw/witw_hymn.html

imprisonments, kidnapping, and finally meets and is united with her Lord. In the Kelpius story, religious symbolism intertwines with the mystical. The Lord is eventually revealed to be Christ on the Cross and in both the Mozart opera and Kelpius' Rosicrucian music drama, the powers of light and darkness loom large. In both we read of trial, or purification by fire. In both there is a Princess (the Soul) who is taken from her Beloved. In both there is an evil character that kidnaps the princess. And as with Mozart's opera, the Rosicrucian drama mentions an 'inner temple' and ritual robes.

There is no coincidence in the similarity of the stories. Rosicrucian tradition predates the establishment of Freemasonry. The story in *The Magic Flute* has always been labelled 'Masonic', but is in fact a more polished retelling of this much older Rosicrucian drama.

The music in "Power of Love" is indeed hymn-like but cannot begin to approach the musical genius of Mozart's popular opera. Yet the story in the early version bears closer scrutiny. The "Power of Love" can be read on many levels. There are themes of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, Christ and Satan, Wisdom and Ignorance. A recurring theme in the story is that of the duality of nature, a concept that harkens back to Gnostic dogma, with such unusual references as "Left side weakness."

Another theme is that of cross preceding crown, or of suffering preceding reward; from verses 7 and 8:

*Her Lord did tell her there that in His Kingdom
 she in Hon'r and glory like unto Him should be.*

*And tho He told her too of Crosses near attending,
 she took no notice on it, but of her joys was mending.
 She hoped hourly the outbreking of His might,
 and for the chiefest seat of Honor asked quite.³*

In the Mozart opera, much is made of the trials the young lovers must undergo. In the Kelpius document there is a trial by separation and also by fire. The reward however, is not earthly love, but eternity. The Soul finds herself in prison, alone. She has with her a lantern (symbol of wisdom) and a hammer (symbol of strength). She uses the hammer to break her chains, then to strike a spark to light the lantern. From the manuscript, verses 84 and 85:

*Then straight way she did take and hammer
 with hands double confident.
 God saw her misery and trouble.
 She smote a hardy rock till flame came with a stroke;
 then lighted she her lamp until daylight broke.
 The fetters on her feet she smote them quite asunder;
 this indeed well strove, and rightly to a wonder.
 And then yet after this, with lamp in hand, she came
 and set her jail on fire and sped her through the flame.⁴*

Notice that the text says 'through' the flame. The fire is a purification ritual that the Soul must undergo as an initiatic rite. For us, the fire is symbolic. Throughout the story, the Princess or Soul is found to be at fault through her lack of preparedness and weakness. Yet verse 122 warns us:



*Judge not before the time,
 Nor too soon the offender!
 O deal in mercy with and
 Censure her but tender.
 O let but judge in you the
 Love that's true and right.
 Or else your dear light will
 Be turned to darkness quite.⁵*

The beautiful concluding verses, full of imagery and wisdom offer an admonition and hope:

*Oh fear yourselves much more, while yet you soundly
 venture stand in the holy fear that you may safely enter.
 Like as a black night does the brightest day devour,
 so may your night also in darkness hide its power.
 And since we have the weight of the working
 days been bearing,
 so can we only be such exchange comparing.
 But when Love in death stands on the end of the earth,
 then will first of all in us the Lord's Sabbath day begin!⁶*

In the summer of 1986 a reconstruction of this magnificent work was performed in Philadelphia under the sponsorship of the Kelpius Society (now defunct) and the Benjamin Franklin Lodge of AMORC, with the author directing. It is hoped that this work will one day again be performed as an inspirational work.

Meanwhile, the next time you hear the magnificent music of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, remember that it may be an evolved form of a much earlier work, a version which evolved along the Wissahickon near Philadelphia in 1705 under the guidance of Master Johannes Kelpius and the Rosy Cross.

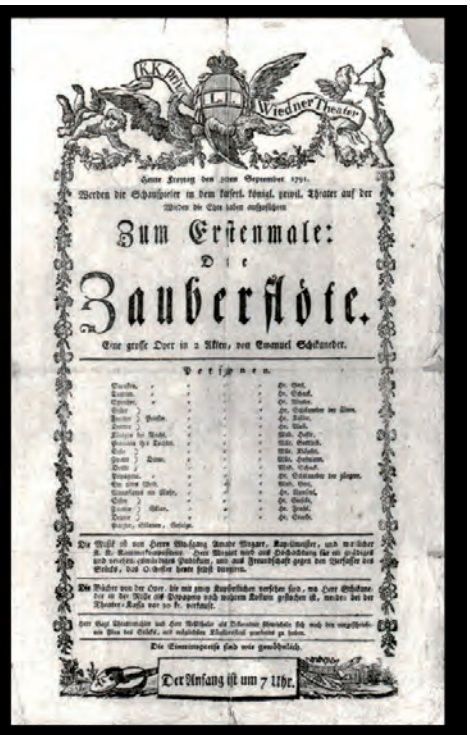
Endnotes

1. See "Christopher Witt: Rosicrucian Wonder Worker of the Wissahickon," *Rosicrucian Digest*, Feb. 1986.
2. See "The Lamenting Voice", manuscript, pp. 34-56. Ms. Ac 189, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
3. From translation and edition copyright L E Carroll, 1986.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., verses 135 – 136.

