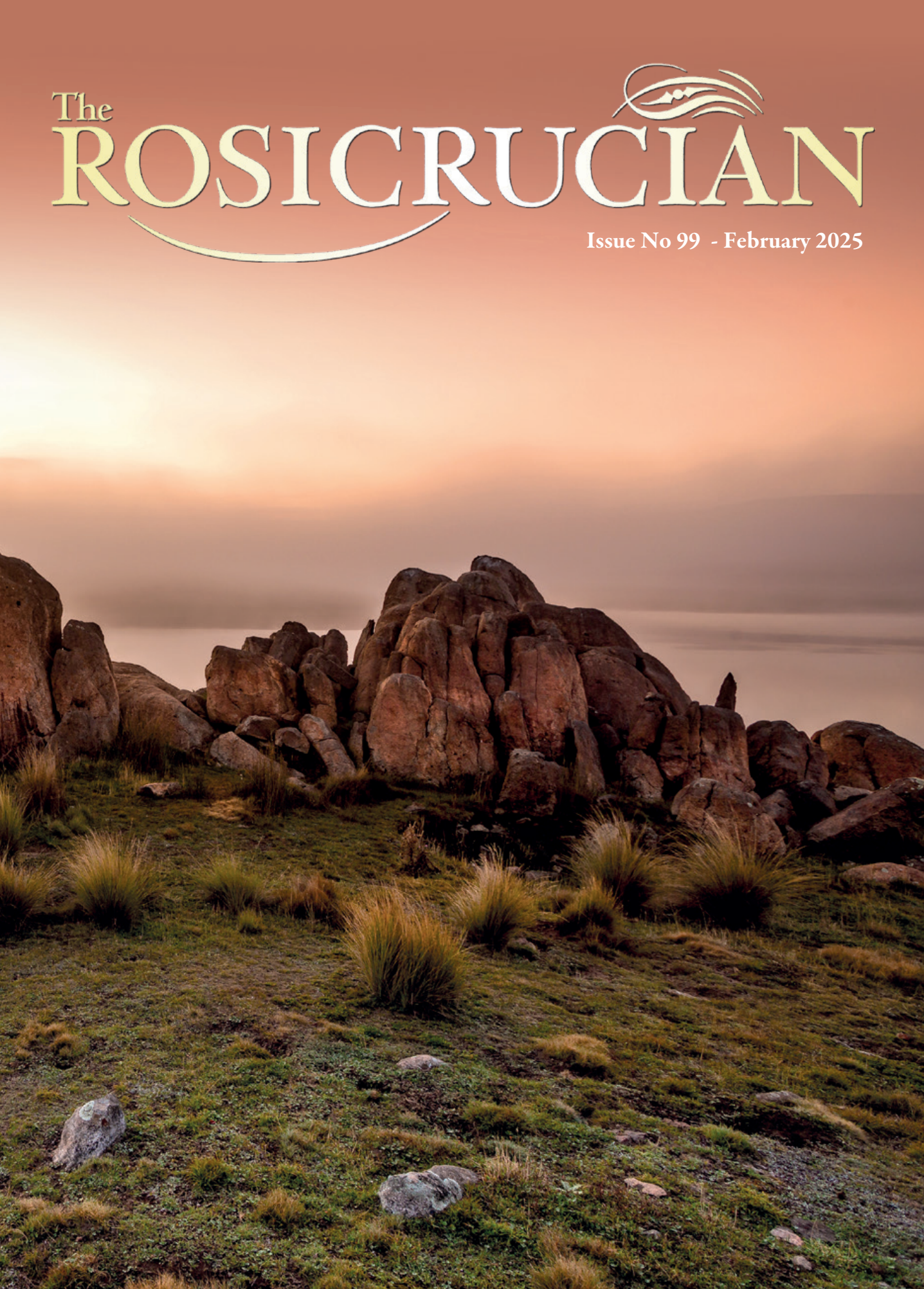
The ROSICRUCIAN

Issue No 99 - February 2025



In the depths of Your Being



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. It seeks to instruct and guide its humanity about how to live a good life, and does so with care for our wellbeing, and above all, with love and compassion for all expressions of life.

Your deeper Self knows why you are here and what you are meant to accomplish in this incarnation. It knows what your chances are of attaining the goals you have set for yourself, and whether they are beyond your reach or fully attainable. And it assists you to reach the attainable goals with care and attention to the minutest details.

Your deeper Self is a veritable slumbering genius, eager to help you express your hidden talents with greater refinement and sophistication than you have ever considered possible. The most productive thing we can ever do is to find and communicate with this wise inner sage.

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 we would expect only of the most accomplished of humans.

You can discover how to access this high level of achievement and embark upon the definitive, true direction of your life simply by learning how to contact and regularly commune with your deeper Self. If you are searching for a way of accomplishing the most fulfilling and rewarding things in life, in a fair, ethical and peaceful way, then you may wish to learn from the ineffable wisdom that is within you.

To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order and how it can help you achieve your most treasured goals, visit our website or contact us for a copy of our introductory booklet 'The Mastery of Life.'

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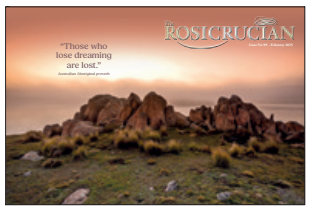
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A dreamy sky lingers above silent sentinels of rock in front of a high mountain lake. These serene guardians seem to gaze out upon all those whose footsteps have passed by since ancient times—as if hoping that each visitor will not have forgotten how to dream.

Kosciuszko National Park, NSW, Australia
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The Basis of Spirituality

by **Ralph M Lewis**
Imperator of AMORC (1939 to 1987)

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In approaching the subject of spirituality we come to realise that it seems to lack a singleness of nature. Some individuals think of spirituality as a phenomenon unique to humankind. Others consider it to be of supernatural origin, a divine efficacy. Then there is the rationale that spirituality is psychological, a state of mind which is engendered by both objective and subjective experiences.

There is, however, the strong suggestion that each of these differing ideas regarding spirituality can be integrated into a single idea. In other words, spirituality embraces, in part at least, some quality of each of these different concepts. An eminent philosopher once said:

> You are never an isolated individual cast off from the rest of the universe; you are always in relation to the world about you. The whole of man is greater than its parts. The reality in which man finds his own realisation is always above and beyond him.

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This realisation that we do not stand alone in existence, that in some way we have an affinity with all else, can well form the basis of what is termed spirituality. But while we exist to ourselves, what we experience has reality too. These other things of the external world which we perceive can in various ways affect us..., sometimes beneficially and at other times causing fear and distress.

At this point we may assume that primitive people, long ago, began evaluating the particulars of the external world. This evaluation was based on an innate sensitivity which has but two qualities to measure the value of all sensations: pain and pleasure.

Everything we experience has its final value determined in terms of the pain or pleasure accompanying it. But such sensations are varied in their cause and intensity. While some of our pleasure arises from the physical gratification of the appetites, we also have the more abstract pleasure of the intellect. There is also that mysterious and exotic pleasure which is experienced as the harmony of the whole self. It is a state of euphoria, a freedom from all irritability, and yet its sensations cannot be related to any of our peripheral senses; it seems to transcend them all. Achievements in aesthetic and cultural pursuit can often produce a state approaching that rapture of the whole self.

What is Good?

Humans have, however, arbitrarily and collectively assigned the quality of good to all the pleasures which have been and still are experienced. Whatever satisfactorily fulfils the expectation of pleasure, whether from a physical or mental pursuit, is said to be good. For example, a good craftsperson is one whose work is well performed, and a good citizen is one who conscientiously abides by the requirements of good citizenship.

What impression did the phenomena of nature have upon the mind of early humans? Among our early ancestors the concept of *hylozoism* prevailed, namely the notion that all celestial phenomena were imbued with life. Heavenly bodies, such as the planets, were said to be animate, thinking, superior beings. Some were assigned imagined characteristics that were perceived as good and beneficial to humanity, while others were their opposite, evil. It was reasoned that the idea of good naturally suggested an opposite that was not good. So that which was adverse and distressing in some manner and was associated with pain was thought to be harmful and evil.

It would appear that, at some point in our intellectual and emotional evolution, it was thought best to emulate the behaviour of the gods and goddesses



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Heavenly bodies, such as the planets, were said to be animate, thinking, superior beings.

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who, it was believed, possessed the quality of goodness. The question was asked: what benefit did these beings representing immanent goodness derive from their benign acts? Since humans experienced this goodness as varying kinds of pleasure, by comparison, then, what was the pleasure of goodness experienced by these heavenly entities? Was it through the acquisition of a material substance or the successful completion of some act or other?

It was thought that heavenly entities performed good deeds for mortals, and humanity benefitted from such acts. But did these celestial beings also experience a personal gratification from what they did? Let's for a moment follow the reasoning process of early humans in that stage of their inquiry into the nature of goodness. Quite clearly the goodness that was experienced when one person aided another in distress would be retained in the collective memory. The responsive display of gratitude from the person being aided was strongly felt by the recipient of that gratitude. This sensation of pleasure was one of emotion and unlike any that satisfied the physical cravings of the body. This sensation, experienced after committing an act of goodness, seemed to permeate the person's whole being.

The Heart-Centre of Goodness

Anger, fear and other forms of emotional response seemed to be centred in the heart. We only have to reflect on how our own heart speeds up or palpitates in times of stress as well as pleasure. Was the pleasing sensation of goodness also centred in the heart? Since the heart was at one time considered to be a source of life, could not the impulsive act of goodness and its sensation of pleasure be similarly centred in the heart, the centre of life?

The conclusion, over aeons of time, was that the finer perceptions of life were immersed in the infinite ocean of the cosmic realm. There was an invisible power, a 'something' that flowed from this supernatural realm to humanity itself. The experience was one of goodness and it was pondered upon what thoughts and human behaviour would represent it. This impulse and motivation, which humans became conscious of, was the spiritual.

Yet this divine power infusing humankind had to be given an identity, a form that the human mind could realise. It was thought to be conveyed by the breath with which life enters and leaves the body. Thus, the word *'spiritual'*, in one of its original meanings, denoted the act of breathing air.

The Concept of Soul

Yet it came to be thought that *air itself* was not the essence of this spiritual quality; it was only the *medium* for transporting this 'essence' from the Cosmic to humans. This gave rise to what theology and related subjects designate as *'soul'*, an idea that went through a raft of changes as to its nature and function in humans. The most prominent and persistent concept was that the *individual soul* was a sort of ethereal substance implanted at birth in a person by the Spiritual or Divine Source which itself has been subject to many interpretations.

The *'incorporeal substance concept'* of the soul has associated with it the belief that we can manipulate the nature of our soul at will, either corrupting it by our behaviour, or regenerating it and returning it to its original spiritual state. Consequently, according to this notion, the quality of our soul can vary.

There is also the *'mystical concept'* of the soul, a belief held by mystics from the East and the West alike, that what is traditionally termed *'the soul'* is a super or highly developed and elevated state of consciousness of the Cosmic itself; in other words, a supremely high manifestation of the stream of possible states of human consciousness. In general, this attribute of consciousness

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...the word 'spiritual', in one of its original meanings, denoted the act of breathing air.



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pervades the very Life Force itself, existing as a unique subset in each living cell and as an attribute of Vital quality of Life Force and therefore present in every person. There is no distinction in its quality in humans, other than how it expresses itself. To the extent that we become aware of this exalted state of consciousness, we exhibit that goodness which is known as *'spirituality.'*

Individual Spirituality

But what should represent this spirituality, this oneness that is experienced as the Absolute or as the God that we conceive of? Human reason has struggled immensely to reduce to common and comprehensible terms those rules of self-discipline by which we might become aware of our indwelling spirituality. Simply, it has been an attempt to establish a mortal goodness corresponding to what true spirituality is.

However, the conclusions of human reasoning are not universally alike. Those who had this revelation and attained a personal enlightenment felt an obligation to assist others to experience it too. They attempted to reduce a state of ecstasy to common words and actions, which formed the nucleus of their religious beliefs and practices. Although carried out in good faith, this process often engendered dogma and practices that were not truly spiritual and resulted in intolerance, bigotry and a false sense of devotion.

There is no single road which leads directly to spirituality by its material aspect and its interpretation of the spiritual good. Indeed, there are many such roads whose guidelines to spirituality deviate from what spirituality really is. Goodness, which is true spirituality, cannot be realised by argument or the compulsory acceptance of a dogma. The realisation of the goodness of spirituality must be a subjective attainment. By analogy, if beauty is in the eye of the beholder then certainly spirituality is similarly wholly individualistic.

If we have the benevolent wish to assist others to attain the ultimate experience of spirituality, we may introduce them to the mystical procedure by which this self-realisation can be attained, either through a religion that teaches the fundamentals of mysticism, or through an organisation which traditionally perpetuates those teachings, such as the Rosicrucian Order. We should allow ourselves to learn the meaning of true spirituality through the sphere of our own understanding, whether it is in alignment with that of others or not. After all, no particular description of a sunset can ever equal our personal perception of it.

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The Mystic Gardener

by **Affectator**



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The Taoists, those sages of traditional China, loved saying, over and over again, that those whose occupation was nearest to the Truth were the farmers. Each of us, in one sense at least, is a gardener, a mystical gardener, cultivating and nurturing our sense of a spiritual presence in all things. This is not a play on words but a very profound truth, for the development of that better part of ourselves is truly a close analogy to the ancient art of gardening.

First of all, the ground must be prepared. This is analogous to the willingness of people to learn and be amenable to instruction. Secondly, the seed must be suitable for the soil in which it is placed. In other words, the seed that enters the soil and sprouts represents those people who are karmically ready to understand, rather than those who are doomed to fail even before germination begins.

Of great importance is to remember that nothing good or of lasting value is ever achieved without patience and perseverance. This is a central tenet of all true paths of spiritual unfoldment, and those who feel they are not advancing fast enough are like novice gardeners who, having sown their seeds, grow impatient after only a few days when they see no signs of shoots appearing. It would be well for such people to heed the old Latin saying, *'Festina lente'*..., *'make haste slowly.'*

When you have chosen the right inner soil, and right inner seeds of spiritual achievement have been planted, the only fail-safe way of delivering experience and understanding of genuine quality is to use, in moderation, a 'fertiliser' of just the right grade and composition. The fertiliser of your life is to nurture your inner seedlings of wisdom and experience with deliberate acts of good thoughts, words and deeds,

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little by little, doing a bit every day. In this way you will neither burn your plants nor destroy the soil in which they grow.

