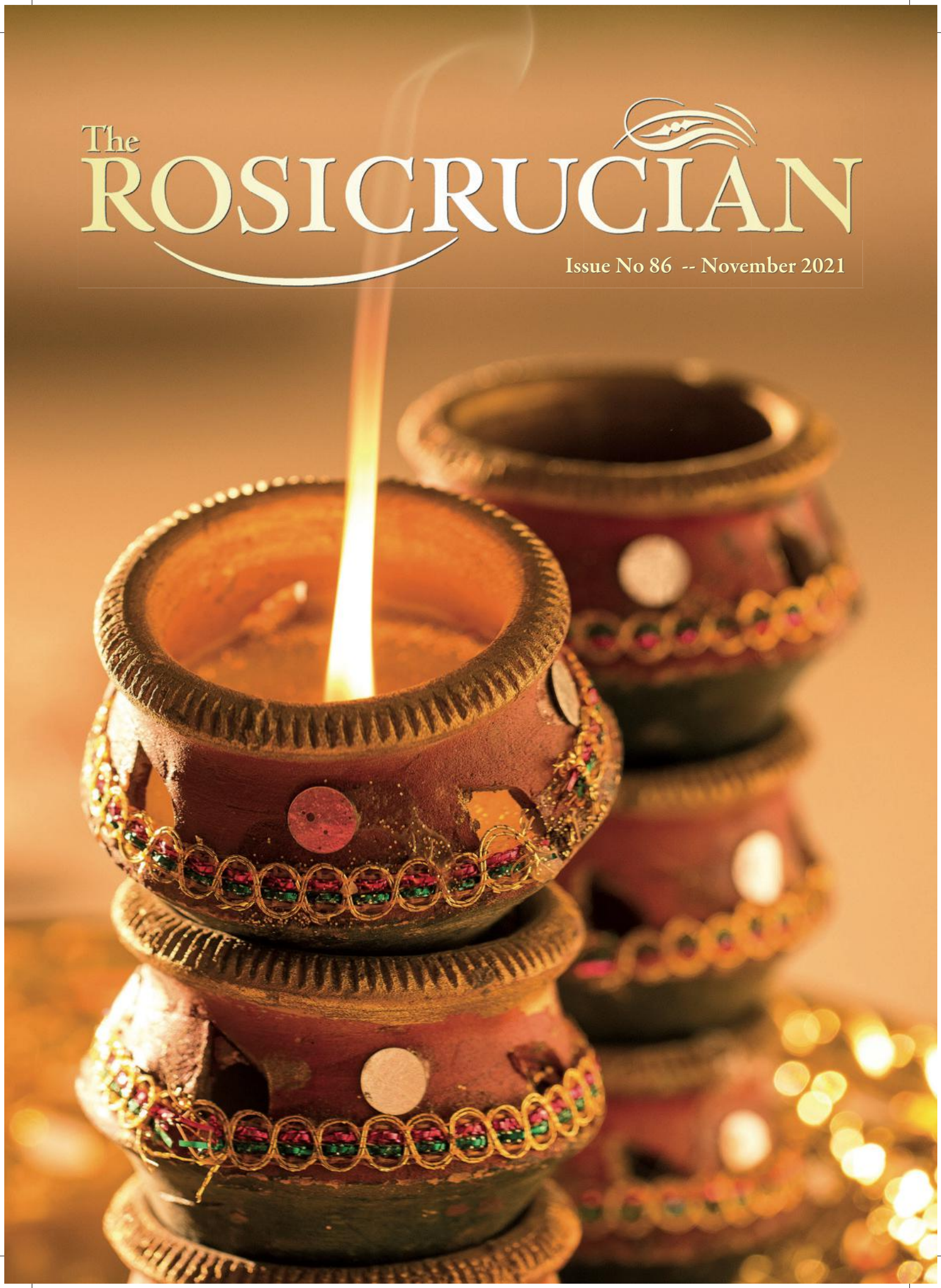
The ROSICRUCIAN

Issue No 86 -- November 2021



Find your Deeper Self

IN THE depths of your being resides your deeper Self, an aspect of your being which breathes, in calm reflection, the very rhythm of the universe. It is in touch with all things and communicates with all that matters for life on Earth. Its purpose is to instruct and guide you in learning how to live a good life, and it does so with great care for your wellbeing.

Your Self knows why you are here and what you are meant to accomplish. It knows what your chances are of attaining the goals you have set for yourself, and whether they are beyond your reach or are fully attainable. Your deeper Self is a veritable slumbering genius, eager to help you express your hidden talents with great refinement and sophistication. The most productive thing we can ever do is to find and communicate with this Self.

For millennia, seekers of universal truths have known of the existence of a kernel of perfection lying dormant in every person, manifesting supreme confidence, calmness, maturity and wisdom. This deeper Self is called by Rosicrucians the 'Inner Master', for it has in abundance, qualities of refinement, high purpose and spiritual maturity that we would expect only of the most accomplished of humans.

You can discover how to access this high level of achievement and embark on the definitive, true journey of your life simply by learning how to commune with your deeper Self. If you're searching for a way of accomplishing the most fulfilling and rewarding things in life, in a fair and ethical way, then learn from the wisdom of your own inner perfection.

To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order and how it can help you achieve your most treasured goals, find us at one of the following...

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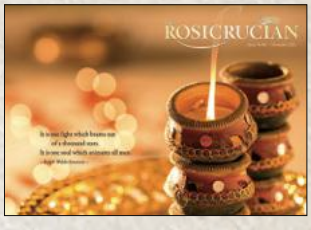
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THE LIGHTS OF DIWALI

Mentioned in early Sanskrit texts, during the Hindu lunisolar month of Kartika (Oct/Nov) each year, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists hold a five day long festival of lights as part of one of the major festivals celebrated on the Indian subcontinent. Although the festival, in modern times, is often secularly devoted to success and abundance, the symbolism of light throughout these days of celebration have a far deeper, more spiritual meaning, as is found as well in many other traditions worldwide.

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Illustration of Zoroaster from Bombay Shahnama (1849)

ZOROASTER

Ancient discoverer of light and dark

by **Nahid Aryanpour**

Zoroaster[1], also known as Zarathustra, was one of the great avatars of the pre-Christian era. He is referred to as a *Saoshyant*, the one who brings about the final renovation of the world. In the Avestan language[2] Saoshyant means *'the one who brings benefit'*, but also *'the bringer [revealer] of light.'*

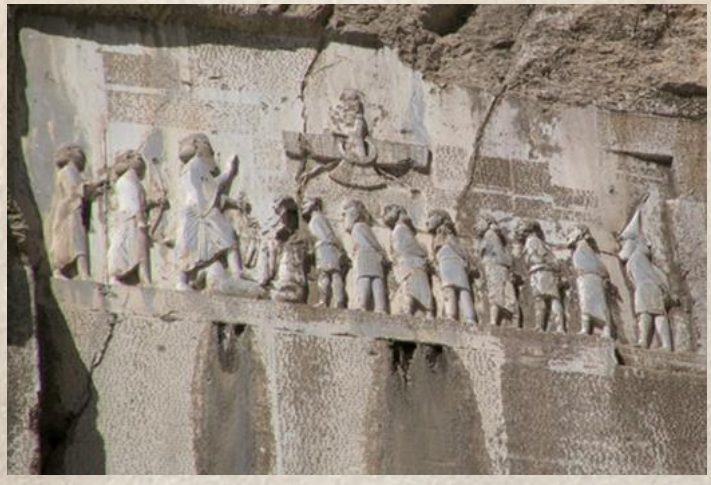
Zoroaster's birthplace is uncertain, though it is widely believed that he was born in the eastern part of the Iranian Plateau, perhaps in Bactria in modern-day Afghanistan but also perhaps in the Zagros mountains of modern-day Iran. Some sources claim he lived during the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, roughly contemporaneous with the second intermediate period of Egypt or a few centuries before it[3]. Others believe he lived during the 7th or 6th century BCE[4], at roughly the time as Solon, the great Athenian statesman and poet. And yet others believe that, if he lived at all, it would have been far back in pre-history, possibly as far as 6,000 BCE[5].

There is no agreement as to when Zoroaster lived, nor even where he lived, but it is likely that what he taught was not so much an entirely new religion but more a reformation of an existing belief system with a

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few radically new concepts added to it. Just as Jesus is portrayed in the New Testament as a reformer of an old religion, Judaism, Zoroaster may have been a reformer of a much older, possibly Vedic, religion with roots stretching far back into pre-history.

There has been speculation that he lived and wrote around the same time as Akhenaton or Moses, but this is almost certainly incorrect, for it is based only on the single thread of commonality between the three religions emanating from them, namely monotheism. But if Zoroaster lived centuries before Akhenaton, it is not inconceivable that his teachings eventually found their way into the Egyptian court of Akhenaton's father Amenhotep III or centuries earlier, just as the highest expression of the Supreme Deity of the early Vedic tradition, spoken of as *Om*, found its way into the Egyptian pantheon as *Am*, with *Amn* (the [masculine] Am or Amun) being the specific two or three-foot high graven expression of that supreme deity located in Thebes. Cross-fertilisation of religious beliefs over thousands of miles no doubt happened to an extent then, just as it does to a much greater extent today.



Behistun: Darius triumphing over his enemies beneath the Zoroastrian symbol.

Zoroastrianism and the Three Abrahamic Religions

Zoroaster's life may be shrouded in mystery, but there is nothing mysterious about the noble principles he bequeathed us. They show the way to a truthful and constructive life, and are clearly an ancient prototype of Akhenaton's belief system, of Judaism, of Christianity and of Islam. Central to Zoroastrianism are the concepts



Zagros Mountains, Iran

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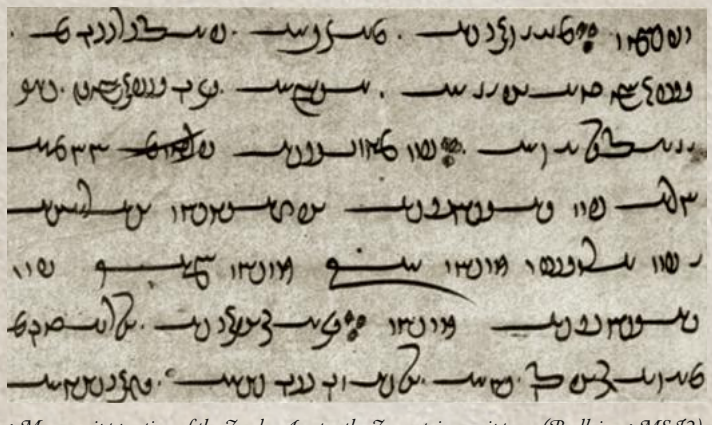
of *light* and *dark*. It is of course not the only concept of a binary pair of opposites to have emerged in the human mind, but probably the oldest by far.

Day and night must have been deeply ingrained in the daily lives of our early hominid ancestors long before fully formed human beings emerged. They are certainly the most clearly manifested pair of opposites in nature, and most creatures know what a vast difference there is between them. The light of day and the dark of night were transformed into the *light of goodness*, the *Ahuru Mazda* or *Ormazd* (*illuminating wisdom*), and the *darkness of evil*, the *Angra Mainyu* or *Ahriman* (*destructive or dark spirit*).



Detail from the School of Athens by Raphael, 1509, showing Zoroaster .

Zoroaster (Zardusht in Middle and Modern Persian) was in every way an ordinary man, upset by the suffering and injustice he saw around him. Much to the alarm of his wife and relatives, he went off into the wilderness one day in search of answers. Sounds familiar doesn't it? Moses, Jesus, Mohammed all did the same. One day while sitting before a cave entrance, Zoroaster pondered over whether his ascetic life was worth the struggle and that maybe he should give it all up and return home. Soon the sun sank behind the distant hills and darkness crept into the valley below. As he watched this happening, he realised for the first time that, just as external life was divided into the light of day and the darkness of night, so too the world of thought was divided into the light of good and the darkness of evil. And evil thoughts, the darkness of evil or Ahriman, were the cause of all human suffering.



Manuscript portion of the Zend Avesta, the Zoroastrian scripture. (Bodleian MS J2)

This may seem trivial and obvious to a 21st century mind, but we must remember that many basic principles we take entirely for granted today were once thought of for the first time by a single individual, and prior to when no one had ever thought of it. There has been a first time for everything we can think of, and undoubtedly there was also a first time for the emergence of the concept of good and evil and its association with light and darkness.

Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds

Following this revelation, Zoroaster returned to his home to begin teaching all who would listen about goodness and the need to pursue it at all costs. He was probably the greatest and most radical of religious leaders of his time, as well as for centuries after his death. To an extent, his legacy survives in the doctrines of the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Zoroaster's teachings form a sacred triangle with the three main points occurring again and again in mantric form as *Good Thoughts*, *Good Words*, *Good Deeds*, or in Avestan as *Humata*, *Hukhta*, *Hvareshta*.

Let's look at the first point: *Good Thoughts*. In Zoroastrian sacred literature, it is written:

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Zoroastrian Parsi Navjote Ceremony.

> Your character is built by your thoughts. As you think so will you become.

Zoroaster stressed that everyone had free will and could choose between thinking good thoughts or harbouring bad thoughts; the right thinking and wrong thinking of the much later Buddhist philosophy.

> If you think nobly, you will be born with a noble character. If you think evil, you will be born with evil traits.

Noble ideals, as thoughts, are the beginning of all things and hence the first point of the Zoroastrian sacred triangle. And as the quotation implies, Zoroastrianism, though not clearly saying so, certainly acknowledges the existence of reincarnation or transmigration as found in the Vedic religious stream.

Next, look at the second point: *Good Words*. In this regard the sacred writings counsel us to *"...render to each man his due."* Speak words from a kind heart, for each day offers endless opportunities for good words, spoken generously and touching another's heart; thereby potentially positively changing his or her life. Words can inspire people to do both good or bad. Good words are the only ones worth keeping, for only good words lead to growth and upliftment in all areas of life.

> **"Your character is built by your thoughts. As you think so will you become."**

And finally the third point of the triangle: *Good Deeds*. Through acts of kindness, a person transforms previously thought-about and spoken-of ideals into physical action. Only by performing *deeds* do things finally crystallise into physical reality. Through every good deed, those doing the deed, as well as those benefiting from it, advance a bit on their path to ever greater spiritual realisation. In the Rosicrucian philosophy, the key to true spiritual growth lies in selfless acts of service to others.

Only One Lasting Good

Zoroastrianism, also called Mazdayazna or *din-e zardusht* (*the religion of Zoroaster*) by its followers, claims that for all people there is but one lasting good, *"...the health, power and purity of the soul."* We have a striking example of this in the clothing of the Parsis (meaning: Persians) in India, who still adhere to this ancient religion of light.

The Parsis wear whatever dress is best suited to their occupation, but beneath their outer garments, the *sudreh* and *kusti* (a white shirt and a belt made from white wool) must always be worn. The sudreh is symbolic of the simplicity and purity of life. The kusti, made of lamb's wool, reminds the wearer of innocence and gentleness. In the act of putting on the kusti, each person makes a commitment to fight evil. This simple act tries to speak to the true inner man or woman as the belt itself is given three winding turns: *good thoughts*,

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good words and *good deeds*, always and everywhere!

The followers of Zoroaster did not *worship* fire, as is sometimes thought. To them, fire was a symbol, and a symbol only, of spiritual purity. His philosophy is based on the supreme value of spiritual health and wellbeing, and provides its adherents with a sense of divine order where a pattern of life in the form of regular prayers and rituals to revitalise the world, social periods, acts of philanthropy, and private moments of devotion to the great God of Light *Ahura Mazda*, gives them a sense of cohesion and continuity.