Other Sources

Sachse, Julius Friedrich, *German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia: 1895.

A poster advertising the first performance of The Magic Flute on 30th September 1791 at the Theater auf der Wieden in Vienna.



The Luminous Mountain



by James Wilson

DEAR FRIEND, you came to me today because your heart is heavy and you feel a longing you can't easily satisfy. Indeed, you don't quite know what you're longing for..., am I correct? See that Light on the horizon? What..., you don't see it? Okay, try looking a bit further, in fact much, much further; further than you've ever looked before. Penetrate the mist that clouds your vision, look beyond the mist for this Light, and seek it with all your heart. Assuredly you can and indeed will find it, for you are ready.

Do you begin to see it? Yes, I see by the look on your face that you see it, though it's faint at the moment, isn't it? Continue looking though until the Light becomes brighter and disperses the mist. Good, this is a good start and a very important beginning.

As you continue looking at the Light, you will see that it shines forth from the pinnacle of a great mountain. Desire it, truly want it in your being, and you will begin seeing its form, for it is your destiny to do so. So far, so good; you are beginning to develop your vision. But stop now and rest your eyes a while, for they are not used to looking at such a Light, and I will tell you about the great luminous mountain.

Light at the Summit

It is the brilliance of its luminescence that distinguishes this mountaintop from the peaks of all other mountains. It is not just the sunlight glistening off crystals of snow that gives it its radiance. Rather, the Light has a special quality that comes from another, otherworldly source.

This mountain's height is unknown. Some say it can never be known, but don't let that put you off. What is known is that it is higher than any of the other great rocks that stand tall and proud upon the landscapes of our planet. Its slopes are steeper, its faces craggier, and its summit more daunting than any other scaled by humankind. There are many hoary legends of valiant souls who have climbed it, and looking at it from a distance you are forgiven for thinking that no one could ever climb to such heights. Yet despite its great height and steep slopes, its peak is attainable by all. No need to look at me like that, for I speak the truth and mark my words, you will begin climbing this mountain one day too, indeed everyone eventually will.

The luminous mysterious mountain, in spite of its size and grandeur, can't be seen if you look at it only



casually. You must look at it in a thoroughly unfamiliar manner, as indeed you must have done already, for you have seen its Light have you not? Rejoice at that, for it is a real achievement. Where the mountain is located is an impenetrable mystery, for no matter where you live, if the heart is ready, you have but a short distance to travel to reach the rock-strewn slopes at its base. The luminous mountain is both everywhere and nowhere and seems to be wherever it is earnestly sought. It was shaped by forces beyond our understanding, constructive forces of a most refined power..., forces that labour eternally for you and I and flow from a fountain of the most profound and pure Love.

Soon you will begin your journey and my words will give you hope and comfort, so listen carefully. I understand your apprehension for I have felt it too, many times. Don't despair, you must summon your courage and be calm. Now that you have rested your eyes a little, look up again. Do you feel the immensity of the luminous mountain? The altitude of its summit is extreme and as you begin to climb, your breathing will become laboured at times because of the effort you must apply. But you will never need to carry oxygen bottles during your ascent, even when you reach the highest levels, for paradoxically, the higher you get, the easier your breathing will be.

And what of specialist clothing and climbing aids? No doubt you'll be surprised to hear that the thinnest clothing will be adequate even if you wish to climb beyond the clouds. You will have no need of ice picks, crampons or ropes, for even when the going gets really tough, you are already equipped with all you need, though you may not know it yet. And when the temperature falls in the darkness of night, if you should feel cold, wrap yourself in a cloak of Love, for this will prove adequate for your needs.

The Journey

There is one item you must take with you however..., a large backpack. For when you begin your journey to the heights you will, through necessity, carry a load that will be heavy and burdensome. This is the weight of your past errors and misjudgements, and you must carefully pack them away and carry them on your back. I can hear you groaning, but see for yourself, there is no other way.

Don't give me that pleading look; trust me, I've been there. There's no escaping it, you must prepare to carry your self-made burden. You are still strongly attached

to your past, and although it may be a great weight to carry, take heart, for your burden may be lightened soon as you progress with this most adventurous undertaking.

Occasionally you will need to rest, and while you recover, take out one of those onerous little packages and examine it carefully. It is at such moments that you may feel the Light penetrate your being as you realise that you no longer need that particular package. As you look at it, your desire to be rid of it will be great, and after careful examination, you will understand its contents intimately and will know how its broken bits can be

repaired. You will wish you could simply discard this small package in order to lighten your load a bit, but be careful not to carelessly cast it aside in its unsightly form. You don't want the beauty of the mountainside

spoil by leaving it around for others to find. Rather, you must repair it, and in so doing, it will be transformed into something of greater benefit to both yourself and others.

Turn it into something that will help you with your ascent, something that may become a source of inspiration to both yourself and others in times of need. It must become something that you would willingly and gratefully wish to give to someone else as your blessing on them. Then your package will shine with the Light of the mountaintop, it will be no burden at all and will take no space in your backpack. You will know what to do with it when the time is right, so don't be apprehensive.