You will, in other words, absorb and assimilate increasingly complex and profound mystical principles of living, not only with your mind but with your whole being. The living, spiritual awareness you seek will germinate inside you at a time of its own choosing, just as a carefully chosen seed will sprout only when it is ready, only in its own good time. To go any faster would be to risk spoiling everything, and a plant that grows too fast is spindly and lacks strength.

If you're seeking a fast route to spiritual growth, remember that the price for entering such a path is great hardship and suffering. Accomplishment can, of course, eventually come even to the impatient, but at what an extravagant price! Certainly not a price worth paying. Our lives can be led comfortably, happily and peacefully if we will but allow nature to germinate and grow our inner seeds of spiritual realisation at the pace that nature meant them to, no faster and no slower.

There is seldom anything to be gained by forcing the pace of your inner development nor, for that matter, by delaying it. There is such a thing as intellectual attainment, of course, and it is not hard to gain, but we must never confuse this with true psychic and spiritual development, for these demand real inner labour—long and exacting personal labour over many years of tests and trials. Being a member of a group of spiritual aspirants will not by itself open the portals of wisdom very wide, for that requires hard, private inner labour, independent of what others around us may be doing.

Returning to our analogy of an inner garden, we see that every seed conforms wholly to the inviolable laws of nature, and it does not attempt to deviate from those laws even in the slightest bit. There is always a best time for seeds to germinate, a best time for seedlings to pierce the soil and face the sun, a best time for plants to reach maturity, a best time for them to flower, and a best time for the flowers to drop their seeds.

As seekers of greater spiritual realisation we are seeking union with an inner form of perfection known to Rosicrucians as the *'Master Within'*, a template of perfection which already exists, fully formed, within every person. The great achievement is learning how to attract that spiritual perfection out into the open, into the small and great events of our ordinary, daily lives.

It is only through this all-powerful inner guidance that we can be led onto a path of genuine spiritual attainment. Only through our association with this inner master can we hope eventually to come to a right relationship with the universal force that guides our lives and grants us a view, albeit faint, of God.



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Duality in Science & Philosophy

by **Walter J Albersheim**

The Rosicrucian scientist Dr Walter J Albersheim (1897–1982) wrote several articles about the relationship between science and spirituality, sometimes referred to as *'mysticism'*. The following article is a condensation of some of his thoughts about duality and the relationship between mind and matter, from the unimaginably small scales of the quantum world up to the earthly and cosmic scales of relativistic phenomena.

Most of the great religions known to the western world are dualistic; that is, they regard the ultimate nature of the universe as twofold. This division may be made between polar opposites, such as good and evil, or between different categories, such as mind and matter.

Mystical religions and philosophies, including the Rosicrucian, are monistic; that is, everything in existence is part of an integrated whole. Mystics recognise polar opposites as the extremes of a graduated scale in which each valuation is relative. For example, Norway is cold compared to countries on the equator but warm compared to those in the far north or south. The Rosicrucian teachings show the value of these opposites: the release of tension between the poles produces action and progress.

It's more difficult to resolve the dualities between different categories, however; between duty and pleasure, between law and chance and especially between mind and matter. Rosicrucian teachings treat even these essential differences as

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graduations on a vibratory scale.

For instance, within the apparent dichotomy of matter and life, the energy vibrations of matter are described as slower and more negative than the higher vibrations of conscious life force. Mystics are encouraged to harmonise all these dissonant distinctions; but harmony is only possible between related elements. We must, therefore, strive to recognise all apparent dualities of experience as dual aspects of an underlying Unity: two sides of the one coin.

The seeming discrepancies may be inherent in the limitations of our physical existence and of our brain-conditioned mind. If this is true, duality must be found in all experience, but before venturing into spiritual realms it's wise to search for it in the material world and in physical science. Material duality must mirror and may help to explain spiritual duality, for it is said in the hermetic axiom: *'As above, so below; as below, so above.'*

Material duality must mirror and may help to explain spiritual duality, for it is said in the hermetic axiom: 'As above, so below; as below, so above.'

A study of modern science shows that duality is, indeed, its basic dilemma. In the 19th century, duality appeared as an essential difference between energy and matter. The two were regarded as independent and unrelated, indestructible and unalterable entities. Shortly before 1900, French scientists discovered radioactive substances that gave off copious energy while losing a slight amount of weight. Einstein explained the discovery by identifying matter with concentrated, *'frozen'* energy. This resolved the dualism between matter and energy in bulk.

However, a new duality arose between the smallest elementary units of matter and energy, called particles and quanta (wave packets), respectively. Matter had long been regarded as being composed of fixed, point-like corpuscles, such as molecules, atoms and electrons. Energy, on the other hand, was assumed to be propagated in the form of diffuse waves. Ocean waves, light waves, sound waves, all seemed to spread through space without definable boundaries.

The corpuscular structure of matter and the diffuse character of vibratory energy seemed to constitute a new dualism until the German physicist Max Planck (1858–1947) discovered that wave energy is absorbed and emitted in units of fixed size, which he called quanta. Subsequently, the Indian physicist Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (1888–1970) showed that light quanta or *'photons'* deflected electrons and atoms like atomic particles. The mass and momentum of these quasi particles are related to the vibrational rate and wave length of the light waves, so that each photon partakes of the nature of both waves and particles.

Conversely, the American Clinton Davisson (1881–1958) and the Englishmen William Henry Bragg (1862–1942) and his son William Lawrence Bragg (1890–1971), proved independently that electrons and atoms can be diffracted like waves, with frequencies and wave lengths related to their masses and momentum. All this had been predicted by the French physicist, Louis de Broglie (1892–1987).

Principle of Uncertainty

How do scientists explain this dual aspect of Nature and make it comprehensible? Quantum mechanics generally distains all visualisation, for its mathematical formulation is based on the *'Uncertainty Principle'* or *'Indeterminacy...'*

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When an experiment is designed to find the exact location of a quantised particle at a given instant, it is impossible to ascertain, as well, its energy and momentum or its frequency and wavelength. Conversely, if one measures the wavelength of light with precision, one loses sight of individual quanta and their location. Individual photons behave like particles, while great multitudes of them behave like waves.

Formally, this principle unified the dual aspects. Actually, it transferred the duality from the realm of physics to that of philosophy and metaphysics. Great physicists like Arthur Eddington (1882–1944) and Albert Einstein (1879–1955) argued whether the uncertainty was a real, physical fact or merely an expression of incomplete information. Eddington welcomed the uncertainty of physical effects as an indication that the human mind and will are free.

Einstein, however, felt that the details of quantum action are unknowable only on the physical plane, and only because all observations must be made with quantised sense organs and instruments. He believed that a higher, *'non-material mind'* might be able to cognise the configuration of all energy and matter in the world and predict its course through eternity. Thus the problem of energy versus matter became linked with that of matter versus mind.

Science has detailed the dual aspects of physical knowledge in the realm of the smallest observable entities.

Science has detailed the dual aspects of physical knowledge in the realm of the smallest observable entities. A similar dilemma arose at the opposite end of the scale, in the vastness of astronomical space. The knowable universe seems to be expanding at a terrific rate and would thus appear to become ever thinner and less coherent until it ultimately dissolves into emptiness.

Some astronomers, however, dispute this and hold that the intergalactic void is replenished by *'continuous creation'*. But if matter and energy increase they must emerge or be *'created'* from something that is not material, at least in the sense that we understand



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Mysticism begins with the inner experience of the conscious mind and strives to assimilate and harmonise the outer world of matter



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the word. Whether emergent or created, there is, at the back of it, the suggestion that there exists some sort of creative force or even a mind.

Wherever we probe the dual aspects of Nature we come face to face with the duality of matter and mind. Biologists maintain that the emergence of consciousness and mind is a gradual, evolutionary process. But how can mind evolve from matter unless some primordial form of it is present in every particle and energy quantum?

Philosophical Aspects

The above survey of material science shows that science confirms but does not resolve an intrinsic duality. Science and philosophy may define and explain, but neither helps us much to experience harmony and unity beneath the dual aspects. Such an inner experience can only be attained through mysticism.

Contrary to prevailing opinion, mysticism is not an enemy of science. The two are closely akin, in the past almost as polar opposites but increasingly merging their respective theories about the great mystery of existence. Science starts from the observation of surrounding material objects and forges its way inward, through derived energy concepts to mental phenomena. Mysticism begins with the inner experience of the conscious mind and strives to assimilate and harmonise the outer world of matter. Both science and mysticism, however, aspire to understand the universe from a unified standpoint, and both clear the trail with the double-edged tool of analysis and experimentation. The fundamental difference between science and mysticism is that the former deals with robust mathematical theories that in due course are proven through experimentation, while mysticism deals with direct inner experiences that have the potential to lead people to states of happiness and serenity seldom dealt with in the sciences of psychology and psychiatry.

Let us begin, then, with mystical analysis: matter and mind must be related because they influence each other. The effect of matter on mind is only too obvious: a stroke or an accidental blow to the head often stops the loftiest thoughts. The action of each individual mind on its body is equally evident. Most bodily motions are initiated by an act of conscious or subconscious will. The influence of mind on so-called *'dead matter'* is less clear, though some physicists claim to have measured the psychokinetic influence of will on a throw of dice, for example.

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But what relationship can exist between incommensurable entities? Energy and matter are quantitative concepts, expressible in the dimensions of space and time. Mind can neither be measured nor timed, and at the scale of quantum interactions, where mind may ultimately emerge, time has no meaning. We can measure the physiological activity of brain cells and even where such activity occurs, but we are still a long way from being able to assign detailed thoughts to those areas of the brain, though this may of course change in years to come. According to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, analysis cannot fathom relationships between mind and matter because the reasoning processes of the mind are conditioned by the categories of time and space on a macro level, even though they are believed to emerge ultimately from quantum-level activity.

Energy and matter are quantitative concepts, expressible in the dimensions of space and time.

Yet, where analysis fails, inner experience bridges the gap. Artists, visionaries, prophets and saints have attained the lightning flash of insight or the sense of profound peace and serenity, something that passes all rational thought. Some of these illuminated ones enjoin us to meditate unceasingly, others claim that the experience is ineffable and requires that we be reborn. Even if intuition can fathom the non-dimensional nature of mind, it can express its findings only in dimensional terms because the words of all languages are derived from material conditions.

Many mystical teachings deal with *'higher'* planes and dimensions, it even being implied that illumination consists in the acquisition of four-dimensional perception, namely, the experience of all that is, entirely devoid of time. No higher dimensions can reconcile matter and mind as long as the new dimensions are subject to the limitations of the three space dimensions. For instance, attempts have been made to interpret time as the fourth dimension, in the manner of relativity. This concept transforms the

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flow of history into a static *'world line'.*

If we believe in the uncertainty of quantum mechanics, all world lines fuzz out into meaninglessness in the distant region formerly called the future. If, on the contrary, we regard the world lines as immutably distinct, we're forced into the Calvinist and Islamic belief of complete predestination, without room for human choice and personal purpose. Moreover, if we relate time to the three space dimensions by the limiting speed of light, we come to the conclusion that the Universal Mind requires eons of time to know what's going on in the depths of its space.

To avoid such contradictions and absurdities, we must remove all physical restraints from the fourth dimension. This requires visual and mental imagination. Our physical universe is vast, but many physicists believe that it is finite. Hence we may visualise it as a sphere; a gigantic drop infused with unnumbered galaxies. With one additional step we may regard the entire physical universe as the curved super-surface of a higher-dimensional continuum. The relation of the physical world to this higher continuum is analogous to that of a geographical map and the solid earth sphere it represents.

In the physical *'surface world'*, spatial forms and boundaries are perceived by the effort and time required to move, or even to glance, from one object to another. I have postulated that the higher dimension has no restrictions, no speed limits, no inertia. Hence the inhabitant of this *'inner world'* may be at many places in a very short time, in effect, in many places at once.

Unrestricted Locomotion

Unrestricted locomotion is equivalent to absence of dimensionality. This imagined condition of the inner world applies to the fundamental problem (namely, the duality of mind and matter) if we picture this higher-dimensioned world as the abode of mind—your mind, mine, the Universal Mind or even all of these rolled into one. Matter, energy and all physical events would be surface phenomena like the images on a cinema screen. Matter and mind would indeed be incommensurate but related like the surface of a body to its volume. They would interact insofar as the interior mind stuff penetrates to the surface.

From the outside, it might appear that an individual part of the mental world could become detached and disappear from view. From the interior viewpoint, such a separation would be meaningless because in the unrestricted world every part has access to the entire domain. The ancient philosopher Plotinus may have meant just this when he said: *'The immortal gods interpenetrate each other. Each one is King, but none envies nor dominates the others.'*

According to our postulations, the inner world must be free from limitation. This does not make it a lawless chaos. The laws of a mental world, however, would be visualised as laws of mind rather than physical laws of matter. Such mental laws might include Logic, Justice, Ethics, Art and Love.

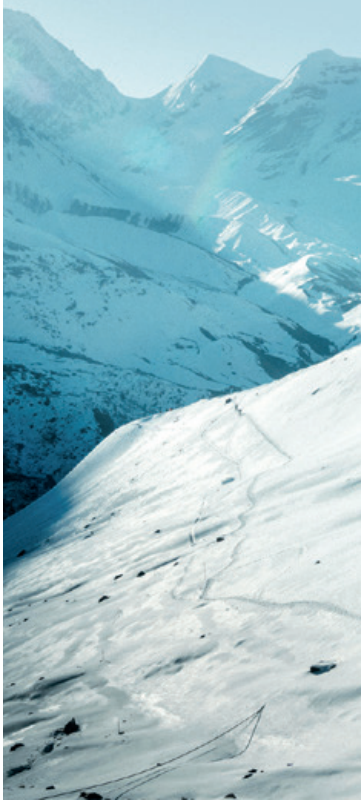
To further detail this flight of fancy, or to impose it on others as a reality, would reintroduce restrictions into a world claimed to be unrestricted. Each mystic has the privilege and duty to create, through her or his own meditation, an image that harmonises the apparent dualities of her or his own experience.

This article has served its purpose if it shows that the dualities of life are not a needless annoyance and spiritual torment. They may goad us on to burrow through, or to leap over, the surface of physical reality until we see, beyond duality, our common Inner Light.