Hambandagi is a term with an inner meaning that the pursuit of goodness is not just a means but is an end in itself, for it alone leads to social cooperation, harmony and personal spiritual liberation. It is a pattern for living a holy life where the Cosmic provides us with many opportunities for growth, progress and happiness. If we could ask Zoroaster what happiness is, he would probably give a single answer: *"Happiness is manifesting your soul for all to see."*



Zoroaster depicted in The Book of Chronicles.

Footnotes

1. Zoroaster is the English variant of the Greek form of his name: Zōroastrēs (Ζωροάστρης).

2. The Avestan language was an early form of Persian and an Indo-European language closely related to Sanskrit. It is partly because the oldest parts of the Zoroastrian teachings were written in old Avestan that experts in the field believe the religion's origins lie close in time to the emergence of the Vedic religious stream during the mid to late 3rd millennium BCE.



Zoroastrian Temple of Yazd, Iran. Photo: GFDL.

3. The *Gathas* and *Yasna Haptanghaiti*, both works assumed to have been written by Zoroaster, were written in Old Avestan, a language dated to the early part of the 2nd millenium BCE latest, and more likely several hundred years earlier and contemporaneous with Sanskrit as a living language. All known surviving Zoroastrian literature was however written (or transcribed from earlier documents) no earlier than the 5th or 6th Centuries CE. Zoroaster's writings were however referred to by the ancient Greeks, and Plutarch and Diogenes, for example, suggested an era prior to 6,000 BCE.

4. Following the conquest of Babylon and lands to the east and north of it by *Alexander the Great*, the *Seleucid Kings* introduced a new calendar based on the year of his death (323 BCE). The Zoroastrian priests countered this by formalising their own calendar based on the birth of their prophet Zoroaster, and the so-called *'traditional date'*, widely accepted up to the 19th century, was placed 258 years before Alexander, namely, 581 BCE.

5. See *Plato Prehistorian* by Mary Settegast, 1990 Lindisfarne Press.

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WALKING IN BEAUTY

by **Bill Anderson**



In the Navajo language, the word *Hózhó* can be roughly translated as the *Concept of Balance and Beauty*. Within it are the consideration of nature, the universe, the world and humankind; the nature of time and space, creation, growth, motion, order and control; and the various cycles of life.

The broadness of Hózhó means that there does not exist a single word in English that encapsulates all that it means. But there is one word from ancient Egyptian that probably comes close: *Maat*, the embodiment of truth and right order. Below is an excerpt from *'Walking in Beauty'* the closing prayer from the Navajo *'Blessingway Ceremony:'*

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The Blessingway

In beauty I walk. With beauty before me I walk. With beauty behind me I walk. With beauty above me I walk. With beauty around me I walk. It has become beauty again.

Today I will walk out, today everything negative will leave me. I will be as I was before, I will have a cool breeze over my body. I will have a light body, I will be happy forever. Nothing will hinder me. With beauty before me I walk. With beauty behind me I walk. With beauty above me I walk. With beauty around me I walk.

I walk with beauty before me. I walk with beauty behind me. I walk with beauty below me. I walk with beauty above me. I walk with beauty around me. My words will be beautiful. In beauty all day long may I walk.

Through the returning seasons may I walk. On the trail marked with pollen may I walk. With dew about my feet may I walk. With beauty before me may I walk. With beauty behind me may I walk. With beauty below me may I walk. With beauty above me may I walk. With beauty all around me may I walk.

In old age wandering on a trail of beauty..., lively may I walk. In old age wandering on a trail of beauty..., living again may I walk. And my words will be beautiful.

Rosicrucian Spiritual Ecology

At this, the beginning of the 21st century, the third millennium, at a time when our planet, and, consequently the survival of humanity is seriously threatened, it seems an appropriate time to make an appeal for *spiritual ecology* from a Rosicrucian perspective.

1. Our Earth has existed for over four billion years. Humanity as we know it appeared about three million years ago and it has put our world in mortal danger in less than a century.

2. Two-thirds of our planet is covered by seas and oceans, and our own bodies consist of more than 75% water. We cannot survive without water.

3. Forests are the lungs of the Earth and produce the oxygen we breathe. Without trees there would be no atmosphere and therefore no life.

4. Animals lived on our planet for hundreds of millions of years before humans evolved. The survival of humankind depends on animals great and small. They are intelligent, sensitive beings.

5. All of nature's kingdoms mutually depend on each other and there is neither space nor frontier between them. Each of them, on different levels and in different forms, is endowed with consciousness.



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6. The Earth is surrounded by an electromagnetic field (aura) resulting from its own natural energies. This aura, combined with its atmosphere, contributes to life.

7. The existence of our planet is not a matter of chance or a mere accident of time and place. Our planet's existence is part of a plan devised and put in place by Universal Intelligence.

8. The Earth is not merely a planet designed to optimise human life. It is also the environment in which our souls may incarnate in order to carry out our spiritual evolution through to its successful conclusion.

9. Our planet is a masterpiece of refined evolution. Although it is by no means unique in the Universe, we already know it is a rarity. It is therefore a great privilege for humans to find safe abode here.

10. The Earth does not belong to us. It is here for us to live on during our lifetimes and represents the most precious of heritages for us to pass on to future generations.

11. We do not have any rights over our planet, simply the obligation to respect, preserve and protect it. In a word..., to love it!

12. Our planet is exquisitely beautiful and the only home we have. Let us resolve therefore to get out of our houses often, go for walks in parks or the countryside, breathe fresh air and rejuvenate our souls.

13. Nature is a gift to the myriad beautiful souls on Earth. Let us therefore walk in beauty and be Divine agents preserving and, where necessary, transforming, the world around us!

14. Let us give thanks for this opportunity to meet together to walk in Beauty and to share Light with each other in the service of all life on Earth! May our lives be filled with joy, appreciation and wonder!

15. The Earth does not belong to us. It is merely here for us to live on during our sojourn through life. It represents the most precious of heritages for us to pass on to future generations.

16. We have no inalienable rights of privilege on our planet, simply the obligation to respect, preserve and protect it. In a word..., to love it!

By walking in beauty we will all contribute to the future wellbeing of this wonderful planet on which we have had the privilege to have incarnated. The future is in our hands; let wisdom point the way!

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The *Eleusinian Mysteries*

by **Albert Hofmann**



A votive plaque known as the Ninnion Tablet depicting elements of the Eleusinian Mysteries, discovered in the sanctuary at Eleusis.

Image: Wikimedia / Philip H. Bailey

Albert Hofmann (1906–2008) was a Swiss chemist best known for having been the first to synthesise and discover the hallucinogenic effects of *lysergic acid diethylamide* (LSD). Never an advocate of the recreational use of drugs, throughout his life he worked to discover where, when and in what manner such substances, known as *Entheogens*, had been used ritualistically in many cultures over the centuries, and in modern times were beginning to be used in psychology. This article offers a perspective on the impact of the so-called *'Mysteries'* on our world and on the legacy bequeathed to us through spiritual means by the Rosicrucian Order.

The *Mystery of Demeter and Persephone* at Eleusis, which was initially only of local significance, became an important part of Athenian citizenship, eventually developing into a pan-Hellenic institution of universal importance at the time of the Roman Empire. Its pan-Hellenic character was signalled in 760 BCE, at the time of the 5th Olympiad, when the Oracle of Delphi called upon all Greeks to make communal sacrifice in honour of Demeter of Eleusis in order to banish a famine which was then affecting all Greek-speaking parts of the Mediterranean.



Albert Hofmann

What was the message conveyed at Eleusis, a message that so powerfully transformed the cult into the most influential and spiritually significant Mystery of antiquity? This question cannot be answered in detail, for the veil of mystery, maintained by a severe commandment of secrecy, was never lifted through the millennia. It is only by examining the testimony of great initiates that we may gain an idea of the

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Demeter (left) and Persephone (right) celebrating the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Images above / left (main) : Wikimedia / Marsyas

fundamentals and spiritual significance that the teachings of Eleusis had for the individual. There is no question of any new religion having been promulgated in Eleusis. That can be ruled out, for the initiates, when safely back in their homelands after the Mysteries, remained faithful to their autochthonous religions.

Instead, revelations about the essence of human existence, and about the meaning of life and death, must have been imparted to the initiates. Prayers are known from the Mysteries, offered by initiates to *Mnemosyne*, the goddess of memory, imploring her to awaken and vividly maintain the memory of the holy initiation, and that the initiation might persist as an experience illuminating all of life and transforming existence. So powerful was the impact of those initiations upon their participants that it is little wonder that they were treated as the highlights of lives, the most important of events that ever took place in each initiate's heart and mind. Perhaps it truly was the power of that mystery transmission of esoteric and spiritual wisdom that ensured that the Mysteries have remained mysteries from antiquity to the present.



Mnemosyne

Participating in the Mysteries was an experience which cannot be understood by examining only their external appearance, for it evoked alterations in the innermost being of each initiate. That is evident from the testimony of the most famous initiates. Thus wrote *Pindar* of the Eleusinian blessing:

> Blessed is he who, having seen these rites, undertakes the way beneath the Earth; [for] he [then] knows the end of life, as well as its divinely granted beginning.

Cicero also attested to the splendour which illuminated his life from Eleusis:

> Though Athens brought forth numerous divine things, yet she never created anything nobler than those sublime Mysteries through which we became gentler and have advanced from a barbarous and rustic life to a more civilised one, so we not only live more joyfully but also die with a better hope.

The initiates often experienced in vision the congruity of the beginning and the end, of birth and death, the totality and the eternal generative ground of being. It must have been an encounter with the ineffable, the eternal, the infinite..., an encounter with the divine, that could only be described through metaphor. It is striking that the Eleusinian experience is described again and again through antitheses: darkness and light; terror and beatitude. This ambivalence is also evident in other descriptions, such as that of *Aelius Aristides*, who stated that Eleusis was:

> Both the most awe inspiring and most luminous of all the divine things that exist among me, Emperor Marcus Aurelius counted the Mysteries among those endowments which manifest the solicitude of the gods for humankind.

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Image: Wikimedia / Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon

The Eleusinian Mysteries Hydria, showing the reunion of Demeter and Persephone at the start of each spring.

This brings us to a problem of our time. It involves a question, much discussed today, of whether it is ethically and religiously defensible to use consciousness-altering drugs to gain new insights into one's personal inner spiritual life.

If the hypothesis that a consciousness-altering drug was present in the *kykeon* (an ancient Greek drink made mainly of water, barley and naturally occurring substances) is correct, and there are good arguments in its favour, then the Eleusinian Mysteries have a relevance for our time not only in a spiritual/existential sense but also with respect to the question of the controversial use of consciousness-altering compounds to attain mystical insights into the riddle of life.

Separation of Individual and Environment

The great importance and long duration of the Mysteries indicate that they answered a profound spiritual necessity, a yearning of the soul. If we adopt the viewpoint of Nietzsche, the Greek spirit was characterised by a consciousness of reality separated from its origin. Greece was the cradle of an experience of reality in which the ego was briefly separated from the exterior world, the active world of daily life that the ego was most habituated to.

Here, the conscious separation of the individual from the environment developed earlier than in other cultures. This dualistic world view, which the German physician and writer Gottfried Benn has characterised as the European-destiny neurosis, has figured decisively in the course of European spiritual history and is still fully operative in the Western world.

An ego that is capable of confronting the exterior world and of regarding the world objectively as matter, a spirit capable of objectivising the external world, was a precondition for the appearance of Western scientific research. This objective world view is evident even in the earliest documents of scientific thought, the cosmological theories of the Greek pre-Socratic philosophers. The human perspective in opposition to nature, which has made possible a vigorous domination of nature, was given its first clear philosophical formulation by Descartes in the 17th century. In Europe, therefore, a wholly objective, quantitative scientific investigation of nature has developed which has made it possible to explain the physical and chemical laws of the composition of the material world. Its findings also made possible a hitherto non-existent exploitation of nature and her forces.

The great importance and long duration of the Mysteries indicate that they answered a profound spiritual necessity, a yearning of the soul.

It has led to the industrialisation and technification of nearly all aspects of modern life and has brought a small portion of humankind to a level of comfort and material wellbeing hitherto scarcely imaginable. But what a price we have paid for this! For it has, in the process, resulted in the catastrophic destruction of our natural environment, worldwide, and we face today a global ecological crisis that has not been seen in many millions of years.

Even more serious than the material consequences is the spiritual damage of this evolution, which has led to an extreme materialistic world view. The individual has lost the connection with the spiritual and divine ground of all being. Unprotected, without shelter, and alone with oneself, the human individual confronts in solitude a soulless, chaotic, materialistic and menacing world dominated by ego-driven, powerful individuals hell-bent on reaching the very top of their game.

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View of Telesterion, ancient Eleusis, Attica, Greece.

The seeds of this dualistic world view, which has manifested itself so catastrophically in our time, were, as previously mentioned, already evident in Greek antiquity. The Greek genius sought the cure, so that the external, material world, under Apollo's protection, could be seen in its sublime beauty. The colourful, joyous, sensual but also painful Apollonian world was complemented by the Dionysian world of experience, in which the subject was dissolved in ecstatic inebriation.

Nietzsche wrote of the Dionysian world view in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872):

> It is either through the influence of narcotic potions, of which all primitive peoples and races speak in hymns, or through the powerful approach of spring, penetrating all of nature with joy, that those Dionysian stirrings arise, which in their intensification lead the individual to forget himself completely [....] Not only does the bond between person and person come to be forged once again by the magic of the Dionysian rite, but alienated, hostile, or subjugated nature again celebrates her reconciliation with her prodigal son, mankind.

The Eleusinian Mysteries were closely connected with the rites and festivities in honour of the god. They led essentially to healing, to the transcendence of the division between humankind and nature; one might say to the abolition of the separation between creator and creation. This was the real, greater proposition of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Their historical, cultural significance, their influence on European spiritual history, can scarcely be overestimated. Here, suffering humanity, split by its rational, objective spirit, found healing in a mystical experience of totality that made it possible for the individual to believe in the immortality of an eternal being.

This belief persisted in early Christianity, albeit with different symbols. It is found as a promise in certain passages of the Gospels, most clearly in the Gospel of John, Ch. 14:16-20, where Jesus addresses his disciples as he takes leave of them:

> And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever in the Truth [....] At that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.

But ecclesiastical Christianity, defined by the duality of creation and with a religiosity estranged from Nature, has completely obliterated the Eleusinian-Dionysian

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heritage of antiquity. In the Christian sphere of belief, only specially blessed people testify to a timeless, comforting reality attained in spontaneous visionary experience; an experience which untold numbers of people could attain in antiquity through the Eleusinian Initiation. The *unio mystica* of the Catholic saints and the visionary ecstasy described in the writings of *Jakob Boehme*, *Meister Eckhart*, *Angelius Silesius*, *Teresa of Avila*, *Juan de la Cruz*, *Thomas Traherne*, *William Blake* and others are obviously closely related to the enlightenment attained by the initiates to the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Transcending the Dualistic World View

Today, the fundamental importance that a mystical experience of totality can have for healing a humanity afflicted by a one-sided, rational, materialistic world-view is emphasised not only by adherents to such Eastern religious currents as Zen Buddhism but also by leading representatives of psychology and psychiatry. Even more significant is that not just in medicine but in ever-wider circles of our society, even ecclesiastical circles, overcoming the dualistic world view is considered a pre-requisite and fundamental step in the healing and spiritual renewal of Western civilisation and culture.

The official Christian churches, whose dogmas correspond to an expressly dualistic conception of the world, offer no room for such a renewal. Rather, it is private groups and associations who are attempting to satisfy the need and the longing for an all-encompassing experience of the world appropriate to our present level of knowledge and consciousness. Great numbers of all sorts of workshops and courses in yoga, meditation and self-discovery are being offered, all with the goal of an alteration or expansion of consciousness. A new direction, transpersonal psychology, has branched off from academic psychiatry and psychology, which are based on a dualistic conception of reality. In this new discipline, various means are sought to aid the individual to attain a healing experience of totality. More and more, individuals seek security and shelter through meditation, pressing onward into deeper levels of experience of reality.

