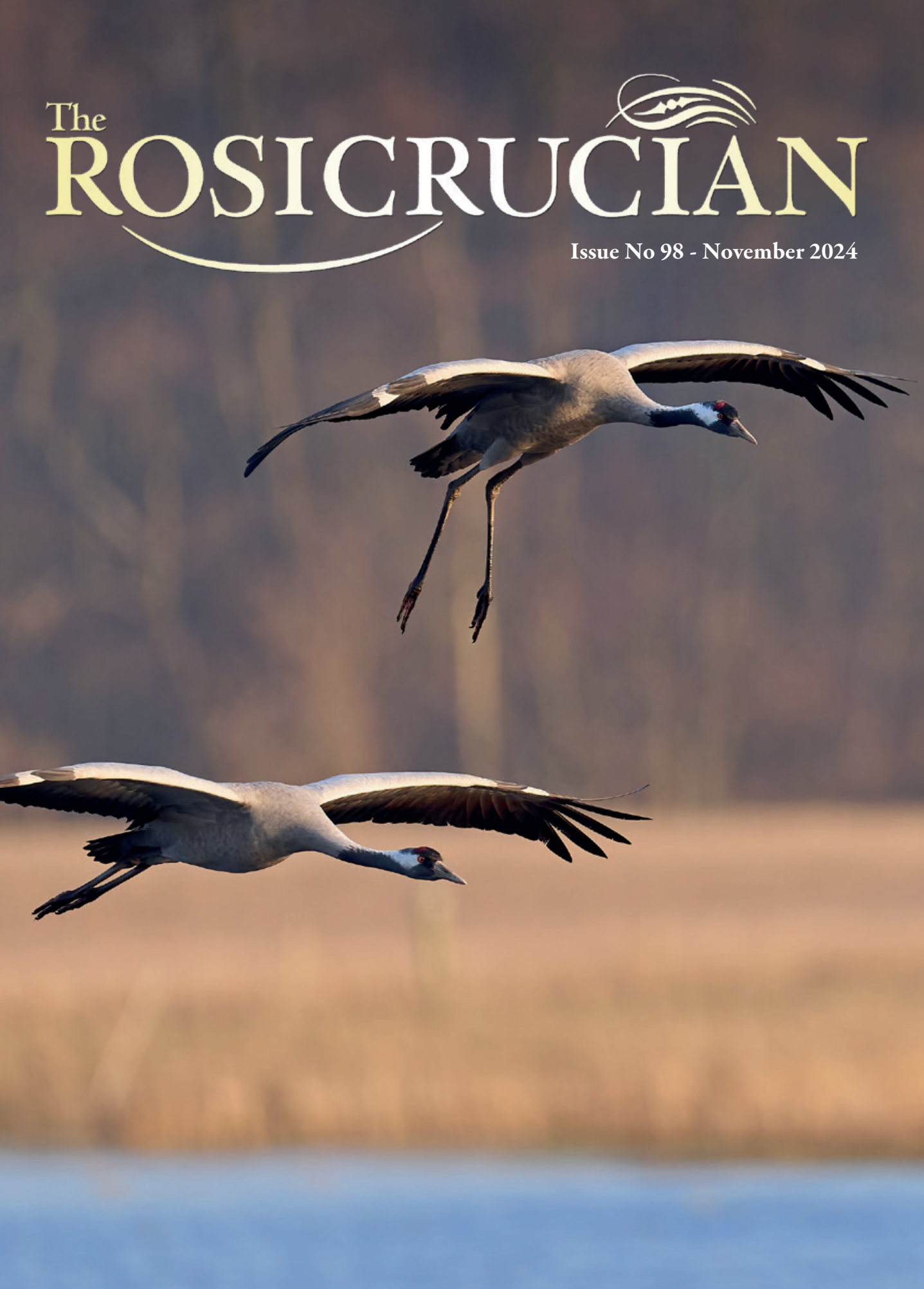