From the start of your ascent, you will carry no provisions, for all things needed to sustain you are readily available at any point along your journey, no matter which path you take. You may not see it from this distance, but the luminous mountain has many faces and as with any mountain, some routes are easier than others. The severity of your climb will therefore depend upon the choices you make, how well you observe the mountain ahead, how well you plan your journey. But do not worry, your inexperience is always taken into account and you will have guide books, maps and a compass with which to navigate your way. Use them well, lest you stray from your path, but take care not to put all your trust in them, for useful as they are, your inner compass is far more accurate and you must learn to use it well and rely on its infallible readings.

Climbing the Mountain

When you begin your climb, indeed at all stages of your ascent, travel slowly, deliberately and consciously,

When you begin your journey to the heights you will, through necessity, carry a load that will be heavy, the weight of your past errors and misjudgements.





The mist, seemingly harmless, will fall often, and your visibility will at those times be very poor. You will no longer see the Light and you may despair.

light up your path. Use them wisely and be sure to help others when they need your assistance.

The awesome forces of the mountain may eventually weaken your spirit and strike fear and despondency into your heart. But your courage, determination and sincerity of purpose will always see

you through the worst of these conditions. And should it become necessary to seek out one of these refuges, as it most certainly will at times, you will find there messages left by others who have gone before you..., messages of hope and encouragement. Such messages you too may leave for others to read in their times of need.

As I say these words to you, my heart is truly with you, for I know how hard the journey can become. You will often feel isolated and alone, especially when the mists have covered the slopes, and this can be the harshest of trials. But when the mists eventually clear and you look around you, you will see that you are not alone for there are many others undergoing this difficult and demanding journey; you are but one of countless others who have taken up the challenge of scaling the luminous mountain and you are well on your way. Your fellow climbers are at various levels of advancement upon the cliffs and inclines, some above you, some below..., each grappling with their own fears and mastering their own chosen precipitous avenue.

Don't be afraid to call for guidance from those above, and be mindful of those below, for they may ask for guidance from you. We must all help each other ascend the slopes, and you will find great joy in doing so. And should you find you have strayed from the path a little and have wandered unseeingly into one of the many dark crevices where you cannot find comfort from your travelling companions, know that you are never alone..., even then, indeed, especially then. Look deep within your being and you will find that I am there, right at your side. My companionship is all you will desire during your entrapment and there too will you find the strength you need to free yourself. Be calm, be still, for I am always with you, right at your side.

There's No Turning Back

I look upon you with much love and understanding, for I know your deepest fears and hopes. You may doubt

observing everything around you; take great care for there are many hazards. Proceeding slowly and thoughtfully is the only safe way to ascend. The landscape can be treacherous and though you will long to reach the Light as quickly as possible, it would be dangerous to run towards it, even if you had the stamina to ascend the slope that fast.

Take heed of my words, for many have fallen and I have seen them dusting themselves off, dazed, hurt and confused, far below where they stumbled. Some will pick up their backpack, and joyful for the lesson learnt, retrace their steps up the slope and smile with happiness as they pass the place where they fell, being grateful that they are now more alert and more able to avoid the same mistake. Sadly though, others wallow in their hurt pride and turn away from the mountain, idly walking in the easiest direction for a while, and that inevitably is down, back to the shadows of the valley where they mistakenly believe they will find an easier life but find instead a harsh, untamed and inhospitable world.

Your journey to each important staging post on this mountain will take its time, maybe a very long time, but don't be troubled by this, for others have travelled your path and they succeeded, so why shouldn't you? The mountain you are climbing is the greatest there is, so remember to pause occasionally when the weather permits, to enjoy the view; not only the vast vistas, but even the small, easily overlooked details always close to hand. There is always interesting detail right before you.

You will of course inevitably encounter some bad weather. The mist, seemingly harmless, will fall often, and your visibility will at those times be very poor. You will no longer see the Light and you may despair. But if you look carefully at the map that I will give you, you will find that there are refuges placed at just the right locations that offer shelter from the mist, strong winds, driving rain and snow storms. And don't forget the Light you carry with you in those little packages you transformed. Now they can be used as flashlights to



you have the courage, strength and stamina to ascend to such daunting heights, but once your ascent has begun up those rocky inclines, there is no turning back..., your fate is sealed, and you will ever more feel compelled to move towards the Light.

Even if you should fall, and this you will occasionally do, and find yourself back in the valley where you now stand, you will sooner or later feel compelled to return to resume the ascent..., if not in this life, then in another. You have your eye on the Light now and your heart will not allow you to relinquish your yearning for its embrace. I'm sure you already feel it. Why does the Light shine if it does not shine for you? And what is Light if not Illumination, knowledge and truth?

You know you will never be satisfied with anything less, and it is for this reason alone that you will begin your journey soon and leave behind this dark valley of sorrows. You may feel safe and secure in the obscurity of the shadows, but you can dwell in the valley of ignorance only so long before your heart yearns for something more, before your heart yearns for greater Light.