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It is no accident that drugs are employed by some of these groups and in the private sphere as pharmacological aids in the production of altered states of consciousness. And, of course, this involves the same sort of drugs hypothesised at Eleusis and still used by certain Indian tribes. These are the *psychopharmaka* (a pharmaceutical substance based on the psyche of the individual) of the hallucinogenic class, which have also been described as psychedelics or entheogens, whose most important modern representative is LSD. The Greeks used the term pharmakotheon, or *"divine drug."* This sort of psychotropic compound differs from the opiates, such as morphine and heroin, and from such stimulants as cocaine in that it does not produce addiction and acts specifically on human consciousness.



Image: Wikimedia / Carole Raddato

Detail, ancient Eleusis site, Attica, Greece.

Psychedelics and Expansion of Consciousness

LSD in particular played an important role in the sixties movement, which addressed war and materialism and whose adherents sought to expand consciousness. As a matter of fact,

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under specific internal and external conditions, this class of drugs, whether called hallucinogens, psychedelics or entheogens, is capable of producing a totality experience, the unio mystica. Before the use of these substances was prohibited worldwide, this effect was applied in academic psychiatry to assist psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic treatment from the pharmacological side.

A prerequisite for meaningful use and a propitious psychic experience of these compounds, which can be described as sacred drugs, is the external environment and the spiritual preparation of those experimenting with them. The Mexican Native Americans believe that if the LSD-like *ololiuhqui* (the Christmas vine) is taken by an impure person, namely, one who has not prepared for the ceremony with fasts and prayers, then the drug might provoke insanity or even death. This wise and prudent manner of use, based on millennia of experience, was regrettably not heeded when many members of our society began to use psychedelics. Accordingly, the results sometimes took the form of psychotic breakdowns and severe accidents. And, in the 1960s, this led to the prohibition of any use of this type of drug, even in formal psychiatry.

In Eleusis, where the preparations and associated ceremonies were optimal (as is still the case among some Indian groups in Central America, where their use is still under the control of shamans), this sort of drug has found a meaningful and propitious application. From this perspective, Eleusis and these Indian groups can indeed serve as a model for our society.

...humankind has repeatedly sought paths and evolved methods to evoke deeper perception and experience.

In conclusion, I wish once more to raise the fundamental question: why were such drugs probably used in Eleusis, and why are they still used by certain Native American tribes, even today, in the course of religious ceremonies? And why is such use scarcely conceivable in the Christian liturgy, as though it were not significant? The answer is that the Christian liturgy worships a godly power enthroned in heaven, which is a power outside of the individual. At Eleusis, on the contrary, an alteration in the innermost being of the individual was striven for, a visionary experience of the ground of being which converted the subjects into *Mystai*, *Epotetai*, *Initiates*.

Eleusis as Model for Today

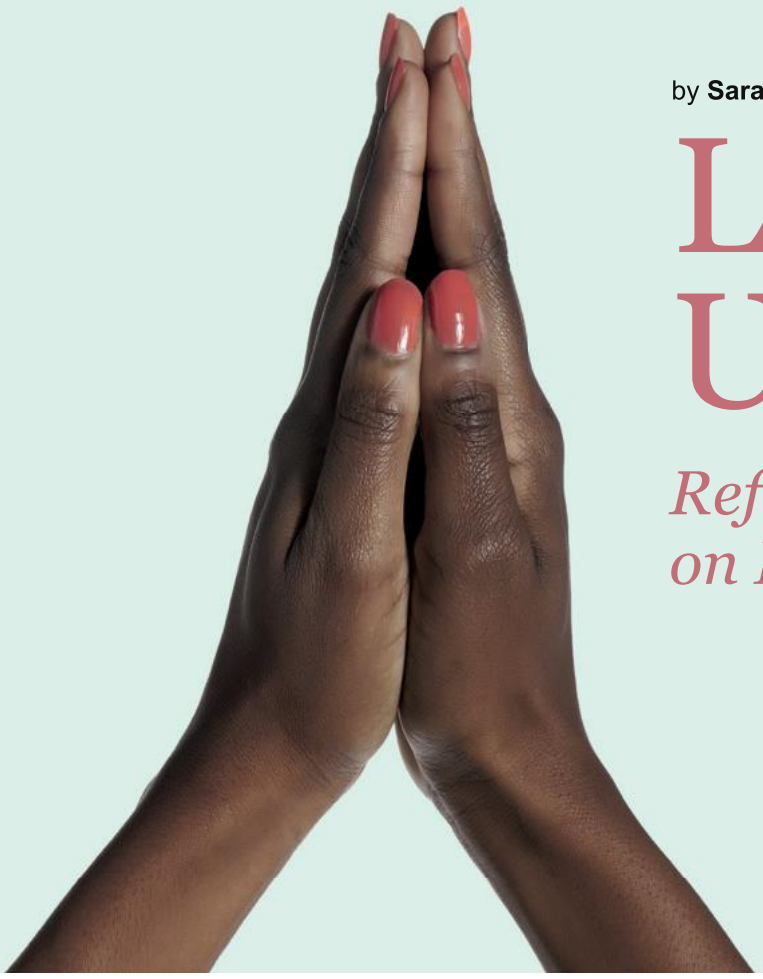
Alteration within the individual is again underway today. The requisite transformations in the direction of an all-encompassing consciousness, as a precondition for overcoming materialism and for a renewed relationship with Nature, cannot be relegated to society or to the state. The change must and can only take place in each individual person.

Only a few blessed people spontaneously attain the mystical vision which can affect this transformation. As a result, humankind has repeatedly sought paths and evolved methods to evoke deeper perception and experience. First among these are the different techniques of meditation. Meditation can be assisted by such external means as isolation and solitude, a path the hermits and desert saints followed; and by such physical practices as fasting and breath control. An especially important aid in the induction of mystical-ecstatic states of consciousness, discovered in the earliest times, is decidedly the use of certain plant drugs. In the preceding discussion, I have made it quite clear that their use must proceed within the scope of religious ceremony.

The fact that extraordinary states of awareness can be induced with various means and in various ways shows us that capacity for mystical experience is innate to every person. It is part of the essence of human spirituality. It is unrelated to the external, social status of the individual. Thus, in Eleusis, both free men and women, as well as slaves, could be initiated.

Eleusis can be a model for today. Eleusis-like centres could unite and strengthen the many spiritual currents of our time, all of which have the same goal: the goal of creating, by transforming consciousness in individual people, the conditions for a better world, a world without war and without environmental damage; a world of happy people.

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by **Sarah Plait**

Listen Up!

Reflections on Prayer

Visitors wandering into a city cathedral to admire the stained glass windows, monuments and architecture came upon a young woman in ardent, vocal prayer and tip-toed away from the area so as not to disturb her. Twenty minutes later a cleric quietly approached the five sight-seers and invited them to join the evening service taking place a few minutes hence, leading them up stairs to elevated seats directly overlooking the woman who, 10 feet below, continued her evidently urgent business with the Almighty seemingly unperturbed and even unaware of the intrusion. She carried on, her voice rising and falling dramatically as she offered up and repeated forcibly the details of her discontent, pleas for divine intervention and direction and *'please, please, please.'*

The five watchers sat in the kind of discomfort they might have felt had they stumbled upon a confessional where someone was disclosing the most terrible transgressions, or into a doctor's consulting room during an intimate examination. Their awkwardness was great, yet it would have felt unseemly and rude for them to move, having been placed by a cleric clearly delighted to have extra listeners at her spoken prayers.

The woman continued on and on until the vicar intervened, inviting her to shut up or ship out, although somewhat more politely phrased. She then left, having apparently been so deeply at one with her outspoken and heartfelt expression of prayer that she hadn't noticed the visitors, despite their bustling entrance, embarrassed

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throat-clearing and hushed conversation. She doubtless felt she was engaged in the deepest of divine conversations. Yet, despite asking for numerous answers and solutions from on high, she never once stopped talking. She wouldn't and couldn't have discerned God's guidance if he had addressed her from the pulpit in a voice of thunder.

Prayer is a special form of communication and it is a two way process. One part is the praying person saying, mentally or out loud, what they want to say to God. The other part, totally indispensable and vital to any kind of positive outcome, is listening. It may be worth remembering here the old saying that we have only one mouth but two ears, all the better to listen twice as much as we speak. I'm sure we have all had conversations where we felt we couldn't fit in a word without a hammer and chisel, and where the other person wouldn't hear a syllable even if we hammered all day. How much more important it is to keep the channel of communication clear and free when approaching the Divine, so as to hear the response when it comes.

In Rosicrucian circles we tend to use the term 'meditation' a lot more often than prayer. This is not because there's anything wrong with prayer, it's just that the word has become so commonly used that it doesn't mean the same thing to all people, whereas meditation is, well..., known to be a quiet and sacred affair. Except for purists who can accurately distinguish between the two, for most people meditation is a form of prayer, though a great deal less personal and much more universal than common prayer. But for the non-purists, the two terms are interchangeable as they involve an individual deliberately contacting the universal consciousness which is responsible for all creation, is all-seeing, all-knowing, ever present and basically has all the answers, no matter what question, problem or dilemma we may have.



How much more important it is to keep the channel of communication clear and free when approaching the Divine...

The key necessity for communication to take place is for the praying person to come into attunement with Divinity (the Cosmic), just as they need to tune in to a radio and pick up the signal for the channel selected. Unfortunately, there is all manner of interference which can block this Divine contact..., anything from rowdy children outside to a distracting inner nag about the waiting *'to do'* list, especially as Divinity speaks to us almost always only in the hushed tones of the still, small voice of our deeper self, the always patient and mostly silent *'Master Within.'*

Attunement requires that we lift our own consciousness to a level where it escapes the confines of objective reality, the reality which is largely governed by our five dominant senses of hearing, sight, touch, smell and taste. In so transcending the mundane world, we allow the connection to be made and enter a fertile mindscape in which we may plant our prayer with the certainty that it will be responded to in the fullness of time.

Like working a muscle, the process is made easier, quicker and more effective through practice and repetition; hence the reason that one of the first tasks suggested to anyone joining the Rosicrucian Order is to mentally create their own 'Celestial Sanctum', a personal sanctum sanctorum where all things sacred can be dealt with in a calm, unhurried and undisturbed manner. This is an individualised, beautiful and serene environment outside the troubles and concerns of the material world, a fitting and sacred place in which to contact our concept of the Divine and provide the conditions for a fruitful outcome.

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There are two important phases to communication with the Divine. One is the active phase in which we articulate as clearly as possible our prayer, wish, request or message. The other is the passive phase in which we need to be quiet and inwardly receptive to the response which will come. Theologians have categorised some of the most common prayers as follows:-

1. Intercessions, in which we ask the Divine to intercede or step in on behalf of someone other than ourselves. It may be a plea for a better outcome than seems likely for one person suffering illness, poverty or some other challenging condition, or it may be for a group, a nation, all people with a particular anxiety, or indeed all humankind, as practised frequently at Rosicrucian meetings.

2. Petitions, which are prayers for the things we personally feel we want or need, whether material belongings, opportunities, good outcomes or the qualities we need to develop as spiritual beings, as in the ubiquitous but anonymous: *"Pray not for lighter burdens but for stronger backs."* Our visualisations for desired circumstances may be seen in the light of structured prayers, vividly imagined and then released to the Cosmic.



3. Confessions, in which we seek forgiveness for what we have done that we shouldn't have, or not done that we should have. We seek the cleansing of heart which comes when we are shown the way to make recompense, mend our ways or salve our conscience.

4. Consecrations, when we dedicate something such as ourselves, our belongings or perhaps particular places, to God's purposes, as we do when we first create our home sanctums.

5. Thanksgiving or praise, which are genuine prayers of worship that acknowledge the goodness of God in its manifold versions with no intention or request to receive anything back in return. The Psalms of David in the Old Testament contain some of the best known, as does the Hermetica, the body of wise and beautiful hymns and poems attributed to the Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus.

The Rosicrucian teachings offer many measures to ensure the efficacy of our prayers

The Rosicrucian teachings offer many measures to ensure the efficacy of our prayers, including those of preparing properly by washing our hands and drinking water to signify the specialness of the contact to come, ensuring that there is always at least some unselfish element in our prayer that will result in a good outcome for others and won't benefit only us. And of course it goes without saying that we must be sincere and truthful in all we say.

It's clear, though, that not all our requests are granted, even when they're for what seem to be undeniably worthy causes. We don't yet have anything approaching a state of world peace, and our loved ones succumb to all manner of unpleasant conditions and circumstances, however much we wish it otherwise. Being on a path of spiritual development however, we acknowledge freely that we don't always (or even often) know best; what we think would be good could frequently be damaging to us, both in material terms and in the realm of karmic consequences.

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Frequently it turns out that the things we felt were hardest to bear or most difficult to handle offer the greatest learning or benefits that we never dreamt of enjoying. Similarly, situations we thought we'd welcome turn out to be horrendous. Ask anyone who has followed the path from true love to disastrous divorce, been promoted beyond their capabilities into a state of stress or won the lottery only to find themselves forced out of home by bags of begging letters.

Even when prayers are answered, the outcomes don't usually arrive as a sudden and complete package, like a genie granting a wish or a fairy godmother turning a pumpkin into a carriage. Certainly they can transform lives and situations in what seems like a magical fashion, sometimes very quickly, as numerous biographies can attest, but generally there is a time-lag and a requirement for action and, vitally, a change of heart and mind. Something changes in the heart of the person praying or the people prayed about. Something changes in their understanding of what is being prayed for and what can reasonably and equitably be expected.

We receive an influx from the highest form of Divinity we are able to reach, and we are given an appropriate form of enlightenment which then inspires and instructs us on how to effect the changes needed. Those changes can relate to anything from healing ourselves or others to calming down a worrisome neighbour with whom we have no option but to coexist. When we bring ourselves in line with our spiritual path and purpose we're given the means to change everything.

What we can't do is upend natural and karmic laws and generate different outcomes from the same attitudes and behaviours which brought about the situations in the first place. Many notable people have said words to the effect that *"...all prayers are answered when one realises that sometimes the answer is no."*

Oh Great Spirit

by Lakota Sioux Chief Yellow Lark (ca 1887)

Oh Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me, I am small and weak, I need your strength and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made, and make my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so I may understand the things you have taught my people.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy - myself.

Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes; so when life fades, as the fading sunset, my Spirit may come to you without shame.



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HEALING THE WHOLE PERSON

by **George F Buletza**

There is a tendency in the world, with its standards of good and bad, right and wrong, for many people to think that they know the only way to health and wellbeing. Attitudes that permit us to say, *"I'm right and you're wrong"* have been with us a long time and are pretty hard to lose.

Wise physicians as far back as ancient Greece and even earlier to ancient Egypt, noted that such attitudes could affect the way we perceive our world, our relationships, our hopes for the future and, ultimately, our health and wellbeing. This attitude formed the basis for one of the three stages of human growth and evolution portrayed in the mysteries of Isis of ancient Egypt, later on in the classical period of Greece, and much later on in the alchemical traditions of medieval Europe.

The Three Stages of Human Growth

During the course of the year, statues of Isis were draped with robes of certain colours that were used to represent the three stages of personal growth. To ancient priests and physicians, the first stage was the colour red and denoted vitality, energy, new life and childlike innocence. This was a dream-like phase, partially unconscious and accepting of nature, but fully participating in her bounties and blessings. It is a stage where we are new to everything, where we need protection from many things due to our inexperience, and where we naïvely expect life to take care of us without giving anything in return.

