The ROSICRUCIAN

Issue No 94 - November 2023





Contribute to Peace

When we survey the history of humanity from its very dawn to the modern day, we observe that it is littered with wars. Generally speaking, they are caused by vested economic, political or religious interests: for example, the goods belonging to one or another group of people are appropriated, a particular form of government is imposed, or people are forced to convert to a particular religion. Whatever the cause, the common factor is that the decision to conduct war and the waging thereof is people. People are responsible for the horrors they generate; it is not chance or fate, or even God. Throughout the ages, wars have caused the death of millions of men, women and children, plunging so many families into despair and chaos. Today, the situation is ever more disturbing now that humanity has the

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My Contribution to Peace

I contribute to Peace when I strive to express the best of myself in my contacts with others.
I contribute to Peace when I use my intelligence and abilities to serve Good.
I contribute to Peace when I feel compassion toward all who suffer.
I contribute to Peace when I see all people as my brethren, regardless of race, culture or religion.
I contribute to Peace when I rejoice over the happiness of others and pray for their well-being.
I contribute to Peace when I listen with tolerance to opinions that differ from mine or even oppose them.
I contribute to Peace when I resort to dialogue rather than to force to settle any conflict.
I contribute to Peace when I respect nature and preserve it for generations to come.
I contribute to Peace when I do not seek to impose my conception of God upon others.
I contribute to Peace when I make Peace the foundation of my ideals and philosophy.

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Sydney Opera House illuminated with colourful light design imagery, during the Vivid Sydney 2016 annual public event. The iconic structure, is this year being celebrated for 50 years since its opening by Queen Elizabeth II on 20th October, 1973. Uniting ancient art and contemporary technology, the images of ancestral beings light up the shells of this special sanctuary for the arts.

The land on which this World Heritage-listed masterpiece is sited is known to its traditional custodians, the Gadigal, as 'Tubowgule'. It has long been a gathering place for storytelling, ceremony and culture.

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The Mystical Path

by **Claudio Mazzucco**
(Imperator of AMORC)

Plato said: *'the unexamined life is not worth living.'* We believe that it is an intrinsic trait of human nature to strive for knowledge and that this manifests itself to a greater or lesser degree in different soul-personalities, according to their stage of evolution. Mysticism, in this context, is an inner pathway, arising as a response to the ever-increasing calls of the soul.

As we gradually grow in awareness about our own nature and expand our understanding of who we are, we discover an increasingly harmonious response within us to those impulses urging us to become ever

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more curious about the mysteries of life, the beauty and harmony, which, in turn, triggers a virtuous, self-perpetuating circle. We become increasingly aware that there are truths that go against everything that may appear obvious to us, and we learn that logic and rationality are only one aspect of human nature.

Rosicrucian mysticism is like a continuous breath of fresh air, its purpose being to reignite the fire that is partially extinguished.

However, on this journey, we are also challenged by aspects of daily life which, for a number of reasons, may not reflect what is actually happening within us. We may, at some point in our lives, no longer appreciate certain relationships, certain environments or certain ways of *'passing the time.'* We may also feel uneasy by the pace and our daily commitments and worries that prevent us from dedicating our energies to the things we consider truly important. We are influenced by the material dimension and feel that we cannot separate ourselves from it. We would like to be, as Plato says in the *Theaetetus*, more like philosophers, who sit in meditation, than mounted archers, who ride around shooting arrows.

The mystical path proposed by Rosicrucian mysticism does not intend to fuel the idea that humanity, in its personal quest, should turn away from life, from family and friends, and become a recluse. Far from it. Rosicrucian mysticism is like a continuous breath of fresh air, its purpose being to reignite the fire that is partially extinguished. This fire can ignite certain aspects of our personality, purify them and restore those energies that are an inherent part of us. When this internal movement is triggered, the mystical path starts to slow down the internal rhythm, enabling each Rosicrucian student to *'see'* more clearly whatever might otherwise have been overlooked, preventing them from going through life without recognising it.

As they engage more and more in the practice of self-inquiry, with a high degree of sensitivity, the Rosicrucian slowly, and harmoniously, leaves behind those anxieties that are typical of life, those false hopes, those patterns that cause human relationships to decline, the passing of time that only seems to increase boredom. Thus, they restore the quality of interpersonal relationships, strengthen their bond with life and with the world, becoming agents of divinity as they begin to substitute the *mere theory of spirituality* with the actual *practise of a spiritual life*. During this process, the soul is nourished, transmuting the personality of the individual who, cherishing it, reaches a greater inner maturity while things appear to be moving more slowly.

We have a saying that a Rosicrucian student keeps their head among the stars and their feet planted firmly on the ground.

Quoting the great Italian poet *Eugenio Montale* (1896-1981), we observe how *"...obscure things tend towards clarity."* One of the aspects that is clarified as we proceed along the Path, is that prosperity is a condition linked to awareness. Humanity's state of mind determines its reality. Even the *possibility* of allowing those energies available to us to flow, is linked to the degree of awareness that characterises our level of personal evolution. We slowly let go of the inclination to think that happiness is a condition belonging to the future: when I have more money, when I have more time, when I am retired, when I have a bigger house, etc. The slowing of this pace within us allows us to *'see'* the things we already have, enabling

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us to plan a future without far-fetched, fantastical ideas or out-of-proportion illusions. We have a saying that a Rosicrucian student keeps their head among the stars and their feet planted firmly on the ground. This expression clearly explains the position we must take in the face of life. The conduct of each person who aspires to great inner revelations, must recognise that we are already, here and now, bearers of a certain level of realisation. We must nurture, within us, gratitude towards the universe and the God of our Heart, manifest compassion towards all creatures, remembering those in physical and emotional pain, and always express confidence in life and humankind.

Reading the history of Rosicrucian mysticism, we naturally draw parallels between 1614, the year of publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, and our present time. The 17th century was a critical period for Europe. The birth of Science, as we know it today, occurred during that time; the discovery of the New World was relatively recent; printing was spreading knowledge like never before; and religious wars were raging, bringing widespread famine and death. Undoubtedly, we have come a long way since then. Many negative aspects have been overcome, however certain experiences do keep repeating themselves, with their heavy burden of anguish and insecurity.

The response of Rosicrucians at that time was the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*, reminding people of the need to place their lives under the auspices of knowledge and fraternity among people of good will. This invitation has been repeated ever since by our Order (vid. the manifesto *'Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis'*) and we, Rosicrucians of the 21st century, carrying our history in our hearts and looking to the horizon, must spread thoughts of peace, harmony and prosperity to the whole of humanity. To this end we are reminded today of the pledge we made to ourselves before joining the Order, when we embarked on the path of self-knowledge. Let us draw strength from the fraternal bonds that unite us and spread the light of knowledge of which AMORC is a worthy heir of the world!



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Music: *Attuning to Immortality*

by **Walter Harris**

Music at times has the power to enable us to catch an echo of immortality. The experience does not require any profound depth of musical understanding and may even serve as a measure of compensation to those who have striven in vain for musical expression, as I have. When I was 18 I began singing lessons, not that I had a great voice or, up to then, any strong talent in music. Singing was just a nice, cultural outlet. But when I started formal vocal training, almost at once I stepped into a whole new world, an alluring, enchanting world of such richness and refined expression that all other things in life became in comparison monotonous and worthless. For a time I made good progress in this new world of song, and after several months my teacher remarked that my voice had improved more than any pupil she had taught.

For a few months longer, progress continued, and then one day I thought I really was going to have a voice. As I walked along a street, not even thinking about the matter, there suddenly came over me a strange sensation, a profound inner conviction, expressed in the simple sentence: "You can sing!" I hurried home to the piano and began to sing. It was a revelation, an initiation, as my voice flowed out as it had never done before, with greater proficiency and control than ever before.

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Even my family noticed that something had changed. That freer, finer voice continued for weeks of further training, and the change stayed with me. But then slowly, inexorably, a sinister opposing force began to creep in. I'm not sure if it was physical or psychological, but I do recall a feeling of real fear. I began to doubt that I could continue singing in this new and wonderful voice, and I'm almost ashamed to say that, over time, I lost it entirely.

As the singing lessons progressed, my voice returned almost to where it had been before the miracle had happened. I carried on with my training for four more years but was never able to fulfil those few weeks of promise. The door to musical achievement had opened ever so briefly but had thereafter quickly closed on me forever.

Eva Tetrazzini

In these years since then I have tried to find consolation in the thought that I had probably deluded myself. Never having a true singer's physique or musical ear, I had probably never even had a chance. For much of the time since then I haven't had sufficient musical receptivity to get what I know could be a much fuller enjoyment of music. But I know that most of us have within ourselves a responsive chord which, possibly on rare occasions of heightened emotion, is quickened by music to an intensity that is like a door opening into a realm of light and harmony beyond our world.

Without betraying my age, I recall attending, in my mid-teenage years, a performance of the Italian soprano Eva Tetrazzini. I had no idea what she was singing about, but the beauty and power of her voice, starting on a single brilliant point of sound, swelled to fill the auditorium. It had a profound impact on me. It was the most beautiful thing I had experienced and it changed me for life. In just one brief performance I learned what breathtaking beauty there is in singing with a perfectly trained



Italian soprano Eva Tetrazzini

voice, and from that day onwards I wanted to follow the path of song that she and her sisters had. But my ability never reached anything near the celestial heights that I experienced on that first initiation into song.

There is the biblical account of how Moses hid in the cleft of a rock as his god, YHWE, passed by, for it was said that no person could look at the Hebrew God and survive. There is also a story, in Greek mythology, of how Semele rashly sought to behold Zeus's heavenly splendour and was consumed to ashes by his radiance. And there is the actual circumstance of how the poet and musician Sidney Lanier was, as a youth, sometimes so exalted by a violin's strains that he would pass into a trance state. Mere mortals as we all are, we can only endure a certain degree of the revelation of beauty, truth and the presence of the Divine. Beyond that point, I believe we cannot survive.

Beyond Mortality

That night when I experienced the almost overwhelming, almost unbearable beauty of Tetrazzini's voice, I know I came close to that point of no return, for deep within

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me I was quivering, laughing and weeping all at once. And something rose up in me, causing me almost to cry out in anguish and leap out in exultation into the limitless space that stood before me at that moment. That night, music had opened a door for me into a realm of beauty infinitely removed from mortality.

And then there was the time when I heard, for the first time, Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. This tormented Russian composer, whose lifetime of grief and forbidden love, of anguish and exaltation, was poured into his music. As I listened to the symphony's eloquent strains, a voice seemed to rise and soar above the conductor and the musicians—the voice of the music's creator, whose soul dwelt in the music, singing its grief and hope, its fear and final exaltation. I had the sense of a living presence in the music, of its voice speaking to me and its soul calling to mine. Music had opened another door, which permitted me a brief contact with its immortal spirit from across the years and beyond the grave.

When I attended college, there was a girl who had the best singing voice in our class. The famous professional voices I have heard since have not been able to still the memory that I have of hers. Not only was it lovely in tone but her voice revealed a sincerity of soul beyond that of all singers I have listened to. She had, I think, a spark of the Divine in her, and it showed not only in her sincerity but in her maturity of spirit and great kindness.

One night she sang a solo-setting of Psalm 91. I had heard the words of the psalm many times before and thought I understood their meaning, but I realised that night that my understanding had been superficial. For, as she sang the psalm with such deep sincerity and intensity, at last, where the opening verse is repeated—"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"—suddenly another door opened for me. As if initiated into a new mystery, I had a glimpse into a higher purpose and plan for all humans, and the true meaning of those words were plain to me, for I experienced it as a spiritual resonance through my whole being.

Not many have the ability to experience spiritual exaltations more than a few times in a lifetime. But, if we listen with the heart—whether to music without words or to music with words or merely to words of beauty spoken with meaning and sincerity—we may at some unexpected and unforgettable moment have music, song or words lead us at least a little way into that region that I call the threshold to heaven.



She had a spark of the Divine in her, and it showed not only in her sincerity but in her maturity of spirit and great kindness.

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Samuel Hartlib

Reformist & Intelligencer

by **Paul Goodall**



Image: Wiki Commons / Vladimir Lobachev

Hartlib was born around 1600 in Polish Prussia. Image: Coat of arms of Royal Prussia



The frontispiece of Bacon's Great Instauration, *1620.*

The name Samuel Hartlib crops up fairly often in the first half of the 17th century, in literature and texts relating to Rosicrucianism and the idea of universal reform. He was, in fact, one of a number of principal people in the milieu of reformist idealism that characterised this period.

Constituting the frontispieces of two books published at the time are two engravings that reflect the aspirations of this circle of personalities who wanted to bring about an advancement of the 17th century scientific learning that was typified in the writings of Francis Bacon. One of these is the frontispiece to Bacon's *Great Instauration* (meaning awakening or renewal) of 1620. It portrays the ship of learning sailing between the pillars of Hercules—which, in mythology, were situated at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea—and thus looking toward Atlantis and the undiscovered sea of knowledge. The other engraving is the frontispiece to Thomas Sprat's *The History of the Royal Society*, published in 1667. In it we see the figure of Francis Bacon as 'Atrium Instaurator' (font of knowledge) pointing towards scientific instruments.

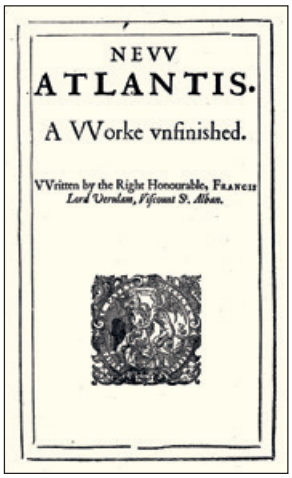
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The frontispiece of Thomas Sprat's
The History of the Royal Society, *1667.*

Samuel Hartlib was born around the year 1600 in Elbing (modern Elblag) in Polish Prussia, to a wealthy dye-works owner and his English wife. He was educated at the Brieg Gymnasium and the University of Königsberg before studying briefly at Cambridge in England. He returned to London in 1628 to escape the upheavals of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) in Europe, where intellectual activity had become a precarious pursuit.

In 1630 he tried to establish a private academy, for selected refugees from Poland, Bohemia and the Palatinate, at Chichester, Sussex, but when this failed he returned to London where, to earn a living, he lodged students and foreign visitors. Once back in the city he never left it until his death in 1662.