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Awakening to Freedom

by **Vincent Edwards**



unsplash / Touann Gatouillat Vergos

Rabindranath Tagore may be gone, but his great dream for the future is as alive as it ever was. People everywhere can take heart when they think of his far-reaching vision. When India's celebrated poet and philosopher passed away in his native Calcutta, tributes to his memory poured in from all over the world. While his compatriots remembered all he had risked for a united India, the Anglophone world outside India remembered him primarily as the poet whose genius had brought him the Nobel Prize. Yet these accomplishments seem of lesser importance alongside another of his qualities. Tagore dared to dream of a world where all people, united in universal friendship, were no longer divided by racial and national hatreds.

When Tagore was still quite young, his benign father insisted he put his books aside and go up among the high Himalayas. Rabindranath Tagore had been meditative even as a boy, and the parent thought the sight of those lofty, snow-covered peaks might touch his spirit. Whatever the effect was upon his youthful soul, one thing is known: throughout the rest of his life the rising young Bengali philosopher never wanted to live walled-in by narrow prejudices and jealousies. The older he became, the clearer was his vision of a free world where human understanding would count more than national boundaries.

In this utopian world people would live as friends, side by side. Scientists would pursue their studies whilst always respecting the environment and cosmic law, and wars would have come to an end through the practice universal love. Does that dream sound far-fetched? Is it too much to hope for? If beauty and goodness are to prevail in the world, Tagore's dream must surely come true. It remains our only hope for the future. The prayer that this great Indian poet voiced is perhaps now as relevant for the world of humanity as when it was first conceived for his native country:

Where the mind is without fear, where the head
    is held high and knowledge is free;
Where the world is not broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out of the depths of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms toward perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
    into the dreary sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into
    ever-widening thought and action;
Into that Heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

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ORDO ROSAE CRUCIS

by **Einar Einarsson**

Partnership with the Cosmic



istockphoto / artisteer

Whether individually or in groups, many Rosicrucians involve themselves in what is generally called *spiritual* or *metaphysical* aid. Sometimes petitioners for assistance (usually for healing) ask the person or group to pray for them. While such requests are always taken seriously and acted upon, they sometimes betray a misunderstanding of the nature of Rosicrucian healing work and particularly the nature of God.

Metaphysical helpers have often erroneously been regarded as privileged people with direct lines of communication to the Divine not available to others outside this elite circle of healers. For surprisingly many people seeking metaphysical healing, God is understood in anthropomorphic terms only, often perceived as a wise old man but also as an authoritarian ruler who arbitrarily afflicts or exalts people on whims of fancy, shortening or prolonging lives without rhyme or reason.

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> "God is beyond all human form...
>
> No mind can ever encompass all that God is."

Of course, this does not mean that prayer is wrong. Praying for assistance in overcoming some overwhelming problem, such as impending financial disaster or poor health, is without doubt perfectly permissible if done with deep sincerity and a sense of universal justice for all involved. However, advanced mystics, and especially great masters and avatars, have been and continue to be known for the deep nature of their prayers, some of which grace the pages of inspirational books. A unique feature of their prayers is that they seldom ask for earthly or personal favours. Their prayers are more akin to acts of gratitude, reverence and worship than specific requests for personal assistance, and when assistance for anyone is involved it is almost always assistance for someone else, not the petitioner him or herself.

There is something deeply satisfying in appealing to the highest authority we know for the welfare of another person. In times of crisis, appealing to God for our own welfare is perfectly justified, but in the vast majority of cases—and these occur almost daily in the life of every true mystic—the appeal is for someone else or some group of people in need.

And if there is anything we wish to appeal for personally in our prayers, there are few better things we can do than to ask deeply and sincerely for more personal responsiveness to the suffering and needs of others. Rosicrucians ask the God of their understanding to make them worthy of and responsive to the highest form of love they know..., and that often manifests in a deep desire to assist someone or some group of people in need. They know that this love is what they need more than anything else, and they attract it by the manner in which they live their lives and conduct themselves in their moments of quietude and attunement with the Cosmic.

The Pantheistic Mystic

To find a solid foundation for mystical work, we must elevate our concept of divinity to the most universal and all-encompassing form we know. We must understand that God is not made in the image of humankind. God is beyond all human form. What we perceive as God, can never be more than a faint outline of what God actually is. No mind can ever encompass all that God is.

To a pantheist mystic, God is immanent in the entire Universe and indeed beyond it. God is present in everything, from the tiniest to the largest structures there are. *'The Cosmic'* is a word used to label one aspect of God, namely, the aspect that contains everything we can know about God while we are still human. Being but one manifestation of God, it may have limits definable by science, though God 'itself' cannot have limits. God includes all, and we are therefore all parts of this God.

The life and power of God flows through us and manifests outwardly as sanctity and goodness to the extent we allow it..., no more, no less. This may be intellectually hard to accept but, in moments of inspiration, some mystics feel emotionally within themselves a oneness, with a sort of universal and impersonal yet intimate creative power. With no warning, they are suddenly overwhelmed by feelings of intense love for the totality of Creation, for God. And this love extends to all people, indeed to all living

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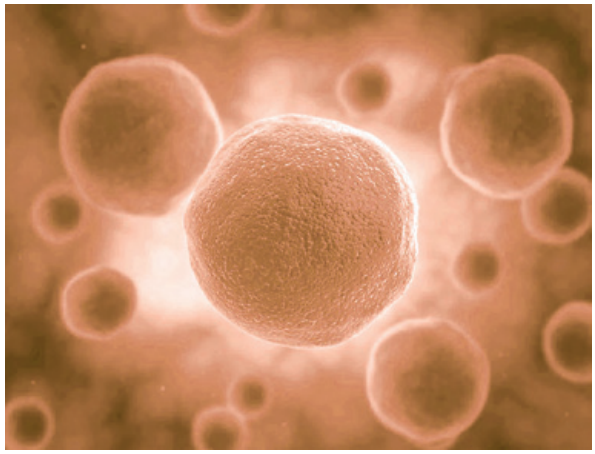
things. Such feelings can seldom be expressed in logical words but are nevertheless hinted at through analogies.

Paul, the early Christian author of several books of the New Testament, said that all followers of the new religion were *'one body in Christ'.* Taking the early Christian belief that Christ was the son of God and that his followers were therefore *'one'* with him, Paul's statement can be rephrased as *'We are all united in one God'*, or *'We are all part of one God'.*

"The life and power of God flows through us and manifests outwardly as sanctity and goodness to the extent we allow it."

Working Cooperatively

Extending this analogy further, our body consists of billions of individual cells. Each cell, whether part of the brain, bones, organs or muscles, is an individual living being that is born, which dies after a lifespan ranging from a few weeks to many years, and which is imbued with a rudimentary consciousness. Having a keen instinctive interest in our own wellbeing means that we care for our bodies and, by extension, we care for its tiniest living components, its cells.



Each cell is an individual living being imbued with a rudimentary form of consciousness.

But groups of individual cells must regularly be sacrificed for the sake of the whole. We trim our nails, cut out corns and calluses and even cauterise infected sores, and cells by the million are sacrificed as a result. How does this affect our interrelationship with the single cell? Is it in any way analogous to God's relationship to individual human beings?

If you hesitate over these questions, think of a more understandable analogy. Imagine yourself as having been drafted into a vast labour force for the purpose of building an Egyptian pyramid! Some recruits may rebel and try to escape from the camp. Others will resign themselves to their situation and work just hard enough to escape punishment. But a small group believes they are participating in a glorious work that will stand for ages as a lasting monument to some transcendent collective ideal, and they sacrifice all they have for that ideal.

The workers in this last group are most likely to be the survivors and the ones who rise to positions of authority and decision-making. Their cooperative and constructive attitude is like that of true mystics everywhere, in that they do all that is demanded of them when challenges have to be overcome as they place the interests of their common transcendent ideal above

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all else. Mystics rightfully use their personal powers to the best of their ability, just as an individual blood cell rushes to the site of an infection in order to begin the process of healing.

Spiritual Power

Metaphysical healers are aware of the larger, divine power in which they have a share. They are free to call for the help of this creative cosmic power by clearly visualising a constructive goal and releasing it to the Cosmic Mind. They are also free to call upon this power for their own benefit, but they seldom do so, electing instead almost always to direct it elsewhere to those who need it most.

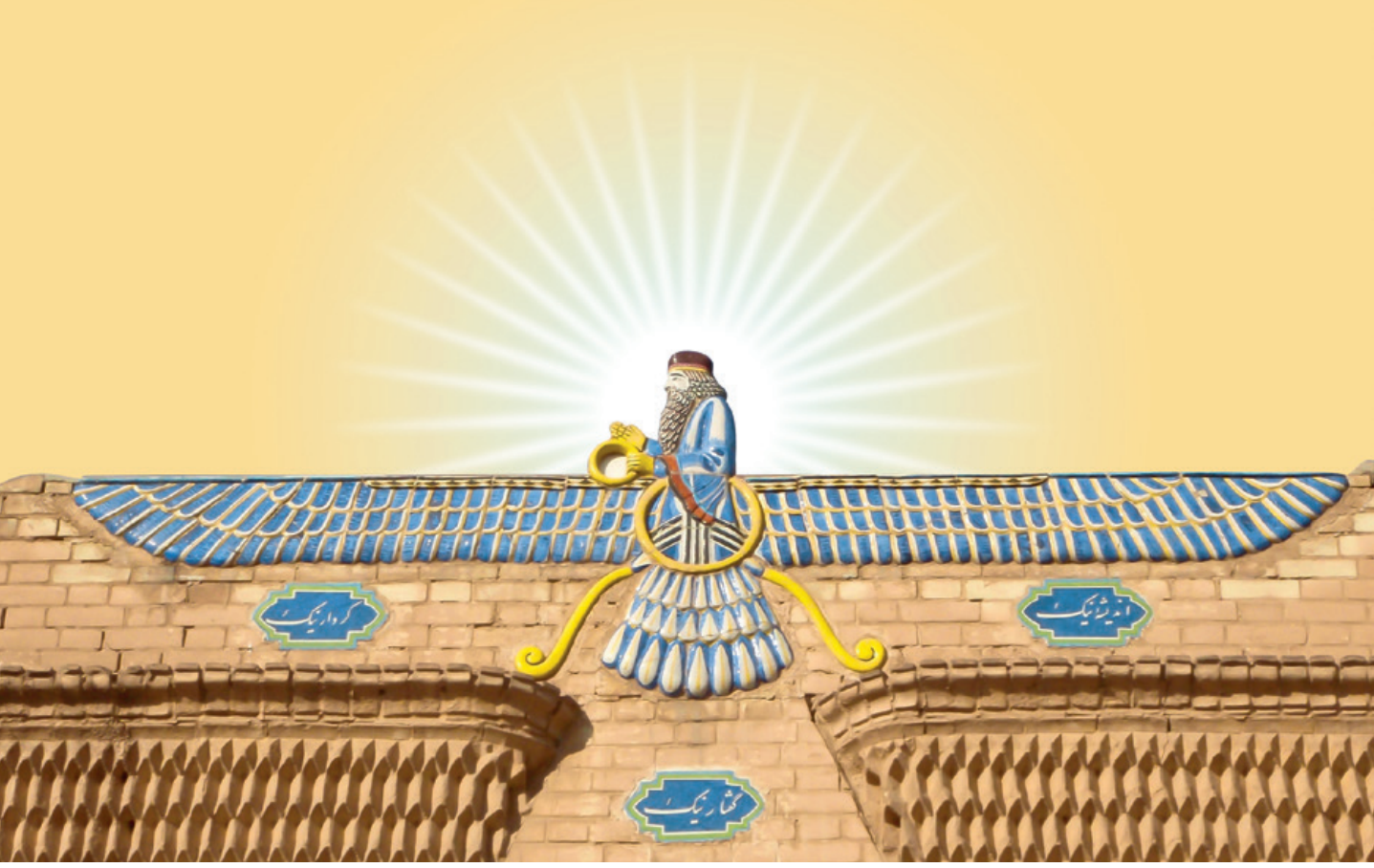
When we undertake to treat a sufferer, we are well aware that we are only a channel for the unlimited healing power of the Cosmic. The psychic power we can accumulate in order to accomplish psychic healing is puny in comparison to the power available to us to direct to the afflicted by appealing to the spiritual power that rules our very destiny. By cooperating with the Cosmic we become its partner and confidant and have supreme confidence in universal justice and the ceaseless operation of the one immutable law that we know operates in the lives of all creatures: the Law of Karma.

"By cooperating with the Cosmic, we become its partner and confidant..."



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Symbol of LIGHT

by **Roshan Ushah**

The *Farvahar* is the name given to one of the best-known symbols of Zoroastrianism. It consists of a winged disc with a man's upper body, and it has been commonly used as a symbol of the Zoroastrian religion since the 19th century. But it has a has a much longer history in the art and culture of the Ancient Middle East.

The symbol and its philosophical meaning are an ancient heritage extending through at least three millennia to modern times. The Farvahar reminds us of the purpose of life on earth, which is to live in such a way that the soul progresses

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spiritually and attains union with *Ahura Mazda* (the Wise Lord), a state called *Frasho-kereti* in the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Zoroastrians.

The symbolism of the figure is disputed, and while it is currently thought to represent a *Fravashi*, a person's guardian angel, what it represented in the minds of those who adapted it from ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian reliefs is unclear. In the *Arda Viraz Namag* text, written during the later Sassanid period (226–651 CE), the term 'Fravashi' is used to mean a *guardian angel* or the *immortal soul* of an earthly being. Since the symbol primarily appears on royal inscriptions, it is also thought to represent the *'Divine Royal Glory'*, the Fravashi of the king...; or it represents the *divine mandate* that was the foundation of a king's authority.

How the Farvahar is Depicted

In the centre of the figure is a circle representing the soul of the individual. To enable the soul to evolve and progress, it has two wings. Each wing has three layers of feathers. These are a reminder of the *Jzhirums* with which the soul is linked. 'Jzhirum' is a Persian word meaning the *source of celestial light*, the fountain source of the creation of different vibrational and spiritual energies.

According to Zoroastrianism, in nature there exist two opposing forces: *Spenta-Mainyu* (the good mind) and *Angra-Mainyu* (the wicked/angry mind). A continuous conflict is maintained between these two. The individual's soul is caught between them and is pulled by each from side to side. The two long curved legs, flanking left and right of the circle, represent these two forces.