The second stage of personal growth was characterised in the mysteries by the colour pair black and white. These

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colours represented duality, good and bad, right and wrong, likes and dislikes. In broad terms it was a phase of choice being presented and taken. Such judgmental thinking leads to expectations about how the world ought to be and how we or others need to behave. From a plethora of alternatives characterised by the colours black and white, choices are made. There is a need to focus clearly on the realities resulting from these choices. The realities sought are of course the bountiful gifts that life creates for us if given half a chance.

The third stage, represented by gold, is the stage of wisdom, reintegration and wholeness. In the gold stage of human growth an overwhelming compassion drives everything that we do. The Rosicrucian studies point out that our growth and transformation does not occur by being hermits or avoiding integration with other human beings. Transmutation occurs through the tests and trials of life, through our interaction with others. The alchemist's work is with personal realities, with what he or she believes to be true about the world. This subtle shift in outlook, in attitude, in consciousness, suggests that, rather than our shaping life to meet our expectations, we can choose to be transformed by life and by the relationships and experiences we attract to us.



Statues of Isis were draped with robes of certain colours.

Developing Healing Relationships

In the ancient world, emphasis was given to the phases and cycles of life as normal processes of nature. These followed each other in ordered sequence and each contributed to the unfoldment of future phases. With regard to healing, this rule also applies.

In terms of a healing situation, the first phase, represented by the colour red, the healer-patient relationship is like a parent-child relationship. In the black-and-white phase, for instance, patients may begin to take personal responsibility rather than expecting a parent-figure to solve their problems. Patients begin participating in the healing process by following the advice of a qualified healer, watching diet, exercise, breathing and thinking, as well as actively visualising and sincerely wishing for a positive outcome. By participating in their own healing processes, patients come to realise the awesome healing potential already within themselves.

Speaking in the present now, patients in the black/white phase start taking charge of the outcome of their health or eventual demise, and assume far greater responsibility than before. But this has the tendency of cutting out opportunities for developing healing relationships that bring them out of themselves and the many old, narrow and patently false solutions that may have been adopted in ignorance. Such people run the risk of missing opportunities to integrate with other people who may evoke new ways of doing things and a broader view of the world of healing. If their visualisations, meditations, exercises and other self-healing techniques do not appear to work, they deem themselves unworthy failures. As former Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, Dr H Spencer Lewis called it, a form of *'mental poisoning'*, not one of self-healing.

For the healer, the black/white phase, filled with opportunity that it undoubtedly is, can also lead to unhappiness and the so-called 'dark night of the soul'. Regardless of healing style, whether medical or metaphysical, healers have a personal need to fulfil their reality, to confirm with confidence their belief in their healing abilities. When unsuccessful, they may become despondent and conclude they are poor healers, not cut out for the profession. Or they may try and bolster their belief and confidence in their abilities through one or more of the following strategies, saying to themselves:

In the ancient world, emphasis was given to the phases and cycles of life as normal processes of nature.

1. *"I will master this problem, if I just try harder, read another book, attend another lecture, take another course. Next time it will turn out all right."*

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2. *We may decide it's the patient's fault. "My therapy is fine; if only they followed my instructions, everything would be okay."*

3. *"This is not the kind of illness or patient we need to deal with in the future. This is not our specialty or area of expertise."*

4. *We can comfort the patient and ourselves by deciding that the very best is being done and that progress is being made, even if we can't see it yet.*

Gold is the stage of wisdom, reintegration, and wholeness.

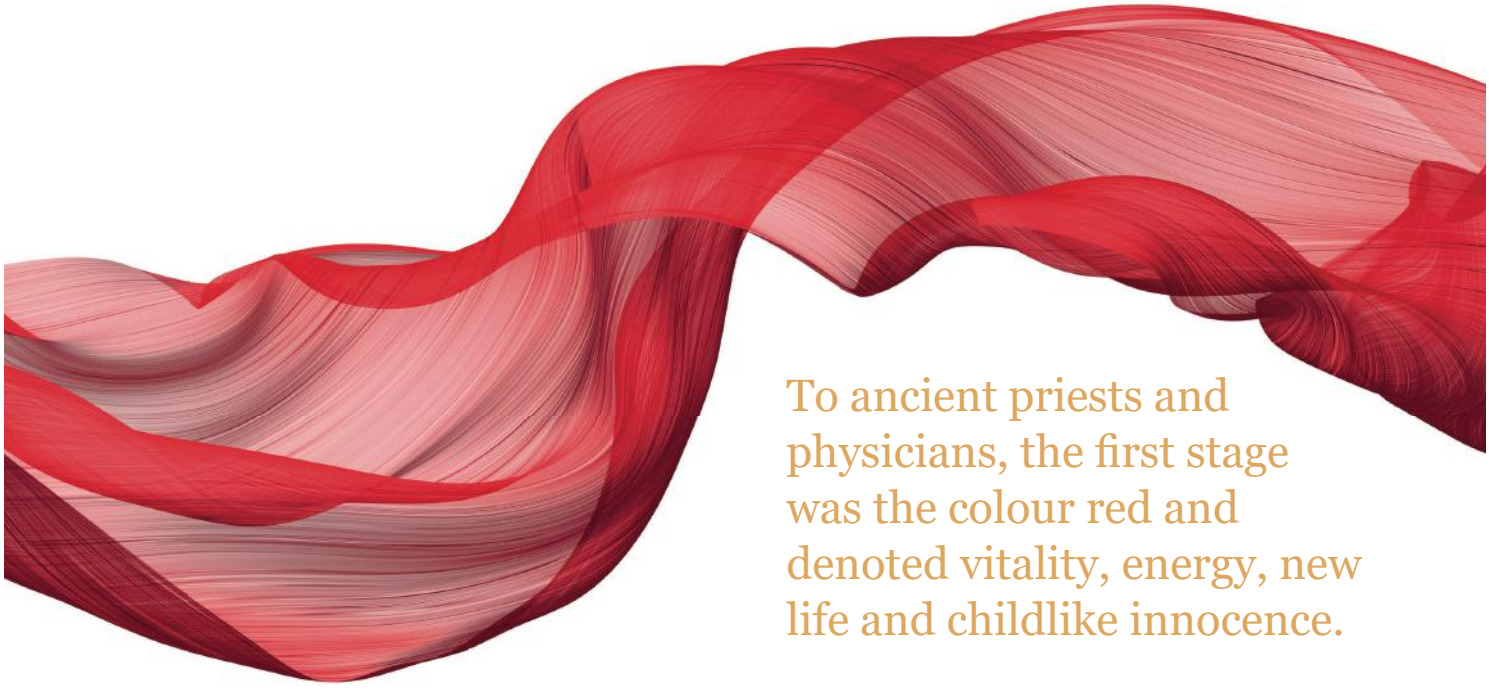
Whether healer or patient, we tend to think that strategies like these help us compete in a black-and-white world. They inflate the outer personality, the ego, and encourage us to believe that we are in control of our lives and problems. Yet even if we are convinced of our control, if we still have the courage to go inward with an open, questioning mind, we may discover that we still secretly fear we are not really in control, that maybe we are not really 'good' healers. We get by, but only just. We make mistakes and feel the guilt of failure.

Caught in the extremes of dualistic thinking, neither healer nor patient is immune from fear, superstition and ignorance; burnout, despair and degenerating health are all the legacy of dualistic thinking. The black-and-white stage represented death in the ancient mysteries; and death in turn represented putrefaction and separation in alchemy. Almost every culture uses black or white, or a combination of both, to represent death. Yet the colours of death also symbolise the potential for rebirth and transformation to the third stage of life, represented by gold.

The Stage of Wisdom, Reintegration

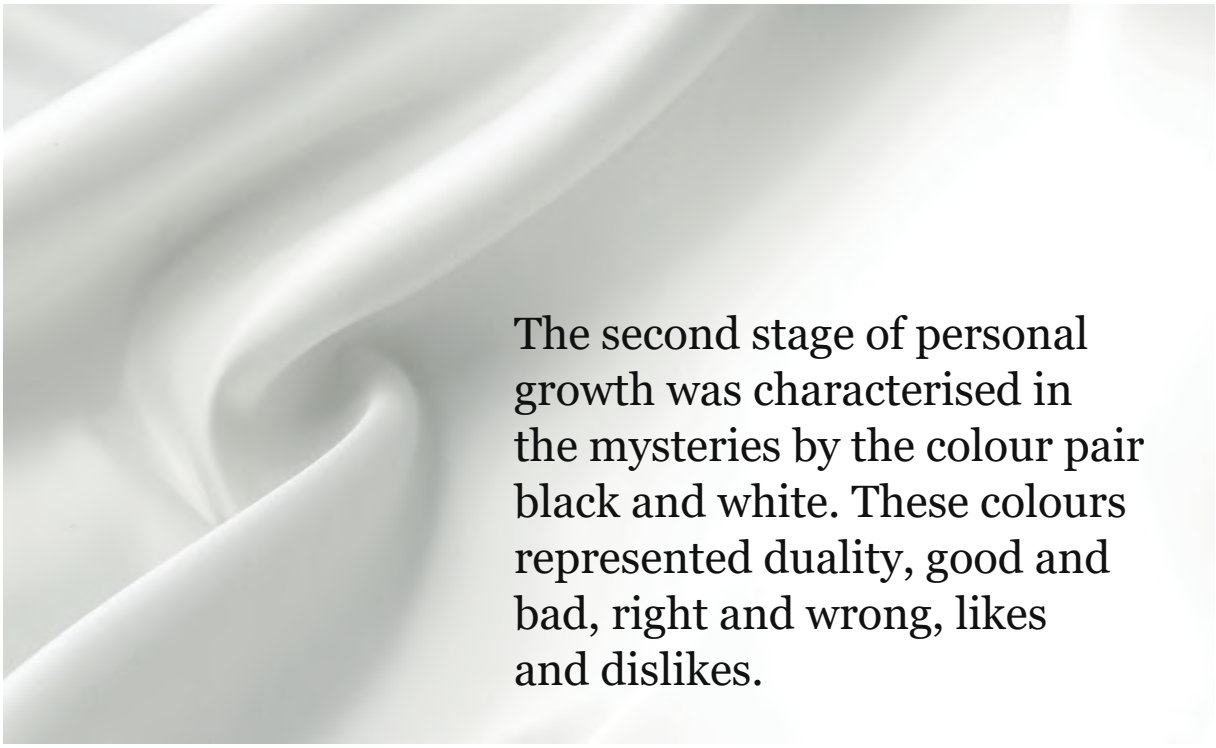
Gold is the stage of wisdom, reintegration, and wholeness. The idea of a separate healer and patient loses meaning in the gold phase. When, as healers, we deal with patients, we gain insights into our own lives. Friends' needs are our needs, friends' tears our tears, friends' healing our healing. In this gold stage there is no separation between patient and healer, and an overwhelming compassion drives all that one does.

We are one humanity with common needs and problems, and even common transformations. Healings and transformations occur through relationships .We may decide to practice the art of healing consciously, but this is done without the compulsion to act out the role of healer or patient. Each time we enter into a healing relationship with others we do not know what the precise outcome will



To ancient priests and physicians, the first stage was the colour red and denoted vitality, energy, new life and childlike innocence.

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The second stage of personal growth was characterised in the mysteries by the colour pair black and white. These colours represented duality, good and bad, right and wrong, likes and dislikes.

be. We do not know in just what way our persona can be beneficially transformed. In the gold stage, entering into a healing relationship is an adventure. It is a quest that leads to ever-greater self-discovery and deeper appreciation for the love that unites all.

When a person is ill, that person is vulnerable. Illness cracks our habitual defence mechanisms. When our unquestioned realities and beliefs are no longer effective, we can decide to replace them with realities that more accurately mirror our inner intentions. Upon discarding irrelevant defences we may also be surprised to discover that we can experience greater freedom, spontaneity, and creativity.

If we are willing to let our defences down, to look deeply within at our own nature, then we can come to realise the commonality, the unity, and the love that always existed but that we didn't notice before. We may be surprised by our own transformations made as a result of seeing what is true in this mirror of self. We may discover at an inner psychic level that there are no coincidences, that we and those attracted to us are co-healers, co-creators, on an extraordinary adventure we call life.

To embark on this extraordinary adventure, a trust in the inner power of healing and transformation is essential. Creative openness, integrity, firmness, and compassion follow from genuine confidence or intense trust. With genuine confidence we find that no one in a relationship is less than, or more than, he or she actually is. Instead of being lost in sympathetic responses to symptoms, we interact with compassion and integrity, creatively transforming into what we actually are.

With trust, illness can be an opportunity, a threshold to greater health and the golden state of life we call wisdom. With experience we come to realise that genuine confidence comes only when we are willing to face our own fears. Crossing this threshold results in greater physical, emotional, and mental wholeness. Rather than being the dualistic opposite of illness, health can become a celebration and appreciation of life. Life is our friend. Life is the provider of the conditions and opportunities that evoke the evolution of the open mind.

Growth, transformation and evolution can apply and be incorporated into any therapeutic modality, whether traditional or non-traditional. We can choose to follow allopathic medicine, homeopathy, chiropractic, acupuncture, touch, nutrition or any of a host of other approaches to healing and still realise that life is a shared adventure wherein we all are evolving.

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Apophthegms of Francis Bacon

by **Ruth Olson**

During his life, Francis Bacon always enjoyed making terse, witty apophthegms, what we today would call *bon mots*..., although usually more acerbic in tone. An illness gave him the opportunity to dictate from memory those he liked best, and they were published in 1624. Later editions contained deletions and additions, and even later editions had spurious entries which were brobably not his.

The following sayings can be found in *Lord Bacon's Works, Volume VII, Literary and Professional Works: edited by Shedding and Heath*. A warning: they seem simple but some are infuriatingly difficult to comprehend. But they all contain hidden truths. Let your mind wander a bit, therefore, and challenge it to grasp what Bacon meant.

- Simonides, when asked by Hiero what he thought of God, asked for seven nights to consider it. At the end of seven nights he asked for a fortnight; then at the end of a fortnight, he asked for a month. When Hiero marvelled at this, Simonides answered that the longer he thought about it, the more difficult he found it.

- Come to the point. Why? I shall not find you there.

- Solon said to Croesus when in ostentation Croesus showed him his gold: *"Sir, if anyone comes that has better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold."*

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- The glory of God is to conceal a thing, and the glory of a man is to find out a thing.
- He that resolves in haste repents at leisure.
- Croesus told Cambyses that peace was better than war; because in peace the sons buried their fathers, but in wars the fathers buried their sons.
- In Chancery, the counsels of the parties set forth by plot the boundaries of the land in question. The counsel of one party said, *"We lie on this side, my Lord";* and the counsel of the other party said, *"We [also] lie on this side."* The Lord Chancellor Hatton stood up and said, *"If you lie on both sides, whom will you have me believe?"*
- Nothing is impossible to a willing heart.
- Solon compared the people to the sea, and orators to the winds: The sea would be calm and quiet if the winds did not trouble it.
- There was a young man in Rome who looked very much like Augustus Caesar. Augustus heard of it, sent for the man, and asked him: *"Was your mother never at Rome?"* The man answered: *"No sir, but my father was."*
- An orator of Athens said to Demosthenes: *"The Athenians will kill you if they wax mad."* Demosthenes replied: *"And they will kill you, if they be in good sense."*
- After Themistocles had been banished, he came into great favour and was honoured and sumptuously served. In his glory he said to one of his friends: *"If I had not been undone, I had been undone."*
- Bacon was wont to say of an angry man who suppressed his passion *"...that he thought worse than he spoke"*, and of an angry man that would chide, *"...that he spoke worse than he thought."*
- All is not in years, somewhat is in hours well spent.
- Sir Robert Hitcham said he cared not that men laughed at him, for he would laugh at them too. My Lord St Alban answered, that if he did so he would be the merriest man in England.
- Bishop Latimer said in a sermon at court that he had heard the King was poor and many ways were propounded to make him rich. For his part he had thought of one way, which was that they should help the King to some good office, for all his officers were rich.
- Antisthenes, on being asked what learning was most necessary for man's life, answered: *"To unlearn that which is naught."*
- Cato Major would say that wise men learned more from fools, than fools from wise men.
- Better to be envied than pitied.