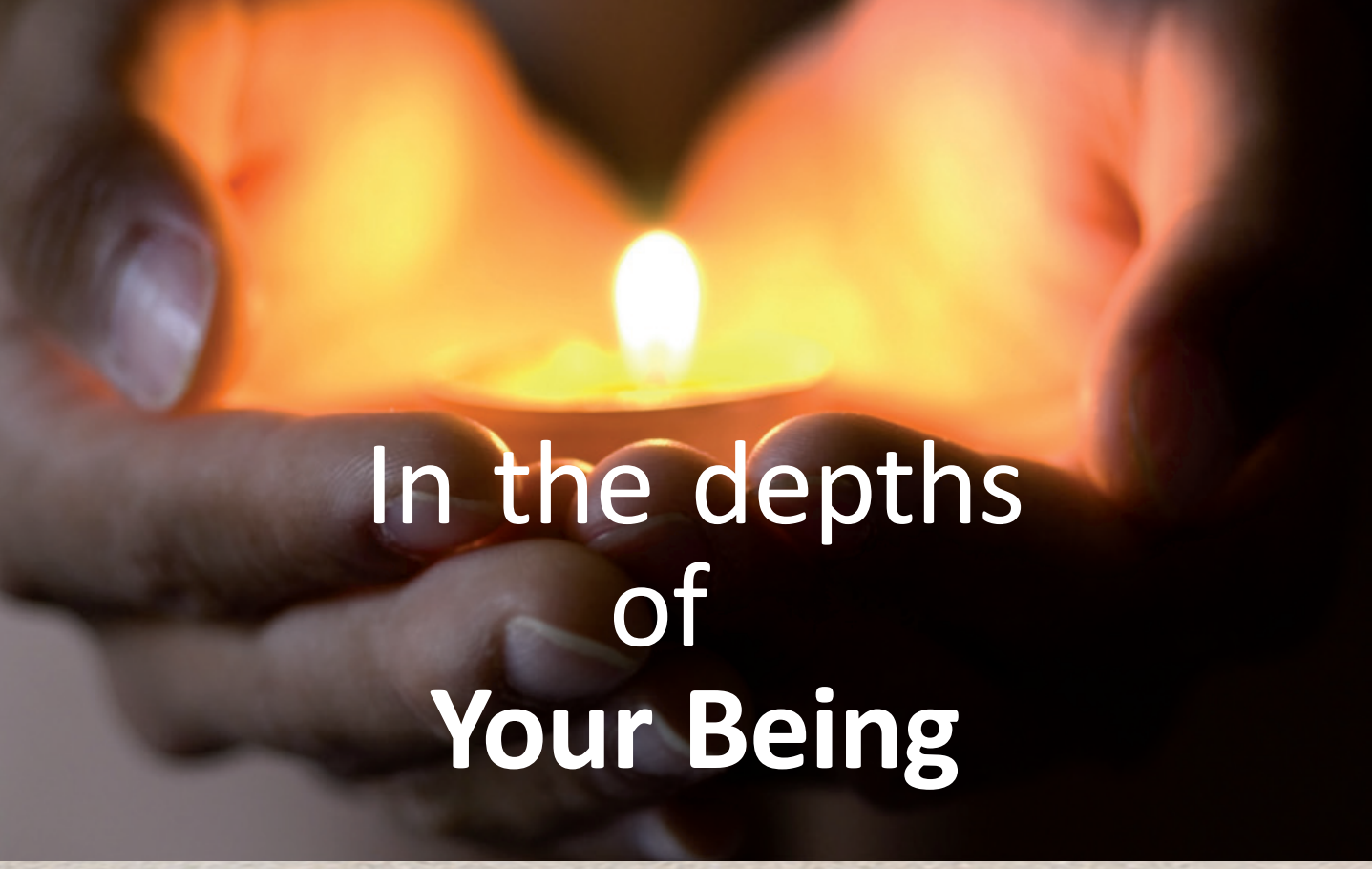
The ROSICRUCIAN