To help the soul balance itself between the two forces, it is given a rudder in the form of a tail. This tail also has three layers of feathers, reminding us of the path of *Asha* or truth, reminiscent of Maat to the ancient Egyptians. The three are: *Humata* (good thoughts), *Hukhta* (good words), and *Hvarasta* (good deeds), by which the soul is able to make its own spiritual progress.

The head of the figure prompts us to recall that Ahura Mazda has given every soul a free will to choose to either obey or disobey divine laws. The figure also has a pair of hands that hold a circular ring. The ring symbolises the cycles of rebirths on this earth and other planes that the soul has to undergo to make progress on the path of Asha. If these divine laws are obeyed through good thoughts, words and deeds, the soul will attain union with Ahura Mazda. This far-off event, towards which the whole of creation moves, is called *Frasho-kereti*.

The Modern View

According to philosopher and professor of Islamic Studies Henry Corbin in his *'Spiritual Body & Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran'* (1977), the name 'Fravashi' means *'those who have chosen'*, namely, those who have chosen to fight in order to come to the aid of Ahura Mazda. This demonstrates a similarity in meaning to that of the ancient Egyptian winged disk of *Horus of Behdet*.

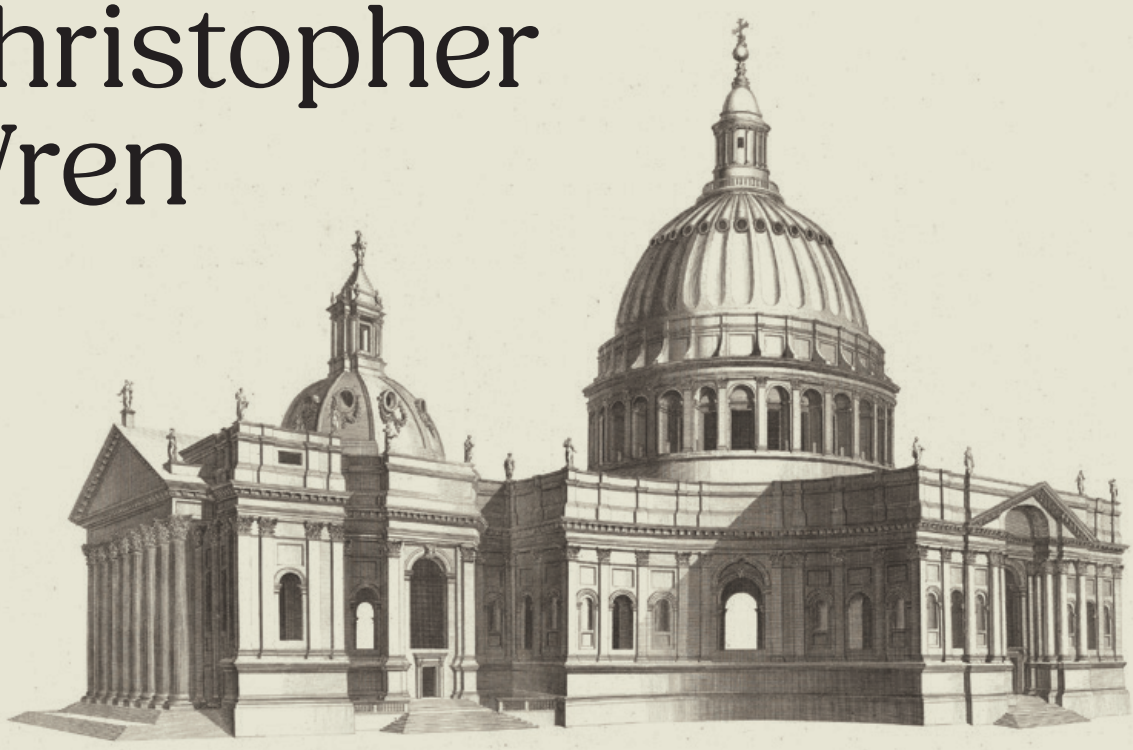
In modern Zoroastrian doctrine a Fravashi is the guardian spirit of an individual who sends out the *urvan* (often translated as *'soul'*) into the material world to fight the battle of good versus evil. On the morning of the fourth day after death, the urvan returns to its Fravashi, where its experiences in the material world are collected.

The Farvahar is used as a reminder of our purpose in life, which is to live in such a way that the soul progresses towards Frasho-kereti, or union with Ahura Mazda. Although there are a number of interpretations of the individual elements of the symbol, it should be noted that none of these stem from earlier than the 20th century.

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by **Serita Glassenberg**

Christopher Wren



St Paul's Cathedral

Born near Tisbury, Wiltshire, on 10 October 1632, the young Christopher Wren had a delicate constitution and grew up short in stature. Up to the age of 14 he attended the Westminster School but, impatient for progress, left school to assist the famous anatomist Sir Charles Scarburgh with his studies. Attending Wadham College, Oxford, in 1649, Christopher joined *'a society of philosophical inquiries'.* It was with the help of these fellow intellectuals that he conducted many valuable experiments.

While still at college, Wren assisted in establishing the foundations of what later became the *Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge*, an association of learned men, dedicated to empirical methods of thought, who came together to investigate *'new or experimental philosophy'.* The group's first meeting was held during Wren's residence at Oxford (c. 1651). However, the *Royal Society* itself was not formally recognised until 1660, and thereupon received three Royal Charters, in the years 1662, 1663 and 1669.

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To advance his new theories, Wren wrote the *Catalogue of New Theories, Inventions and Experiments*, in which he called for new philosophies to be advanced with other useful discoveries. Some of Wren's new theories, included in the booklet, were a weather clock, a *'balance of weights'*, several new ways of engraving and etching, as well as *'diverse musical instruments'*. Some of his other new ideas included a hypothesis on the moon's libration, *'how to stay long under water'*, and *'to measure base and height of a mountain only by journeying over it'*. Talking before the austere group of fellow scientists, Wren spoke of his *'juvenile blushes'* and *'my bashful years'*, but it mattered little for he had by then already been recognised as a man of great intellectual genius.

By the age of 21 Wren had completed his university degree and was elected a fellow of All Souls College. Still wishing for more knowledge, he continued with his scientific study. However, his philosophical pursuits did not interfere with his absorbing profession. He made elaborate drawings to illustrate Dr Thomas Willis' work, *Anatomy of the Brain*. In the book's preface, Robert Hooke, a famous philosopher and physicist, praised Wren as a thinker possessing a great combination of both mechanical and philosophical abilities. At about this time, Wren also invented a planting instrument drawn by a horse, which would not only plough and harrow the land but would also plant corn without waste. He also devised a method for making fresh water at sea. His produced work also clearly explained and illustrated a scheme for the graphical construction of solar and lunar eclipses and occultation of the stars. This work was published in 1681 by Sir Jonas Moore, along with Moore's system of mathematics.

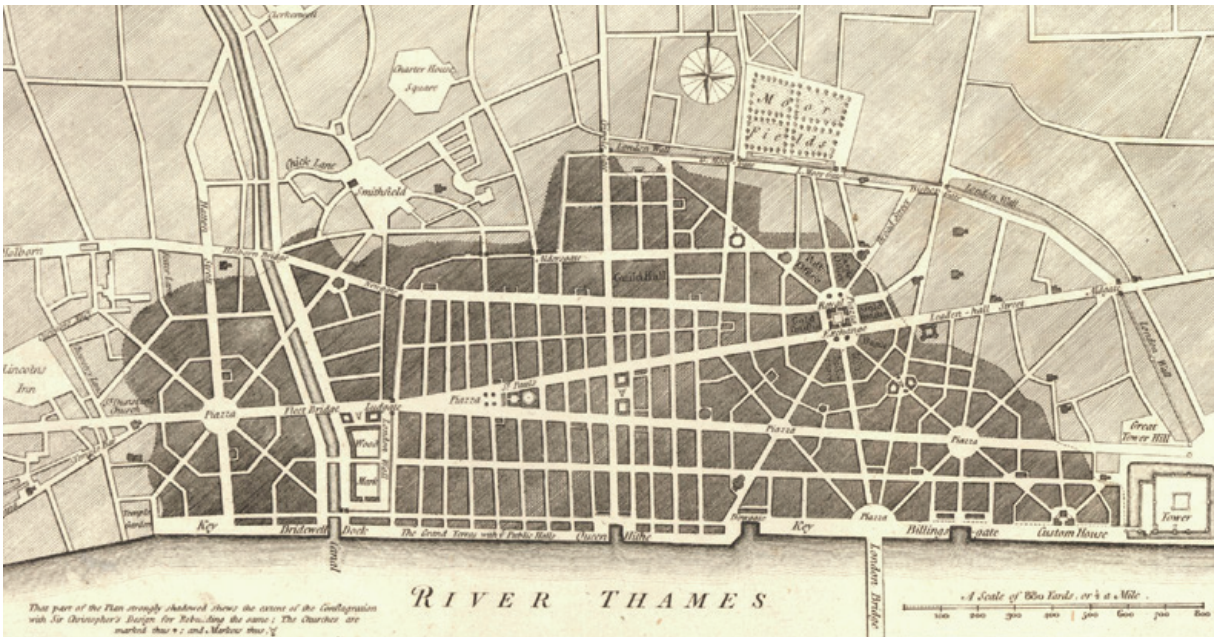
His produced work also clearly explained and illustrated a scheme for the graphical construction of solar and lunar eclipses and occultation of the stars.



Christopher Wren

Not content with what he had achieved, Wren decided to solve a problem that had been proposed to the geometricians of Britain by the French philosopher Blaise Pascal. Astonished that Wren devised an answer so quickly, Pascal failed to answer the challenge which Wren returned to the French scientist. Mathematics occupied Wren's time at this period in his life, and he wrote four of the tracts that later appeared in John Wallis' book on mathematical works. Wren's solutions, published in the book, preceded those of Newton. Newton himself thought Wren the best geometrician of the time. Unfortunately, Wren, trusting his fellow men, took very little care of his research and inventions and often allowed friends of the Royal Society to pass them off as their own. Unbothered, Wren turned his attention towards astronomy. From

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Wren brought King Charles II a sketch of his restoration plans for London following the Great Fire of London.

the astronomer John Flamsteed, he learned the geographical construction of solar eclipses.

Returning to Oxford, Wren then initiated an experiment on the subject of barometer variations. The barometer's practical use in meteorology was attributed to Wren in 1679 by the Royal Society. Following this, Wren's interest in anatomy was rekindled, leading him to experiment with a method for blood transfusions from one animal to another. Twelve pages of *Parentalia* (written by his son) are devoted to Wren's anatomical and medical pursuits, a study which he pursued until the end of his life. Three years before Newton's demonstration of the inverse square law, Wren, along with Robert Hooke and the astronomer Edmund Halley, arrived at this same law. Newton freely gave credit to his friends, but it was Newton who was applauded as the discoverer. Wren, however, did not mind as long as humankind profited.

When the Royal Society began meeting in 1664, Wren was called upon to give the opening address. Urging knowledge for the profit and convenience of humankind, he reviewed some of his latest theories: a punctual diary of meteorology; the study of refractions; the growth of fruits and grains (plenty, scarcity and the price of corn); the seasons of fish, fowl and insects; a useful account of epidemic diseases, addressed to physicians; the effect of weather upon medicine; and the mortality in London. Wren then concluded by speaking of the self-registering anemometers, thermometers and hygrometers, all inventions or modifications he had made.

Wren was on friendly terms with Oliver Cromwell, as well as with Charles II, newly restored to the throne.

An amicable person, Wren was on friendly terms with Oliver Cromwell, as well as with Charles II, newly restored to the throne. Now in royal favour, Wren designed a form of level for measuring the horizon

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in every direction. He used this level in his survey following the Great Fire of London in 1666. Repeating his experiments on the force of gunpowder and in lifting weights and bending springs, he went far ahead of his time. The Great Fire of London left much of the city a charred wasteland. Within 12 days after the fire, scarcely before the ashes had cooled, Wren brought Charles II a sketch of his restoration plans for London.

Wren is perhaps best remembered as the architect who designed and rebuilt St Paul's Cathedral in London. Following the Great Fire, the old cathedral was reduced to a smoking ruin. Wren's experiments in prior years contributed to his reconstruction of St Paul's. As with every part of his work, he preferred public service to private advantage. He accepted very little money for his city work, and yet not only did he rebuild St Paul's (taking down the old remains from 1666–1668) but also oversaw the architectural design and rebuilding of 52 parish churches, 36 company halls, the customs house, Temple Bar, and several private homes and provincial works. That same year, Wren also presented his papers regarding a pair of telescopes and conducted more experiments on the laws of nature. Navigation also appealed to him, as applied to swimming, sailing, construction of ships and latitude.

Wren's life was not all work, though marriage came late. He was nearly 40 when he first married Faith, the daughter of Sir John Coghill. They had two sons, the first dying at the age of two, and the second, Christopher junior, outliving his father. The difficult births were a major factor in Faith's death. In the year following her death, 1676, Wren married Jane Fitzwilliam, daughter of Lord Lifford. However, she lived only three years, leaving him with two more children, Jane and William.



Crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, with Wren's memorial on the left.

Wren was knighted shortly before the birth of his first son. By the time of death of his second wife, St Paul's Cathedral was only half completed. It took a total of 22 years after the Great Fire until the cathedral was again open for services. At that time, the famous gold dome was still not finished, and other projects awaited the great man's attention. St Paul's was finally completed in 1711 when the great master builder was in his 80th year.

St Paul's was finally completed in 1711 when the great master builder was in his 80th year.

By 1684, as the King's Comptroller of Works, Wren had rebuilt Windsor Castle and began to partake in politics. The following year, at the age of 53, he took his first parliamentary seat as the member of parliament for Plymouth.

During the last years of his life, Wren lived at his home in the renovated Hampton Court Palace and at his townhouse on St James' Street in Piccadilly. The last great project Wren worked on was the Royal Hospital for Seamen at Greenwich. The work began in 1696 but was not completed until after his death. In 1723, at the age of 91, he caught a chill and passed away soon afterwards; his body was buried in the crypt in St Paul's. Wren was one of the few men who had been favoured by the Stuarts, Oliver Cromwell, William III and Queen Anne. Though certain politicians, jealous of Wren's high position, had tried to discredit him at the close of his life, they could not eradicate the memory of all he had done for humanity.

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I Had a Dream

by **Eva Coomber**

One day I felt I had been unfairly chastised when a comment of mine was taken the wrong way, so I asked the Cosmic for understanding. As I was about to retire for the night, I requested that I be given greater understanding of the situation during my period of sleep. In answer, as I slept, I dreamed.