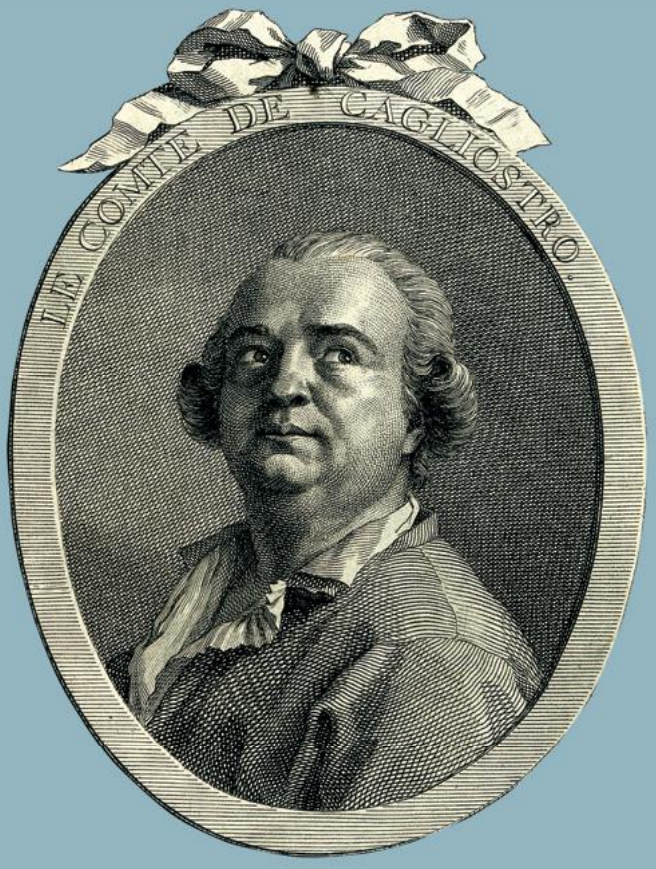
"He that resolves in haste repents at leisure."

- When examined about certain scandalous words that had been spoken against the King, someone said: "It is true that I spoke them, and if the wine had not failed I would have said much more."
- Cosimo, Duke of Florence, was wont to say of perfidious friends: *"We read that we ought to forgive our enemies; but we do not read that we ought to forgive our friends."*
- An Epicurean boasted that philosophers of various other sects turned to Epicureanism, but Epicureans never turned to the philosophies of other sects. Whereupon a philosopher of another sect said: *"The reason is plain, for cocks may be made capons, but capons can never be made cocks."*
- When a certain nimble-witted counsellor at the bar who was forward in speech repeatedly interrupted Sir Nicholas Bacon, the latter said: *"There is a great difference between you and me; a pain to me to speak, and a pain to you to hold your tongue."*
- Thales said that life and death were all one. When asked: *"Why do not you die then?"* Thales said again: *"Because they all are one."*
- Use Maketh Mastery.

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Cagliostro

by **Marc Cornwall**



The Swiss city of Basel is centrally located in Europe and relatively easy to get to. Some years back, before the Covid-19 pandemic arrived, I travelled there with some pharmacist friends for a long weekend. The city has a large and successful pharmaceutical industry and, as befits any industry proud of its heritage, it has a museum to chronicle the evolution of pharmacy.

The Pharmacy Historical Museum is run by the University of Basel, Switzerland's oldest university and the academic home of illustrious minds of the past such as Erasmus, Paracelsus and Friedrich Nietzsche. The exceptional exhibits and old setting of this museum reveals many pages from the past. Granted, it's not on the top-10 list of must-see venues in this beautiful

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Reconstruction of the full-sized alchemist's laboratory at The Pharmacy Historical Museum, University of Basel, Switzerland.

and historically interesting city, but it is a fascinating place for anyone interested in the history of the Western mystery tradition in particular to visit. As I had suspected, one little known chapter of Rosicrucian history is what I was looking for and I found it there. As far as I know, this chapter is virtually unknown even to historians.

We completed our visit to the museum. The highlight for me was the reconstruction of the full-sized alchemist's laboratory. Just a few steps beyond the museum, and as we were about to leave, I came upon a strange sign that startled me. There, on our left, was a simple placard over the protective railing of a steep stairway leading to the basement. The sign read in German: *"Cagliostro machte hier das Gold"*, Cagliostro made gold here! This was a surprisingly positive statement about the accomplishment of that mysterious mystic, Cagliostro. It wasn't a notice put up by someone with a penchant for the romantic or someone indulging their imagination to embellish facts. It was the official declaration of a scientific institute in the third largest city in Switzerland. So, here it was: official.

I peered excitedly over the railing and down the stairway into the dark shadows below. I could barely see the old, partially subterranean chamber which had been used by the famous Cagliostro during his stay in Basel. I had read about him briefly but nothing detailed and, up until my visit to the museum, I knew very little about him. I dragged the others down to see the room where it was claimed that he had, as in France, produced transmuted gold. Scientifically, short of having discovered cold-fusion, that was nonsense, but it was apparently not disputed by the museum authorities, for they had put the sign up, so it was worth looking into. Strangely, the offspring of alchemy, modern pharmacy, had erected its museum right beside the very building in which one of its earliest predecessors had laboured away.

A lot has been written about Cagliostro's life, but, to be quite honest, most of it is worthless. Making gold in Basel was by many of these accounts one of the concluding events in the life of a man whose life reads like the most fanciful fiction. Nevertheless, let's delve a bit. It is said that Alessandro di Cagliostro was born at Palermo, the capital of Sicily, in 1743. Most of the early biographers said his real name was Giuseppe Balsamo. It is worth noting, though, that opinions on Cagliostro were formed primarily by one Italian biographer, and he was commissioned and paid by the Vatican to produce the biography. So there is every reason to believe, therefore, that this central biography, upon which so many other stories about Cagliostro are based, is a fabrication intended to libel the character of a man who was born into Catholicism but was in later life considered worthy of burning at the stake.

A further contribution is the so-called *Memoirs of Cagliostro,* now considered spurious by many literary authorities but which have nevertheless influenced encyclopaedias and historical references for centuries. So, in the knowledge that there exist very few works of real historical authenticity, we will use what exists and try to glean from it what is and is not plausible.

He was, it is claimed, taught the deepest secrets of ancient Egyptians and became, even in their eyes, a sage.

Cagliostro stayed for periods of his life in Greece, Egypt, Arabia (Yemen), Persia, the island of Rhodes and most countries of Europe. While in Egypt he was initiated into a remnant of the ancient Egyptian mystery schools and underwent initiations not only in the Great Pyramid of Khufu but in several other temples along the Nile. He was, it is claimed, taught the deepest secrets of ancient Egyptians and became even in their eyes a sage. Of course, as a Rosicrucian *'walking*

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Basel, Switzerland.

question mark', I'm a bit sceptical of such claims; they come after all from the literature mentioned above. How much of ancient Egypt still lay under the desert sands in his day? Undoubtedly virtually all of it! We know that most of these temples were in ruins at the time, but some may have been accessible through secret passageways.

That Cagliostro was a scholar of great learning and possessed the most extraordinary knowledge even his false biographers conceded, so clearly he received his wisdom from somewhere other than a provincial little town in the south of Italy.

On the island of Rhodes he is said to have studied alchemy and the occult sciences, and was inducted into the *Knights Hospitaller* (*Knights of St John of Jerusalem*). Through his close friendship with the Grand Master, he was later introduced to many prominent families in Rome. He returned to Europe, visiting several of the capitals, and his fame as an alchemist, philosopher, healer, and reputedly a Rosicrucian too, became widespread. The biographers who referred to him as Giuseppe Balsamo have presented him as a contemptible rogue, charlatan and heathen. But the gulf between the two characters we find in the literature is so great that it seems obvious to me that they were either two entirely different men, or, as is also possible, a Vatican-inspired attempt to sully Cagliostro's reputation.

In early life, Cagliostro, it is narrated, was a perverse and extremely immoral man. However, in describing his later years in Paris and Strasbourg, his biographers, with a few exceptions, admired his powers and seemingly miraculous acts. You can sense their secret wonder at his feats and their doubt about reports about his early years. As an example, Waite, in his short sketch of the life of Cagliostro, whom he calls Balsamo, just as those others, quotes from the Italian biographer. Then, as if suddenly conscious of the incongruity of the acts of morality and immorality attributed to Cagliostro in the stories, he says:

You can sense their secret wonder at his feats and their doubt about reports about his early years.

> *"The veracity of this account is not however beyond suspicion."*

Phenomenal Demonstrations

Cagliostro reportedly entered the city of Strasbourg in triumph. Different reports agree that crowds of sick people who had heard of his healing powers were waiting for him and hoped for treatment from him.

> *"The famous emperic entered and cured them all; some simply by touch, others apparently by words or by a gratuity in money, the rest by his universal panacea [specially prepared medicine]."*

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Going to his lodgings in Strasbourg where the ill had assembled...

"...Cagliostro issued from the hall amidst universal acclaim, and was accompanied by the immense crowd to the doors of the magnificent lodging which had been prepared against his arrival."

His demonstrations of occult phenomena amazed people wherever he went. It was said that he could cause objects to manifest which weren't ordinarily visible and that he was also able to make himself visible in two places simultaneously..., something I still need a lot of practise with! These displays of power weren't only for the ignorant and credulous masses. Many learned people were present on these occasions. As one biographer almost reluctantly admitted:

"Contemporary testimony established that these manifestations as a whole were genuine and there is little doubt of the mesmeric abilities of Cagliostro...."

In other words, the biographer was attempting to make the reader believe that Cagliostro hypnotised (mesmerised) everyone he confronted and deceived them into thinking what they had been told about his powers. However, elsewhere the same biographer calls Cagliostro's powers fraudulent.

His demonstrations of occult phenomena amazed people wherever he went.

In the heart of bustling, noisy Paris stands the solemn, attention-arresting residence of Count Alessandro di Cagliostro, the famous mystic and alchemist. The building's high stone wall and wrought iron gates shut out the world and preserve its air of mystery. On the superimposed garret balcony, the alchemist-philosopher hoisted from the cobblestone courtyard below kegs of chemicals and boxes of instruments used in his secret alchemical experiments. Cagliostro studied in the mystery schools of the Orient and later taught his knowledge to kings and potentates. Feared and hated for his wealth and power, he was libelled, persecuted and finally wrongly imprisoned for life.

We are also told that

"...he visited the sick in the hospitals, deferentially participated in the duties of the regular doctors, proposed his remarks with prudence, did not condemn the old methods but sought to unite the new science with the science which was based on experience."

How can the above quotation be reconciled with the character of Balsamo? Would someone who was a cruel fraud and actually lacking in knowledge of healing be capable of such acts of compassion and even participate in the work of the doctors in the hospitals he visited?

Furthermore, he didn't condemn the accepted scientific methods of the day but tried to integrate his own arts with those of the doctors. And he was not rejected by the doctors, for they allowed him to participate in the healing in the hospitals. These weren't the actions, then, of some sham or quack. In fact, his critics further admit:

"...unheard-of cures were cited and alchemical operations which surpassed even the supposed possibilities of the transmutatory art."

In 1771 Cagliostro moved to Paris.

"He assumed the role of a practical magician and astonished the city by the evocation of phantoms, which he caused to appear at the wish of the inquirer, either in a mirror or in a vase of clear water. These phantoms equally represented dead and living beings and, as occasionally, collusion appears to have been well nigh impossible, and as the theory of coincidence is preposterous, there is reason to suppose that he produced results which must sometimes have astounded himself."

It would have been more apt for this biographer to have said that he was the one astounded rather than Cagliostro. It is clear that, search as he could for any suggestion of fraud, the biographer could find none and thus admits to the astounding and inexplicable phenomena that Cagliostro produced. Let us remember that almost all these biographers began on the premise

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Louis XVI of France became infatuated with Cagliostro after having private audiences with him.

that Cagliostro was a charlatan but, once the biography was started, they often found themselves hard put to support such a notion.

Genius or Impostor

Louis XVI of France became infatuated with Cagliostro after having private audiences with him. He was so convinced that Cagliostro was a genius and a noted alchemical philosopher that he declared that anyone who injured him would be considered guilty of treason. This implied royal sponsorship of Cagliostro. Consequently, the crown's acceptance was an open sesame for him to the highest social circles of France. Nevertheless, one biographer, who related this, includes tales of reported debauchery by Cagliostro in the temple erected in the splendid mansion on the Rue St. Cloud in Paris.

Cagliostro's creation of a lodge of Egyptian Masonry in Paris, his conferring of Rosicrucian rites, his mystical ceremonies, his fabulous cures and his demonstrations of powers were causing the Catholic Church great concern. He was adored by the people, from the highest social circles down. His generosity to the poor, his apparent self-sacrifice and charity, as well as the moral esteem in which he was held by the people, were conditions of rivalry that the Roman Church could scarcely endure. Strangely enough, despite this hostility, Cagliostro became a close friend of Cardinal de Rohan, though it turned out to be one of his most fatal mistakes, for...

"...in a short time he was raised to the height of a celebrity by a miraculous cure of the Prince de Soubise, the brother of Cardinal de Rohan, who was suffering from a virulent attack of scarlet fever. From then on the portrait of the adept was to be seen everywhere in Paris."

Cagliostro was implicated in the famous "diamond necklace affair," in which the Cardinal was the central figure. Cardinal de Rohan, via his mistress, had been led to believe that Queen Marie Antoinette was in love with him. The Cardinal bought the fabulously priced necklace for her but was not able to meet the payment. As the Cardinal had formerly been expelled for improper conduct, he perhaps hoped to return to the good graces of the crown. At the trial, Cagliostro was freed from conviction. However, he was imprisoned in the Bastille "for other reasons," as a biographer says, and without further explanation. He was later able to flee to London and, while there, wrote of the corruption prevailing in France and predicted the Revolution that was soon to come. Both Church and Royalists now hated him for this, and he finally found sanctuary in Basel.

...the people were anxious to learn the art that had given Cagliostro his power.

Under Penalty of Death

It was while in Basel that some of the initiates who followed him conducted their alchemical researches in the very basement laboratory I was looking at. His followers who remained in France didn't all desert him either. His Egyptian Masonic lodges and Rosicrucian Temple continued, to the great annoyance of the Catholic prelates, for the people were anxious to learn the art that had given Cagliostro his power. Furthermore, Cardinal de Rohan, who had eventually been acquitted, had probably believed that Cagliostro had involved him in the diamond necklace affair and caused him to be exposed. The Cardinal's ecclesiastical power seems to have been brought to bear against the mystical alchemist primarily because of this.

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Against all the odds stacked against him, Cagliostro returned to Rome. He was urged by former initiates of his Egyptian Masonic and Rosicrucian Lodges to establish more Lodges in the eternal city. Despite a papal penalty of death for the establishment of Freemasonic lodges in Rome, Cagliostro had always displayed absolute courage in these matters. In defiance of the papal edict, he organised his lodge and initiated eager supplicants who sought the Greater Light. He was arrested on 27 September 1789 by order of the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

The Italian biographer tried to mitigate the historical impression of the dictatorial policy of the Roman Church by declaring that the papal authorities had engaged for Cagliostro a lawyer *"Whose knowledge and probity were generally recognised."* Cagliostro was induced, through reliance upon this counsel and against his own better judgement, to confess to odious crimes, and also induced not to staunchly deny the many charges brought against him. He was assured that he would then receive leniency from the papal authorities and be permitted to leave Italy at once.