When your legs begin to tremble, when your hands are cut and bruised, when your eyes weep with painful

effort and you think you can't go on..., know that there are still some who will come to your aid..., veteran climbers who have already touched the apex and have descended deliberately to help aspirant climbers such as you who need to be held just for a while and to be shown a better way. Allow them to help you for that is their greatest wish. Open your heart to these Master Mountaineers and they will guide your movements towards every hand and foot hold, every little niche that will serve to help you ever further upward. Remain sincere in your yearning for the Light, be pure of motive, have Love in your heart always, and they will respond to your cries for help. They are agents of Light and can guide you to it better than anyone else.

Last Words

There is one last word of guidance I wish to offer you, my friend. Should you ever falter, should your spirit begin to wear, do not look ahead and despair at how far you still have to go. Rather, look behind, and see how far you have already climbed. You will find no small comfort in viewing the path well taken and the heights you have already attained. Rest a while and then continue your ascent with your eye and heart once more upon the Light.

Go now and prepare yourself for your journey, for you know in your heart that the life you are so familiar with must now be left behind. Reflect on what I have told you about this great mountain and be of good cheer, for I will always be with you, even in your darkest hour. This ascent will not be the easiest of journeys, but it will be an adventurous and joyful one if you will but have the courage to let go.

Take my blessing with you now as I surround you with my lesser Light. Once you have taken that first step upon your chosen path, know that you will also have the blessings of all who have gone before you. If you truly aspire to reach towards the heavens, your efforts will be richly rewarded. And remember that simple, obvious and wise old Tibetan saying: "...many are the vistas that are revealed to one who has attained the mountaintop." Go, seek the luminous mountain, scale its heights and one day return to help others do the same.



Go now and prepare yourself for your journey, for you know in your heart that the life you are so familiar with must now be left behind.

"We take spiritual initiation when we become conscious of the Divine within us, and thereby contact the Divine without us."

-- Dion Fortune





The Spiritual Wealth of Islam

by Serge Hutin

THE FIRST VOLUME entitled *From the Early Beginnings to the Death of Averroes* (1198) of the important three-volume *Histoire de la philosophie Islamique*, appeared in 1964. It was published in English in 1993 as the *History of Islamic Philosophy*. The trilogy was written by Professor Henry Corbin (1903-1978) who was the director of Islamic studies at the Sorbonne in Paris, and who also taught every year at the University of Tehran. This book is a living testimony of someone who fully understood the higher meaning of the initiatic, theosophical and mystical currents of Islam. Even today, no better introduction to a serious understanding of these probably exists.

My aim is not to try and give an adequate but bland summary of the magnificent spiritual panorama Corbin offers us, but to extract from it some elements that can make us fully aware of the immense spiritual wealth, still so readily

Detail of a 16th century Persian miniature showing a Sufi meditating in the trunk of a Turkish çinar tree.



unappreciated in the West, of Islamic esotericism in its traditional forms.

The Secret Meaning of the Koran

Islam is a religion that relies entirely on an inspired book, the *Koran*. The Muslim religion in fact forms the third and last revealed branch of what may be termed the Abrahamic tradition: Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all 'Religions of the Book' of the same monotheistic revelation.

Like the Bible, the Koran is subject to two types of interpretation, both completely genuine. We can see in it *"the rules for living in this world and the guide of beyond this world."* On the one hand, there are the literal interpretations and on the other, the esoteric exegesis. The problem of the 'true meaning' of the sacred work dictated to the Prophet Mohammed, could not in fact arise for the *initiates* of Islam who are completely loyal to their spiritual convictions and religious practices, while, at the same time, recognising the real existence of inspired men *outside* their traditional path.

This active tolerance is expressed in the significant recognition of the fact that the higher knowledge of thinkers from ancient Greece also came from the 'niche of the lights of prophecy'; while at the same time there is also an absence among Muslim initiates of all mistrust towards sincere representatives of the Abrahamic tree as well as other paths. This extreme form of tolerance even results in the admission of Christians and Hindus among their students by some Sufi masters in Iran and Pakistan.

But to come to the precise problem of the Koran's esoteric exegeses, Corbin states the principle very clearly:

"To indicate as a goal the achievement of the spiritual meaning implies that there is a meaning which is not the spiritual meaning, and that between this and that which does not exist, there is perhaps a gradation, leading to a plurality of spiritual meanings."

And he quotes several pages further on a remarkable statement from the 6th Imam (Guide) of the Shi'ites, Ja'far as-Sadiq (702 - 765 CE):

"The Book of God is made up of four things. There is the revealed word; there is the allegorical understanding; there are the occult meanings related to the hidden world; there are the higher spiritual doctrines. The literal word is for ordinary mortals. The allegorical understanding is for the elite. The occult meanings belong to the 'Friends of God. The higher spiritual doctrines belong to the prophets."

This passage can be interpreted as follows: *"The literal word is intended for hearing; the allegory is intended for spiritual understanding; the occult meanings are for contemplative vision; the higher doctrines concern the realisation of the whole of spiritual Islam."*

Why is esotericism necessary? The reason is obvious. The great Persian Sufi mystic al-Hallaj (858-922 CE) was careless in revealing his great illumination publicly to the profane in the streets of Baghdad. Many Sufi masters felt that it was inappropriate to share mysticism with the masses, and it earned him his execution eleven years later. Not only the profane and the ordinary believers among them, even the most devout cannot understand the secret truths, but they risk making initiates look like the impious and sacrilegious who despise the beliefs and practices of the exoteric religion; which is what happened to al-Hallaj.