NEVV
ATLANTIS.
A VVorke vnfinished.
VVritten by the Right Honourable, FRANCIS
Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban.

Utopian Societies

Before leaving his homeland Hartlib had already become involved in an idealistic secret society called *Antilia*, which was devoted to the reformation of education and religion and spurred on by millenarian concerns for the future. In true Rosicrucian spirit, its main aim was the universal reformation of society at all levels, and it was this society that had prompted Hartlib to found the academy at Chichester.

The members of Antilia appear to have been specialists in science and technology. Its manifesto was to bring together experimental knowledge and scientific pansophy (universal knowledge) for the benefit and amelioration of society. Antilia was one of several utopian brotherhoods, such as *Societas Ereunetica* based at the University of Rostock and *Unio Christiana* founded at Nürnberg in 1628. These formed a general Protestant utopian movement inspired largely by the writings of Johann Valentin Andreae, the author of the *Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*. These brotherhoods were preceded by Andreae's own *Societas Christiana*, upon which they are modelled.

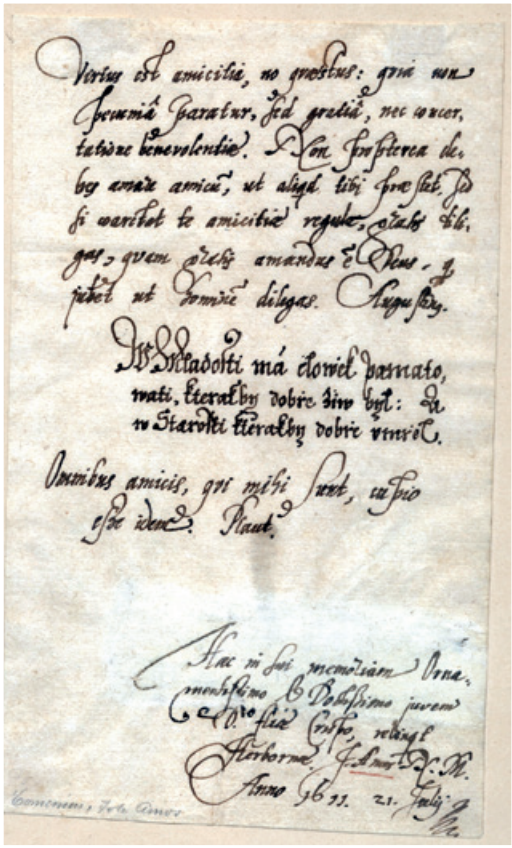
Reform

In 1640 Hartlib addressed his utopian treatise, *A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria*, to the so-called Long Parliament, which had been excluded from the affairs of the nation by Charles I. The fictional offshore island of Macaria is the same as that created by Thomas More in his *Utopia* (1515) but is primarily based upon Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* and the pansophy of Jan Amos Komenský (1592–1670), who is better known as Comenius. In Macaria, Hartlib describes a society in which government and people collaborate in



Comenius

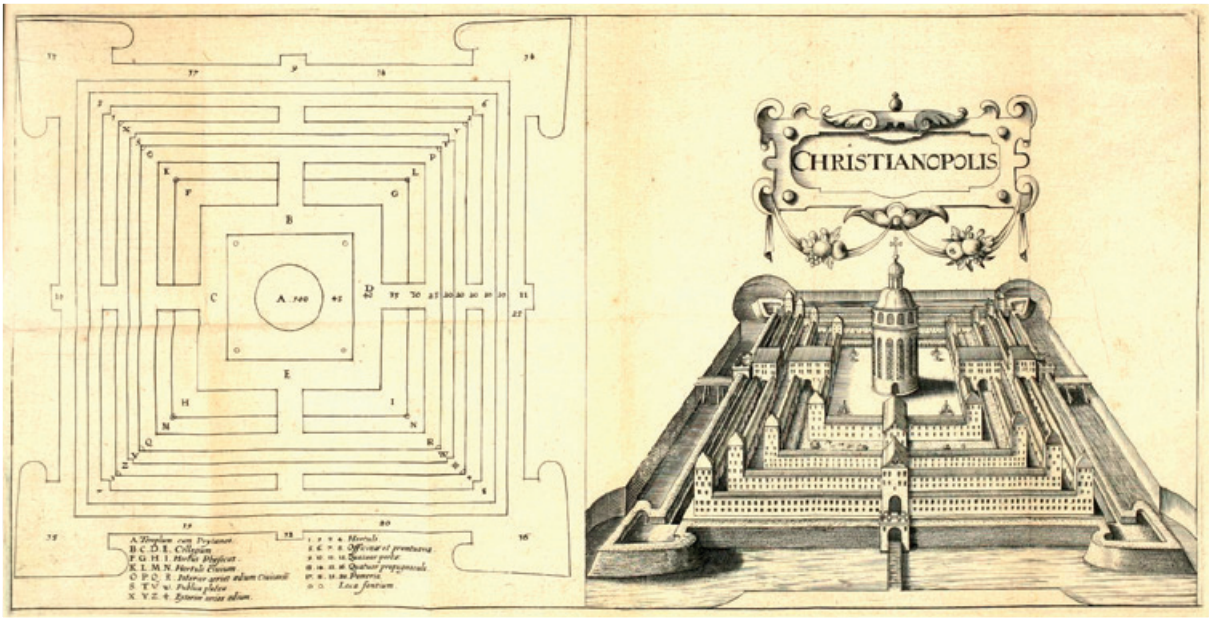
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Oldest surviving manuscript by Comenius (from 1611), written in Latin and Czech



Hartlib based his The Kingdome of Macaria *on the island in Thomas More's* Utopia *of 1515.*



Johann Valentin Andreae's utopian Christianopolis *of 1619, upon which Hartlib based his ideas of a new society.*

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prosperity through the practical application of widely disseminated knowledge.

Hartlib and Comenius had been in correspondence since 1632, and in 1634 Hartlib was trying to raise enough funds to publish Comenius' reformist work *Pansophiae Prodromus*, which eventually he did in 1639. While 'Macaria' was being published in 1641, Comenius had been invited to England by Hartlib to assist in the execution of the reforms that were envisaged and to collaborate in the founding of a pansophic college. After his arrival, Comenius wrote his *Via Lucis* (Way of Light) in 1642, outlining a Christian academy that would guide and educate society toward universal salvation.

Since 1628 Hartlib had been closely associated with John Dury (1596–1680), the son of a Scottish minister, who wanted to heal the divisions that existed between the Protestant churches and who had travelled extensively in central and northern Europe in his quest to do so. Dury sermonised that Protestant unification was the only way to counter the advance of the Catholic Habsburg Empire in Europe. In order to maintain support for Dury's activities, Hartlib published an account of his travels and negotiations in 1641. Like Hartlib, Dury was also deeply interested in the reform of education and philosophy. In 1640 Hartlib expressed his approval of Comenius and Dury in an address to the Long Parliament as philosophers to be followed in future reforms. This was an attempt to win the Long Parliament's aid and to encourage it to follow policies which might lead to evangelical union and universal reformation.

Education and Language

Aside from unifying churches and reforming society, improvements in education lay at the heart of their ideas. Outlined in Comenius' pansophy were three 'books' of wisdom from which to gain knowledge. They were: the 'Physical World', 'Human Reasoning' and 'Divine Revelation'. Books on their own were insufficient to achieve a universal wisdom; therefore pansophy would be the true objective of all educational and scientific endeavours. Reformation of teaching methods would have to be undertaken through the authority of a sympathetic state so that, in time, successive generations would be progressively instructed to know the books of nature, God and reason. In this way humanity would attain the ultimate stages of enlightenment.

Another pressing issue was the idea of creating a universal language to conquer linguistic division. An agreed mode of communication had to be established to maintain international harmony and, since this was an age of discovery, a scientific language was required in the Baconian fashion to express concisely the true nature of things. It was reasoned that human languages had fallen into decay, resulting from the curse laid on them at Babel. It must not be forgotten that these were Puritan men of deep religious conviction and such reasoning is entirely in line with their staunch faith in the Bible.



Francis Bacon (1561–1626)

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John Milton (1608–1674)



Andrew Marvell (1621–1678)



Robert Boyle (1627–1691)

History Repeats Itself

In the summer of 1641 these three 'foreigners' saw themselves on the brink of achieving their reformist aims in England and establishing Hartlib's 'Macaria'. The political situation was ripe for use. English society appeared poised to embrace the pansophy of Comenius, and the ground was fertile to begin the process of Protestant unification envisaged by Dury, who had arrived in London and been given the honorary post of chaplain to the Earl of Leicester.

Furthermore, all three had the patronage of the Bohemian Queen Elizabeth in exile in The Hague, daughter of James I and widow of Frederick V of the Palatinate. Providence, it seemed, had brought to England the essential agents of the new reformation and the future looked assured.

In mid-October the parliament reassembled. Parliamentary friends of Hartlib had kept him informed throughout September of political plans and activities, and hopes were high. Hartlib and Comenius were told to prepare to consult with a parliamentary committee and to await further advice. Meanwhile they began looking for a likely place to set up their *Pansophic College*. Among those considered was the Savoy Hospital, the Hospital of St. Cross at Winchester and the Chelsea College founded by James I.

But suddenly an event occurred that put paid to the whole scheme. The Irish Catholics had rebelled, following the political shenanigans of the politician John Pym, who had used them and the Scots Presbyterians but had not paid their price. This changed things between parliament and Hartlib's reforms. Although they waited throughout the winter of 1641–42, hoping against hope that the tide might turn, it was not to be. The country was drifting towards civil war and parliament was preoccupied with other concerns than a golden age of universal reform. In May Dury left England to serve as chaplain to Mary, Princess of Orange at the Hague (although he did return before the end of the Civil War) and Comenius set sail on 21 June, bound for Sweden, never to set foot in England again. Hartlib remained in London, we can only assume somewhat disillusioned.

It seems that history has a way of repeating itself. Just as the Thirty Years' War had overtaken the expectations of those involved in the publication of the Rosicrucian Manifestoes and its application in the Palatinate, success was equally denied Hartlib and his associates, and the universal reformation was indefinitely postponed.

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Office of Address and Correspondency

During the English Civil War that lasted from 1642 to 1649, Hartlib acted as an agent for the parliamentary cause. He had become well-known as an intelligencer; namely, a distributor and conveyer of news and information. After 1646 he began to promote his 'Office of Address and Correspondency'.

The aim of this establishment was to bring together information from thinkers and practitioners in every field and to allow them to be in communication with each other for their own and the common good. Hartlib tried to get state funding for this organisation but was unsuccessful, although he was awarded an annual stipend of £100 in 1649. More than likely, this was in view of his extensive contacts abroad, which made him a valuable source of political information.



Emblematic image of a 'Rosicrucian College. Illustration from Speculum Sophicum Rhodostauroticum, *a 1618 work by Theophilus Schweighardt. Frances Yates identifies this as the 'Invisible College of the Rosy Cross'.*

The underlying motivation for this work was still the idea of universal reformation, and as an active publicist he published various pamphlets on reforming methods, the Church and public life. He employed a team of copyists and translators, at his own expense, in order to circulate letters and treatises. Although Hartlib became a major conduit for passing literature on many diverse subjects, it was only ever within the framework of education, science, technology or theology, which were regarded by him as useful. Eventually his residence at Dukes Place became too small to run this free intellectual exchange and he moved premises to Axe Yard near Charing Cross.

The Hartlib Circle

What is often termed the 'Hartlib Circle' was in fact not a society with a membership but a more diverse group of individuals who were dispersed over a wide geographic area. Throughout Hartlib's stay in London he had been in correspondence or discussion with hundreds of people on issues regarding 'useful' subjects, such as educational theory, divinity, natural philosophy or schemes for practical improvement. Some of these contacts were people from whom Hartlib hoped to benefit, while others were impoverished scholars whom Hartlib often supported through funds he managed to raise from government from time to time.

Other more practical pursuits were aimed at proposing ways to relieve poverty, thereby increasing the wealth of the nation, while the means to prolong life and cure diseases were sought by alchemical discoveries and the practice of iatrochemistry (chemical medicine). Hartlib and his associates were ever seeking to apply new knowledge and new methods of understanding to further ameliorate the human condition.

Hartlib could not avoid making the acquaintance of many significant personalities, of course, among whom were the chemist and exemplar of the experimental philosophy espoused by the Royal

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Society Robert Boyle (1627–1691), the metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), the diarist and founder member of the Royal Society John Evelyn (1620–1706), and the poet and prose writer John Milton (1608–1674), who, to prove his admiration, dedicated his treatise *Of Education* (1644) to Hartlib. Many of these personalities, it should be added, had some kind of connection to Rosicrucian sympathies and thoughts of the times.

The Invisible College

It had always been the intention of Hartlib and others to set up Baconian-type colleges that would be the bastions of the new learning. On 13 March 1642, when the expectations of the reformers were at their highest, Hartlib, Comenius and Dury signed a pact, committing themselves to a secret fraternity to advance the goals of their Pansophia, which was essentially the same as the Rosicrucian vision of a universal system of knowledge embracing all aspects of human learning.

In letters dating to 1646 and 1647, Robert Boyle speaks of a 'new philosophical college', which he refers to as 'our Invisible College' when requesting books from his tutor. He also mentions the Invisible College and its relationship to community plans in a further letter to Hartlib in 1647. It appears that there may have been some meetings organised in London in 1645 to discuss natural philosophy and the new experimental philosophy; these included John Wilkins, the first secretary to the Royal Society, and Theodore Haak, a German from the Palatinate. This kind of anecdotal and written evidence has led to some speculation that the Invisible College was the antecedent to the Royal Society, which was founded in 1660. And so we can discern links—following through from Francis Bacon, Johann Valentin Andreae, Samuel Hartlib and Jan Comenius, among others—that have a definite Rosicrucian perspective that ultimately lead us to the foundation of the Royal Society itself.

Final Days

Religious dissent and political turmoil had effectively terminated the grand plan of the three 'foreigners', but this did not stop Samuel Hartlib continuing his work towards the realisation of something that would not appear in his own lifetime. His importance in his role of intelligencer was only made apparent in 1933, when 72 bundles of his papers were discovered in a chest by George Turnbull, Professor of Education at the University of Sheffield.