I found myself being held hostage while many people were sitting around a huge table, trying to negotiate my release. With a rifle barrel inches from my nose, I had three choices: to make a desperate dash for freedom and almost certainly be shot before I had gone a few yards; to sit quietly and be a 'good' little victim; or to show token resistance, not enough to provoke the gunman into doing something we would both regret but enough to show that I was no doormat to be used and abused. I decided on the third option. I rose slowly from my seat, expecting my captors to shout at me to sit down. They did nothing.

Slowly, I wandered around the room. As I passed

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a large pillar, I realised that one step backwards would take me behind the pillar and out of immediate firing range. I stepped back, expecting to be ordered back to my seat, accompanied by threats of what would happen otherwise. I waited and waited. The action, when it finally came, was totally unexpected. There were no arguments and no battle. The negotiators simply rose from their seats and began to leave the room. Puzzled, I peered out from behind the pillar, to find that my captors had disappeared. In my dream state, I decided that my kidnappers must have been arrested as soon as I had moved myself out of the line of fire.

"I had learned a valuable lesson, but was there still more that my dream could teach me?"

Upon awakening, I thought long and hard about my dream and how it related to the confrontation of the day before. In both that circumstance and in my dream I had seemingly been a victim. I wondered what my dream self had done that my waking self had not. My waking self had tried to argue my innocence. My dream self had simply changed position, refusing to accept the role of a victim. As a consequence, I came to view the proceedings from a different angle and also found an unexpected refuge. Is a change of position then the way to tackle confrontations and disagreements? In my dream I physically moved position by just walking away. In real life, we can sometimes walk away rather than stand and argue. We can also change position mentally and view the situation from several different perspectives, including that of our adversary. We may then see the situation in a completely different light. We may see possibilities or solutions that we had not previously considered. The stroll around the room gave my dream self a new perspective, and one small step took me out of harm's way.

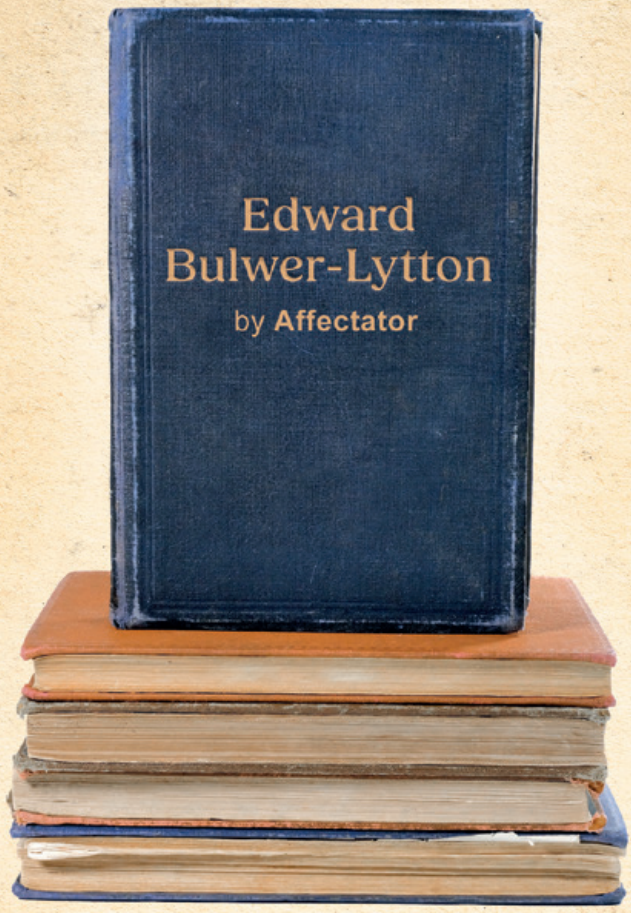
I had learned a valuable lesson, but was there still more that my dream could teach me? How often, when we are feeling most vulnerable, do we also feel most deserted? Why, we wonder, does someone not help us? The negotiators in my dream were trying to help, but they were powerless. It was only when I took that one small step behind the pillar that they were able to effectively come to my aid, without jeopardising my fragile safety even further.

'God helps those who help themselves' suddenly took on a new meaning for me. The Cosmic is not like some bullying official who deliberately denies aid we have not earned. It wants to help, but sometimes it cannot until we have taken that first small step to help ourselves. My dream refuge and the potential for my rescue were there all the time, but I had to risk the unknown to find them.



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"It is not in books alone, nor in books chiefly, that we are made conscious of our strengths. Life is the great schoolmaster, experience the mighty volume. He who has made one stern sacrifice of self has acquired more than he will ever glean from the odds-and-ends of popular philosophy."

With these words, the English Rosicrucian novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton alluded to a fundamental aspect of Rosicrucian philosophy, an ideal which he personally exemplified in his life's work, *The Mystical Law of Development Through Service.*

Bulwer-Lytton had strong ties to London. He was born in Baker Street in 1803 and spent his childhood in nearby Nottingham Place. In 1827 he married at St James's Church, Piccadilly, and three years later settled in Hertford Street off Park Lane. Residing mainly in the city until inheriting Knebworth House in Hertfordshire in 1843, most of his working life was centred in London. He was buried at Westminster Abbey.

An eloquently outspoken critic of the materialism of the age in

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which he lived, Bulwer-Lytton pitted himself against what he called:

> The hollow, sensual, sharp-witted, self-wrapped world—the world that is all for this life, and thinks of no future and no God.

Channels of Service

The channels of service through which he operated to this end were many. Best remembered as a novelist, he was also an active member of parliament, a playwright, a poet, a journalist, a magazine editor, an essayist, a historian and translator of the classics, a social reformer, a philanthropist and an esoteric philosopher. He was usually engaged in several of these fields simultaneously, even completing one or two full-length novels each year.

The fullness of his life is further evidenced by his leisure accomplishments. He travelled widely and was skilful at riding, boxing, fencing and whist. He sacrificed time and money, both precious to him, and ultimately his health and domestic happiness, in an uncompromising effort to implement the exalted principles of the Rosicrucian Order that he served with dedication until the end of his life.

Bulwer-Lytton's profound understanding of life was not acquired painlessly. At the age of 21 he meditated for one night by the grave of his lover. Later he wrote of this experience:

> What I suffered in one long, solitary night I will not say. At dawn I turned from the place, as if re-baptised or reborn. I recovered the healthful tone of my mind, and the stage of experience and feeling through which my young life had passed contributed largely to render me whatever I have since become.

At about this time he entered Cambridge University where he laid the academic foundations for his wide-ranging skills. In the Debating Society he developed a powerful oratorical ability, which was to serve him well in parliament. After graduating in 1826 he toured the Continent, devoting much of his time to study, and returned to London in April 1827.

Four months later he was married, but his widowed mother did not approve of the match and cut off his allowance. He therefore had to resort to a life of



'Best remembered as a novelist, he was also an active member of parliament, a playwright, a poet, a journalist, a magazine editor, an essayist, a historian and translator of the classics, a social reformer, a philanthropist and an esoteric philosopher.

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literary drudgery, working for the popular periodicals of the day—he called this time *'the graveyard of much genius'*. However, in 1828 the success of his first novel released him from this monotony, and in 1831 he entered the House of Commons as a supporter of the Reform Bill.

Benjamin Disraeli was already a close friend and wrote that Bulwer-Lytton was *'one of the few whom my intellect comes into collision with benefit.'* Bulwer-Lytton resigned from parliament in 1841 to concentrate on literature but re-entered the Commons in 1852, serving as Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1858 until his elevation to the peerage as the first Lord Lytton in the following year.

Parliament and Literature

Bulwer-Lytton was a much more influential politician than might be supposed. Although he attended the House of Commons regularly, he spoke only occasionally but always with great effect. His political efforts were directed mainly out of the limelight, but a pamphlet that he prepared in 1834 was essential to his party's unexpected win at the general election of that year. He refused the offer of a government post in 1835 as he did not wish to work exclusively in the field of politics.

In parliament, Bulwer-Lytton naturally took an active interest in cultural matters and also spoke on Irish affairs, the Crimean War, the reform of the Factory Act and the Poor Law and other social measures. With his friend Charles Dickens, he formed the *Guild of Literature and Art* to benefit impoverished artists and authors. After the two friends had raised a considerable sum of money to establish the guild financially, Bulwer-Lytton personally carried the bill through parliament to legally incorporate it.

Despite the success of his political endeavours, and of his work in the various fields previously mentioned,



Bulwer-Lytton is acknowledged as a pioneer of the didactic or instructive novel. He utilised the medium of romance to draw attention to the social ills of the day...

it was as a novelist that he did the most to raise the consciousness of his contemporaries. Indeed, these writings have continued to elevate people's thoughts down to the present day.

Bulwer-Lytton is acknowledged as a pioneer of the didactic or instructive novel. He utilised the medium of romance to draw attention to the social ills of the day and, in true Rosicrucian tradition, to instil subtle gems of mystical thought in his readers. Most of his novels were bestsellers, and his compelling artistry ensured that many people who would not read formal essays on serious topics would have the message of depth and truth brought to them through the medium and force of popular fiction. On a purely objective level, even today his novels make good reading, as he took care to meet the conventional criteria of the genre, such as fascinating stories, coherent plots and skilful

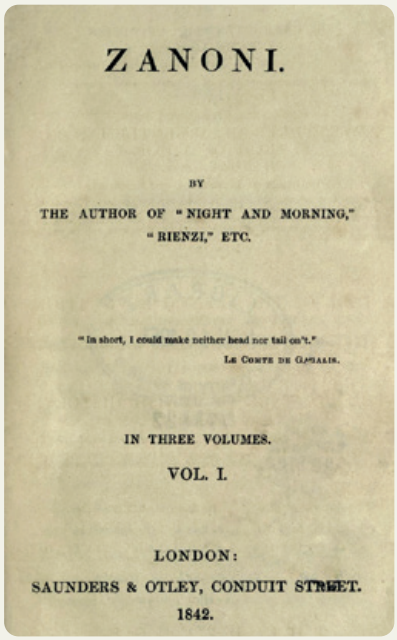
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development of themes. One can also not help but be impressed by the author's psychological insight and dry wit.

It is evident that Bulwer-Lytton's parliamentary activities were compatible with his aims in literature. Of the edifying aspect of his novels he said:

> I direct myself to the Conscience that reigns elder and superior to all Law, in men's hearts and souls; I utter boldly and loudly a truth, if not all untold, murmured feebly and falteringly before – sooner or later it will find its way into the judgement and the conduct.

In this manner he worked to raise public opinion, which would eventually call for the passing of more enlightened laws by parliament, where he was personally on hand to help in framing appropriate measures.


ZANONI.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "NIGHT AND MORNING," "RIENZI," ETC.

"In short, I could make neither head nor tail on't."

LE COMTE DE GABALIS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS & OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.

...the story is concerned with symbolising the true mystical path of initiation and reintegration.

A speciality of Bulwer-Lytton was the historical romance, of which *The Last Days of Pompeii*, published in 1834, is the most famous. These works were not undertaken without the most thorough historical research. However, the realistically vivid portrayal of events in these works leads one to speculate as to whether he might have projected his consciousness back in time (consciously or unconsciously) and psychically experienced some of the scenes as they really happened. The author's admission that the 'intuitive spirit' was his means of acquiring such descriptiveness possibly lends weight to this supposition.

But Bulwer-Lytton did not entirely neglect the didactic approach in these historical works; he usually chose periods that were analogous to, and hinted at, the imperfections of contemporary society. This approach is most pronounced in *The Last of the Barons,* which was set at the time of the Wars of the Roses.

The Mystical Novels

Although those who are interested in Rosicrucian mysticism can benefit from reading most of Bulwer-Lytton's works, there are three novels in particular in which the degree of mystical interest is especially high: *Zanoni*, *A Strange Story* and *The Coming Race.*

Zanoni was published in 1842 and, like all high art, is capable of personal interpretation on many different levels. The author denied that there was any unique meaning to the narrative, saying, *'I cannot disentangle all the hues that commingle into the light I seek to cast upon the truth'*, leaving each reader to *'guess at such truths as best please to instruct him.'*

However, the introductory chapter gives the thesis for the theme of *Zanoni* as being Plato's

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Caricature of Bulwer-Lytton, published in Vanity Fair *in 1876.*

teaching of the four ways through which the soul personality progresses to union with the Divine. Therefore, it is safe to assume that, in its most profound aspect, the story is concerned with symbolising the true mystical path of initiation and reintegration.

The aptly titled *A Strange Story*, dating from 1861, was written at the request of Dickens, for serial publication in his magazine. Bulwer-Lytton described it as *'a Romance which conducts its bewildered hero towards the same goal to which philosophy conducts its luminous student'*. From the mystical viewpoint, this 'goal' is self-integration, but many subsidiary meanings are also conveyed, all subject to personal exposition, and important mystical and psychic principles are strongly alluded to.

The Coming Race appeared in 1871 and was the author's penultimate novel. A genuinely prophetic work, it is concerned essentially with human evolution. Utopian in form, it is also an early example of science fiction, and Bulwer-Lytton did not miss the opportunity to satirise the social attitudes of his contemporaries.

Man of Vision

Like all advanced mystics, Bulwer-Lytton was an originator well ahead of his time in his thinking. He was a pioneer and he knew it, though in a most humble way. He expected, and got, vehement and venomous criticism. But he took it with unyielding resolution because he realised that he was easing the path for those who would follow the truth he had discovered.

In his writings, he planted in the minds of his readers seeds of constructive thought which have had a far-reaching influence on the evolution of humanity. Other writers, at home and abroad, heeded his innovations and followed his example. Bulwer-Lytton did not attempt to hide his light. He *lived* his mysticism openly, declaring the truth with assertiveness and authority in a steady and continuous effort to give of himself in service. That he was fully conscious of his mission in life is apparent from the following words[1], which he wrote as a true Rosicrucian:

Bulwer-Lytton was an originator well ahead of his time in his thinking. He was a pioneer and he knew it, though in a most humble way.

> The opinions I have put forth are not in fashion at this day. But I have never consulted the popular, any more than the sectarian, prejudice. Alone and unaided I have hewn out my own way, from the first to the last, by the force of my own convictions. The corn springs up in the field centuries after the first sower is forgotten. Works may perish with the workman; but, if truthful, their results are in the works of others, imitating, borrowing, enlarging and improving, in the everlasting cycle of industry and thought.