The result of the trial, however, was pronounced. There was some public indignation over the verdict and the sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment in the fortress prison of San Leo. Strangely enough, although Cagliostro was in comparatively good health when sentenced and during his imprisonment, he died two years later when only 50 years old. The accounts of his death were always quite mysterious. One statement was that he had tried to strangle a priest (whom he had called for confession) in an attempt to escape, and was killed for this. Another report was that he had strangled himself.

At the time of Cagliostro's arrest, the Roman Church seized all the manuscripts he had prepared from his alchemical researches. They also took his books on occult and esoteric philosophy of the East that he had carefully gathered. His Masonic and Rosicrucian records were also confiscated and may still reside in the prohibited section of the Vatican archives. It was during these two years in prison and just before his death in the prime of life, that his memoirs were are said to have been written. These purported memoirs, which he never lived to confirm or deny, refuted all he had ever taught, written or demonstrated. They are so inconsistent with the acts of his life that there is little doubt they were the consequence of the inquisitional methods that were exercised against him.

His wife was also tried and, *"under terror of the Inquisition"* was made to deny Cagliostro's eloquence and brilliance, which were a known fact throughout Europe. Notwithstanding the intimidation of his wife

(His wife) stated that he must have "been assisted by the powers of magical art."

(who was later confined to a convent), she insisted that some of his arts were inexplicable. She stated that he must have *"been assisted by the powers of magical art."* Later, battalions of the French Revolutionists sought to rescue Cagliostro from the castle in which he was imprisoned, showing the devoted public feeling toward him in France. But they were too late..., he was dead!

While gazing at the stairway down which this adept and mystic had trudged to his labours, I reflected that all the vituperative and vilifying accounts and biographical sketches and fictional tales written about Cagliostro were mainly based on his alleged memoirs written while he was a papal prisoner. The Italian biographer who wrote about him, and who has been so widely copied, gained his principal data from these memoirs and the information which the Roman Church reported as having been included in Cagliostro's private papers. The fruits of the man's life in most contemporary literature are thus made to appear as rotten as the roots these sources have attributed to him.

It was in this laboratory in Basel, Switzerland, that Cagliostro conducted alchemical research. The implements and devices in this laboratory date from the 15th century, when alchemy flourished in Europe. This original alchemical equipment was gathered together by the Pharmaceutical Society of Switzerland. The room is a tribute to alchemy, father of chemistry, medicine and pharmacy. On an inner door is an announcement proclaiming: *"Cagliostro made gold here..."*, recognition of the greatness of this alchemist by a modern, and grateful, scientific organisation.

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by **James Wilson**

Our Beautiful World

"Everything has beauty,
but not everyone sees it"
Confucius

A Simple Exercise

I would like to share with you an exercise I'm fond of doing. Unfortunately I don't do this exercise often, as it requires one to sit comfortably outdoors for a period of time, and in our frustrating British climate it is a rare occasion when it's both dry and warm enough to do so! However, please indulge me and imagine that I am sitting on top of Malling Down, my favourite spot here on the South Downs of Sussex. This exercise is best done from a good vantage point. I make myself comfortable and begin to breathe fully in and out, holding the breath for a short period and then slowly releasing it and willing myself to relax more and more with each exhalation.

I do this for a few minutes and then begin the exercise. It's a very simple exercise because it involves only looking, or should I say *'seeing.'* I begin by looking out to the horizon and then bring my gaze steadily back and take in the landscape from the furthest point I can see, back to the hill I'm sitting on. I look carefully at the way both nature and humans have shaped this landscape over time. I look at the contrast of form and colour between the natural environment and the towns and villages. I see the river and reservoir, the roads and pylons. I take in the woods and far hills of the North Downs as well as the farmyards and ploughed fields. I try to be completely non-judgemental when I see something that doesn't appeal to my sense of aesthetics..., what may be termed a *'blot on the*

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landscape.' Instead I try to think about the human achievement behind it.

Having spent some time looking at the wider environment, I then begin focusing my attention on my more immediate environment. I begin to look at the individual trees and shrubs around me, the flowers on the hillside and manmade structures such as fences, gates and water troughs. I watch the cattle and the sheep and, if I have my binoculars with me, I take a closer look at the birds and butterflies that are resting or feeding nearby. I try and take in as much detail as possible, all the time looking at tones and shades of colour, the light and shadows, texture, form and even the 'shapes' of the spaces in between the various solid objects. The idea is to see what I would not ordinarily see if I were just walking along this hilltop, glancing casually from side to side.

For the final part of the exercise I begin to look at the micro-environment that is most immediate to me. In other words, I begin to take a very close look at the world that is within just two feet from where I'm sitting. Being very careful not to cause too much disturbance, I start to gently explore the long grass around me. I notice the different varieties of grasses with their long and graceful stems and perfectly formed seed heads. I note the way the grass moves in the gentle breeze before I part it, take a closer look and wonder at the tiny size and diversity of the creatures that live in this particular habitat. By simply prying the grass apart, I have discovered a whole new micro-universe. If I am fortunate, I have remembered to bring my magnifying glass so I can explore in even more detail this tiny universe and the life forms that inhabit it.





Feeling Beauty

> A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul. *-- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe --*

What is the point of this exercise? Well, absorbing oneself in nature is immensely relaxing and uplifting, but endlessly fascinating too. Also, how many of us can say that we truly see the things around us? How often do we take the time to take in so much detail? To do so not only opens the eyes but also opens the heart to the beauty that is all around us. When I practise an exercise such as this, my mind is absorbed with thoughts of the wonder of creation and my heart is filled with higher emotions. I find myself contemplating the universal forces inherent in all things and I can feel, not just see, a beauty that is not ordinarily experienced. There is no doubt in my mind and heart at such times as these that an attunement is taking place, an attunement with some power that is within us and all around us. It is a power that is ineffably beautiful, peaceful, graceful and sometimes overwhelming.

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I feel intuitively that during such moments I experience just a very small proportion of the beauty and peace that could be obtainable by us. However, it is enough to lift me and temporarily release me from the usual mundaneness of life. It is also enough to enhance an ever-increasing awareness of the divinity behind all life and particularly within my own being. It is a mere hint, a subtle suggestion, but it is there nonetheless. To contemplate such things and to try and attune with the higher aspect of ourselves and the beauty and peace inherent within the universe is one of the goals of the Rosicrucian, and we try to do this through practical methods of meditation. Exercises such as the one described can certainly be a form of meditation and can produce surprising results.

I am reminded of an incident from a book I read many years ago, supposedly based on a true story. It involved a little girl growing up in 1930s London who had been abandoned by her parents and taken in by a young man and his mother. Her name was Anna and she had a very intimate and communicative relationship with *'Mr. God.'* One day she was walking down the street and was suddenly completely captivated by a patch of rust on some railings. She became very excited by this and stopped each passer-by to show them what she had found. The response was always the same: a pat on the head and a look of pity for this sweet but strange girl.



The reason that Anna failed to get any of the passers-by excited about what she saw was because all they could see was a bland bit of brown rust on some old railings that badly needed a lick of paint. What Anna saw in the rust, however, was a world of sparkling colour, beautiful texture and glistening light. This incident illustrates the difference between merely *looking* as opposed to *seeing* what are to many the hidden beauties of the world.

Creating Beauty

> I never saw an ugly thing in my life: for let the form of an object be what it may – light, shade and perspective will always make it beautiful.
> *-- John Constable (1776 – 1837) --*

Most of the time, the majority of us only casually look at the world around us. Occasionally we may

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see something that takes our breath away, such as a beautiful sunset, and we then may feel something of what I have described. However, how often do we actually see such a sunset in this country? Why wait for such moments when, with a little effort, we can actively look for and really begin to see and feel the beauty that is all around us all the time? And of course, beauty is not only to be found in nature.

While we humans are most certainly very capable of creating ugliness in this world, we also have a remarkable capacity to create beauty, and thankfully we don't always have to wait for that dry, warm day to seek it out. Beauty can be found everywhere if we look. It may be found in an art gallery, a museum, an aquarium or any number of places that exhibit natural or human-created works of art. It may simply be found in a vase on a windowsill or in the glossy photographs within the pages of a book. And let us not forget that beauty is not just to be observed with our visual sense. We have four other physical senses with which we can discover the beauties of this world.

Beauty is not only physical, of course. Beauty can also be found in our thoughts, emotions and actions. We could get truly philosophical about it and assert that beauty is a state of consciousness only and that it exists only in the mind. For the purposes of this article it matters only that beauty is something we experience and surely something we all seek. It is hard to imagine anyone actively seeking to bring ugliness into their life. However, rather than just seek it, can we not also make a point of adding to the beauty of this world? As individuals we can all do this. For instance, do we not contribute to a beautiful world when we plant seeds or young plants and nurture them into maturity?

We can make our homes and our gardens, and even where we work, places of beauty. We can help to keep our natural environment beautiful by avoiding despoiling it in any way. We can add to the beauty of the world by buying only items that are of real quality rather than cheaply and poorly made mass-produced goods, as this creates a demand for craftsmanship. Likewise, supporting businesses that are ethical in their approach and practices helps to create a better and more beautiful world for all.

We can also help add beauty to this world by supporting those outstanding organisations that help protect the environment, help those in crisis or work for peace in this world. Most importantly, we can contribute to the beauty of this world by ensuring that our own thoughts are only for peace and beauty and our conduct admirable in all respects. Look for and enjoy the beauty in this world. Actively seek it and look more closely at the world around you. Seek it everywhere you look, Listen for it, feel for it and, most importantly of all, take time to seek it also within your own being.



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by **Juan Calcaño**

Following the Path of Light

Contributions of Arabic Spain to Mysticism

History teaches us that civilisations, cultures and even religions have their cycles of life. They are born, grow and attain a glorious climax, only to decline and eventually disappear. The world has already known a series of different civilisations, some of them brighter than others.

What I want to explore now is how the light of mystical teachings passes from one civilisation to another. I want to trace the oath of the eternal light from the old European cultures of the Mediterranean to our present civilisation.

In Europe two different civilisations have existed. The first was the old culture of Greece and Rome, the Graeco-Roman civilisation. It ended when barbarian peoples from central and northern Europe invaded the Roman Empire. The second European civilisation started, about the 12th century, and its centre was in Italy and France at first. It eventually spread throughout Europe, and today has spread outward from Europe to the Americas and other parts of the world. But, between those two cultures in Europe, there was a period of about a thousand years in which Europe was in a backward stage of development. That period of history covered the last centuries of Roman disintegration, the Dark Ages that followed, and the early times of the Middle Ages, when present civilisation was taking form. During those centuries, European culture was fragmented and in a poor condition, while Arabic civilisation ascended to great cultural heights. The Arabic or Islamic civilisation was much like a bridge between the old and new European cultures.

Mystery Schools of the Old World

The old European culture, the civilisation of Greece and Rome, had inherited its mystical teachings from the still older Egyptian culture, to which were added later

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Early Greek and Roman civilisations eventually ended .

some of the mysteries from other places of the Near East: from Syria, Persia and other places. The Greek tradition consisted of the Eleusinian mysteries, the Orphic mysteries, the Pythagorean Order, and some other schools of the mysteries. All of these later had their branches in Rome and, not so long ago, archaeologists found near Rome, on the road to Naples, a subterranean temple of the Pythagorian Order.

In later times, to those mystical schools of ancient Rome, were added some Oriental cults, such as the cult of Mithra from the fire religion of the Persians, the cult of Astarte from Asia Minor, the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris, and several others. Most of these had their inner initiatic circles. Other branches of the Great Brotherhood developed still later on, during the Roman Empire, as the Therapeuti and Essenes. In the very latest centuries of the culture, already within Christian times, were introduced the Gnostics and, lastly, the Neo-Platonists. These last two schools had their main centres in Alexandria, the magnificent city founded by Alexander the Great in Egypt, but their world of conceptions belonged to the Roman civilisation and not to the Egyptian civilisation, which was already finished by that time.



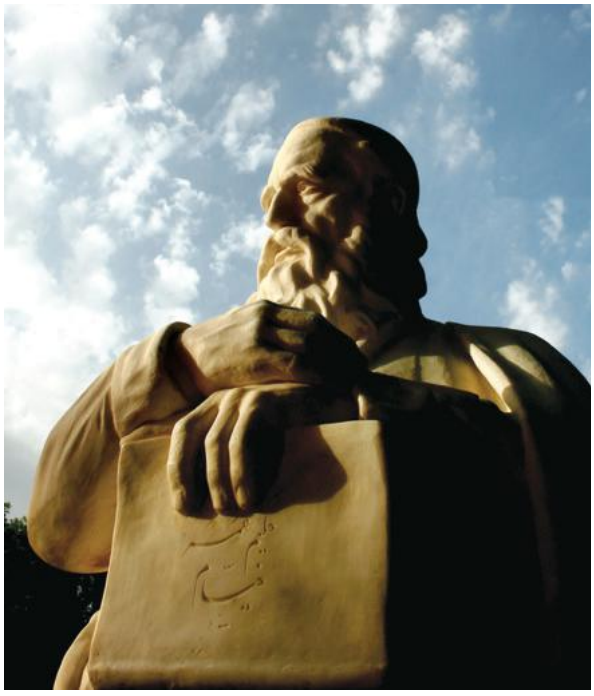
Mithra

Chaos

When the barbarian tribes from the North, *the*, as the Romans maintained, uncultured peoples from central and northern Europe invaded the Roman Empire and swept away all established standards of civilisation, that centuries-old corpus of esoteric knowledge rapidly waned and finally disappeared entirely. Those old standards and principles had already started to fade away when the first Christian emperors fostered an early Christian fanaticism and, trying to get political support from the early churches, began a steady and long persecution that eventually wiped out everything that was not accepted by the first Christian theologians. It is well known that the esoteric message of Christianity, the inner occult circle of the new movement, was lost during the early centuries of the Common Era. In fact, the Gnostics belonged to that inner circle which possessed the secret tradition, and when the action of the early church began to be more political and less mystical, that inner circle was rejected by the new priests and theologians, and its light was spent. All other schools which kept perpetuated the ancient esoteric knowledge were persecuted, disbanded and even exterminated.

At that time a kind of frenzy or madness ran through most of Europe. The church wanted to do away with long-established habits and customs, replacing them with accepted and traditional ideas. All was gradually destroyed. People began to dress in another fashion.

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Omar Khayyam

Houses were built according to new styles. Ideas changed. Everything was considered from another angle, and all those factors produced a kind of chaos which engulfed the old culture, the old knowledge and the old standards.

All the more or less civilised lands of Europe were divided in two great portions: the Western Empire with Rome as its capital, and the Eastern Empire with its capital at Constantinople (now Istanbul). Gradually the Dark Ages descended on the western half. It was in some way a kind of Obscure Night which later turned into the dawn of our present civilisation.

It was during this confused period, when Europeans had lost their old culture and had not yet established a new one, that Arabia began to awake. Arabia had been a land of great civilisation for a thousand years when the prophet Mohammed was born and began to preach his teachings. The people were stirred, and in a short period all the Arabian peoples found themselves well ahead on the road to a high civilisation and to the most prominent position as a political and military power. They first conquered Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, all the coast of North Africa, Sudan, parts of Ethiopia and eastern Africa, and later extended their civilisation into Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Turkestan and India. It was a larger empire than the Romans ever had in their hands.

Rise of Islamic Civilisation

Literacy was widespread throughout ancient Arabia from at least the early 1st millennium BCE, and vast numbers of inscriptions in a variety of languages and scripts have been discovered there, with more coming to light every year. Arabia was unique in the ancient world in having its own branch of the alphabet (the South Semitic script family), varieties of which were used from the far north of the peninsula to the south. It survives in the script used for Ge'ez, Amharic, etc. in Ethiopia. One of the most remarkable aspects of literacy in ancient Arabia is that from the 1st millennium BCE until about the 4th century CE writing was used extensively by nomads as well as by the settled communities. This is the only period in history when the nomads of this area had been able to read and write, and they have left scores of thousands of graffiti on the rocks of the Arabian deserts. They invented architectural styles that were more delicate, ornate and beautiful than anything the world had seen before. Their carpets, their clothing, their ceramics, their weapons; and their pageantry were full of new beauty never dreamed of before.