The diarist Samuel Pepys, who was Hartlib's close neighbour at Axe Yard in the later years of his life, noted his social eminence and respectability. He was also visited by another diarist in the 1680s, John Evelyn, who recalled his impression of Hartlib as the 'master of innumerable curiosities'. Having been a part of the Cromwellian regime ensured that Hartlib was marginalised after the Restoration of the monarchy, and his reputation suffered an almost total eclipse. He died in poverty in 1662.

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Transformation

by **John Marshall**

Ask the average person to name one thing they associate with the expression 'Ancient Egypt', and it is often the word 'mummies'. Egypt and the ancient art of mummification are so synonymous in popular imagery that most people would put them together automatically, along with, no doubt, the pyramids and Cleopatra. Yet the purpose behind the practice of mummification is rather more elusive than might be imagined.

If you have ever visited the Egyptian section of the British Museum, you will know that the crush of visitors surrounding the mummy cases give the gallery the atmosphere of a crowded tube station on a hot summer's day! Judging by snatches of conversations overheard there, I get the distinct impression that vintage horror films, depicting walking mummies brought back to life as zombies, have a lot to answer for!

Morbid curiosity is an understandable human failing, but I'm sure the wide-eyed looks are fuelled by images of bandaged bodies lumbering about, intent on murderous revenge for being disturbed. Not that trailing wrappings would have impressed real Egyptian embalmers, mind you, for they created the most meticulous, neat and complex patterns to encase their dead. It seems to be an integral part of the romantic myth that mummies could be restored to life, provided the correct magical procedures have been followed, either by design or accident.

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The ancient Egyptians made the most elaborate preparations for the accommodation of those who had passed from the physical world. Eventually, even the poorer members of society could receive simpler forms of embalming and burial that were previously afforded only to the great of the land. But why go to so much trouble? If the soul leaves the body at the point of death, why should it be so important to preserve the outer shell for continued use?



Egyptian mummy detail.

The Scarab

Death is, of course, a form of transformation— indeed, the final and greatest of transformations—and the Egyptians used symbols to remind themselves of this truth. The dung beetle, of which there are over 5,000 species, was regarded as sacred because its lifecycle appeared to mirror the stages of human destiny. Illustrated on temple and tomb walls as a beetle rolling upwards into the heavens and the rising sun, the dung beetle, called *'Khepr'* by the Egyptians, was especially sacred.



Larvae of the May beetle, one of the over 30,000 members of the Scarabaeidae family.

The female beetle lays her eggs in a tightly rolled- up ball of dung, representing the earthly beginnings of a newly created soul. The eggs hatch into larvae that spend their time eating and digesting the dung parcel they are encased in until they achieve maximum size and are ready for transformation into beetles. Again, this corresponds to the physical life of a soul, when knowledge must be absorbed and progress made on the path of enlightenment.

The next stage for each scarab larva is to spin a tiny cocoon within the dung pellet and to remain within it, suspended in time as a gradual metamorphosis takes place. Hidden inside this small 'sarcophagus', the pupa bears a striking resemblance to the human mummy wrapped meticulously in strips of linen. So, just as the scarab waits for its release as a fully winged insect, the body of the deceased rests within its 'cocoon' until the soul emerges as a transformed being in a new, radiant sphere of existence. The departed will then have gained his or her 'spiritual wings.'

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Image: Gabana Studios Cairo / Wikimedia

Tomb of Nefertari, vestibule east wall. Khepri, who has the head of a scarab beetle, sits on a throne.

Regeneration

The concept of a human 'chrysalis' may seem far-fetched to us in the 21st century, but it was understandably obvious to the ancient Egyptians, who had, in the life cycle of the scarab beetle, the natural equivalent of mummification before their very eyes. And it can be argued that the Christian equivalent of this pupation is no more rational and no less of a belief than the ancient Egyptians' belief in the afterlife and the process required for getting there. That equivalent must surely be the Christian belief in purgatory, a state of purgation after death where the soul awaits the great 'day of judgment' while cleansing itself of all its earthly failings.

Just as the ancient Egyptian soul was taken to the Hall of Osiris to have its heart weighed against the feather of truth after having traversed terrifying chambers where it had to prove its prowess and spiritual maturity, so too medieval Christian clerics believed that the soul passes through a stage of hardship and cleansing in Purgatory before appearing before the Creator at the day of judgement.



Illustration from from the 'Book of the 'Dead of Hunefer showing the judgement of the dead in the presence of Osiris; the weighing of the heart against the feather of truth.

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Two dung beetles tussle over a ball of dung containing a single egg from one of them. The dung ball represented the supreme deity of Egypt, 'Ra', emerging on the eastern horizon at dawn and containing within it the germ of life and all creation.

The ibis-headed god Thoth presided over the scales, while the jackal-headed god Anubis ensured that the embalming and mummification of bodies was done in strict accordance with the rules, and also acted as a guide to all souls traversing the Underworld. Anubis also held the power of regeneration, and this seems to be a clue to the Egyptian need for preservation of the body. If the soul was to be transformed into a new being fit for entry to a higher level of existence, it was obvious that, at the very least, the form of the body of the deceased had to be kept intact, and mummification was the best method available.

In the Christian tradition, parallels could be drawn here with the death of Jesus, who *'rose from the dead'* and was *'seen in the flesh'* before being transfigured into a being of pure light. This insistence on the physical resurrection of Jesus has often been a stumbling block for contemporary Christians, some of whom now place the emphasis on the survival of the soul rather than on a physical resurrection.

The Egyptians accepted that if the body completely 'died' during its pupa stage it would not live again in the afterworld. Only through this stage of pupation could the soul of the departed aspire to become one of the fixed stars of the night sky, the final abode of all souls who had been 'elevated'.

The latent power beneath this suspended animation is best illustrated by the legend of Osiris. Despite everything that his brother and mortal rival Seth did to destroy all memory of him, Osiris' fragmented body was collected piece by piece by his sister-wife Isis, and reassembled and revitalised for just one day so she could conceive a child by him. Osiris was in this sense reborn in his child, the falcon god Horus, the radiant being who emerged from the mummified Osiris as surely as the winged scarab emerges from its chrysalis.

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Our Spiritual Transformation

You might be forgiven for asking if this has any relevance in our daily lives. It has. The life cycle of the evolving scarab can be compared to the milestones in our own spiritual journey. The egg is like the human baby, still waiting to release its potential. Then comes the 'larval' stage, a large part of life when we learn, experience and assimilate as much as we can. Here we pursue our spiritual quest..., asking, seeking, reading and listening..., trying to gain a deeper knowledge of ourselves through meditation, devotion to higher ideals, and service to others.

This is followed by the 'chrysalis' stage when so much is happening to us although we seem to be doing nothing more than marking time. We seem to get stuck in a no-man's-land, and yet, when change comes, its swiftness takes us by surprise. Transformation can only come about slowly, inwardly, by waiting for our true self to mature and eventually reveal itself. But when it begins to manifest, it happens with relative speed.

Everything in life has a purpose, even though the blueprint may elude us. No experience is wasted, and our changing views are staging posts along the way. Far from regretting the mistakes we made in the past, we should accept that they were probably necessary in order to have reached our present state of awareness. The scarab beetle can't emerge as a winged adult until it has passed through its larval and pupation stages. Neither can we evolve along the spiritual path without going through the stages essential to our nourishment and growth.

Sooner or later we will all emerge into a world made radiant by our new sense of awareness, carrying with us the seeds of future transformations as the cycles of life turn again and again.



Scarab cartouche of Thutmose III from the temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak, Egypt.



Relief of Thoth and Horus blessing the pharaoh.

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LOOKING OUT and LOOKING IN

by **Peter Pagel**

There is a duality in us that might not be immediately apparent throughout our everyday lives. By that I mean our sense organs, which have a twofold function, expressed mainly as active and passive. I'll give you a few examples: the tongue is part of the faculty of speech, which is an active faculty, but it also houses the organ of taste, which is a passive faculty. Again, the fingers are the main organ of the sense of touch; they also hold and grasp, and that is an active operation. The nostrils serve the sense of smell, but they are also used for inflating the lungs. Hearing is a passive operation, but the ear, the internal ear at least, plays a large part in balance.

What about the eyes? What other function do they serve beside that of guiding us safely across the street? Think of some distant place you know. You are using what is called your mind's eye, and by that I don't

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mean what is known to mystics as the *'third eye'.* The mind's eye is not actually an organ like the physical eye (or indeed the third eye), yet it is convenient to call it the organ of visualisation. In remembering something, we visualise; and in planning the future, we also visualise. The mind's eye therefore endows us with memory and expectation, without which there could be no sense of time. Time therefore is subjective. All of us possess the mind's eye, but only a few have developed it into a *'third eye'.*

Now note this: you could not have visualised a distant place unless your outer eye had originally supplied the image. Only the third eye could have done that. With the mind's eye we can see no colour or form that has not been previously seen by the outer eye. Though the mind's eye is the foundation of all imagination, and therefore of all achievement, it is yet limited in its range of vision by the images and pictures which the physical eyes have previously brought in from the outer world.

Fiction writers obtain their scenes and characters not by originating ideas of places and individuals but by fusing the characteristics of a number of scenes and incidents into one. They model their so-called creations on people whom they have known, that is, those people their outer eyes have observed. Storytelling is a process of using the mind's eye to rearrange, transpose and mingle the multitude of persons, scenes and adventures which have previously been reflected upon the retina of the outer eye. Words are then used to convey those visions to other minds.

Fiction writers, myth makers who are generally' poets, and even historians are skilled through the use of words to convey the images of their mind's eye to the mind's eye of others. They are responsible for such enduring characters as Santa Claus, King Arthur, Saint George, Romulus and Remus, as well as for Harry Potter and many more. Ultimately, even word-visions are dependent upon the physical eye, for storytellers can tell us nothing outside of the range of their vision. They are equally dependent upon the eyes of their readers (or listeners); hence angels, an entirely separate order of beings, have to be visualised as humans with wings since this is the idealised form common to most.



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An important function of our two physical eyes thus becomes apparent. As we walk abroad, as we admire antique furniture or a wayside flower, as we travel by train or fly through the air, as we gaze into a shop window or into the depths of a sheltered pool, in addition to guiding our footsteps these two eyes are also peopling our inner world with farms and forests, with antique or modern furniture, with fabrics or fountain pens, or perhaps still pools carpeted with pebbles. Even while relaxed and immersed in a book, we are focusing our mind's eye on the creations of the authors of fiction. In fact, unless we are sleeping or perhaps daydreaming, our outer physical eyes are ceaselessly populating our individual worlds with people, landscapes, grandfather clocks, woods, forests and houses and suchlike.

Realities of the Mind

We cannot separate ourselves from this inner, immaterial world, open to the mind's eye and provided by the physical eye. We cannot even forget about it, as psychoanalysts well know. If we strenuously try to forget something that may be unpleasant, it is likely to form an inconvenient complex, or it may trouble us in our dreams. In fact, these images build up and become part of our consciousness that is almost a part of the Self. Whether our home looks out on a flower garden or a slag heap is more than a question of refinement or culture. As the poet Browning says, *'What entered into thee, that was, is, and shall be.'* Thus these countless images are something more than feeble reflections of outer reality or fantasies, as the unthinking multitude regard them.

Indeed who can discriminate between the real and the unreal? Is the outer world real because we see it with our outer eyes, and the inner world unreal because we see it with our mind's eye? Is the mythical King Arthur less real than the historical Charlemagne? The reality of these personalities is dependent not upon any historical counterpart but upon the intensity of our visualisation. Even when picturing some familiar historical figure, we are dependent upon the accuracy of the historian, and each reader visualises the figure somewhat differently.

It has been truly said that the best histories are only approximately accurate. Where is the real Charlemagne, or even the real Jesus?

We have now reached a rather startling conclusion. Our responsibility, as we continue to people our own inner world, the world we rule, becomes far greater than we had previously supposed. Shall we people it with flower gardens or with slag heaps, with heroes or cowards?

Science knows much more about the two physical eyes than about the mind's eye, for science has given much more attention to physics than to psychology. The act of seeing is full of wonders almost miraculous. The image on the retina, like all pictures, is two-dimensional, and yet we look out onto a three-dimensional world. The image originally is upside down when it is cast upon the retina; the retina reflects no colours, yet we see colours. It can, however, only see the here and now. Even as we sit in our own room and view the furniture and wallpaper with our physical eyes, we must use our mind's eye if we would see the adjoining room. And similarly we must use the mind's eye for all the past and the future, as that is not a possibility of the physical eyes.

The vision of the mind's eye is largely responsible for the development of character and, being the basis of the imagination, it is responsible for all achievement. And so we are endowed with memory and hope, and are lifted definitely above the animal kingdom. When we know that these mind pictures become a part of our consciousness, is it not reasonable to suggest that the work of the outer eye in projecting scenes, people and events onto the mind's eye is a function even more important than that of its guiding us safely across the street? After all, the kingdom we seek is within.

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The Nature of Compassion

by **Cecil Poole**

There exists in our language a word that we should come to know better. It is *'compassion'*. The meaning of this word indicates a sense of sympathy, a sense of fellowship and feeling, a realisation or a sensitivity to the suffering of other individuals. Longfellow wrote: *'The little I have seen of the world teaches me to look upon the errors of others in sorrow, not in anger'.* In this sense, we have the ability to understand vicariously another individual's feelings. When those feelings bring that individual difficulties or trouble, they have a tendency to create in the intelligent human being a sense of sorrow and therefore a feeling of compassion for that individual.

To fully and fairly judge an individual is beyond our ability, for we cannot know all the circumstances that may have brought about that individual's present condition. In this sense, then, compassion is more important than judgement. It is the trait or sense that is inherent in every human being, the ability to understand—or at least to have a feeling that makes it possible for us to realise—that what other individuals experience is echoed by our own experiences. Since we frequently flounder or feel sorry for ourselves, sorrow for others, or at least realisation of their problems, is summarised in this one word: *compassion*.

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Compassion is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by suffering or misfortune. It is often accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the pain of another, or to remove its cause. In the fullest sense of the word, compassion is using our mental and psychic abilities to bring us to a realisation that what exists in the world is a complex mixture of human experiences. If we are to live to the fullest extent of our own abilities, we will be willing to use compassion as a means of trying to understand not only ourselves but also our fellow human beings.