Footnotes

This article was originally published in the 1980 Year Book of the London Chapter of AMORC.

1. From his preface to the 1845 edition of *Night and Morning*, Volume 1.

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Singing Bowls

by **Nobilis**

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A singing bowl is a simple metal bowl which can range in size from a few centimetres to a metre in diameter. It can produce a sound that resonates in a similar way to that of a glass when you run a wet finger around its rim. Although associated with Tibet, singing bowls have a long tradition in many countries across the Far East.

While their origin is uncertain, they are said to have been introduced to Tibet, along with Buddhism, around the 7th century CE. The use of singing bowls in Tibet is the subject of much debate and many stories. Some people say they were used for meditation, while others say they were magical tools for transformation of self and of matter. Today they are used worldwide for meditation, relaxation, healthcare, personal wellbeing and religious practice.

According to legend, the original bowls were made from an alloy of seven metals representing the seven

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planets then known. However, metallurgical analysis suggests that the original bowls were made from a complex alloy of up to 12 different metals, giving them their distinctive rich sound.

Modern versions are usually made from a much simpler alloy, mainly copper, and do not have the same complexity of tone and harmonics. Antique singing bowls may display abstract decorations like lines, rings and circles engraved into the surface. Decoration may appear outside the rim, inside the bottom, around the top of the rim and sometimes on the outside bottom. Unlike new singing bowls, antique ones never display figurative decoration like Buddhas, mandalas or dragons. Modern singing bowls are often made to look like antiques and are often sold as *'old antique'* or *'vintage'.* However, the vast majority of bowls on the market are new, even if they are advertised as old. New singing bowls lack the warmth and complexity of tone found in the fine antiques, which are a rare find today and very collectable.

Some people say they were used for meditation while others say they were magical tools for transformation of self and of matter.

A more recent innovation is the popular *crystal singing bowl*. The use of the word 'crystal' is misleading, for crystal bowls are actually made from silicon glass. Although these crystal bowls may seem similar to the metal ones, they are musically very different, producing a single clear tone rather than the complex harmonics of their Himalayan counterparts. Crystal bowls are neither better nor worse than metal ones, but they are certainly different.

Playing the Singing Bowl

Singing bowls are played by striking the bowl in certain places with a soft mallet to produce a warm bell tone. Genuine antique singing bowls produce a complex chord of harmonic overtones. Singing bowls may also be played by the friction of rubbing a wooden, plastic or leather-wrapped mallet or wand around the rim of the bowl to produce overtones and a continuous *'singing'* sound. Here is the method:

- Place the singing bowl in the palm of the left hand if you are right-handed. Smaller bowls should be held by the fingertips.
- With your right hand, grasp the wand about mid-length, much as you would hold a pen but pointing downwards and touching the wood.
- With an even pressure, rub the wand clockwise around the rim of the bowl.
- Experiment with speed. Let the sound build up slowly as the bowl picks up the vibration.

A special sound effect can be produced by adding a small amount of water to the bottom of the bowl. The sound produced using this technique is strangely similar to dolphins singing. The amount of water used of course varies with the individual bowl. Start by filling three-quarters of the bowl with water. Be careful not to get the rim of the bowl wet. Now play the bowl, using the wand-around-the-rim technique. Bring up the sound by using a steady, even pressure. Pull the wand away from the bowl rim and let the bowl continue to vibrate while still holding the bowl in your hand, and tilt it so that the water inside gently laps towards the inside rim.

Continue to swirl gently while tilting the bowl and water. Experiment with the amount of water used. Usually the best effect is produced with a minimum

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amount of water.

Another way of modifying the sound is by the use of the mouth. Start the bowl singing by using the wand-around-the-rim technique. Pull the wand away from your bowl and let the bowl continue to sing. While still holding the bowl in your hand, raise it up to your mouth. The sound may then be modulated by changing the size and shape of the oral cavity. Experiment with the position of your mouth relative to the outside rim.

Healing Sound

The sound vibrations emanating from the bowl stimulate the body to recreate its own harmony and help to produce alpha waves, which are present in the brain during deep relaxation. Many people feel they have been touched and cleansed within when they listen to the sound of a singing bowl. As some describe it:

Playing the bowls can have an immediate centring effect on the body.

Time stands still. There is a feeling of peace, sometimes relief in aching parts of the body, or, at the very least, contact with something beyond daily life.

Many people find that the rich blend of harmonic overtones that the bowls produce have a direct effect upon their psychic centres. Playing the bowls can have an immediate centring effect on the body. The tones set up a response that creates a balance between the right and left sides of the brain, a balance known as *synchronisation*. Focusing on the subtle sounds of the bowls tunes one in to the universal sound of OM.



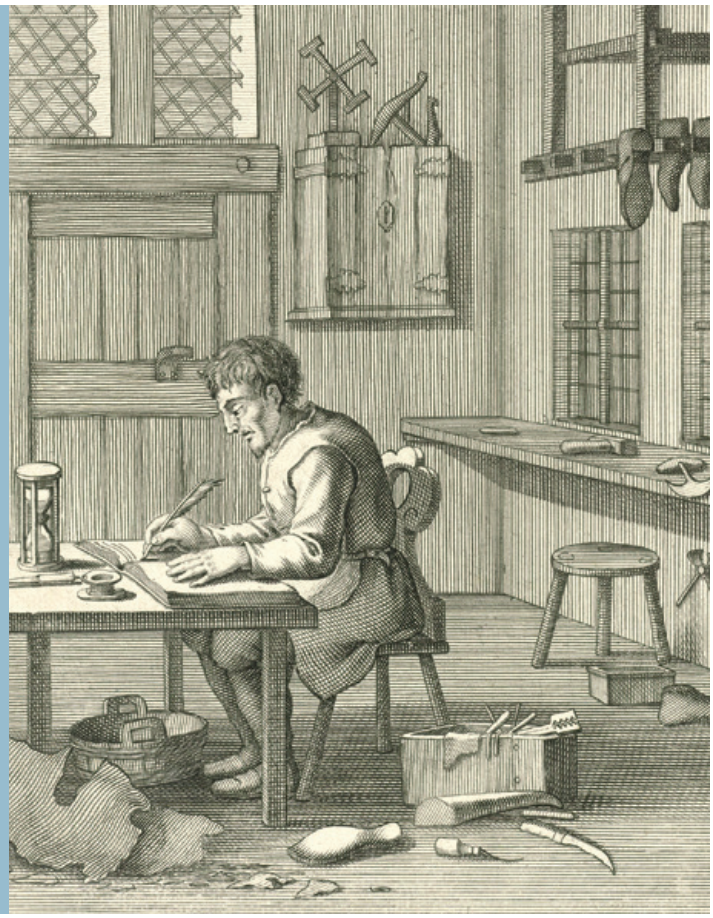
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by **Brian Aubrey**

Jacob Böhme

(1575 - 1624)



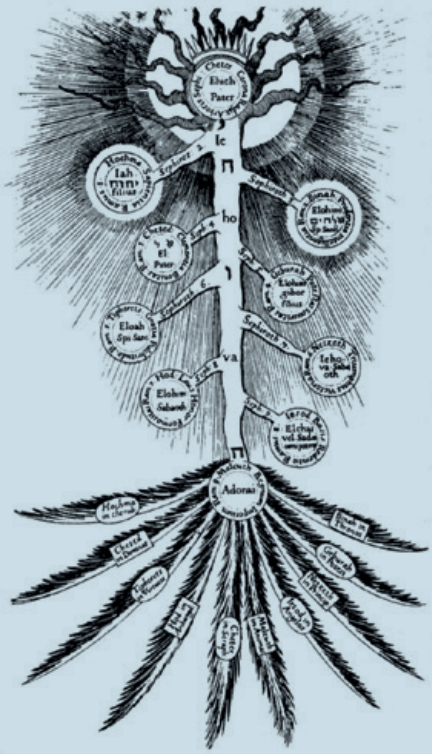
Jacob Böhme, writing.

By Joseph Mulder – Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

The German philosopher, mystic and Lutheran theologian Jacob Böhme is one of the greatest promoters of true mystical thought and experience to have survived the harsh relgious environment during and after the years leading up to the Thirty Years' War of 1618–1648. Born in 1575 in a village near Görlitz, Germany, Böhme was by trade a shoemaker. Although he received only elementary schooling, and despite humble origins, he has exercised an enormous influence on some of the most profound thinkers of the modern period. The German philosopher Schelling, for example, called Böhme *'a miraculous phenomenon in the history of mankind'*, and the English poet Coleridge declared him to be a *'stupendous human being'.*

Böhme's exploration of the nature of existence, his astonishing insight into the laws governing the universe, is indeed compelling. Nevertheless, he remains an obscure figure. Few have the patience or time to wade through his dense and difficult German prose to

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Boehme was influenced by the Kabbalistic Sephirothic tree. The version above is based on a depiction of it by Robert Fludd that presently resides in the Deutsche Fotothek.

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

It was from these experiences that he elaborated, in a series of lengthy volumes, his description of *'eternal nature'*, the term he gave to what he believed was the underlying nature of all existence, viewed in its most fundamental, unified and powerful state. He described it as being made up of the dynamic conflict between seven fundamental qualities from which all existence takes its origin. In his first known work, *Aurora: The Coming Dawn* (1612), he lists these seven qualities, conceiving of them in terms of the opposites of fire and light, wrath and love, and declared that each quality was necessary for the existence of the others, for he was convinced that nothing in the universe could know itself except through dynamic interaction with its own opposite.

A Dynamic State of Creative Tension

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

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

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

Böhme was a practical man, interested in metaphysical knowledge only as a way of waking

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humanity to an understanding of its true status as a *'child of eternity'.* He thought that eternal nature was of vital importance in this respect, because it made up the superior part of the human constitution. Before the biblical fall of Adam, he says, the primeval first man had known his origins, and his life had embodied the bliss of eternal nature. He had enjoyed perfect health and happiness and would have continued to do so had his vision not become so clouded by ignorance. Sickness and death arose only when he chose to focus his mind on the fragmentary nature of the material world, rather than the wholeness of eternity. This upset the balance of the qualities in his own constitution, and his fall was a consequence of this loss of internal equilibrium, resulting in a narrowing of his perceptual abilities.



The Magician, from the Rider–Waite tarot deck, is often thought to display the Hermetic concept of 'As above, so below.'

Microcosm and Macrocosm

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

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



Jacob Böhme

Related to this is Böhme's hermetic idea that *'All is in all'*: every part of creation contains the totality. It is this vision which enables him to see, as did the English poet Blake, *'...a world in a grain of sand'.* For Böhme, it is an especially important concept, for all people contain the universe within themselves. The human mind always remains linked to its transcendent source, in which the totality of knowledge is contained. By knowing ourselves we can know everything in the universe, and Böhme means this quite literally. He envisages a mode of knowing through direct cognition, something he calls *'Verstand'* (understanding). Verstand grasps the totality of existence and can intuit both the fundamental laws

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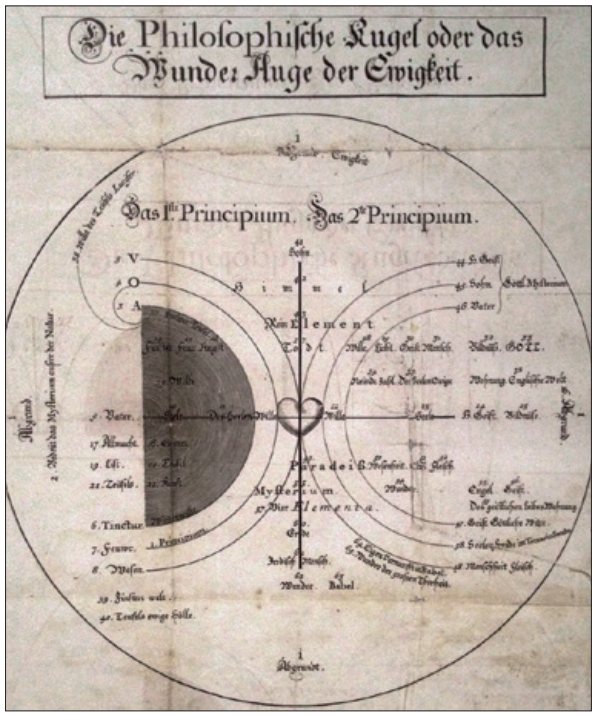
and specific details that structure the physical world. This is in contrast to '*Vernunft*' (reason), which sees only in part and cannot penetrate the deeper layers of creation.

Such, in brief, is a small part of the contribution of the shoemaker of Görlitz to human enlightenment. Böhme was a deep thinker and a majestic seer. It was not always easy for him, though, and he often suffered abuse from the defenders of religious orthodoxy, which he bore patiently always. When he was forced to leave town, for example, he said quietly, *'Seeing it cannot be otherwise, I am content.'* Sometimes he gave a more spirited response. When one of his opponents sneered, *'What ails the fool, when will he be done with his dreaming?'* Böhme replied defiantly, *'Well, well, we shall see what kind of a dream this turns out to be!'* He thought that his writings would fall into neglect after his death, but said that they would blossom again in *'the time of the lily'*, the lily being his often-used symbol of spiritual purity.