The preceding quotation allows us to understand the existence of not just one esoteric meaning of the Koran, but of several hierarchical meanings, corresponding to the progressive stages of the initiate towards complete illumination. The differentiation of meanings in the Koran is part and parcel of the necessary spiritual hierarchy within humanity. There are three categories among these:

1. The ordinary profane.
2. Those who have the potential to become possible initiates (hence the need for initiates to make contact with them).
3. The initiates who are themselves divided into various grades according to their degree of personal advancement on the path.



A page from the Koran.





Tomb of Mevlana (the Sufi poet, Rumi) with prominent green tower in Konya, Turkey, upon whom, after his death, the Mevlevi Sufi Dervish Order was founded in 1273. Also shown is a modern whirling dervish.

The Initiatic Hierarchy

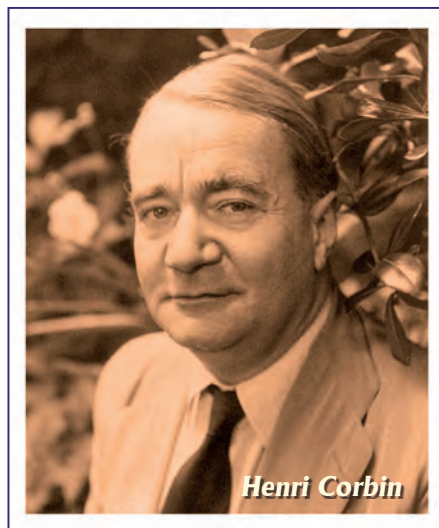
Traditional Muslim initiations are generally unknown if not distorted in a grotesque way, as shown in suspect accounts that sometimes still circulate on this subject. In Europe, we hear confused stories about the *Dervishes*, the *Ismailis* (because the Aga Khan, given more or less equal status as their ‘pope’, is one of the personalities the world media willingly talks about) and the *Assassins*, the followers of Hassan-e Sabbah, the ‘Old Man of the Mountain’ and friend of the scientist and poet Omar Khayyam, who were finally destroyed by the Mongols when they razed their formidable Iranian fortress of Alamut.

Corbin corrects all the overly simplistic ideas on these topics. In particular, he does justice to all the dark stories (like a Gothic novel) spread about the Assassins by their enemies in the first place, and then by generations of Western self-appointed ‘historians’ who specialised in secret societies. On Sufism, Corbin’s book makes the point very clearly. What are the Sufis? They are mystical Muslims who gather in initiatic communities, often in a more or less monastic manner, and which are grouped into the various Dervish Orders.

The characteristic of traditional Sufism is always to develop into an initiatic hierarchy. Just to confine ourselves to the past, let us take for example the secret society of the *Ikhwan as-Safa* or ‘Brethren of Purity’

which had its centre in Basra in Iraq during the height of the Abbasid Caliphate. They wrote 52 treatises on mathematics, natural sciences, psychology and theology. Their initiates divided themselves into four grades, corresponding to spiritual aptitudes that develop with age, with initiation not being possible before about the age of forty. At forty years of age, members began their progress towards illumination. At fifty, they could even be ready to perceive directly the spiritual light in the totality of things, into the microcosmic heart of humanity as in the ‘Great Book of Nature’. From all evidence, the ages of 40 and 50 are intended to characterise initiatic maturity, and are not to be confused with the temporal time of civil society. The ages of 40 or 50 years (33 is also frequently cited in the Christian tradition) is the age of initiates when they are finally ready, like Dante, to receive the ‘great illumination’, which could, according to the real advancement of the pilgrim on the path, become manifest before or after physical maturity.

In Corbin’s work we find detailed chapters on an area even less well known by Europeans than Sufism, that of *Shi’ism* of which the Ismailis are one of the two great historical branches. The Shi’ite phenomenon is entirely placed within the perspectives of an ardent and persevering search, in the true esoteric sense, of the real spiritual path of the whole of Islamic Revelation, and consequently, of Islamic History. But this esotericism,



Henri Corbin



Arabic manuscript from the 12th century depicting the Brethren of Purity, a secret society of the Ikhwan as-Safa which had its centre in Basra in Iraq during the height of the Abbasid Caliphate.

which developed after the Prophet, is more particularly based on the problem of both an obvious temporal and spiritual supreme authority of Islam. Shi'ism therefore rests on the belief in the Imamate, that is, in individuals considered as 'Guides' (Imam means 'Guide') to the whole gamut of history from the death of Mohammed (considered to be the 'Seal of the Prophets' ending the period of prophets) to the end of the earthly cycle of manifestation.

The historical conception of Shi'ism therefore goes back to the years of Mohammed himself. The Shi'ites were, from the beginning, those who, in contrast to the *Sunnis* (Muslims wanting to maintain rigorous observance of what is called the Sunnah code of the oral traditions which complete the Koran), wanted to put Islam under the supreme governance of an Imam manifest in the holy person of Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet by his daughter Fatima. The Imamate would always have to remain among the descendants of Ali after his death.