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In the depths of Your Being

In the depths of your being resides your deeper Self, an aspect of your being which breathes in calm reflection the very rhythm of the universe. It is in touch with all things and communicates with all that matters for life on Earth. It seeks to instruct and guide its human ward how to live a good life, and does so with care for its wellbeing, and above all, with love and compassion for all expressions of life.

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

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

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

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

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

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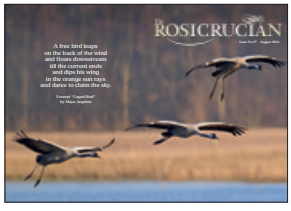
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Demoiselle Cranes (Grus Virgo) naturally live in wetlands, yet each year these delicate water birds, in their thousands, follow an extraordinary inner calling to carry out an epic journey. They must scale up to 26,000 feet of the formidable peaks of the Himalaya when they migrate from China and Mongolia to reach their wintering grounds in India, where, in villages such as Khichan (in Rajasthan), they are venerated by the Jain community, who feed them a portion of their scarce crops.



Yalda

by **Roshan Ushah**

istock.com / lovleah

The word *'Yalda'* is believed to be Syriac in origin, having been imported into the Persian language by Syriac Christians. It is taken to mean *'birth'.* The *Shab-e yalda* (*Night of Birth*) is celebrated in the northern hemisphere at the winter solstice on 21 December (midsummer in the southern hemisphere). Yalda, in different guises, has been celebrated in countless cultures for thousands of years. The ancient Roman festivals of Saturnalia (after Saturn, the god of agriculture) and Sol Invictus (the solar deity) are among the best-known in the Western world.

In most ancient cultures, including Persia, the start of the solar year was chosen to celebrate the victory of light over darkness and the renewal of the Sun. Light, day and sunshine were assumed to be the signs of order and the form of *Ahura Mazda*; whereas night, darkness and cold were seen as the signs of *Ahriman* (the evil spirit). Watching the changes in the length of days and nights made people believe that light and darkness, or day and night, are in continuous battle. Light's victory resulted in longer days, whereas the victory

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of darkness meant longer nights. The increase in the warmth and light of the sun following the first night of winter (the longest night of the year) was perceived then as the rebirth of the sun.

In the East

The Persians adopted their annual renewal festival from the Babylonians and incorporated it into the rituals of their own Zoroastrian religion. The last day of the Persian month of *Âzar* is the longest night of the year, when the forces of Ahriman are assumed to be at their peak, while the next day, the first day of the month of *Dey*, known as *Khor-e ruz* (the day of the sun), belongs to Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom. Since the days are getting longer and the nights shorter, this day marks the victory of the sun over darkness. The occasion was celebrated in the festival of *Deygan*, dedicated to Ahura Mazda, on the first day of the month of *Dey*.

Fires would be burned all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of Ahriman. There would be feasts, acts of charity and a number of deities honoured and prayers performed to ensure the total victory of the sun that was essential for the protection of winter crops. There would be prayers recited to Mithras and feasts in his honour since Mithras is the Immortal, responsible for protecting the light of dawn. He was the preserver of Truth and Cosmic Order.

unsplash / maxim tajer



Persians would burn fires all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of Ahriman.



Painting by Antoine Callet, depicting the ancient Roman festival of Saturnalia.

One of the themes of the festival was the temporary subversion of order. Masters and servants reversed roles: the king, dressed in white, would change place with ordinary people. A mock king was crowned and masquerades spilled into the streets. As the old year died, rules of ordinary living were relaxed. This tradition persisted until the Sassanid period, and it is mentioned by the famous Muslim scientist *Al-Biruni* (973–1048), amongst others, in his recordings of pre-Islamic rituals and festivals. Its origin goes back to the *Isinnu Akitu*, the Babylonian New Year celebration, which took place at the spring equinox. These people believed the first creation was order that came out of chaos. To appreciate and celebrate the first creation they had a festival and all roles were reversed. Disorder and chaos ruled for a day and eventually order was restored and succeeded at the end of the festival.