Impact of Böhme's Philosophy Today

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

Perhaps this trend can most clearly be seen in physics, in which previously absolute distinctions between subject and object, the knower and the known, have broken down, and human consciousness is understood to be intimately involved in shaping the way we see the world. Particularly interesting is the inexorable drive towards the fulfilment of Einstein's dream of a unified field theory. The discovery of a state called 'supersymmetry', in which opposing elements in creation, such as force and matter fields, coexist in a *'superfield'* of unimaginable



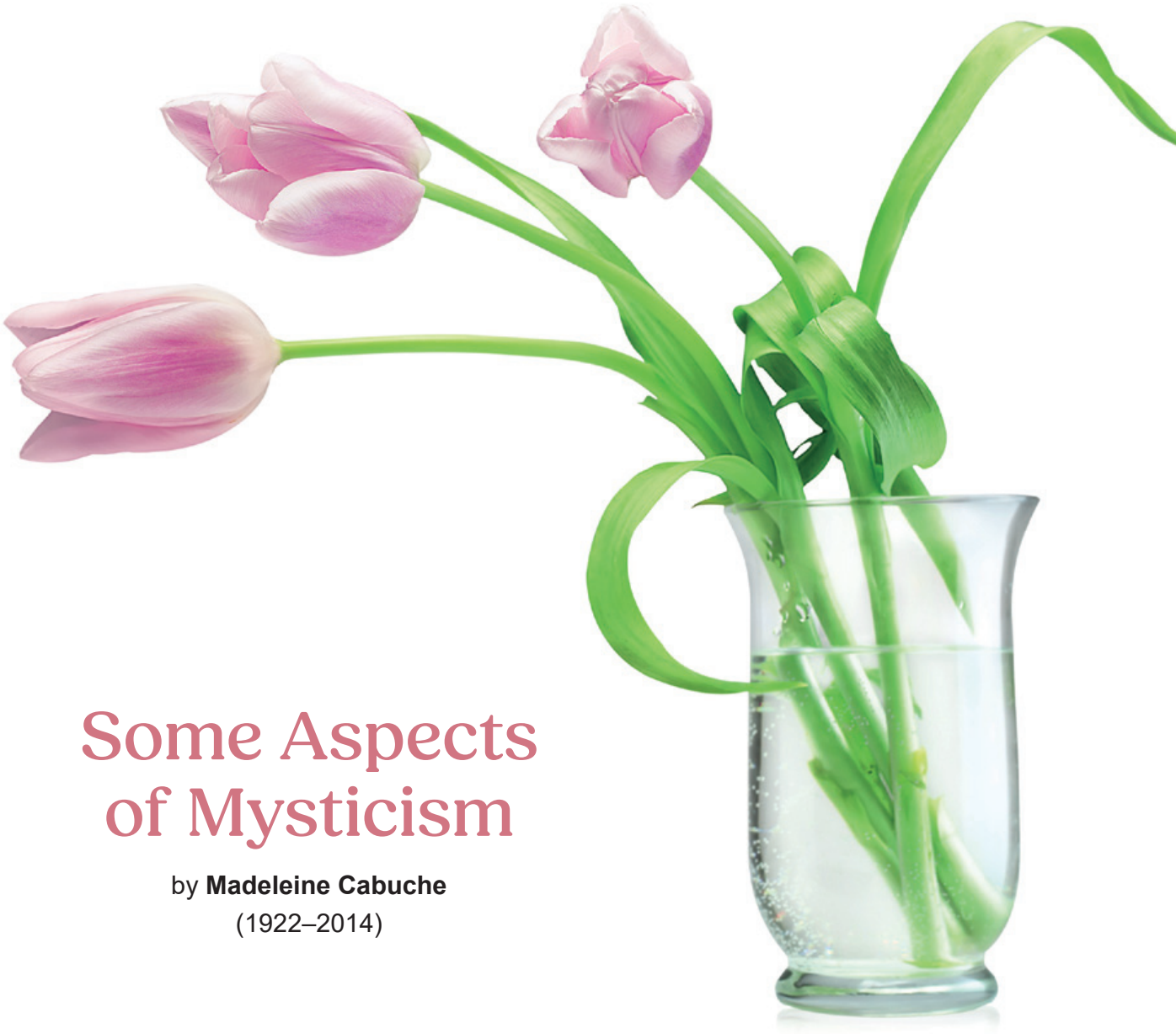
Böhme's Cosmogony, or the Philosophical Sphere, or the Wonder Eye of Eternity (1620).

energy and dynamism, represents a major step forward in this quest.

Some physicists suggest that this unified superfield is the field of human consciousness itself, in its most simple and powerful state, which would make it an extraordinary parallel to Böhme's description of the coexistence of all opposites in *'eternal nature'*. Both perspectives give to human consciousness an awe-inspiring creative power. Böhme insists that we create our own reality according to our impulses, thoughts and desires. And what we have power to create, we have power to change.

Perhaps the next evolutionary step for humanity is to shift the focus of human consciousness from 'temporal nature', made up as it is of irreconcilable contradictions and limitations, to the perfection of *'eternal nature'*, in which the world is experienced in its full value as a myriad of *'signatures'*, a true *'triumphing joyfulness.'* Such a leap, in which millions throughout the world would attain their full stature and power, would represent the fulfilment of Böhme's inspired vision.

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Some Aspects of Mysticism

by **Madeleine Cabuche**
(1922–2014)

It has been said that the mystical doctrine relates to the relationship and potential union of the human soul with ultimate reality, and that the mystical school is a school of learning *by becoming*.

The mystic person claims that the average person is only half alive, that the greater part of his or her being is dormant because it has never been taught or allowed to function properly or to realise its full potentialities. The mystic discipline sets out to remedy that.

The keywords are Light, Life and Love; and by these we have to transmute all that is negative and therefore *'evil'* in our lives to that which is positive and good. We strive to overcome the *'I'* of self, not by mortification or subjection (which is merely an inversion) but by enlightenment: seeking to outgrow it rather than to suppress it.

We can never be self-satisfied or complacent, for each advancement made only serves to emphasise how much further we have to go. Gradually, as

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Rosicrucian students, we become aware of certain profound principles through an inward discovery or revelation. Initially, we commence by a search for *truth*. Purity of motive must be the underlying factor in this search, for unless we apply it to all things—thought, purpose, self-analysis and outward dealing with others—we cannot even begin to glimpse truth as a reality.

Many things can be learned intellectually, but it is not until we feel and know them throughout our whole being that they become real and can then exert a positive influence in our lives. There is such a frail dividing line between thinking that we understand a thing and really understanding it; yet effecting the transition between the two states is, for many people, an apparent impossibility. That is the reason why we have often to experience tragic or unpleasant things in life: they serve to rupture the outer shell that separates intellectual understanding from that complete understanding which permeates the whole being.



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Without purity of motive one cannot understand oneself...

Without purity of motive one cannot understand oneself. If one cannot understand oneself it is impossible to understand others, and then life becomes full of complexities and distortions and the truth becomes obscured. Understanding brings its own *'shorthand'* of expression. Colette, the famous French writer, was once giving water to tulips which were drooping in a vase. Her innate tenderness and compassion, which covered all aspects of God's creation, extended to the flowers that were dying for lack of water. *'Maurice!'* she cried to her husband, *'There is only one creature!'* There, in a sort of *'shorthand'*, the entire thing was said.

God's love runs through all, is manifested everywhere, and those who have eyes to see can recognise it in both the animate and inanimate worlds: in earth and rock, in plant and animal as well as in the human. God is love, sounding and resounding in every particle throughout the universe. It is a mystical experience and can only be conveyed to those who have had a like sensation—a love that is both personal and impersonal, reflecting the All and taking us back again, in thankfulness, to the Source.

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The Cumaean Sybil

Famous Oracle of the Ancient World

by **Maria Reynolds**

Those interested in the mystical aspects of Ancient Greek and Roman history invariably become fascinated with accounts of the many oracles who lived in isolated places of pilgrimage, where they used their psychic abilities to make prophecies of the future, mostly for well-paying clients. The most famous of these was the Greek Pythoness at Delphi, who, legend relates, presided there for a thousand years. From Ovid's *Metamorphosis* comes a story in which Apollo offers the Pythoness 1,000 years of life if she will lose her virginity with him. She readily agrees but then reneges. As she ages, she shrinks and shrinks until she is so small that she is placed in a jar, where she shrinks to such a small size that she can

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no longer be seen—but her oracular voice continues to be heard from the apparently empty jar. While Apollo granted her 1,000 years of life, he did not grant her 1,000 years of youth.

The oldest Greek oracle was at Dodona in Epirus, where priests read the future by examining the entrails of sheep. The priestesses of the oracle of Demeter lowered a mirror into a well and informed the sick of their outcome. At Telmessos the oracles interpreted dreams, and at Aegria the oracle of Hercules caused supplicants to throw dice while priests interpreted their meaning. And of course there was the oracle of Zeus-Amun at Siwa Oasis in the Libyan desert of Egypt, who was consulted by Alexander the Great before he led his armies through Persia and on to India.



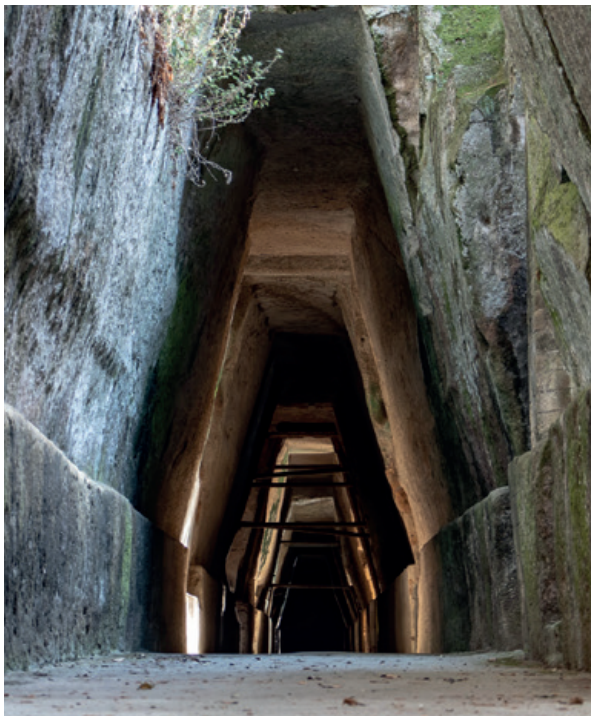
'The Cumaean Sibyl' by Andrea del Castagno

But of all the famous oracles, it is the Cumaean Sibyl who provides the most intriguing account of an oracle that has come down to us from the mists of antiquity. The word *'sibyl'* probably comes, via Latin, from the Greek word *'sibylla'*, meaning prophetess. The colony of Cumae, in southwestern Italy, was established around 750 BCE by Greeks from the city-state of *Chalcis* on the Greek island of *Euboea*. Soon the colony became so prosperous that it established own colonies of its own, including nearby Neapolis (modern Naples). Old though Cumae was, the grotto of the Cumaean Sibyl already existed close to what later become the acropolis of Cumae, the strongest fortifications in the Greek world at that time. The Cumaean Sibyl is the oldest oracle we have mention of anywhere in ancient literature.

Archaeologists rediscovered the Cumaean Sybil's grotto in 1932. The cave we can see today consists of a *dromos*, or corridor, 144 feet long, nearly 8 feet wide and 16 feet high, ending in a rectangular chamber (the *oikos endótatos*) all hewn out of solid tufa rock. The stone chair of the Sibyl can still be seen in the *oikos*. Since few tourists come to the grotto, which is only a few miles from the city of Naples, visitors will usually find themselves alone on their visit. It is an awe-inspiring feeling to realise that you are sitting in the chair of a Sibyl who was the most famous oracle in this part of the world for hundreds of years, satisfying her supplicants for at least that length of time.

The architecture of the grotto is also remarkable in that it is Creto-Mycenaean rather than Greek or Roman, and the size of the grotto surpasses anything known today in the trapezoidal style. There is nothing to equal it in either Cretan or Etruscan building. In short, the grotto of the Cumaean Sibyl goes back to at least the days of the Trojan War (c. 1200 BCE). Indeed, Virgil, in his *Aeneid*, has Aeneas consult the Sibyl before going on to found Rome. The Cumaean Sibyl was therefore originally under the aegis of the Mother Goddess who presided over much of the

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Archaeologists rediscovered the grotto in 1932. The cave we can see today consists of a dromos, or corridor, 144 feet long, nearly 8 feet wide and 16 feet high, ending in a rectangular chamber (the oikos endótatos*) all hewn out of solid tufa rock.*

eastern Mediterranean long before the genesis of the Greek Olympian male gods.

Later, as at Delphi, the priests of Apollo were to take over, and the ruins of the temple from which they dominated the grotto can still be seen at the top of the acropolis a few hundred feet from the entrance to the *dromos*. The temple still exists, though only because it was transformed into a Christian church in the 6th or 7th century CE.

The Mysterious Sibyl

When each Sibyl in turn passed away, a new Sibyl was found and the former oracle was mummified and placed in a chair in the *oikos endótatos*. She was always present when the living Sibyl made her prophecies. The Roman Emperor Claudius (10 BCE to 54 CE) reported that when he consulted Amalthea, the reigning Sibyl, her predecessor was seated on a chair in an iron cage. Various accounts, including that of Claudius describing the rituals of the Cumaean Sibyl, have come down to us.

A supplicant would first approach the priests of Apollo with suitable gifts. They were then taken to the *dromos* and began the long walk to the *oikos endótatos* or *adyton*, the secret chamber at the end. The *dromos* was lit by six galleries opening to the west. On the opposite side were three chambers, probably utilised for lustral waters and perhaps as living quarters. In more modern times, Christians used them as burial chambers. Before receiving the supplicant, the Sibyl had bathed in lustral waters and had taken a quantity of *numen*, a drug which historians have been unable to identify but which was undoubtedly a narcotic that acted in much the same manner as the laurel leaves eaten by the Pythoness at Delphi. In this drugged state, therefore, the oracle uttered her prophecies.

Supplicants posed their questions, and, in a trance, the Sibyl answered in incoherent gibberish, very similar to the procedure in Delphi. The priests took due note of this and returned with the seeker of advice to the Temple of Apollo. Here they disappeared for a while to interpret



'Apollo and Daphne' (by Antonio Pollaiuolo), one of the tales of transformation to be found in Ovid's Metamorphosis. *Apollo lusts after Daphne and she escapes his attentions by turning herself into a bay laurel.*

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Ruins of the Temple of Apollo (Delphi, Greece).

among themselves the meaning of the pronouncement, finally to return with the answers written in Greek hexameter verse. It might be pointed out that these priests of Apollo were not ignorant charlatans but among the most intelligent men of their time. Aside from the ability to write in one of the most difficult of Greek verse forms, they had to be thoroughly familiar with the politics and intrigues of their time, on a worldwide basis. This was absolutely necessary, as an oracle did not remain an oracle for long if her prophecies did not have a high degree of validity.

The Sibylline Books

The ancient historians Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Varro recorded the momentous encounter between the Cumaean Sibyl and Tarquinius Superbus, the last of the Etruscan kings to rule Rome. Herophile, the incumbent Sibyl, came up from Cumae in 511 BCE and demanded an audience with him. Her fame had preceded her, and she was immediately ushered into the king's presence.



Two priests who accompanied Herophile bore nine books, which she called the *Libri Fatales*. History now calls them the 'Sibylline Books'. They were crude in appearance, with numerous verses in Greek hexameter written on palm leaves and then awkwardly sewn together. Herophile was described as wild-eyed and frantic in appearance. She informed the sceptical king of Rome that the nine books not only foretold the future of the city but also in what manner to meet each crisis that developed.