While the Twelver Shi'ites recognise, as their name indicates, twelve successive Imams beginning with Ali, the Ismailis recognise only seven. The real contrast is in fact only an apparent one, because the esoteric implications correspond and appear as complementary. Corbin draws us to the following observation:

"While Twelver imamology symbolically corresponds to the twelve constellations of the Zodiac (like the twelve springs gushing from the rock struck by Moses' staff), Sevener imamology of Ismailianism symbolises the Seven Planetary Heavens and their moving stars."

Even the idea of secret initiatic governance in the background of visible history is completely traditional in many forms of esotericism. In Sunni Sufism we find, under a different form from the Shi'ites, the idea of an invisible esoteric hierarchy in which the *Qutb* (the mystical pole or axis) is the summit. In this case, we should remember that traditions of this kind are always played out on various levels in the historical domain as they are in personal initiation. It should also not be forgotten that human initiators still have as their mission and role to allow the initiate gradually to have contact with 'the spiritual entity', with the 'Angel of Philosophy', (a term openly used in Shi'ite esotericism) and with their personal guide, the Master Within who will only appear when the student is ready. This, then, explains the manner in which



traditional esoteric documents are simultaneously placed from a point of view which Corbin calls 'metahistory' and on the level of the visible world on this plane. This is obvious in the chief problem of the succession of great Divine Emissaries on the earthly plane.

Regarding this, Corbin quotes a wonderful text from the Persian Ismaili poet and philosopher, Nasir-e Khusraw (1004-1088 CE):

"Positive religion is the exoteric aspect of the idea, and the idea is the esoteric aspect of positive religion. Positive religion is the symbol; the Idea is the symbolised. The exoteric is in perpetual flux with the cycles and periods of the world; the esoteric is a divine energy which is not subject to becoming."

In the course of events in this world, invisible *determinism* always shows through in a visible form. This is essential in truly understanding the traditional idea of historical cycles. Earthly events can only be explained in relation to 'a drama in Heaven'; in fact they prepare the end. In Islamic esotericism, as in the better known perspectives in Europe of the Christian Apocalypse, the problem of the 'last days' plays a determining role.

In Shi'ism, they talk about the 12th or last Imam, the 'Imam of the Time', the Imam "*hidden from the senses but present in the heart.*" Vanished from this plane 'the Hidden



Imam' is nevertheless accessible to initiates, gradually becoming their personal invisible guide, their inner master. Until the hour of the Millennium, the Hidden Imam only remains visible in dreams, or in personal manifestations which have a 'visionary' characteristic. But when the present cycle comes to an end, the last Imam, the Master Within of the Shi'ites will become manifest on the earthly plane. It is he who will preside over the Golden Dawn, the advent of the New Era. At the end of the present cycle then, the Mahdi, the Hidden Imam who has been living in occultation since 872, will bring complete revelation and supreme fulfilment.

Illumination

The initiatic forms that appeared in Islam intend, like all similar paths whether based on an exoteric religion or not, to enable the inner light to radiate within. In Sufism, we therefore find exercises that are aimed at *internalising* Islamic revelation.

In the quest of complete illumination, the initiate will relive the experience had by the Prophet himself, especially at the time of his Mi'raj or ascension, an experience during which Mohammed, after having been transported in spirit to Jerusalem, rose up through the seven heavens to the throne of Allah. In the same way, Sufi mystics try to understand the Koran inwardly in some way, by again finding through the correct pronunciation of the Koranic Suras, the mystery of the original 'Enunciation of the Holy Book'.

In the final analysis, the exegesis of the Koran will rest on the parallel between the vicissitudes of history and the ways in which the soul attains the liberating illumination. For example, the marvellous example, in Sura 95 (at-Tin), of the olive tree growing on top of Mount Sinai, is interpreted as follows by an anonymous Ismaili author:

"This Sura means the spiritual pilgrim sees that his own personality, as Moses did, is none other than his 'Sinai', the inner sanctuary where the theophanic Form can shine..., the Divine Light."

Being able to contemplate 'in the Soul of the soul', and being able to radiate the Divine Light within our heart, this is the goal the mystic pilgrim is fixed on, and will attain when illumination has finally blossomed within. Here is a quotation from the great Persian Sufi Abu Yazid Bastami (804-874 CE) who played a major role in placing the concept of *divine love* at the core of Sufism:

"When finally I contemplated truth through truth, I lived truth through truth and I existed in the truth for the truth in one eternal present, without breath, without word, without hearing, without knowledge, until God had communicated to me a knowledge thrust from His knowledge, a language issued from His Grace, a regard modelled on His Light."

To radiate a Divine Light within us and to lose ourselves in it, this is the Great Illumination. Here is another marvellous passage from the Persian mystic al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE) that Professor Corbin quotes:

"The moth which has become the lover of the flame, has the light of this aura as nourishment as long as it is still some distance from it. It is the portent of the dawning illumination which both calls and welcomes him. But he must continue to fly until it catches him. When he has reached it, it is not up to him any more to move towards the flame, it is the flame that advances within him. The flame is then not his nourishment but he is nourishment for the flame. And that is the great mystery. One moment a fugitive, he then becomes his own beloved, since he is the flame. And that is his perfection."