Loren Eiseley was a great believer in the sense of compassion and its importance insofar as human survival and the ultimate victory of humanity over the environment were concerned. Both philosopher and palaeontologist, Eiseley had numerous experiences with the study of early man and the conditions that surrounded his existence. He spoke frequently of the early Neanderthal man, who was less evolved in appearance and way of life when compared with modern man. Nevertheless, as he pointed out on several occasions, the first stages of what we would recognise as 'humanity' were clearly evidenced in this early creature. Describing a Neanderthal burial, Eiseley wrote:

> Massive flint-hardened hands had shaped a sepulchre and placed flat stones to guard the dead man's head. A haunch of meat had been left to aid the dead man's journey. Worked flints, a little treasure of the human dawn, had been poured lovingly into the grave.
>
> And down the millennia the message has come without words. *'We too were human, we too suffered, we too believed that the grave is not the end. We too, whose faces affright you now, knew human agony and human love.'* It is important to consider that across 50,000 years nothing has changed or altered in that act.
>
> It is the human gesture by which we know a man though he looks out upon us under a brow suggestive of the ape. If in another 50,000 years man can still weep, we will know humanity is safe. This is all we need to ask about the onrush of the scientific age.

From this quotation it is clear that Eiseley believes that the future of the scientific age in which we live depends upon our ability to continue to register compassion. As long as we can weep, as long as we can express emotions that have to do with feelings of a nature that takes into consideration not only the wellbeing of ourselves but the wellbeing of all people, civilisation is safe. In my opinion, compassion is the key to the future of the human race.

Humanity will no doubt continue to evolve and struggle for ever greater achievement and refinement for as long as men and women are able to express compassion. As we learn the daily lessons of life and study our Rosicrucian mystical teachings, let us all remember that compassion is the single most important key by which we are able to express our own evolution. If human evolution is to continue and civilisation is to be safe and secure, we must never give up or lose our ability to show and express compassion, the feeling of mercy for all that lives.



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Life on Other Worlds

by **Sven Johansson**

How unique and rare is human-level intelligent life in our universe?

For example, on a universe-wide scale, could human-level intelligent beings be as numerous as all the house flies on Earth?

In recent years there has been much talk about the possibility of life on other planets in our solar system. I am not referring to the popular belief in extra-terrestrial beings regularly visiting Earth, or the occasional alien abduction. This belief has been with us since the 1940s or perhaps a decade earlier. It arose more or less at the same time as the appearance of the comic book hero *Buck Rogers* and his first space flight in 1930, and of course the appearance in 1938 of another comic book hero, *Superman*, an alien with super-powers from another planet.

Whereas some factual experience may accompany a few 'sightings' of phenomena that appear to be related to alien life forms on Earth, it is likely that, in the clear light of scientific scrutiny, not a single one of those sightings is likely to be proven to relate to anything beyond our home planet. I am not referring to intelligent life forms from other stars but human-level intelligent creatures from within our own solar system.

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That we would ever find little green men from Mars, or similar high-level intelligent life forms on any other planet in our solar system, is pretty well ruled out by now, though not yet entirely, of course. From the information gathered and analysed from the various space probes that have penetrated almost the entire solar system, there seem to be only a few planets and moons left that could possibly harbour life. Even then, within the next few decades, as new space probes delve ever deeper into the composition of each potential candidate solar body, it is likely that most of these will no longer be candidates for human-level life.

Because a single human-level life form took over 4½ billion years to evolve on Earth, it is extremely unlikely that any other human-level life form will have evolved in our solar system yet. So it isn't any surprise that science long ago lowered their sights considerably and would be happy if even the lowest forms of bacteria were found on any other planet. Popular imagination accepted for decades the possibility of finding other life forms like our own, only to have their hopes dismantled one by one, until now it would be sufficient if we could find just a bit of algae or bacteria. Whatever forms of life we eventually do discover in our solar system, if indeed we find any at all, it will almost certainly exclude anything much larger than microbes. That, at least, is the common consensus at present.



On 14th April 2023, the European Space Agency launched a probe that will, eight years from now if all goes well, start investigating the three Jovian moons, *Europa*, *Callisto* and *Ganymede*, with the specific purpose of searching for signs that one or more of them could harbour life. If successful, the mission will bring us close to discovering if there is any other life in our solar system.

> ...life is resilient and can exist in exceedingly harsh environments.

What we have come to realise over the past 50 or more years of scientific enquiry, and especially from deep-sea research, is that life is resilient and can exist in exceedingly harsh environments. Indeed, it seems to fit in wherever any suitable energy source exists. So we find large clams and tube-worms living in the vicinity of many deep-sea hydrothermal vents. The sun's light does not penetrate to these creatures, and their survival depends entirely upon the heat generated by the radioactive energy of the Earth itself and the nutrients it acquires from the vents. On land there are great mats of living algae floating in scaldingly hot water around hot springs throughout the world. And finally, there exist live *endoliths* (archaea, bacteria, fungi, lichens, algae and amoebas) within some rock types in regions where the temperature seldom rises above –20 degrees centigrade and in rocks deep within the Earth where pressure-induced temperatures exceed the boiling point of water.

So some primitive life forms appear to be a lot tougher than we ever imagined, but that is not likely to be the case for higher life forms, of which we humans are one young and impetuous species that has had a good ride so far. But we may soon exit the stage of life for good unless we soon find and faithfully apply permanent ways of getting along with each other, caring

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for each other, caring for all other life expressions and actively protecting our Mother Earth a great deal more.

Even if we were to find life elsewhere in our solar system, there is a great gap between algae and microbial life forms, and life forms similar to our species. Whereas primitive life forms may indeed be almost commonplace in the universe, higher human-level life forms may be vanishingly rare.

OUR VAST UNIVERSE
How many Earths?

Thankfully, the universe is a very *BIG* place—so big, in fact, that it is almost certain that life forms very much like our own have existed elsewhere in the past, are now existing somewhere and will exist somewhere in the future. Words like 'past', 'now' and 'future' of course relate only to our tiny world, where we live close enough to each other that we can have a common experience of time and space. The further apart we are or the faster we are travelling towards or away from each other, the less we could agree on any of our experiences, including when and where we may one day find definitive evidence of human-level (or higher) intelligence elsewhere in the universe.

Even in our galaxy it is almost certain that intelligent life other than our own exists in the present, namely, *our present*, the present that we share on Earth. Just considering that there are more celestial bodies in the universe than there are grains of sand on our planet, the chances should be quite high that human-like life forms have sprung up elsewhere in the past, not just once but maybe thousands or even millions of times in the past, some of them almost identical to our lives here on Earth, possibly even with similar histories to ours, even similar tyrants and similar great spiritual leaders. Other worlds, other earths.

Even in our galaxy it is almost certain that intelligent life other than our own exists in the present, namely, our present, the present that we share on Earth.

It is all very well to know that such advanced life forms may exist, but how could they ever interact with each other? Given that it could take as much as 100,000 years to send a signal from one end of our galaxy to the

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other, and then another 100,000 years to get a reply, communication via normal electromagnetic energy transmission simply could never work. By the time we got a reply, we would have evolved into a new species anyway or have gone extinct. Sending a message to even the nearest star would take four years at light speed to get there, and it would take another four years for a reply to be sent back to us, provided that any advanced life forms were there to receive the message in the first place, which is not likely.

So if there is any communication between intelligent life forms in the universe other than on Earth, it must be by some other means. In the Rosicrucian Order we actively discuss and use the phenomena of *telepathy* and *psychic projection* (astral travel). This is not unique to us, of course, and those methods have been used by mystics and adepts for thousands of years. During the last century, or possibly a bit less, various plausible-sounding explanations have been given about the exact nature and transmission method for telepathic messages, but virtually all of these have involved energy of some sort which, if we are to be rational about things, cannot travel faster than light and hence would be no faster at communicating with a distant planet than a physicist beaming a radio signal to it.

If phenomena such as telepathy and psychic projection are instantaneous, or at least much faster than light, then a very deep secret still awaits our discovery, and our whole understanding of space-time will need to be changed or expanded upon.

THE MEDITATIVE STATE
A Medium of Communication?

When entering a true meditative state, it is universally recognised by mystics and religious practitioners throughout the world that *time seems to stop*. Something happens to the human consciousness at such moments; so much, in fact, that entire volumes of information could be written in a brief moment. A true meditative state is not a period of contemplation, nor is it exclusively a period of concentration or a period of visualisation, and it is certainly not a daydream. It is a quite specific though hard-to-master inner process, a mental discipline which may begin with all of the above but which ends in a seeming brief cessation of time.

When entering a true meditative state, it is universally recognised by mystics and religious practitioners throughout the world that time seems to stop.

Of course, with the end of time also comes the end of space. According to our limited understanding, at least, the one can never exist independently of the other. So, with the end of space, do we now not have the end of everything? Evidently not, some say, for we do after all return, and with us there sometimes comes new information, new experiences and new abilities. Is it not perhaps possible, then, that the key to intergalactic communication lies not in titanium spaceships plodding along for generations to reach their destinations but in trained and disciplined minds, human minds, right here on Earth? It is an assertion often made, but regrettably with very little substance as to how such faster-than-light communication could conceivably work.

Personally I am open to this as something plausible and—judging by the increasing complexity, sophistication and refinement that neuroscientists are discovering yearly in the human brain and its related function, the mind—is it any wonder that so much interest is now finally being focused on the phenomenon of consciousness and its possible universe-wide span?

Science is not naive by any means, and as mystics we respect and accept the innumerable useful

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discoveries that it places at the service of humanity. Yet science has had its moments of prejudice in the past, where anything other than the orthodox theory was dismissed out of hand as mere speculation or even superstition. In all honesty, though, as mystics we have also had our moments of prejudice—far too many of them! No doubt many of us have cast doubt on one or two unpopular findings of science, even when they were rigorously proven beyond all doubt. That is human nature, unfortunately: a bit of logic, a bit of heart, a bit of rational thought, a bit of irrational belief. What a species!

THE MYSTICAL QUEST
Old as Humanity Itself

For many thousands of years mystics have used various techniques in order to reach the specific goal of what is called *'Illumination'*. Also referred to as *'Cosmic Consciousness'*, this state of being, this whole-being experience of an inner emergence of super-reality, was attained by adepts not just once but repeatedly, many times throughout life. That such things happened in the past and happen even today is beyond doubt and throws a bright beacon of Light and encouragement to all humankind.

The words, thoughts and deeds of holy men and women of the past bear witness to what they achieved, and it takes very little imagination to fill in the gaps of information now missing. Physically they were human, almost identical to us today, and their direct experiences of life would therefore have been very similar to ours too. They had their moods and happy moments, their times of terror and of happiness, times of hunger, pain and pleasure, and also times for introspection, just as we do today.

What they achieved in their day, they achieved despite their much harsher conditions during antiquity, and surely we can do the same today? From the pampered vantage point of the 21st century, let us not forget that, as Rosicrucians and aspiring mystics of many different persuasions, we share a common quest, namely, the attainment of Illumination and the consequent mastery of Life that flows from it. Let us never forget our vaunted positions as the most accomplished of living creatures on Earth and, consequently, do all within our powers to fulfil our karmic obligations towards all humans as well as all other living creatures on this magnificent planet Earth—this unique, one-in-a-million little *'blue dot'* within the vastness of our universe.



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Ancient Egyptian Gardens

by **Mary Jones**

Above: *Hunting in the papyrus thicket; excerpt from a mural in the tomb of Nahamun in Thebes-West, British Museum, tempera on plaster, height 81cm, 18. Dynasty, before 1350 BC (hr.*

Modern Egypt consists of a wide river bordered by green fields, with the ever-present threat of the sands of the Sahara to the west and eastern deserts slowly creeping towards the river. That is probably what most visitors remember. But there is another part of the country that is less visited, and that is the northern delta area with its river branches and lakes. From space, the outline of the Nile Valley and Delta is prominent and reminds one of the lotus flower which features so prominently in ancient Egypt.

However, any traveller to Egypt in our own time will visit the temples of Upper Egypt, and what we see amounts to viewing an ancient mummy compared to what the original landscape must have looked like. So, what did ancient Egypt actually look like?

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Back in Time

If we could travel back more than 3,000 years we would find a completely different scene. To us it would seem like a paradise. The temples were a riot of colours, with flags waving in the breeze and sunlight glinting off the gold-plated tops of obelisks, all surrounded by orchards and gardens. It is sometimes hard to visualise this today, so let us go on a brief journey back in time.

Ancient Egyptian gardens were filled with birds and plants. Sometimes they were arranged in terraces, like Queen Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahri, and decorated with papyrus clumps which would be harvested to provide writing materials for the household or temples. In tombs we find images of pergolas covered with vines, artificial ponds with fish, and many different fruit trees and flowers chosen for their beauty and fragrance, such as waterlilies, roses and jasmine. There were grape vines, and trees included apples, olives, persea, sycamores, date palms, figs and pomegranates.

It wasn't just Egypt that treasured its gardens; all ancient civilisations built and adored their gardens. We need only think of the *Hanging Gardens of Babylon*, the gardens of Persia, and the vast market gardens of Central Mexico that so astonished the Spanish conquerors. These were not primitive people but sophisticated and cultured societies.



Queen Hatshepsut's mortuary temple features images of trees and plants

In Egypt, gardens were small oases of peace and tranquillity. From their writings, we know that the ancient Greeks and Romans expressed admiration for Egyptian gardens, which contained elements that in due course were brought to Europe. We have the following description from the temple of Horus at Edfu:

> The countryside is for Horus: its birds are more numerous than locusts, its fields flourish with cereals, all its basins are filled with lotus buds and flowers, and the land is thriving. No weeds grow there, the grain harvest is abundant, the branches of trees are well-placed and the basins are filled with flowers.

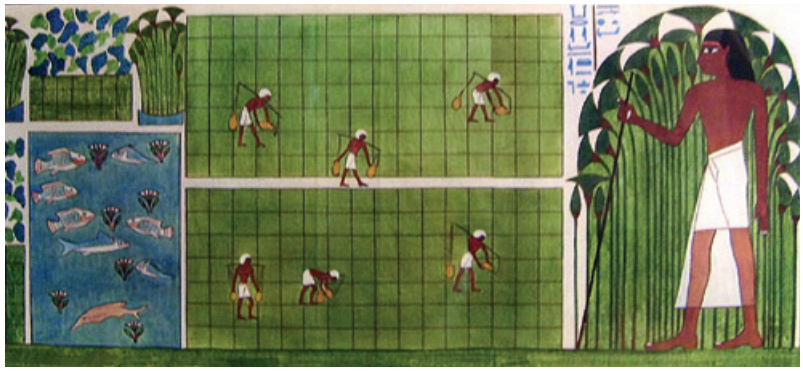
We find terraced gardens, like the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut, long before the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were even thought of. Egyptian gardens were cooled by water channels long before the first of the Persian Paradise gardens had been started. And they even had atrium gardens far in advance of the ones found in Pompeii.