Their poets of the new religion wrote the most beautiful poems. We know some of those names: the Persians Omar Khayyam, Firdausi and Hafez.

Their scientists surpassed all those previously known. They excelled in medicine, astronomy, music, history and chemistry. Their mathematicians went further than anyone before. They developed the numerical system we are using today, which was fundamental for the development of higher mathematics. They discovered, or rather invented, algebra. Our present-day mathematics owes more to the Arabs than to any other people. Commerce and trade found new ways and systems. Large maritime enterprises were undertaken and the Arab merchants covered almost the whole earth.

Invasion of Europe

The Arabs, conquerors in Asia and Africa, were a serious danger for Europe. We have already seen that Europe at that time was in a chaotic state. After conquering all the north coast of Africa across the Mediterranean from Europe, the Arabs finally took one more step and invaded Europe. They conquered almost the whole of Spain and parts of Italy. But when they crossed the Pyrenees mountains into France, they

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were defeated in battle by the French. That single battle in 732, won by the Frankish statesman and military leader Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, between Tours and Poitiers, stopped forever the Arabian advance into Europe.

The Arabic cycle in Spain was most important. That culture was in full activity in the Spanish peninsula. The Emirs achieved a high culture for their time, and there, as everywhere in the Arabic world, the Islamic religion was the foundation of their civilisation.



Spain in the 11th century.

In Europe during the Dark Ages all religious or mystic manuscripts that were not orthodox were destroyed; the Arabs, although they also destroyed part of that ancient lore at the beginning, preserved it afterwards. The mystical schools of Islam, such as the Sufis, began to spread their light. Some of their more important mystics are: *Saadi*, more or less well known; *al-Ghazali*, perhaps the greatest of their mystics; *Al-Biruni*, the great astronomer and astrologer; *Jabir ibn Hayan* (Geber), the great alchemist; *Ibn Sina* (Avicenna); *Al-Razi* (Rhazes); *Ibn Rushd* (Averroes); and many others well known in the philosophical, alchemical or mystical fields.

Andalucian Mystical Schools

Very early, the Arabs started their Military Orders which were stationed in so-called *"Ribats."* The term transformed over time to become known as centres for Sufi fraternities. The Ribats were converted to a peaceful use where Sufis could congregate. They call to mind the forerunners of the military and mystic European Orders at the same time, such as the *Knights Templar*, the *Knights of Malta*, the *Knights of St. John of Jerusalem*, and others.



Knights Templar

During the 9th and 10th centuries the Arabs founded in Spain several secret schools and mystical monasteries for the esoteric mysteries. One of them was in the mountain of *Ibn Masarra of Córdoba*, and another was in the *Mujahid of Granada*. It is well known, and quoted in the histories of that time, that in these monasteries the disciples studied philosophy and the occult sciences. At the time of the early Caliphs we know that in Spain several secret mystical societies were in activity, but their work was concealed. One of these was the school of the *Muridin*, meaning adepts. The leader of the school in 1144 was *Ibn Kasi*, famous mystic master of the time. Another prominent mystic was *Ibn Barrajan*, who was also head of another of the mystery schools and whose writings greatly influenced *Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi*, one of the greatest Islamic mystics of the time, and undoubtedly connected with the traditional teachings of the Great Brotherhood.

The Iraqi mystical *Order of the Brethren of Purity* was introduced in Madrid in 1004 by *Maslamah Ibn Ahmad al-Majriti* (died 1008), who was an outstanding scholar in astronomy and astrology. He was an intrepid traveller who journeyed all over the Islamic world and beyond and kept in touch with the Brethren of Purity. Indeed, he is said to have brought the *51 Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* to al-Andalus and added the compendium to other works. Another mystical school was

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Maslamah Ibn Ahmad al-Majriti.

active in Granada in the 12th century, under the leadership of *Ibn Sahl Al-Darir*, a well-known adept who was at the same time a distinguished alchemist and celebrated mathematician. He was also known for his great psychic development, and his school was attended not only by Arabs and Moors, but by Jews and Christians as well, who travelled from Toledo and Baeza to receive his teachings.

As can be seen, the Arabs had created in Spain not just one little school somewhere but rather a large movement with several schools and different branches all over Iberia, including formal monasteries. Besides, the Arabs had preserved many of the writings of the ancient mystics that had been destroyed in Europe. All through their expansion into Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor and Egypt, the Arabs had preserved many precious manuscripts, not only mystical but also philosophical, scientific and literary, which at that time no longer existed in Europe. All these went to Spain with the teachings, and scholars from many parts of Europe, including areas of modern-day France, Austria and Germany, travelled to Spain to translate into Latin or other languages some of the books of antiquity preserved by the Arabs.

'Golden Age' of Israel

But the Arabic culture in Spain had something else to offer: it was the so-called *'Jewish Golden Age.'* Let us consider this important development.

The Arab rulers were not outstanding for their tolerance. On the contrary, at the beginning and towards the end of their cultural period, there were persecutions and fanaticism, religious intolerance and destruction. All of this was directed mostly against the Christians, and this in turn was due to Christian intransigency and political wars. But toward other sects and creeds which did not antagonise Islamic ways and ideas, the Arabs were more tolerant.

It was in this way that the Jewish people, scattered throughout the Arab Empire, were free to pursue their Jewish cultural aims to a considerable degree. Under successive Islamic caliphates in the Iberian peninsula, Jewish culture grew and evolved as never before. Science, letters, philosophy and mysticism attained a peak, and historians call this period the *'Golden Age of Israel.'*

Some of the greatest names Judaism outside of Biblical times, belong to this Spanish Golden Age of Israel. Authors as outstanding as *Judah ha-Levi* and the two *Benezras*; philosophers like *Moses ben Maimon* (Maimonides), the most distinguished commentator of the classical Hebrew writings, and *Solomon ben-Gabirol*, belong to this time and place. Of greatest importance to us is *Moses of Córdoba*, who wrote the *Zohar*, which is the foundation text for all Kabalistic writings. Jews introduced into Spain, and subsequently into the rest of Europe, the Kabalistic tradition and Kabalistic magic, and a rich Biblical lore which is a treasure for anyone interested in the Western mystical tradition.

So we see that during the Dark Ages and early Middle Ages there was an extraordinary mystical activity in Moorish Spain. The rest of Europe was almost completely cut off from the Spanish Caliphates for several centuries though gradually, all this light spread to the rest of Europe.

We owe to the Arabs the early knowledge of the Neo-Platonists, which is nothing else than the teachings of the Egyptian Brotherhood. We owe to the Arabs the introduction of alchemy into Europe, and it was under this form of teaching that the early European Rosicrucians taught the truths they possessed. We owe

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The Great Mosque of Córdoba.

to the Spanish Jews all our knowledge of the Kabala and magic, all closely connected with early Rosicrucian movements. From the Arab mystery schools in Spain came those great mystics such as *Ramon Llull*, *Arnold of Villanova*, and all the schools of the Illuminati which flourished in Toledo and other places until they were persecuted, later on, by the Spanish Inquisition under the Spanish Catholic kings. Such great French mystics as Flamel and his predecessors owe their light to the Hebrew tradition of Spain. And even, in much later times, *Martinez de Pasqually*, founder of the Martinist Order, proceeded from this same fountain of sacred knowledge.

It was, then, through Spain and through the Arabic world, that the light in Europe was restored after the Dark Ages. It's true that, besides this channel, Emperor Charlemagne sent a mission to the Near East (which was under Arab rule) in order to bring the hidden light. It is also true that this eminent ruler started a secret school in France, to which he himself did not belong, but this infiltration was not comparable in extent to the Arab contribution through Spain. This contribution to esoteric knowledge in Europe also worked, in a lesser degree, through Italy, mostly through Sicily, and this was the origin of the early Italian schools, one of which was the Pythagorian, together with the Rosicrucian. To these schools belonged early great mystics such as *Pietro d'Abano* and, later on, *Pico dela Mirandola* and many others.

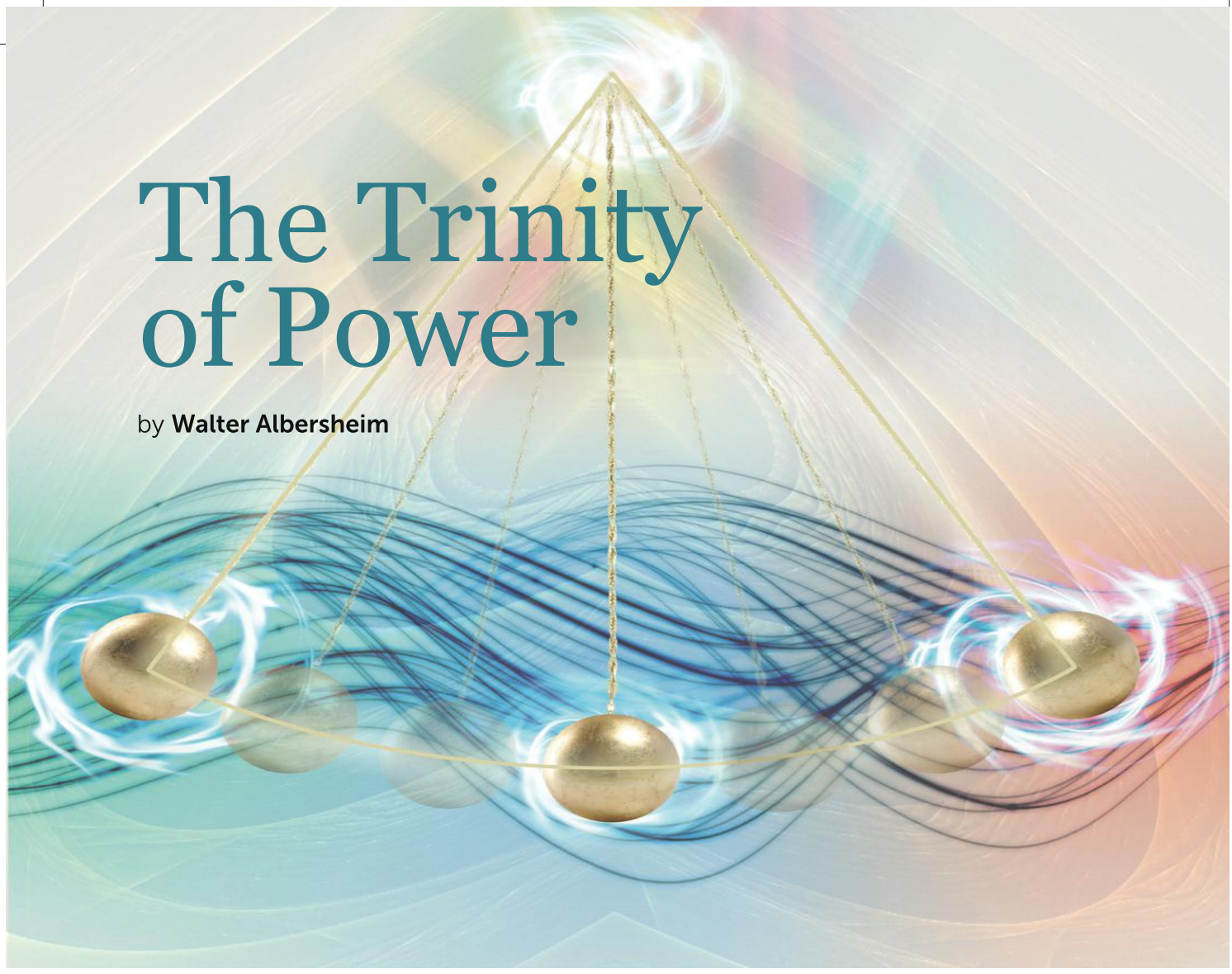


The Zohar

All this historical period we have been considering is not very well known from our point of view, and more research is needed in this field. Still, the works of this period that we can read today are as enlightening to us as they were to the Arabic, Jewish or European mystic scholars 10 centuries ago.

Arabic Spain was one of the important landmarks along the path followed by the tradition of Light from East to West, in accordance with the mysterious ways of the Cosmic.

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The Trinity of Power

by **Walter Albersheim**

This article aims at finding a common bond between world views which, on the surface, seem to diverge widely. We refer to:

1. *Religious concepts of a 'Holy Trinity'.*
2. *The physical concept of the preservation of energy.*
3. *The Rosicrucian concept of the universe as vibrations, manifesting in accordance with the Law of the Triangle.*

Let us begin by looking for basic agreement between different versions of a Trinity, such as the Christian and Hindu interpretations. According to Christian theology, the Godhead consists of three persons: *Father, Son* and *Holy Spirit*. The Father is the supreme source of all power. According to most Gospel descriptions, He generally does not act by Himself but through the two other persons who, in effect, seem subordinate to Him.

Jesus states repeatedly that he does not act of himself but carries out the will of the Father, and that the Father will send the Comforter, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, to his disciples. The Son, identified in the Gospels as Jesus the carpenter's son, personifies God's love, the driving force that fills us with the will and power to work

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for the kingdom of God. Finally, the Holy Spirit is divine power in action. It is likened to the *'Breath of God'*, the rustling of His wind, but also to the fiery power that fills people with enthusiasm and ecstasy so that they can prophesy, *'speak with new tongues'* and act as leaders of humankind.

In Hindu theology, the three persons of the Holy Trinity or Trimurti, are *Brahma*, the Creator; *Vishnu*, the Preserver; and *Śiva*, the Destroyer. Of these, the first, Brahma, is the highest, as shown by the fact that Brahma or *'the Brahman'* by Itself and totally alone is conceived of as the one and only Universal Being. One may therefore liken and identify this person to the Christian concept of the Father. It is equally natural to compare Vishnu to the Son. A power that keeps alive the creation and all creatures within it must be a loving power that strengthens and vitalises like the Christ spirit of the Gospels.

But what of the fierce destroyer and killer, Śiva? In the immortal realm of divinity, death and destruction do not have their common, earthly meaning. They stand for action and change, because every change, every new form, implies the end and therefore a kind of death of previous manifestations. As representative of change and action, Śiva is analogous to the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity. This is further confirmed by the fact that Śiva is also the god of dance, the arts, poetry, religious fervour and ecstasy. Thus, we find in both Trinities a supreme, creative mind power that expresses itself in love and in action.



Vishnu



17th century painting of four-headed Brahma as an aged man.

Modern physics sees the universe as endowed with a vast but constant store of power that manifests as either mass or energy. Energy, in turn, takes many forms such as light, heat, sound, electricity, chemical affinity, flowing water or air, but also the mobility of living organisms. The Rosicrucian viewpoint is similar to that of science,

Modern physics sees the universe as endowed with a vast but constant store of power that may manifest either as mass or as energy.

which is only natural inasmuch as many aspects of the Rosicrucian curriculum are scientific too, though it deals, in addition, with areas of knowledge that science can in all honesty not deal with yet.

According to Rosicrucian teaching, all Being is Energy, and all Energy is vibratory. Nowadays, the term vibrations has been cheapened by indiscriminate use, so let us go back to the original meaning of the term: The Latin root *vibra* means a slender, whip-like twig;

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Śiva

so vibration means a whipping, oscillating motion. We may study its character by its classical prototype of a swinging pendulum. The pendulum is set into motion by an initial supply of energy, such as the lifting of its bob to a maximum height or elongation. This energy storage can last a long time. Even if seemingly consumed by friction, it has only been transformed into other expressions.

Now let us look at one period by itself. At the beginning of each swing, all motion stops for an instant before it reverses its direction. At this point, all the energy expresses as polar tension, as an overcoming of the pull of gravity. Then, in mid-swing, having reached its lowest point, the pendulum has transformed all that polar or potential energy into motion..., kinetic energy, momentum or action.