And here we find the aim of all initiatic training. Sohrawardi (or 'Suhrawardi' in Arabic), a great Persian philosopher (1155-1191 CE), shows himself to be an authentic initiate when he tells us that the human soul must tear itself away from the shadows of its 'western exile', that is, from the world of sub-lunar matter, to progress towards the East from where the Light comes. Through the very act of their awareness of self, beings of



Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliyari was a 16th-century Sufi master of the Shattari Order and the author of Jawahir-i Khams meaning 'Five Jewels' pictured here. This mystical Sufi order originated in Persia in the 15th century and later developed fully in India.





A 15th century European portrait of 'Geber' (Codici Ashburnhamiani 1166, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence) and a manuscript showing the alchemical apparatus he used in his experiments.

operations without seeing these as marking out the stages of an initiatic path, the spiritual pilgrimage towards the rediscovery of the Divine within. It is only in this way that it is possible to understand the exact meaning of this teaching from Imam Ja'far:

"The human form is the supreme evidence by which God confirms His Creation. It is the book he has written with His hand. It is the temple He has edified through His wisdom. It is the gathering of all universes."

Very explicit also is this declaration from the 6th Imam of the Shi'ites:

"The light of the Imam in the heart of believers is brighter than the Sun which spreads its light." And the golden rule of all initiatic training and all esoteric discipline is found in this Ismaili saying: "He who knows himself knows his Lord."

light will become a presence to each other, and note this, experiencing one of the privileges of the state of Rosy Cross, in the precise meaning of the term.

Alchemy

In Islamic lands, alchemy thrived. To quote one name alone, that of the illustrious *Jabir ibn Hayyan* ('Geber' in the West), the student of the 6th Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, who is credited with the definition of Hermeticism as 'the science of Balance'.

It is a question, in fact, of finding the relationship which exists in each body of the manifest and the hidden. These operations apply to the material as to the spiritual, as Corbin rightly points out to us:

"It is the transmutation of the soul coming back to itself which will affect the transmutation of the body. The soul is the very place of this transformation."

Alchemy, with its marvellous secrets of total human transformation was undoubtedly known by a number of Muslim initiates, as much within Shi'ism as in the Sufi Orders. 'Islamic hermeticism' has shown itself to be one of the important branches of traditional alchemical filiation.

Henry Corbin was able to show clearly in his remarkable work *Corps spirituel et Terre céleste* (known in English as 'Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth') that it is impossible to understand something of alchemical

As for contact between Muslim and Christian initiates, they merit quite a few pages. Let us be content to remember the contacts, undoubtedly established, between the Knights Templar and the Muslim who formed the so-called 'Assassins'; and let us also remember the legend of Christian Rosenkreutz who came to receive the light from the 'Wise men of Damcar'. Not only do all esoteric traditions meet on the summit, but their interrelationship on this plane is also an incontestable reality.



The Persian mystic al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE) conversing with a young man.



THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY

Evolving towards Perfection

by *Akin Akinfe*

ROSICRUCIANS BELIEVE that humans are dual beings, possessing both a physical body and a spiritual 'body' commonly referred to as the soul. While the physical body is composed of material components, the soul, carried by the so-call Vital Life Force, enters the infant at birth with its first breath of air. With that first breath, the child becomes a living expression of the universal soul of God.

And when life comes to its inevitable end, the physical body is interred in the earth where it gradually decays and brings nutrients to plant life; or if cremated, still finds it way into the earth where its

remaining elements assist other life forms to survive. The soul on the other hand, leaves the physical world for the spiritual world from whence it came, and there merges with the Universal Soul at whatever level of spiritual attainment it has reached. The principle of reincarnation enables us to know that the soul incarnates, returns to the earth plane where it 'inhabits' a human body, and through many such incarnations learns the different lessons it needs for the evolution of its earthly manifestation, the soul personality. Why does the soul reincarnate so many times? What purpose is served by so many incarnations?



Evolving towards Perfection

The primary reason for incarnating in a world such as our Earth, is for the personality of the incarnated soul, the so-called 'soul personality', to go through many experiences in material reality in order to assist its own evolution towards an eventual reunion with its Creator. The 'earth plane' provides the environment for each individual soul personality to evolve towards that perfection. Through many incarnations, the soul comes into different families, meets different groups of people, different communities, different traditions, different religions and cultures, all with whom its personality, the soul personality interacts during those life spans.

The soul personality is faced with many new and interesting problems and challenges, and must use its accumulated experience and potentials to guide its human ward into solving the life problems she or he faces, eventually overcome them, and then make a success of each earthly life. The physical body therefore serves as the vehicle with which the soul personality can and must exist and function on the earth plane, thereby serving as "the temple of the soul."

The so-called 'earth plane' serves as the environment within which the soul's personality can manifest itself to the individual in the form of an 'inner guide', one who is known to Rosicrucians as the Master Within. Why a Master? Because in comparison to the outer personality or character of its human ward, the soul personality or Master Within is the epitome of perfection, the highest form of expression that the person can possibly attain in a single lifetime. The experiences of each earthly life are stored permanently in the portion of the 'Akashic Records' unique to that soul personality, and constitute part of its permanent attributes, and are what gives continuity to the soul personality from life to life.