Olive

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Queen Hatshepsut's Temple



Tomb painting of the gardens of Amon at the temple of Karnak, from the tomb of Nakh, the chief gardener. Early 14th century B.C.

Trees and plants were a vital part of all gardens, particularly those attached to the great temples. It is difficult to believe today that every temple had its own garden inside the temple walls as well as in the fields surrounding the great house of the god. On the walls of Queen Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahri, we see images of incense trees and plants that her expeditions brought back from the land of Punt, believed to have been located in either modern-day Somalia or Yemen.

We also see gardens in paintings and models of the tombs. For those fortunate enough to pass the test of having their heart weighed against the feather of Maat, the afterlife was portrayed as an image of Egypt with its idyllic gardens. We can see this in many of the famous tomb paintings, where life continued in an idealised version of the life they had known when alive.



Poppy

Every temple needed their special incense trees and bushes for daily use. The trees and bushes in the gardens as well as the lotuses (actually African water lilies) in the sacred lakes surrounded by flowers and trees were considered holy, as they lay both inside the temple and in the immediate surrounds of the *home of the god* or *goddess.* These trees and plants provided food, fruit, fuel, wood and perfumes for personal use as well as for bouquets.

Temple Gardens

Ancient Egyptian temples represented a sort of heaven, even if not the whole known universe, where the *divine essence* would manifest. Symbolism continued inside the temple, where columns, such as in the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, represented a papyrus marsh and the tops of the columns had capitals of various plants.

Recent excavations in the eastern Nile Delta have revealed the great extent of orchards around the temples and palaces there. Also at Amarna traces of extensive gardens have survived because the city was abandoned and not disturbed until the excavations in the 19th century. Those parts of houses and temples which have been uncovered were painted with images of papyrus, lotuses, palm trees and other plants, flowers and fruits.

We have a description of the gardens at the mortuary temple of the 11th Dynasty Pharaoh

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Mentuhotep II at Deir-el-Bahri, next to Queen Hatshepsut's mortuary temple:

> Sycamore-fig trees formed an avenue beside the ramp up to the temple. On either side of them were rows of tamarisk trees. Between the sycamores were two rectangular flower beds, about 2 x 7 metres. The area covered by the plantation was about 50 square metres, the length of a standard Olympic-size swimming pool.

Gardens were an integral part of temples. Inside the main gateway there was usually an open space that often contained trees and flowers. Between the buildings were larger gardens, usually consisting of a vineyard and pools surrounded by papyrus, mandrake, poppies, cornflowers and daisies. In the pools were water lilies and papyrus reeds. There were gardens inside courtyards, and gardens were also created at points along the processional way between temples. Imagine the processional avenue of sphinxes between Karnak and Luxor with gardens on either side. It must have been a magnificent sight.



Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1920

Funery Garden Exmple. From Thebes, Southern Asasif, Tomb of Meketre.



Willow

Amarna or Akhetaten was a new city which Pharaoh Akhenaten filled with parks and gardens. Cypress and willow trees and almond and pistachio trees were also grown, along with figs, juniper berries, castor oil bushes, carob trees, plums and the moringa and olive trees.

Funerary Gardens

Funerary gardens were placed in tomb courtyards and were miniature versions of house gardens. They usually had a small square house or pavilion with wooden columns, surrounded by a wall. Within the wall was a pool surrounded by a row of trees or bushes. The house resembled a kiosk within a garden.

We know what funerary gardens looked like, as one was actually found in Luxor at the entrance to a 12th Dynasty tomb on Luxor's West Bank. The garden was small: 3 x 2 metres (10 x 6½ feet) sectioned into squares. The plants grown there each had a symbolic meaning. Each small section possibly contained a different plant, one of which we know was lettuce, which was associated with fertility and, as a result, the return to life of the deceased in the tomb. There were also two raised beds, which probably contained trees because a tamarisk stump was found in one of them.

Trees

Many of the plants had symbolic meanings. In some paintings we can see the lotus (water lily) symbolising

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Rectangular fishpond with ducks and lotus planted round with date palms and fruit trees, in a fresco from the Tomb of Nebamun, Thebes, 18th Dynasty

Upper Egypt and papyrus symbolising Lower Egypt, often intertwined in a symbol of unity. Trees were sacred to certain *Neters* or deities: the date palm to *Ra* and *Min*, the doum palm to *Thoth*, the sycamore to *Hathor* and the tamarisk to *Osiris*. As I said before, we find images of plants and trees in the remains of the city of Akhetaten and in the Akh Menu building at the eastern end of the Karnak temple complex in Luxor.

The *sycamore fig tree* that was especially sacred to Hathor could grow some distance from the Nile, at the edge of the desert but only in well-watered areas. The tree's life-versus-death symbolism originated from the fact that it lost its leaves during the winter months, when it looked barren and lifeless. But in early spring the *'flowers of life'* buds appeared, which became new green fruit even before the leaves had returned. Like the winter evergreens in other parts of the world, the sycamore fig was seen by Egyptians as bringing life in the midst of death.

During the 4th Dynasty, the goddess *Hathor* absorbed the attributes of the sacred sycamore spirit at the ancient city of *Heliopolis*, known as *Iunu* to the Egyptians. Just a short distance to the south Hathor was worshipped as the Mistress of the Southern Sycamore at Memphis. One of her aspects was as the goddess connected with the *Duat* or underworld, and the sycamore fig was imagined as existing in the afterlife in order to provide nourishment to departed souls. She was the tree-goddess who nourished the *ba*-souls of all the dead who entered the Duat, the world beyond this one.

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The *Tamarisk* tree was associated with *Osiris*. According to ancient Egyptian religion, when the body of Osiris was imprisoned in a chest and thrown into the Nile it floated to Lebanon, where it came to rest and a tamarisk tree grew up around the chest and enveloped and protected it with its trunk. Isis found the tree, which was by then a pillar in the local king's palace. She retrieved the chest and returned it to Egypt.

It is not clear if Tamarisk species are fire-adapted, but many of the trees are able to resprout from the stump after fires. The ancient Egyptians saw in this tree the death and rebirth of Osiris. A tamarisk tree in a garden was a powerful link to the resurrection of Osiris.



Mesu Smelling a Lotus.
Relief, Tomb of Heri (TT 12), woman, Mesu. (circa 1525–1504 B.C.



Date palm

It is uncertain where the *date palm* was first cultivated; it was so long ago in the past. It probably originated in the Fertile Crescent region between Egypt and Mesopotamia and was a treasured garden plant because its fruit.

The *pomegranate tree* had a very old and symbolic meaning, representing prosperity, fertility and wealth. The sheer number of seeds within each fruit symbolised wealth, while the deep red colour of the seeds symbolised blood or life energy. As far as we can tell, the pomegranate appeared in Egypt during the Middle Kingdom but became much more prevalent during the following New Kingdom. Pomegranate juice was added to or made into wine. It was also used in medicine in preparations against intestinal diseases, dysentery and stomach ache.

There is a scene on the tomb of Nebamun, showing his beautiful garden filled with

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pomegranate and date palm trees surrounding a pond. The pomegranate was found on many funerary offering tables and even mentioned in love songs. Pomegranate plants have also been found flourishing in gardens providing shade in royal palaces or villas and funerary or cult temples, as well as the villas of officials and wealthier citizens.

The *Persea* is a tree name associated with an ancient Egyptian tree that was cultivated for its fruit long before it was called the avocado tree. It is an evergreen tree belonging to the laurel family.



Egyptian papyrus paintings featuring water lilys.

Water Lilies, not Lotuses

In our view of ancient Egypt we often refer to the *'lotus'* flower, even though it is not found in Egypt but is native to South and Southeast Asia and has been known in Persia for thousands of years. It is called *'Nelumbo nucifera'* and is not the same as the *'lotus'* referred to in Egyptian tourist brochures.

However, since the name *'lotus'* is so widespread, and associated with Egypt and wetlands throughout Africa, we may as well continue using this term to refer to the two water lily species native to Egypt that have erroneously been assigned the name *'lotus'.* The Egyptian lotuses are the *blue water lily* or *blue lotus (Nymphaea caerulea)*, which appears during daylight only, and the *white water lily* or *white lotus (Nymphaea lotus),* which flowers only at night. They are both true aquatic plants whose roots and stems stay submerged while the leaves float on the surface and the flowers emerge above the water.

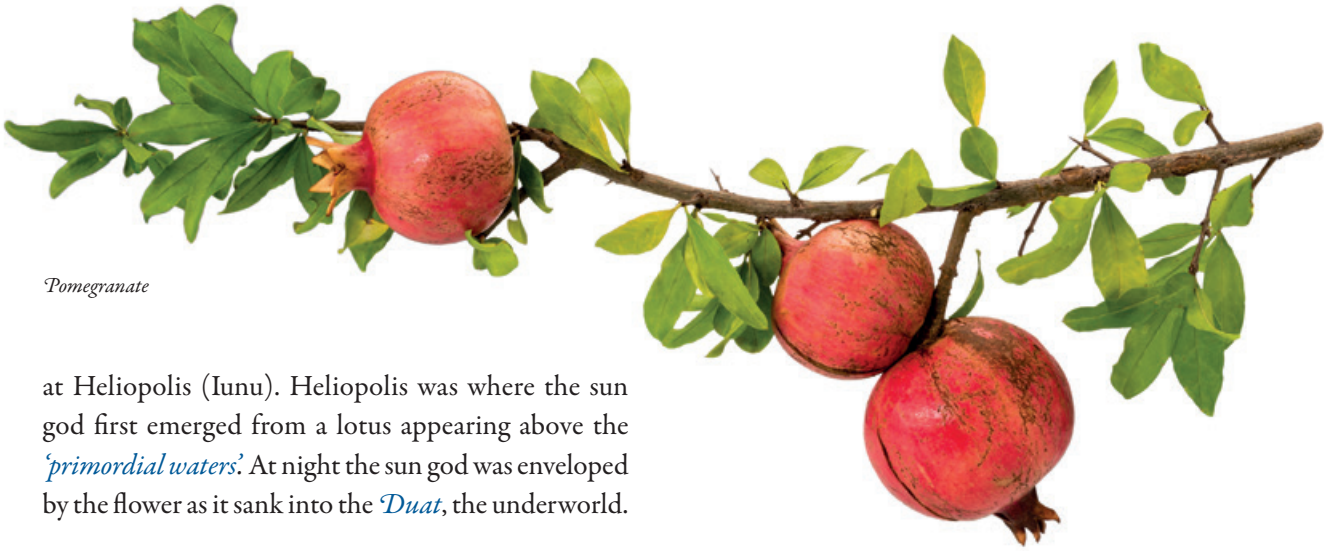


White water lily

The *blue lotus* flower bud rises out of the water at first light, and as the day progresses it opens wide on or slightly above the water's surface, where its fragrance attracts beetles or other insects, especially bees, which pollinate it. Towards sunset, the flower closes back into a bud and, with its precious trove of fertilised seeds now safely protected from predators, it sinks into the water. A new stem emerges the next morning, either with a new leaf or a new flower bud, and the process repeats itself.

The blue lotus grew wild and was sacred to the Egyptians as a symbol of creation and rebirth. In one of their creation stories, a single blue lotus was instrumental in bringing the entire universe into being

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Pomegranate

at Heliopolis (Iunu). Heliopolis was where the sun god first emerged from a lotus appearing above the *'primordial waters'.* At night the sun god was enveloped by the flower as it sank into the *Duat*, the underworld.

Due to its colour it was identified, in some beliefs, as having been the original container, like an egg, of *Atum* or *Ra*, who are both solar deities. It was also the symbol of the Egyptian god *Nefertum*, who was the son of *Ptah* of Memphis. In Utterance 249 of the Pyramid Texts in the tomb of the 5th Dynasty pharaoh *Unas* we read: *'Unas appears as Nefertum, as the lotus flower at the nose of Ra, as he comes forth from the horizon each day.'* They also saw, in the flower's daily re-emergence from the waters, a beautiful symbol of their own personal resurrection one day.

The *white lotus* is often depicted in ancient Egyptian art and stone carvings, including on the walls of the temple of Karnak. Unlike the blue lotus, the white lotus, which appeared only at night, may have been associated with the rites pertaining to the *Duat* and the afterlife. A number of pharaohs' mummies were covered with the petals of the white lotus. In many tomb paintings there are depictions of mourners at a funeral banquet, wearing a wreath of white lotus flowers on their head or holding them to their nose as a symbol of resurrection. There are indications that it was grown in special farms, over 4,000 years ago, to produce enough flowers for votive offerings.

The ancient Egyptians cultivated the white lotus in ponds and marshes and believed that the flower gave them strength and power.

In temples we find that the white lotus was one of the two earliest Egyptian column capital motifs, the topmost part being the opening bud of the flower. At that time, the most important column capitals were those based on the lotus and papyrus plants, and these, with the palm tree capital, were the chief types used by the ancient Egyptians. Perfume was extracted from the white lotus and added to the cones shown on peoples' heads at social gatherings. It has also been suggested that, at such gatherings, the guests would dip lotus flowers into their wine to produce a mildly narcotic effect!

Whereas the blue lotus opens in the morning, the white lotus tends to open in the late afternoon and early evening. Egyptian tomb paintings from the 18th Dynasty provide some of the earliest evidence of ornamental horticulture and landscape design, depicting lotus ponds surrounded by symmetrical rows of acacias and palms.

The *pink lotus* (Nelumbo nucifera), which is the one common to South and South East Asia, is not, strictly speaking, a water lily and is commonly referred to as the *'sacred lotus'*, for it is revered in Hinduism and Buddhism as a symbol of rebirth, re-emergence and spiritual enlightenment. It spread through Persia to the Middle East and can now be found in Egypt as well. The

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Juniper

whole flower is edible, and boiled young leaves are eaten as a vegetable supplement. The stamens are used for flavouring tea, as are the dried petals. The roots are eaten throughout Asia, either fresh or used in soups and curries. So far, we have no direct evidence as to whether or not the ancient Egyptians used their blue and white lotus plants for food as well.