You may see in these two so different forms of energy an analogy to the two subordinate persons of the Trinity. Potential energy stands for the love and eagerness to approach the attraction of Earth..., akin to the driving love of the Son. Kinetic energy is the restlessly moving action of the Spirit. These two are in dynamic balance: The tension must manifest in action, and the motion overshoots its aim, creating new tension. Only the sum total of these energy forms remains invariant, constant in the midst of activity, like the eternal Being and Mind power of the Father.

Note that this process of energy transformation is also symbolically expressed by the Rosicrucian *Law of the Triangle*. The polar tension between the elongated, raised pendulum bob and the force of gravity stands for the two polar and opposite points of the triangle, and the release of tension in motion exemplifies manifestation at the third point of the triangle. All three points together, like the three persons of the Trinities, express the totality of Being..., permanence beneath all seeming change.

What lessons can we human beings learn from these symbolic laws? Outwardly and physically, we are puny compared with the bulk of a mountain or the strength of a hurricane, but inwardly we are privileged to become one with the entire Cosmic Mind and its limitless power. We can use meditation to store up potential energy, namely the strength and willingness to act constructively in harmony with the Cosmic. And in action we can become channels through which the invincible Cosmic Spirit can flow and express itself as healing power, artistic inspiration, or as illuminating knowledge.

Let us strive to be the third point of the triangle in which the vibratory energy of the Cosmic manifests; or if we wish to express the same goal in terms of Trinity, let us strive to become imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit so we may attain son-ship and one-ness with the wisdom and peace of the Father!

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The Oceanic Feeling of Oneness

Life is often conceived of symbolically

by **Frank Dyer**

Life is often conceived of symbolically as a circle. Mention is made of the cycle of nature, the wheel of rebirths, cycles of history, and numerous other manifestations of the circle dating back to the most remote antiquity. A true cyclical process consists of the development of a phenomenon from a point of origin through a series of transformations, and back again to this initial point. Hopefully, while the points of origin and destination are the same, the phenomenon in question has benefited from the cycle in terms of progress, growth and reintegration at a higher level.

In the evolution of human consciousness, the point of origin is the mind of the newborn infant. This stage of consciousness has been described in psychoanalytic literature as *'primary narcissism'*, for at this early stage the infant makes no distinction between himself and the outside world. He is the centre of all, and to the limited extent to which he perceives external objects, he regards them as part of himself. There is no distinction between sensations arising within him and those which flow in from the outside. All psychic energy is directed toward a self-system which embraces both ego and that which is not ego.

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This happy state is short-lived however, since the infant gradually discovers that he is not the source of all gratification and requires objects outside of himself in order to maintain equilibrium. The first object to which he relates is his mother's milk. He learns that the painful feeling of hunger does not subside on its own and that gratification occurs only when he is breast or bottle fed. He therefore acknowledges the external world and forms an emotional attachment to this first object which he associates with gratification. This is the first step in a long process of development during which the infant discovers the limits of his own body..., in other words, where *'me'* stops and *'not me'* begins. He forms emotional attachments to people, beginning with mum and dad, and begins to make sense out of the world through concept formation, categorisation, value judgments, logical inferences, and a host of other cognitive operations.

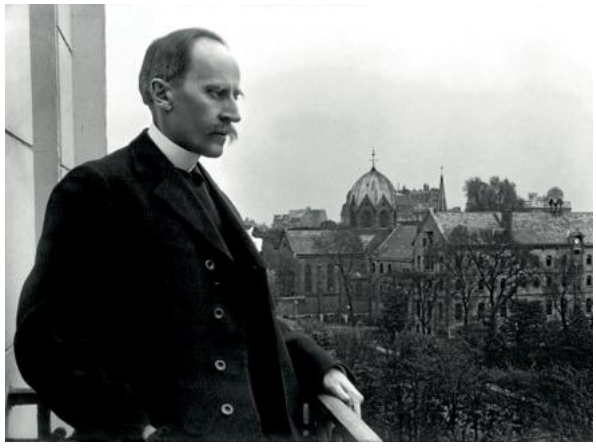
In the healthy adult, the result of this process is a well-differentiated ego or self, an efficient conceptual framework and system of values with which to deal with the outside world, and the ability to work and to love. This is the essence of the psychoanalytic concept of mental health, the goal of psychoanalytic therapy being to remove those emotional obstacles to proper performance of one's work, to secure loving interpersonal relationships and self-esteem.

While this represents a final goal of psychoanalysis, mysticism views this point as but a stage in the cycle of personal and spiritual evolution. The point at which mysticism and psychoanalysis diverge is in their respective views of religion in terms of conscious experience. In a letter to Sigmund Freud, the founder of the psychoanalytic school of thought, the author and poet Romain Rolland once described the *oceanic feeling of eternity* which gave him the sensation of oneness with all creation.

Freud, while conceding that this was probably a genuine experience, although foreign to him personally, tried to account for it within the context of his developmental theory. He wrote:

> Our present ego-feeling is therefore only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive, indeed, an all-embracing feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. If we may assume that there are many people in whose mental life this primary ego-feeling has persisted to a greater or less degree, it would exist in them side-by-side with the narrower and more sharply demarcated ego-feeling of maturity, like a kind of counterpart to it. In that case the ideational contents appropriate to it would be precisely those of limitlessness and of a bond with the universe..., the same ideas with which my friend [Rolland] elucidated the *'oceanic'* feeling.

Is this *oceanic feeling* nothing more than a remnant of the state of primary narcissism of earliest infancy? Is the theory of psychoanalysis comprehensive enough to explain this phenomenon? It must be borne in mind that Freud was an advocate of the materialist philosophical position which asserts that



Romain Rolland (1866-1944)

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Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

all phenomena can be defined in terms of physical substance. He went so far as to postulate that every event in consciousness was the result of a chemical reaction in the brain and nervous system, and that science would someday evolve to the point where this would be readily demonstrable in all cases.

Mysticism, however, asserts that humankind itself is evolving to the point of realising a true existence beyond the phenomenal world of material form. In this regard, the issue of an oceanic feeling has occupied thinkers for thousands of years. This feeling is a subdued form of the type of enlightenment which mystics of all races, cultures and nations have sought throughout the centuries..., the intimate experience of reality as the expression of the Cosmic Mind. A few examples will serve to describe the profundity of this experience.

The Zen Master *Huángbò*, author of what is perhaps the most uncompromising exposition of this idea, said in the 9th century CE:

> Ordinary people indulge in conceptual thought based on environmental phenomena; hence they feel desire and hatred. To eliminate environmental phenomena, just put an end to your conceptual thinking. When this ceases, environmental phenomena are void; and when these are void, thought ceases.... Thus all things are naught but Mind..., intangible Mind.



More recently, a pupil of the Indian adept *Ramakrishna* (1836-1886), one who later became known as *Swami Vivekananda* (1863-1902) related his first experience of samadhi (unity with the Cosmic) as follows:

> And then, at the marvellous touch of the Master [Ramakrishna], my mind underwent a complete revolution. I was aghast to realise that there really was nothing whatever in the entire universe but God. I remained silent, wondering how long this state of mind would continue.... I kept having the same experience, no matter what I was doing..., eating, drinking, sitting, lying down, going to college, strolling along the street. It was a kind of intoxication, I can't describe it. If I was crossing a street and saw a carriage coming towards me I didn't have the urge, as I would ordinarily, to get out of its way for fear of being run over. For I said to myself, *'I am that carriage. There's no difference between it and me.'*[3]

"I was aghast to realise that there really was nothing whatever in the entire universe but God."

Finally, the 19th century master himself, Ramakrishna, in describing his first experience of *non-dualistic samadhi*, that is, the complete elimination of all form, including the subject, relates what occurred upon learning the art from a wandering monk. Until this time he had chosen the image of Kali, the Hindu mother-goddess, as his object of meditation.

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I opened my eyes and told the Naked One [the monk]: *'No, it can't be done. I can't stop my mind from working. I can't make it plunge into the Atman* [absolute, unmodified Being].' Then he looked around the hut till he found a bit of broken glass. And he stuck the point of it into my forehead, between the eyebrows. *'Fix the mind here'* he told me. So I sat down to meditate again, firmly determined. And as soon as Mother's [Kali's] form appeared, I took my knowledge of non-duality as if it was a sword in my hand, and cut Mother in two pieces with that sword of knowledge. As soon as I had done that, there was nothing relative left in the mind. It entered the place where there is no second..., only the One.[4]



Kali

In these accounts of three of the most enlightened mystics of the East is seen the culmination of what is a painfully long path for sentient beings everywhere. The trenchant lesson which psychoanalysis offers mysticism, albeit indirectly, is that this path too is a true cycle. As the leaves bloom, fall and bloom again..., as the tides rise, fall and rise again..., so the human consciousness begins with the formless, acquires form, and eventually returns to the formless. We begin in a state of unity with the All, perceiving neither ourselves nor any object as distinct from an inseparable One.

This however, is a most naïve state of Enlightenment, since the infant *'knows not that he knows.'* He then evolves to the stage of form perception, structuring the world in categories and concepts, and establishing the boundaries of his own ego. And there are those few in every age who complete the cycle entirely; who, with an unbending will, discard the cognitive framework which they have so laboriously built up and which had enabled them to advance along the Path. With this act they return to the formlessness of infancy in which *'I'* and *'It'* no longer have meaning. The enlightenment however is no longer naïve, for now they *'know that they know'* and have consciously, deliberately and painfully come full circle. While the point of origin and destination are the same, the human consciousness has benefited from the cycle in terms of progress, growth and reintegration at a higher level.

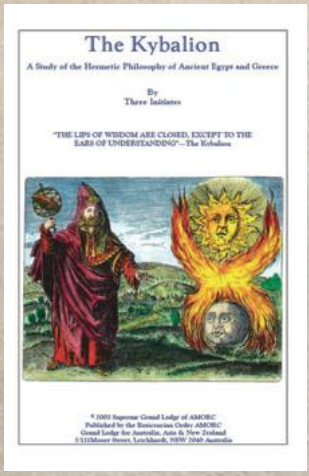
The trenchant lesson which psychoanalysis offers mysticism, albeit indirectly, is that this path too is a true cycle.



Ramakrishna (1836-1886)

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2. *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po*, 1958New York: Grove Press, p. 45
3. Isherwood, *C. Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, 1970 New York: Simon and Shuster, p. 206
4. Ibid, p. 118

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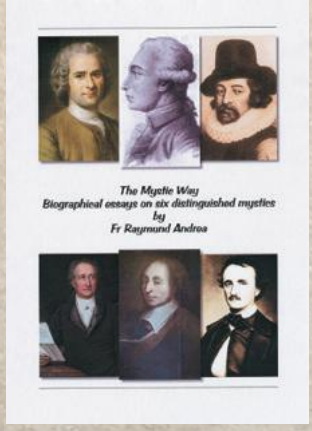
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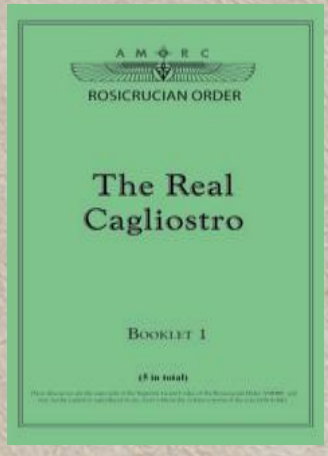


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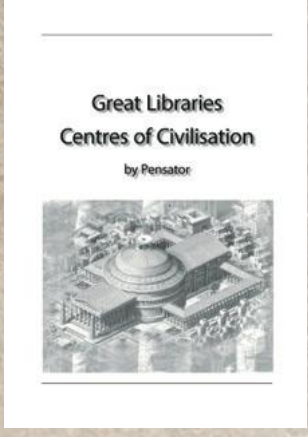
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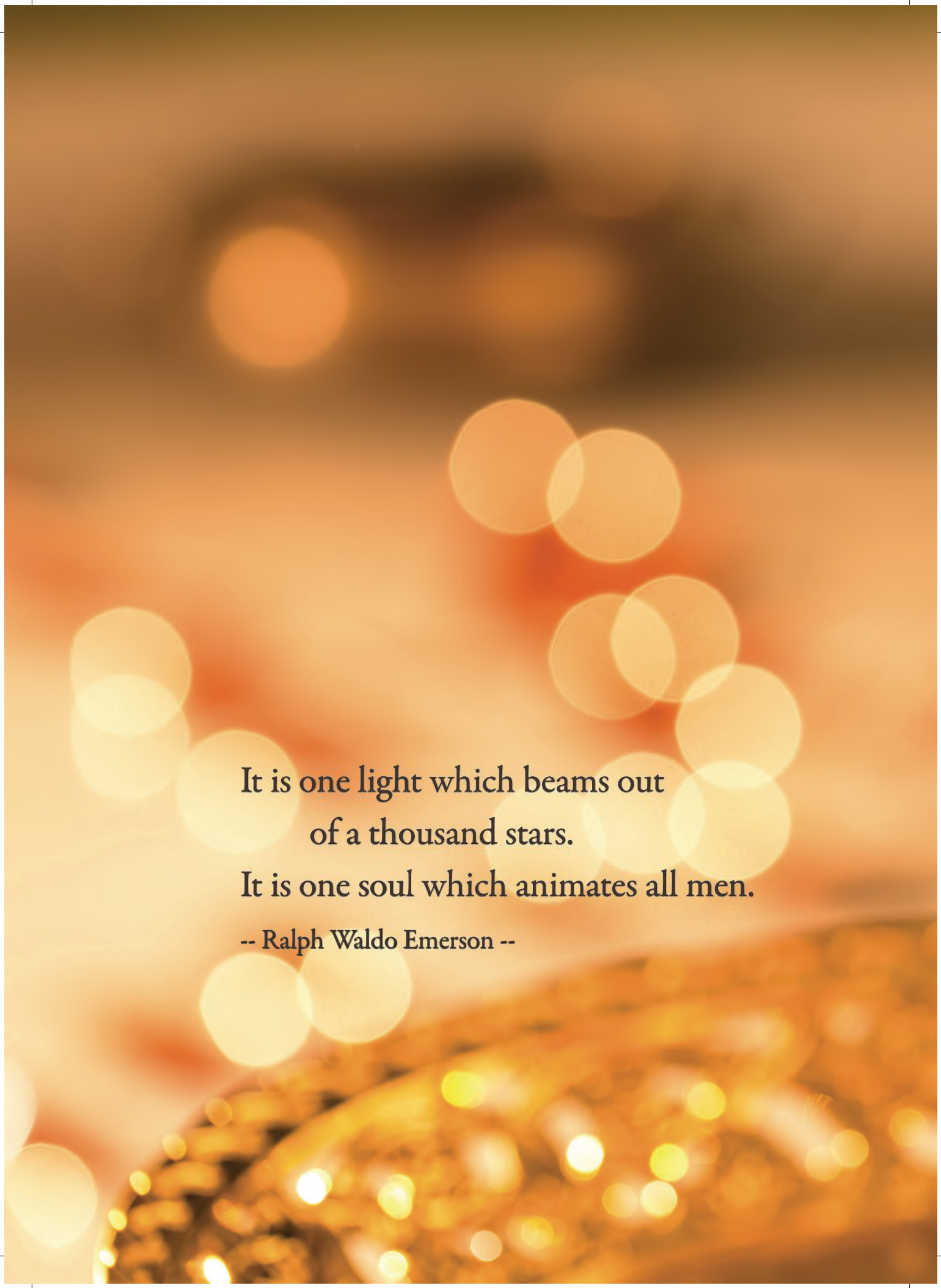
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It is one light which beams out
of a thousand stars.
It is one soul which animates all men.
-- Ralph Waldo Emerson --