In a recent Rosicrucian forum class, a member asked: *"What is it that must evolve? Is it the physical body or the soul? If it is the soul, why does it need to incarnate many times in order to evolve to perfection when the soul is already perfect or pure?"*

Being a direct and partial expression of the Universal Soul itself, the individual soul is already perfect in every respect it could possibly manifest. But the personality that the soul is capable of manifesting through a human body needs to evolve to the perfection of the soul itself, while the outer personality of the person needs to evolve to the highly refined level of accomplishment of the soul personality. And the soul's personality needs to evolve to the level of the Universal Soul.

So, in the spiritual world, the individual soul is a 'segment' of the Universal Soul, and cannot be as all-

encompassing and 'perfect' as the Universal Soul itself. There are degrees of attainment and therefore stages of development towards perfection of each soul personality. Though it may be imperfect, while in the spiritual plane, it is more conscious of its relationship with and to other souls in the spiritual plane, as well as to other souls incarnated in the physical plane. For all souls belong to the same community of human life when in the physical plane.

The soul is aware of course that it is a partially formed 'segment' of the one and only Universal Soul from which all humans have originated and ipso facto, the same universal community of humankind. The soul is not bound by space and time and does not carry the weight of a physical body or the burden of physical life. Conversely while in the physical plane, the soul's personality will have degrees of awareness of its relationship with other souls, depending on the level of its spiritual evolution.

Awareness of the Universal Soul

Why are so many of us on the physical plane not consciously aware that we belong to the same Universal Soul or community of humankind? Let us use a simple analogy to explain. Let us represent the Universal Soul by a large expanse or unlimited expanse of the 'ocean of consciousness'. It is vast and unlimited in space. By space here I mean our existence in both the physical and spiritual spheres. The consciousness is a single continuum throughout all planes, physical and otherwise.

At the spiritual level, the human soul is free and has no absolute need of a physical body to serve its purpose. Each individual soul can be viewed as a 'seed of consciousness' among billions of such seeds, all related and linked within or throughout the overall consciousness of the Universal Soul. When each seed of consciousness is ready, namely when it has sufficiently assessed its work during the past life, and a plan has been laid out for its next incarnation in material reality, including fixing the family and the environment it will live in, it then incarnates through a new born baby, carrying with it experiences of previous incarnations, similar to or analogous to the genetic composition of the physical body which the individual acquired from his or her parents.

In the physical body, the soul personality is not free to act as it would like to. One can view it as almost 'imprisoned' in the physical body by the weight and burden of physical existence. To view and know the world, it needs to use the five physical senses which, limited as they are, can only partially experience or 'see' things in their true nature. The soul personality must to carry the physical, intellectual and emotional 'weight' of the body and its interaction with the world, as it deals constantly



with physical challenges and the attendant requirements of the body in maintaining its life.

The five physical senses have little or no useful application beyond the material world, but for us, our outer selves that is, they are of supreme importance. The burdens of life impact upon us to such an extent at times that it is difficult to realise our true relationship with other people, all of them possessing souls, but who, on the outside at least, we may see as competitors rather than as brothers and sisters united by a common bond to the Universal Soul.

Indications of Development

The more a person allows negative traits of intolerance, greed, selfishness and other vices to harm their fellow brothers and sisters of humankind, the more the conscience of that person, the voice of his Inner Master or soul personality, who is connected or linked with all other souls, becomes stifled; thereby reducing the extent of his awareness of his own soul. This is the primary indicator of a low level of spiritual development and evolution towards perfection. Through attunement with higher spiritual principles, through prayer, meditation and other mystical practices, all people can learn to listen to and increasingly permit the voice of the Master Within to direct them in realising that there is a power within them beyond their physical selves.


They become gradually aware of their individual souls and may with time develop consciousness of the Universal Soul and the community of humankind through self, even while on the physical plane, though with difficulty. Thus even though they are on the physical plane, they are still able to make contact with the spiritual plane through

their subconscious, psychic beings, as direct channels to the Universal Soul itself. This will undoubtedly depend on their respective levels of spiritual development and attributes acquired in numerous past lives.

As they show compassion, love, tolerance, honesty and other virtues to their fellow brothers and sisters, indicating an awareness of their relationship with them, so their ascent on the ladder of spiritual development and perfection of their respective soul personalities will be enhanced. When they pass through transition from this life into the spiritual plane again, though still imperfect, they become more conscious of their relationship with other soul personalities whom they then see and know as originating and belonging together as siblings in a universal sense.

Thus as explained above, the soul personality needs many incarnations to have many different life experiences to refine its nature. It figuratively needs to transmute the 'base metals' of its being into 'gold', thereby moving closer to perfection. The burden of physical existence, the limited vision of reality and the negative tendencies of character, prevent the individual on the earth plane from realising the connection that already exists with all other souls.

Mystical exercises, however, incorporating compassion, tolerance and love towards others, assist us to become aware of our true relationship with them, and to the same Universal community of human souls. This is a trait acquired only over many incarnations. Such virtues and good behaviour to others on our part enhances evolution on the ladder of perfection and purity of the soul. Then the person realises that we all owe our existence to a Universal Intelligence which through us contemplates its own perfection.



"Mystical exercises incorporating compassion, tolerance and love towards others, assist us to become aware of our true relationship with them, and to the same Universal community of human souls."



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*Rose-Croix Lake at the
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