Incense

The ancient Egyptians went to great lengths to cultivate incense trees. In Queen Hatshepsut's temple on the West Bank of the Nile at Deir-el-Bahri, we see paintings and carvings of people bringing living trees in baskets from the land of Punt (either Yemen or Somalia). They may have been *frankincense trees* or *myrrh shrubs*. Myrrh has a thorny trunk and branches and issues a reddish gum. Frankincense is a resin released from the tree by cutting the bark and allowing the white sap to drain out into bowls, much like the tapping of rubber trees.

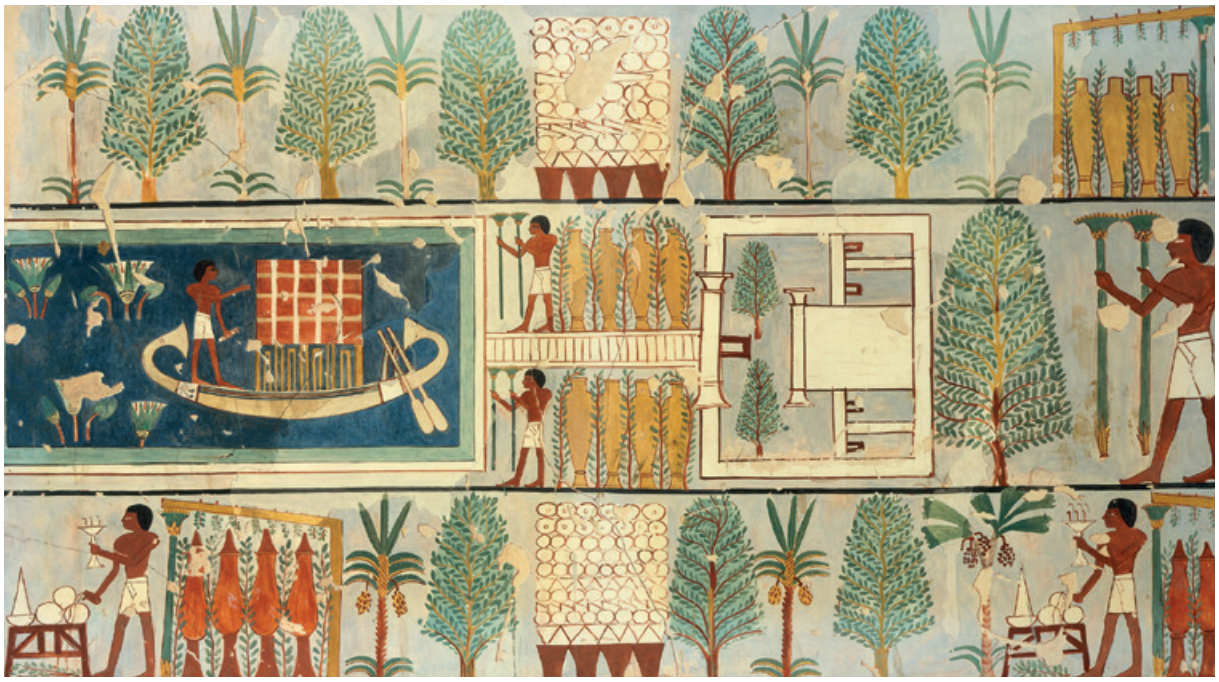
Incense was burned to counteract or obscure bad odours and to appease the gods with its pleasant aroma. Resin balls have been found in many prehistoric Egyptian tombs too. One of the oldest extant incense burners originates from the 5th Dynasty, in the years following the building of the Giza pyramids.

Many people, including Rosicrucians, produce their own incense today. The raw materials are made into a powder and then mixed together with a binder to form a paste which, for direct-burning incense, is then cut and dried into pellets. You can also make incense by powdering frankincense resin and mixing it with essential oils. Floral fragrances are the most common, like the Rosicrucian Moss Rose incense cubes. After preparation, the damp incense mixture is rolled out into a frame and left until it has become firm. It is then cut



Avocado tree, member of the Persea species

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Funeral Ritual in a Garden. This facsimile painting copies a section of wall painting in the tomb of Minnakht (TT 87) in western Thebes.

into small cubes, coated with clay powder to prevent adhesion, and allowed to fully harden and dry, either in direct sunlight or, more commonly nowadays, in a low-temperature kiln.

The *acacia tree* has yellow or white flowers, depending on the type of tree. It grows throughout Egypt and its gum was used in fixing paint and various curative remedies. The *tamarisk* produces a resin similar to frankincense, and these trees were found around the Osireion at Abydos.



Tamarisk Tree

All the plants that appeared in Egyptian gardens had some use, either as food, medicine, incense or aromatic oils, and they were carefully planted to take advantage of the beauty of each plant. A pool in the garden provided a cool spot for relaxation and contemplation, as well as a small habitat for fish and water lilies. Small buildings in the garden provided places to honour ancestors and deities; and arbours, filled with grapes, both decorated the gardens and provided fruit and wine for the family.

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Reflections of a Mystic

by **D. Weber**

The sumblimity of the human personality is the good.

It is true. People who seek lives of a genuine inner unfoldment of their higher faculties, the so called *'spiritual self'*, often consider their highest spiritual experiences to be of greater relevance to their long-term wellbeing than most of the daily, physical rewards of life and the challenges they regularly face and sometimes overcome. For want of a better term, we call such people *'mystics.'*

Having a preference for experiences of a spiritual, inner sort as opposed to the usual experiences driven by our usual instincts is not an impediment to normal living. It is not to say that all mystics *'live in the clouds'*, determined to avoid as many difficult moments of physical reality they can. Far from it, genuine mystics have doggedly, throughout life, aspired to live a life beyond reproach, a life of constant goodness towards all people and indeed all creatures, and, directly as a result of this, they have overcome many of the physical constraints that burden the lives of those who live for nothing but material rewards.

Although mystics consider the inner life to be more important, in the long-term, than the outer, daily life of dealing with mundane, sometimes

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quite hard physical challenges, they are fully aware that both sides—the inner and outer that they face daily—play crucial roles in their overall evolution and maturation of consciousness. While some mystics have possessed great powers of introspection and knowledge of themselves and others within their karmic proximity, in their outer lives they seldom shied away from dealing with the sometimes hard physical realities that came their way. When they needed to deal with them, they did so in the most just and fair manner they were capable of. They found a happy balance between the two major sides of their being: their inner and outer expressions of life.

There is no doubt that the predominant preoccupation of every true mystic is the development of a steady opening up of an inner connection with something transcendent, a sort of *'Inner Master'* or higher aspect of their own self. Consequently, the emphasis is therefore on the development of a new inner reality, an inner perception of a state of being that can appropriately be called *'sanctity'*. The aim of every true mystic, then, is to perceive this *'Inner Holiness'* in every act of life, thereby bestowing upon the material world a purity and dignity worthy of the divine origin of all people—indeed, of all living creatures.

The mystical life is not a sudden epiphany, though there may be many such experiences leading to deep inner changes for the better. In reality, the mystical life is achieved through a long process of spiritual refinement, and the full span of the present life may be only the beginning, with many lives yet to come. Many have sought the mystical life, believing the mountain to be attained is not that far off, after all. But by far the majority have lost their way, not once but many times over. The ascetic forsakes the world and seeks only the divine. The person caught in the maelstrom of human responsibilities, and who cannot or does not wish to retire from the physical world, also seeks the divine in periods of solitude from daily affairs. Both consider the crucible of life an opportunity to temper the metal of the soul.

We seek that for which man has always sought, namely, that which we hope will bring about a union with God and a reintegration of the warring forces within ourselves.

As mystics we yearn for truth; we search for it through meditation and feel an inexpressible happiness when we discover or realise the God within. It is then for us a light, dispelling the darkness of doubt and confusion. We are able to see and love all life everywhere. Fortified with an inner serenity, we are able to meet adversity and suffering, accept them as part of the total human experience and use them as stepping-stones in our ascent toward perfection.

Humility is indispensable, being invariably the sweetest flower in the inward garden and having the most value. Genuine humility implies a profound knowledge of human psychology; it is a cloak that protects and defends true wisdom. Humility is not ignorance; rather, it is an introspective consciousness, a progressive realisation of divine unity. It prevents us from arousing envy and keeps us aware of the consequences of our own thought. Thus freed from lower-level thinking, we are protected from our own pride and vanity and realise the inner peace of tolerance and love.

Just as the disciple of mysticism has sought wisdom within silence , so have the teacher, the sage and the saint alike. Mysticism is not a dazzling light that blinds; neither is it a flickering, perishable flame that confuses the aspirant. It is a permanent, dependable light, dissolving the errors of darkness.

Mysticism Must Be Lived

Great mystics of the past did not merely write down their personal beliefs; they upheld in their thoughts, words and deeds the highest priciples of life that humans can aspire to. Their whole demeanour—what they did, what they said, who they helped and what

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kindness and compassion they showered on all who passed their way—these were the clear hallmarks of great mystics.

Some great mystics live lives of relative silence and unobtrusiveness yet leave as well great works of art in the form of paintings, musical compositions or writings from whom many generations subsequently derive inspiration. But some mystics find it difficult to remain in such obscurity in the hope that someone will discover their life's work long after they have died. They find it difficult to ignore the greater part of their being, which they feel compelled to develop in plain sight of whomever they meet. These are the so-called *'practical mystics'* who use their lives and the challenges they face and overcome in all areas to become living examples of how to find happiness and fulfillment for themselves and, more importantly, how to effectively teach others to do the same.

With the worrying rise of totalitarian states in many parts of the world, one can be forgiven for believing that the world is heading for a massive disaster. That may still happen, but we must understand that humankind is still in its infancy, able to walk but not yet able to walk responsibly. It is to be deeply regretted that, even after the awful wars we have been through in past centuries, so many people still treat life with callous disregard, like children acting out childhood fantasies of power and prestige.

The finer things in life, and those subtle, hard to nail down things that they secretly consider as their sacred, permanent values, are far too often ignored in the face of peer pressure. The trivial, transitory immediate satisfaction things of life become dominant and corrupt otherwise gentle, kind and caring people into becoming tyrants to whatever levels than can reach. In the current turbulent world of rising conflict and division, the only source of real comfort we can find comes from within us, where attunement with our concept of an all-encompasing Supreme Reality, our personalised concept of this God of all that is, is the own true life we yearn for.

Mystics from past centuries sought perfection through the practise of various sets of moral virtues, and, to varying extents, so too do mystics in our own times. A few eminent examples are *Francis of Assisi*, *John of the Cross* and *Jacob Boehme*, though there are many other such fountains of human inspiration.

Time must be allotted for regular, though temporary, withdrawal from our busy lives to retreat into our inner silence, diving deep into true meditation.

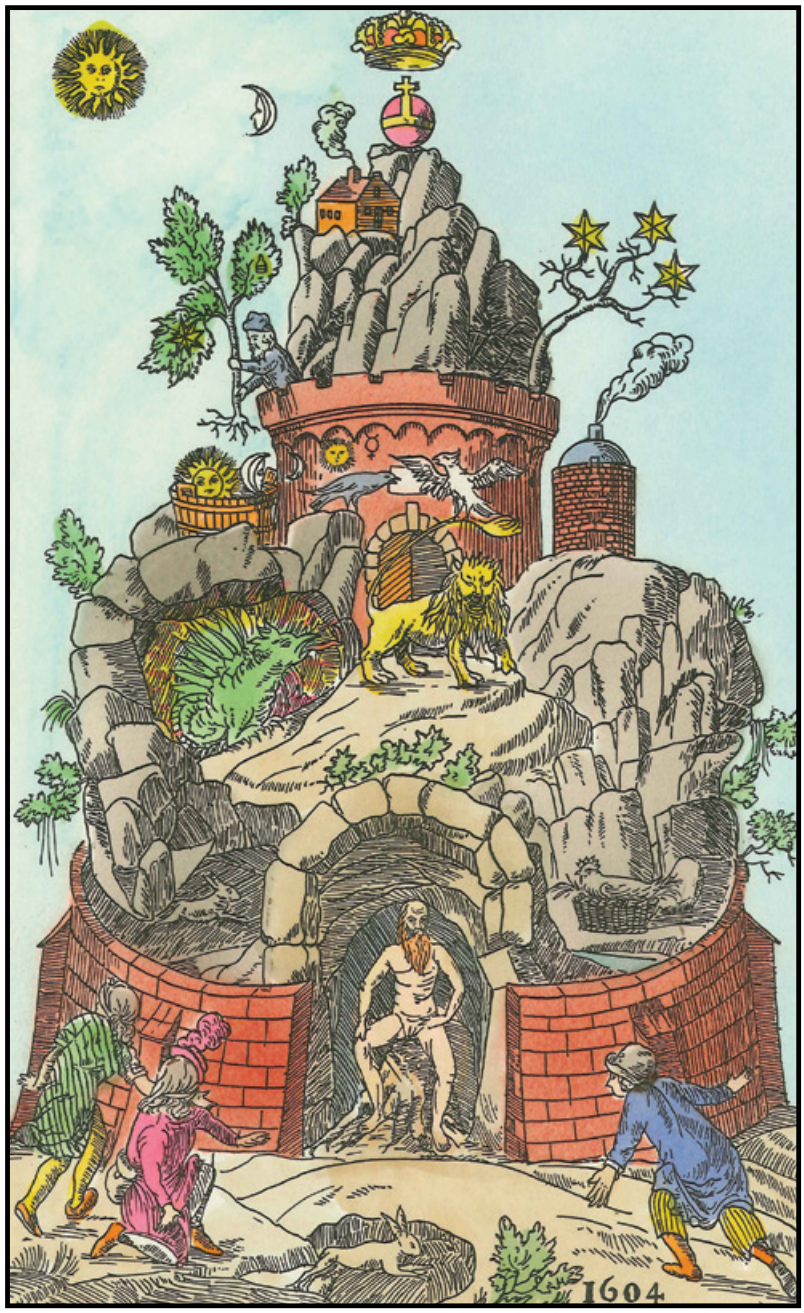
Time must be allotted for regular, though temporary, withdrawal from our busy lives to retreat into our inner silence, diving deep into true meditation. There must be gentle though firm self-discipline in the study and application of the basic principles of life and constant practise of what we consider to be *'moral and virtuous habits.'* It is our understanding of this expression that counts, and we all know that we cannot fool our Inner Self, that divine aspect of our own multifaceted being which ultimately travels with us from life to life and is ultimately, the only true guide we have. These are necessary to awaken and develop the psychic and spiritual elements of the aspirant. *"Mysticism is exalted grace"* said Plato. Saint Teresa, in describing her inner ecstasy, spoke of a *"...going within to experience the feelings of the soul; closing of the eyes, ears and mind and realising life as pure soul."*

These heights are gained by progressive discipline, and the mystic discovers that wisdom thus gained strengthens one in divine light. It girds us with spiritual power and reveals the real treasure of life: *the sublimity of the human soul.*

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The Mountain of Initiation

by **Nobilis**



Between 1785 and 1788 there was published at Altona, Germany, a work in Latin and German, entitled *'The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians of the 16th and 17th centuries'*, a colour version of which can be obtained from the Rosicrucian Order in the United Kingdom. It was published in two parts, its content arising from 17th century alchemical sources such as *Adrian von Mynsicht*, with mystical allegories by *Valentin Weigel*, and works on Jacob Boehme by *Abraham von Franckenberg*. It was an important and influential work

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of Rosicrucian ideas, though filtered through an 18th century perspective. In the preface to the edition published by AMORC in 1935, past Imperator Harvey Spencer Lewis wrote:

> I cannot recommend too strongly that each Frater and Soror of the advanced, esoteric grades of the Fraternity see to it that one copy of this rare old work be placed in the archives of each Lodge or Chapter of the Rosy Cross for future reference by the followers who from year to year *'Cross the Threshold'.*

Among the many plates contained therein was one that has become particularly well known: *Mons Philosophorum* or *Mountain of Philosophers.* It will benefit the reader if frequent reference to the accompanying illustration is made throughout the rest of this article from now on. A more descriptive title for the plate might be *The Mountain of Initiation*, for this is what it represents. Initially, this picture appears straightforward when compared with the seemingly complex emblems that accompany it throughout the rest of the work. It is an image we can feel more comfortable about without having to ponder unduly over the geometric arrangement of the symbolism that characterises the others.