Tarquinius Superbus asked what the Sibyl wanted in return. She demanded a talent of gold, which would have stripped the Roman treasury, and the king refused her. It must also be remembered that Tarquinius Superbus, as an Etruscan, did not worship the gods of his Roman subjects, such as Jupiter, Mars and Apollo. The Roman populace, however, were avid followers of Apollo, the god of oracles, and subsequently were up in arms over the failure to buy the books. Herophile returned with her books to Cumae.

The next year the Sibyl came again, this time with only six of the books. Asked what she had done with the other three, she replied that she had burnt them. When the king inquired what she wanted for the remaining six, Herophile again demanded a full talent of gold. Enraged, Tarquinius Superbus turned her away and she returned to Cumae. The following year the Sibyl appeared again, with but three remaining books, having burnt the rest, and demanded the same price. Public opinion grew so heated that Tarquinius Superbus finally relented. The books were placed in the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, and a commission of 15 men, the *Quindecimviri Sacris*

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Faciundis, was named to administer them. Included among them were two Greek interpreters, since the *Libri Fatales* were written in Greek.

For centuries the Romans abided by the dictates of the Sibylline Books. When a crisis involving the state developed, they were consulted. For instance, when in 218 BCE the Carthaginian Hannibal crossed the Alps with his North African army, he swept everything before him and, in despair, the Romans consulted the Sibylline Books. The consul Fabius, inspired by the books, devised a strategy of resistance to the brilliant Hannibal. The Roman legions fought a delaying action, refusing, with their new Fabian tactics, to come face to face with the enemy. Eventually, after ten years, the forces of Hannibal were so eroded in strength that the Carthaginians retreated to North Africa. Still following the dictates of the books, the Romans advanced and defeated the Carthaginian army.

Fate of the Books

The temple in which the Sibylline Books were stored was destroyed by fire in 83 BCE. However, by that time many of the verses had been copied and distributed around the Mediterranean. The Roman priests went about the task of reconstructing them, using verses found in Egypt, Phrygia, Delphi and elsewhere. Sometimes these verses were suspect as to authenticity, and when Augustus became emperor he named a committee to authenticate those verses that Rome was to abide by. The new collection lasted until 405 CE, when they were burned by the Roman General and Patrician Flavius Stilicho, who was a Christian and regarded the books as pagan and therefore evil. It should be noted that the books were still consulted for a full century into the era when Christianity was the official religion of Rome.



Image: Wikimedia/Kladcat

The Greek goddess Amalthea, believed to represent the Cumaean Sibyl in this image, appears for the second time before Tarquinius Superbus.



Michelangelo's 'Cumaean Sibyl' in the Sistine Chapel.

Even today some fragments of the verses exist. Robert Graves devoted two of his best known books, *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*, to several of the verses that have come down to us. They foretold accurately the reigns of the first six Caesars: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero.

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The Candle

by **Louise Lane**

Michael Faraday, the apprentice bookbinder who became England's most distinguished and beloved scientist, used to give an annual lecture to young people, each Christmas. He invited them to join him in his investigations, and he told them...

> There is no better, there is no more open door by which you can enter the study of natural philosophy than by considering the physical phenomena of a candle.

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Light a candle and notice first the perfect cup formed below the flame to carry the melted wax up the wick to be used as fuel for the flame. The flame, reaching down the wick, melts the wax at the candle's centre, while a current of air rising around the candle keeps the rim cool and high, thereby creating a vessel perfectly suited to hold its molten contents. The liquid wax is drawn up the wick by the same forces that draw sap up a tree or plant, namely, capillary action. But instead of feeding leaves and flowers, the liquid wax vaporises in the dark inner region of the flame closest to the wick, mixing there with the air and combusting into the flame we see. If this were all, as it is for some flames, a candle would shed little light. However, the bright yellow cone that spreads its gentle radiance is due to tiny glowing embers of unburned carbon, the same ones that turn up as soot when the wick is too long. When cold, carbon is the blackest of substances, but when hot it radiates light beautifully as a soft luminous light.

To the poetic eye of Gaston Bachelard, the candle flame is a 'model phenomenon'. In it:

> ...the most vulgar material of all produces light. It purifies itself in the very act of giving off light. Evil is the nourisher of good. In the flame, the philosopher encounters a model phenomenon, a cosmic phenomenon, a model of humanisation.

As a model phenomenon, the candle flame is symbolic, incorporating into its nature a moral as well as a physical aspect. Coarse matter is purified in the flame as it gives off light.

Looking at the flame, Paul Claudel wonders at the transformation it effects:

> Whence matter takes flight, to wing itself into the category of the divine.

To the poet, the candlelight offers a model of humanisation, to the scientist an unsolved riddle. Either way, the candle flame draws us towards it like moths.



"Whence matter takes flight, to wing itself into the category of the divine."

In his Christmas lectures on the candle, Faraday neglected to show his audience of children one feature which, beyond all others, held within it the germ that revolutionised physics and ushered in a fundamentally new concept of our physical world. That neglected feature was the colour of the candlelight. Look at a candle flame. It flickers, waves and pulses, a luminous yellow in substantial form. View it now through a prism and there appears the familiar sight of the spectrum, of a beautiful, flame-shaped array of rainbow colours. Within the delicate, colourful form lies hidden an entirely new understanding of nature.

'In the flame of a lamp all natural forces are active' wrote Novalis. Its peaceful flame offers, as Faraday said, the surest doorway to knowledge. We must pass through it to make our way to the quantum theory of light.

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by **Judith Wolverston-Rumball**
(1954-2006)

Reflections in Silence

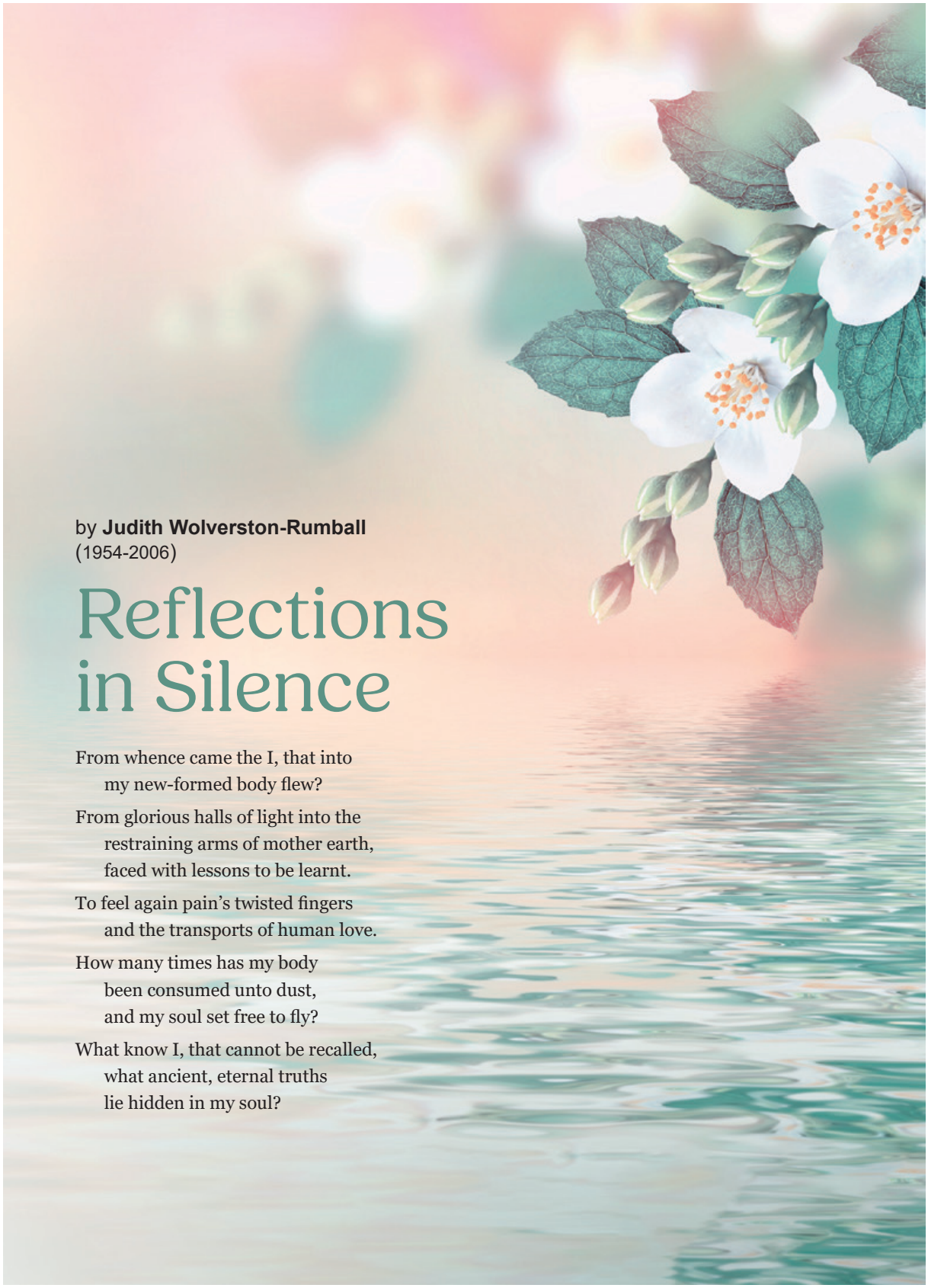
From whence came the I, that into
my new-formed body flew?

From glorious halls of light into the
restraining arms of mother earth,
faced with lessons to be learnt.

To feel again pain's twisted fingers
and the transports of human love.

How many times has my body
been consumed unto dust,
and my soul set free to fly?

What know I, that cannot be recalled,
what ancient, eternal truths
lie hidden in my soul?



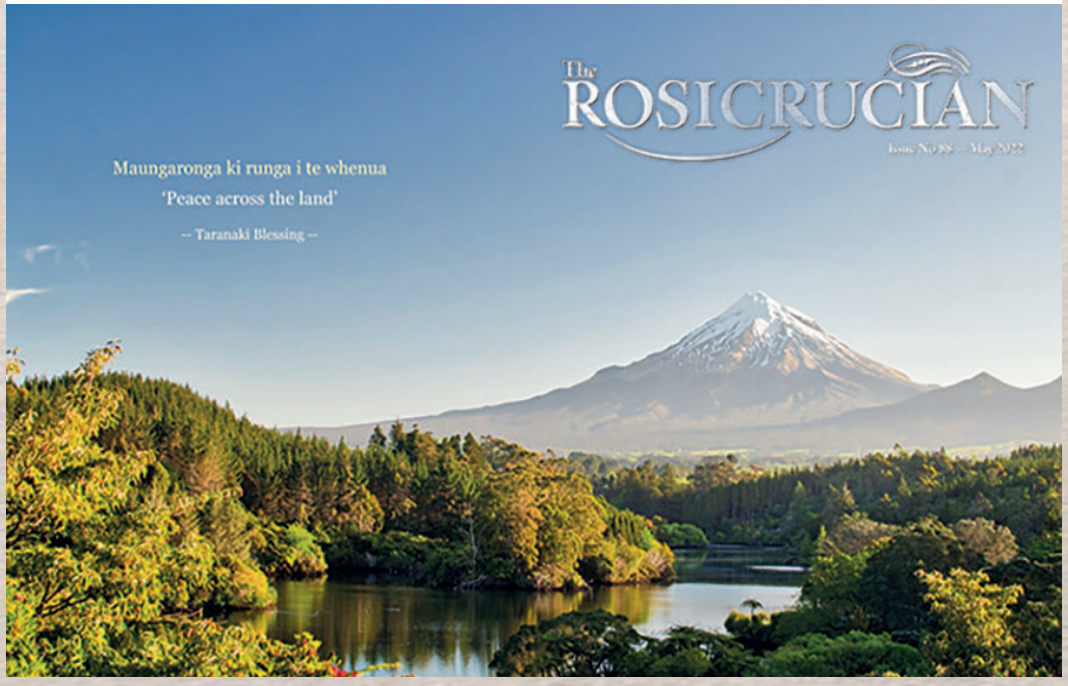
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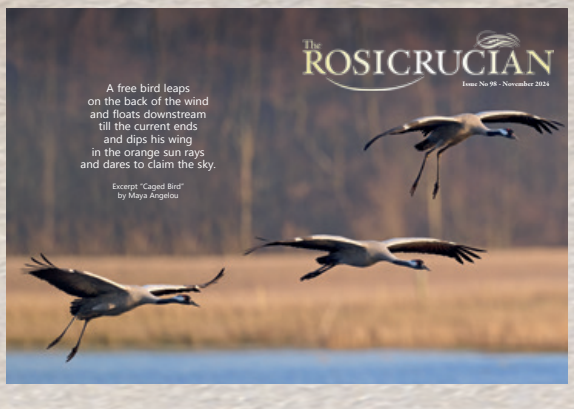
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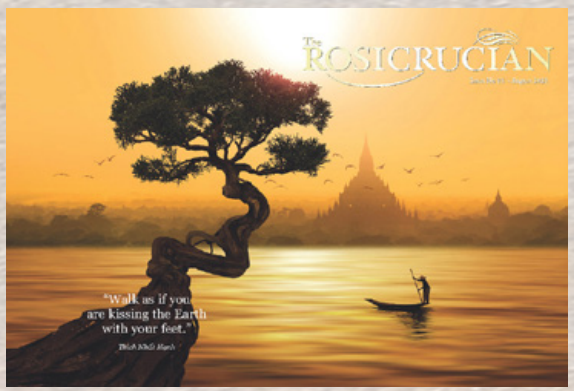


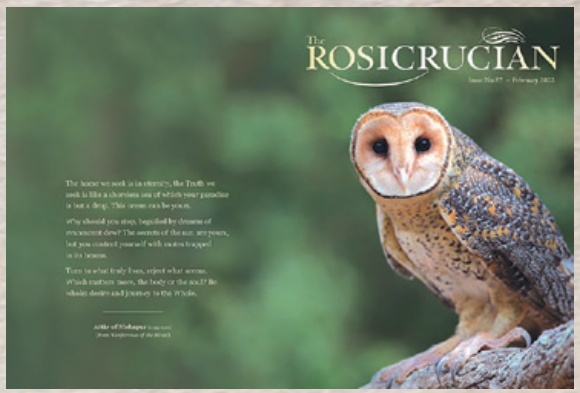
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“Those who
lose dreaming
are lost.”
Australian Aboriginal proverb