An Inner Journey

At first glance one can see that the whole plate is dominated by the subject of the title, namely, a single mountain upon which are arrayed a number of objects or symbols of an alchemical nature. The mountain is surrounded at its base by a buttressed brick wall with just one entrance point that forms an arched opening into the interior of the mountain **[1]**. Three figures can be seen approaching this entrance, in the centre of which sits the *Guardian of the Threshold.* An indication of the way forward is given by the action of the *hare* (or rabbit) in the foreground bolting into a burrow. This is of some significance, for the aspirant must first sacrifice his or her self by entering the earth and, in a sense, dying before becoming spiritually reformed. The aspirant experiences an inner journey, summed up in the alchemical acrostic VITRIOL: Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem, meaning *'Visit the interior of the Earth. In purifying, you discover the hidden stone.'*



...the aspirant must first sacrifice his or her self by entering the earth and, in a sense, dying before becoming spiritually reformed.

Returning to these three figures, the one on the extreme left is blindfolded and appears to be having difficulty finding the way forward. The second figure can be seen on one knee, seemingly weighed down by a heavy purse and the plumed hat having fallen over the eyes. However, the third figure on the right appears joyful and amazed at having discovered the entrance. The date, 1604, beneath this figure is an allusion to the allegory of the discovery of the tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz. Not everyone is permitted to go to Corinth, as the saying goes

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in Horace's epistles, and it is certain that the first two figures are not ready to enter the Portal of Illumination. This idea is reinforced by the first Guardian looking only toward the third figure on the right.

The initiate now approaches the Portal and must satisfy the Guardian that he or she is sincere in his or her aspirations. At this juncture there are two symbols flanking the entrance. On the left can be seen a rabbit or hare, whilst on the right a hen sits brooding on her nest. These represent the two ways in which the initiate can approach the alchemical process of inner transformation: by the active and fleeting thoughts depicted by the hare or by the slow and patient brooding of the hen. A sexual polarity also exists between these two facets of human nature. The initiate must experience an awareness of these two polarities and then begin the important work of integrating these two aspects of his or her being.

Once this part of the work is achieved the gatekeeper allows the initiate to continue, to pass through the darkness of the passage and emerge at the piled-up rocks where the second Guardian [2] awaits. This is in the form of a fiery dragon, the representative of the unleashed instincts and desires of the aspirant. Once these aspects of the initiate's nature are conquered, he continues and finds himself on the central plateau of the mountain. The initiate is well on the way now, but there is still much to achieve.



The fiery dragon; a representative of the unleashed instincts and desires of the aspirant.

On this plateau the third Guardian [3] is encountered. There now stands before the initiate an aggressive-looking lion that represents the egoism and false spiritual pride that can afflict the aspirant at this point. Many aspects of the inner being need to be integrated before progress is made here. Having passed this third Guardian, the aspirant stands before the opening or door of the inner citadel. This is flanked by a black crow and a white eagle over the arch. These two symbols represent the experience of both sides of human nature. While the black crow allows an encounter with the dark and primeval aspects of the initiate's being, the white eagle tempers this with the experiences of spiritual wisdom it has developed.

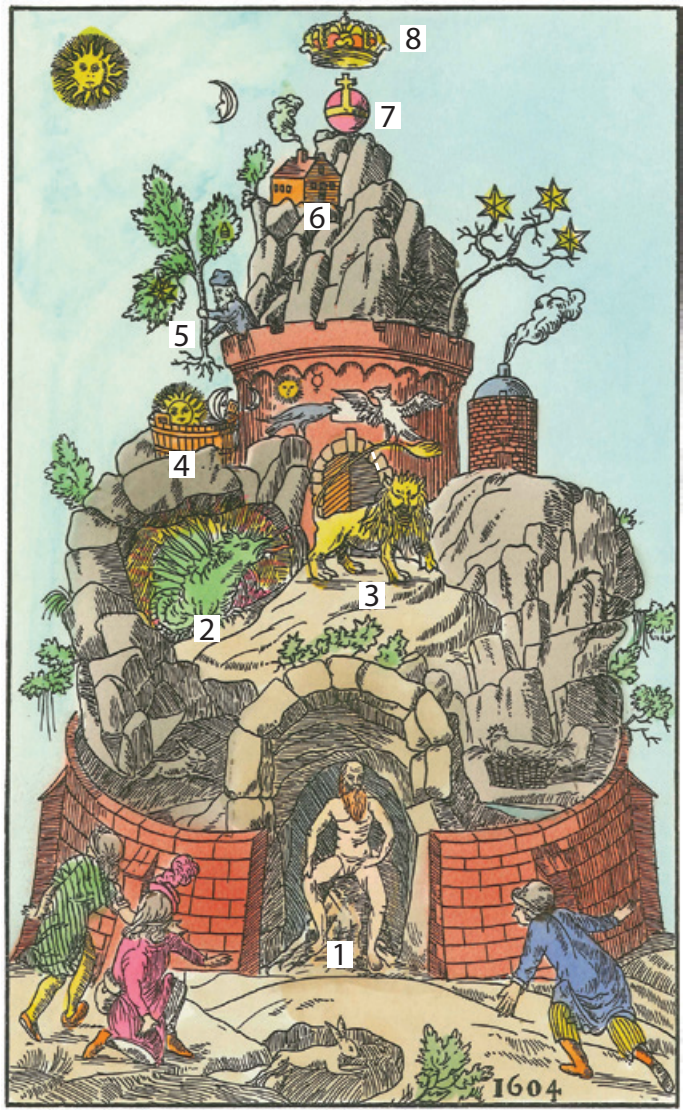
Balancing precariously on either side of the mountain are, on the left, a wooden container housing the Sun and the Moon and, on the right, a distillery with a billowing cloud of smoke or steam issuing from its chimney. The wooden tub is demonstrating a purification of the *lunar (female)* and *solar (male)* facets of human nature through a washing or lustration process. Equally, this process of purification is being performed through distillation on the right. This symbolic washing is an important part of the initiatory path, representing purification and separation from the outer dross that clings to one.

The initiate now proceeds through the door or inner portal and finds himself within the citadel,

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standing (hidden) on the rampart [5]. On the left is an old man in the act of planting a tree into the wooden tub below. This action allows the tree to extract the solar and lunar essences from below and produce the seven-pointed star (the seven planetary aspects unified) and flask (the *Philosopher's Stone* or *Quintessence*) that can be seen within the tree's canopy. On the right stands a tree, bare of foliage and leaning over the battlements, absorbing the smoke from the distillery, in which a flask, issuing vapours, can be seen. Adorning this featureless tree are three six-pointed stars, representing the principles of salt, sulphur and mercury, a further strengthening of the idea of spiritual integration of the elements of the initiate's inner self.

Looking higher up, a house is perched near the summit [6]. This is the house of the Holy Spirit, from where the advanced initiate might look out upon the world, though now with the light of spiritual knowledge attained thus far. Finally, on the peak of the mountain of initiation, there is the goal of the spiritual journey that has been undertaken. [7]. It is an orb with the symbol of *Vitriol* upon it, the final achievement of those who accomplish this



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Finally, on the peak of the mountain of initiation, there is the goal of the spiritual journey that has been undertaken.

inner exploration. This is reinforced by the symbol of the Crown [8], suspended in the air above it, signifying spiritual attainment.

Sevenfold Aspect

There is a sevenfold nature to this image. This can be seen in the seven stages that the initiate has to pass, each of which corresponds to one of the seven planetary aspects of the initiate's inner being. These stages are, in turn: [1] the Gatekeeper or Guardian of the Threshold, together with the polarities of the hare and the hen (*Venus*); [2] the Dragon or second Guardian (*Saturn*); [3] the Lion or third Guardian, together with the polarities of the black crow and the white eagle (*Sun*); [4] the dual aspects of purification through washing, represented by the Sun and the Moon in the tub and in the distillery (*Moon*); [5] the old man planting the tree and the tree bearing the three principles of salt, sulphur and mercury (*Mars*); [6] the House of the Holy Spirit (*Mercury*); [7] the Orb of nitre with its Vitriol sign (*Jupiter*). These are the seven key stages, and if we include [8] the Crown (*Venus* again) an octave is formed, with [1] (the Guardian) pairing with [8] (the Crown), completing the octave and attaing a new beginning.

The use of a mountain to represent the upward journey toward attainment tends to be universal throughout history. The *Divine Comedy* of Dante, for example, was a great initiatory drama of the Middle Ages that incorporated this element in the form of *Mount Purgatory*. This also consisted of seven stages or steps, each corresponding to one of the *'Seven Deadly Sins.'*

Function and Use

It is clear that this whole image is an allegory of the inner journey of the initiatory process. Throughout the different stages can be seen a reflection of what is happening within the Seeker of Light. Thus, by its nature, this emblem can make a rewarding meditative or contemplative object, and this was the original intention of its creator. When an alchemical emblem was constructed, it was intended for it to be read by those who were knowledgeable or sufficiently worthy to do this. Following on, then, modern Rosicrucians may find it beneficial to engage with images such as these. The method is to begin by observing the image for some time and impressing it upon the memory. Once this is accomplished to a degree, reflect on the different stages of the journey. The next step would be to enter the Celestial Sanctum in the manner that you are familiar with and make a visualised ascent of the Mountain of Initiation. You can begin by imagining yourself before the first portal, ready to encounter the Guardian of the Threshold.

It is clear that this whole image is an allegory of the inner journey of the initiatory process.

Postscript

Emblems such as this can never lose their value, for they are imbued with centuries of esoteric wisdom. As such, they are timeless and worthy of the modern aspirant's attention.

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Buddha in Nirvana, Kamakura period, 13th century, wood - Tokyo National Museum

by **Paul Doyle**

PARINIRVANA

After long periods of hardship and struggle with the vicissitudes of life, some people arrive at the conclusion that all existence is ultimately completely futile—so futile in fact that there is no purpose in following rules, laws, norms, morals, beliefs, etc., for it all ends at death, and after that there are no further consequences. This nihilistic view is certainly not shared by the majority of people, but for a small minority life certainly leads to such a conclusion.

We all have our frustrations with ideals that we cherish but cannot reach, at least not easily or affordably. The success of an enterprise is often not experienced within the timeframe we have set to accomplish what we set out to, and frustration levels rise. As we age we become more and more

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aware of our diminishing powers of both the intellect and physical stamina, and that puts the coveted achievement of an enterprise we started years ago just that bit further out of our reach. The end of life offers primarily decrepitude, disease and ultimately death. We cannot escape it! For most people, this last transition from the living to who knows where brings with it an instinctive fear of the future. And as old age comes nearer and nearer, the perceived ordeal ahead takes on a terrifying aspect for the person. What if that's it, nothing more happens, life ends and there is no more thought, perception, consciousness? To escape this existence, to hope for something that affords a compensation for the vicissitudes of mortal life, to find some semblance of universal justice in the Universe and its operation—these have been and remain the greatest hopes and dreams of humanity.

It is in these very contemplations of life that the doctrines of Gautama Buddha took firm root. The Indians in the 6th century BCE had come to realise that to be subject to birth was to be subject to decay and death. They had discovered that there is nothing anyone can do in a material or intellectual way that would grant them immunity from such a process. Those who were reborn, regardless of their social status or other earthly fortunes, would be chained to the process and to its eventual consequence.

By becoming eventually eternal and perfect, and by residing in the essence of one's origin, the necessity of rebirth would end.

The true salvation, according to the teaching of the holy man of India, was that all humans were on a great wheel of life and death, evolving from one life form to another constantly, on and on through aeons of time from life to life, and ultimately headed towards acquiring an eternal form of universal personality. By becoming eventually eternal and perfect, and by residing in the essence of one's origin, the necessity of rebirth would end.

With that final realisation one would descend from the wheel of life and death and remain in conscious union with the infinite forever after. The actual phrase that was used was *'reappearing in the mother's womb'.* This alluded to the primary source from which all humans came, not only in the physical sense but in the spiritual sense as well.

In Buddhism, nirvana is the final physical death.

It is in our realisation of the contingent character of birth and death, and especially the suffering attendant to them, that this quest for spirituality emerges. Religion consists of certain innate feelings stemming from the psychic and their relationship with the exterior world. The insecurity of the world contributes to the search for a permanent ground, for some sort of Absolute, where stability and emancipation from suffering can be attained. The Buddha is related to have said:

> Having been myself subject to the contingency of birth and experiencing its unpleasantness, I have sought for nirvana which is without such contingencies, which is unsurpassed and secure from the worldly yoke, and I have obtained it.

Toward the close of his life, he is reported as having said:

> Sure is my final emancipation; this is the last birth, there is no longer the possibility of rebirth.

In Buddhism, nirvana is the final physical death. It is the consummation of earthly existence prior to that final emancipation of which parinirvana consists. Of course, not every mortal who dies experiences

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parinirvana, unless he or she has attained the high state of consciousness of which nirvana consists. In Buddhism, it is taught that we must experience rebirth until our consciousness is so evolved as to no longer necessitate its return to mortal life. Then we are no longer subject to suffering and the evanescence of pleasures.

Parinirvana, then, comes only to those who have prepared themselves for it by first attaining nirvana. One who experiences this nirvana, this last death, is said to *'expire like a burning lamp (after exhaustion of fuel and wick)'*. Actually, the beginning of parinirvana is realised at the end of the last cycle of conscious existence, namely the previous incarnation. Thera Anruddha describes Buddha's passing (nirvana) in these words:

> There was then no process of respiration to be noticed in the organism of the great saint, whose mind was unshaken, steadily concentrated, and was in its peacefulness when he expired. With an unperturbed mind he bore the pangs of death. Just as fire extinguishes in the exhaustion of all materials of burning, in the same way his consciousness became completely emancipated.

Parinirvana is the ultimate goal of the Buddhist.

The Goal of the Buddhist

But just what is this state that is eternal and stops the wheel of rebirth? Literally translated, the word parinirvana means *'going out'*. This, however, is not very informative except in the sense of meaning release of the consciousness from the world. But parinirvana, as we have noted, has a more profound and embracing significance. Broadly, it is an escape to the unborn, the formless. We are told that nirvana is:

> ...the subsidence of all predispositions toward the form of creation, the relinquishment of all ideas of belongings, the extinction of all desire, the dispassion, and the cessation of the ultimate.



Parinirvana of the Buddha, Gandhara, 3rd century CE.

This constitutes a series of negations, of not being this or that of mortal existence. It is a condition of nescience or unknowing, but still there is the question of what kind of reality parinirvana is.

The Buddha, it is recounted, was often asked whether parinirvana was a state of existence or non-existence; whether it was neither existence nor non-existence; or whether it was both existence and non-existence. The Buddha never answered these questions in a direct manner. It was not that he sought to evade the question, but the content of

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parinirvana was so indefinable, so inexplicable, that in his opinion it did not fall into the category of any form of enquiry.

To the sages of Jainism, parinirvana is unlike the extinction of a lamp flame, for it is not the annihilation of the soul. Many Western minds, especially followers of other religions, such as Christianity, are inclined to think of nirvana and parinirvana as being the extinction of soul. The Jains say instead that it is a transcendent state of the human soul. It is a state of the soul which has risen and remains eternally emancipated from passion, hatred, birth, disease and decay. Their philosophical explanation is that the soul has reached a state where all causes cease to be. In other words, it is no longer motivated by desires from which the passions, sensuality and suffering emerge.



Looking at the subject of parinirvana from the psychological point of view, it is a state of pure consciousness, but without personality.

Looking at the subject of parinirvana from the psychological point of view, it is a state of pure consciousness but without personality. It is a condition of sensitivity yet one which is amorphous, without form or image. In parinirvana there are no ideas corresponding to or suggesting any kind of reality. Obviously, this is difficult to comprehend. How can one be conscious and yet not be conscious of something?

Nirvana is a kind of unconsciousness. In modern psychology we speak of the unconscious, but we do so only in relation to the objectively conscious mind, as well the subjective or subconscious processes of the mind. Even so, we conceive of the unconscious state as being one in which something akin to simple awareness exists. But in parinirvana the consciousness is without personality and without an image of any kind. It is, we can only assume, just a vital potential, an energy, pure being, with no illusion of reality associated with it.

Since the consciousness to which parinirvana alludes has no organism and no processes, it can have no experiences as we think of the word, no sensations, no ideas. Consequently, no terms can be formulated in parinirvana; no quality, feelings or desires may be had, for parinirvana is free of all such contingencies. Words attributed to Buddha, though probably added centuries later to the collection of his sayings, describe this state as:

> Where water, earth, heat and air do not find footing, there no light burns, and the sun does not shine, the moon does not shed her radiant beams and darkness does not exist.

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From the mystical conception, parinirvana is the unity of the individual expression of consciousness with the whole cosmic stream. It is not that the individual consciousness has ever lost its contact or ever would lose its contact with the Cosmic Consciousness but that, in parinirvana, it is no longer obliged to have its expression in matter. On the other hand, personality is completely annihilated, for the parinirvana state is a oneness of being, all being. However there must be some realisation, some ecstasy, something that makes that state sought after in preference to mortal existence. Those who seek to attain parinirvana are at least possessed of that desire.



Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975), an eminent Indian philosopher and statesman.

From the mystical conception, parinirvana is the unity of the individual expression of consciousness with the whole cosmic stream.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975), an eminent Indian philosopher and statesman, described parinirvana as follows:

> Perfection is then the sense of oneness with all that is, has ever been and can be. The horizon of being is extended to the limits of reality. It is therefore not correct to say that the dewdrop slips into the shining sea; it is nearer to the truth to speak of the shining sea invading the dewdrop. There is here no sense of loss, but of infinite expansion when, foregoing all, the universe grows.



This latter notion of parinirvana parallels the mystical conception of Cosmic Consciousness, the only difference being that, in the latter case, one need not pass through transition to experience this exalted state of consciousness. It too consists of a sense of oneness with all being. The individual is not lost but feels that his or her being and all of reality are en rapport.

Further, Cosmic Consciousness is not without its gratifications, its beatitudes, its ecstasies, which are unlike anything that our objective experience creates. However, one can return from a momentary state of Cosmic Consciousness again to confront life, and one may live with it. Cosmic Consciousness does not make one immune to suffering or desire, but the noetic experience received, the insight or illumination which one receives from Cosmic Consciousness, causes the individual to have a more intelligent approach and adjustment to life. Such then leads to a renunciation of many habits that would ordinarily contribute to suffering and unhappiness.

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Creed for happiness

I shall begin each morning unafraid, and shall seek the wonderful gift that the day will bring. I shall be guided by intelligence rather than belief, and shall see truth and ignore no fact. I shall control my thoughts and guide them into the highest realm, holding my cherished ambitions and sacred ideals uppermost in my mind.

Throughout the day I shall enjoy all the beauty of my surroundings. I shall glory in my associations and aspire to the exaltation that comes with love of God and of Humanity.

I shall forgive freely before forgiveness is asked. I shall harbour ill thoughts toward no-one. I shall fulfil every trust. I shall remain poised and serene in every trial, and face each emergency without fear.

I shall be friendly and courteous toward all. To me each day will be one of kindly deeds and unselfish love. I shall obey those in authority and give loyalty to all to whom loyalty is due. I shall be clean in body, action and thought. I shall revere my God and have the utmost respect for the religious convictions of my fellows.

To obtain the most from life I shall give the best that I can give. At all times will I enthrone service and eliminate the motive of gain. I shall perform each task cheerfully. I shall build and not destroy.

And so will I come to the end of each day with the satisfaction brought by service, serenity, kindness and love. I shall go to my rest with the peace that comes from an untroubled mind and the memory of tasks well done.



There is a soft sadness in the passing of time, a melancholy such as touches autumn days when leaves fall and nature is filled with winter's imminence and dear, dear sleep of the gentlest sort approaches our end of days.

'Time's winged chariot' is ever at our backs and seems to hurry near. Not that one feels older, for inside the same eyes look out and ponder the world. But when old friends come by, the streaks of grey, the lines around the eyes and the stoop of a spine once erect make plain that what has happened to them will one day happen to us too.

It is strange that we should all grow old and that time affects what we feel to be our inmost self. Maybe we judge too much by the grey and the lines and too little by the feeling.

After the first stab of realisation of passing time, we may observe that friends have not really changed; underneath, they are the same recognisable personalities despite the repeating cycles of the years. Let the grey, the colours and the lines be forgotten. Let experience, patience, tolerance and peace be the intangible marks we recognise.

And if there be a soul, these things will surely be of it. If we take with us what we do not leave behind, then these things will march forward with us. Why go back a day? Why should the river not press to the sea? Why should spring not come again or the flower return to the seed, or the leaf to the branch, or the egg to the nest?

And down the incarnations, greeting old friends, we are driven, through unfathomable love, to say from the depths of our being...

> Why, you are here, and you have not changed! The flower has left its seed and has returned. The intangible that ever was still is. Your beauty, enhanced in repetition, makes you lovelier than ever.



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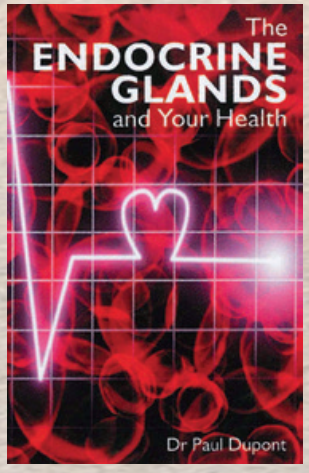
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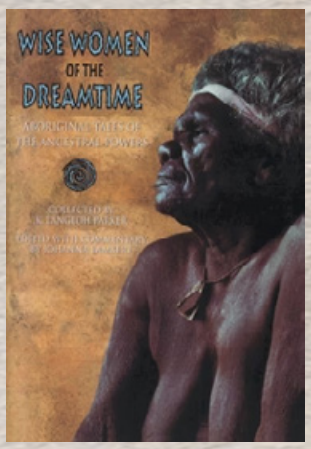
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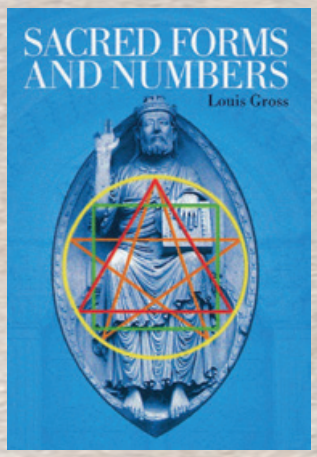
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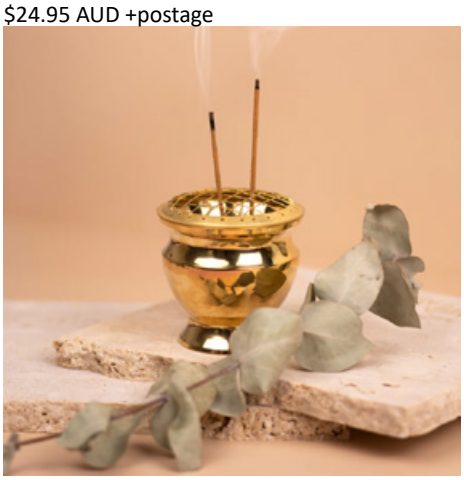


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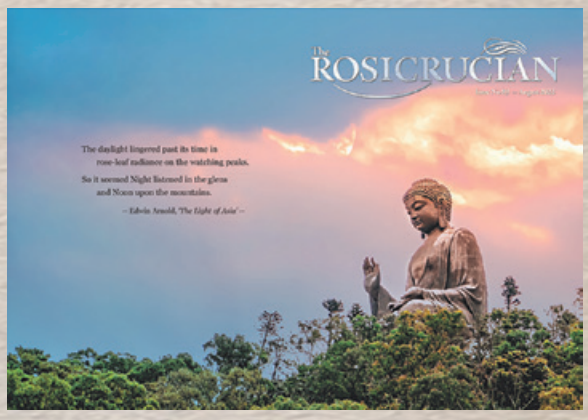
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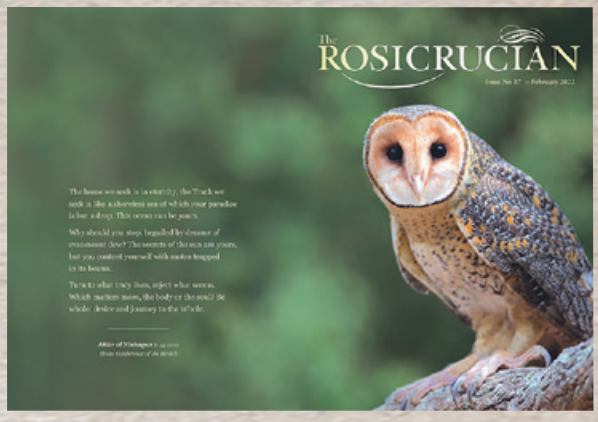
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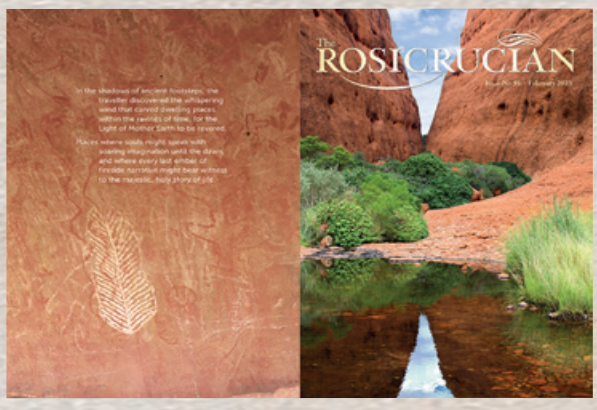
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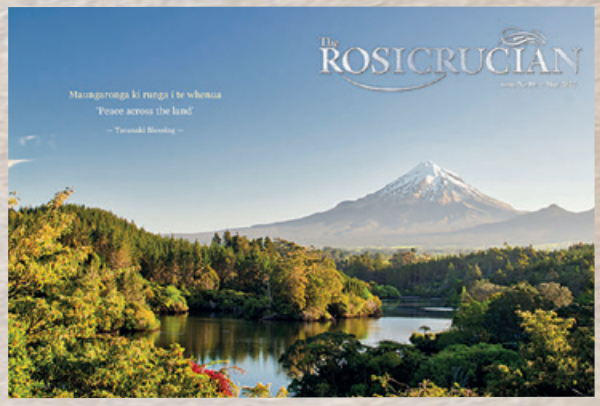












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The curtain raised,
And in silent anticipation,
Eternity spoke:
“Prepare for your
transformation through art!”
And nature replied:
"When I am touched by the eyes of a soul
I shall lift my veil!”