In the West

Ancient Egyptian and Persian traditions merged in Ancient Rome in a festival called the Saturnalia, dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture. The year

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ended with a great holiday of peace and goodwill that started on 17 December and lasted for several days. The Romans exchanged gifts, had parties and decorated their homes with greenery. Following the Persian tradition, the usual order of the year was suspended. Grudges and quarrels would be forgotten and wars interrupted or postponed. Shops, law courts and schools were closed. Everyone dressed in loose holiday clothes and wore soft caps on their heads—which reminds us of the paper hats we wear at Christmas dinner. Rich and poor became equal, and masters waited on their slaves at meals. There were merriments of all kinds, as parents gave toys to their children, families went to the homes of friends and other family members, and candles and lamps were lit to chase away the spirits of darkness.

Another related Roman festival, celebrated at the same time, was dedicated to Sol Invictus (the Invincible Sun), originally a title of the god *Mithras*, whose cult was imported into Rome by *Emperor Aurelian* in 274 CE. Sol was made the state god, with his birthday on 25 December. A world state needed a world religion, and Aurelian wanted to weave together the main religious strands of East and West into a united, cosmopolitan and universal faith. However, with the spread of Christianity, the Christmas celebration became the most important Christian festival.

By the 3rd century CE, various dates in December to April were celebrated by Christians as Christmas. January 6th was the most favoured day because it was believed to be Jesus' Epiphany (still celebrated by some orthodox churches as Christmas). However, in 350 CE, 25 December was adopted in Rome as Christmas, and gradually almost the entire Christian church converted to that date, which incidentally coincided with the winter solstice and the various pagan festivals, *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*, *Saturnalia* and *Mithras*. Many of the rituals and traditions of these pagan festivals were incorporated into the Christmas celebration and are still observed to this day.



The Romans exchanged gifts, had parties and decorated their homes with greenery.

pexels / mattycphoto

Time of Renewal

With the conquest of Islam the religious significance of the Ancient Persian festivals was lost, but Yalda is still considered a time of renewal. Today, in Iran, Yalda is merely a social occasion when family and friends get together for fun and merriment and different kinds of dried fruits, nuts, seeds and fresh winter fruits are consumed. The presence of dried and fresh fruits is reminiscent of the ancient feasts that celebrated and prayed to the deities to ensure the protection of the winter crops.

The winter solstice on 21 or 22 December is the longest night of the year. In Iran, it is the night of *Shab-e yalda*, which celebrates the birthday or rebirth of the sun. This night may be considered unlucky in Iran, but from this particular day forward Light triumphs as the days grow longer and generate more light.

Modern Rosicrucians also celebrate this time of year with their Festival of Light in December, where, following ancient tradition, we send positive thoughts to all humankind and visualise the deep bonds of friendship between men and women of all races and nationalities.

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by **Rodrigo Sanchez**

Jacaranda Trees

Beautiful & Medicinal



istock.com / Elena Pochesneva

The city of Pretoria in South Africa is famous for its avenues of beautiful jacaranda trees, hence its nickname of *Jacaranda City*. I was fortunate to travel there a few years ago when the trees were in full bloom in spring. Coming around a wide bend on the modern freeway leading to the city, I was astounded to see below me a city completely bathed in the purple colour of the flowers of this wonderful tree.

The time of year, September and October, coincided with the end-of-year exams at the University of Pretoria. During my two-month lecture tour of this and two other universities, students told me that if a jacaranda flower drops onto a student's head they will pass the upcoming exams with flying colours, guaranteed! As I marked many of those exam papers, I doubted that the flowers had worked, though. It was virtually impossible to walk anywhere in the city and its suburbs without jacaranda flowers dropping around one almost constantly. Everyone should have passed with flying colours, but it was not to be.

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A jacaranda tree-lined street in Pretoria, South Africa.

The sidewalks and street verges, covered in purple carpets of spent flowers, were a feast for any tree-lover's eyes and a special treat for the nose, as the jacaranda has a strong yet delicately soothing scent.

The jacaranda is a genus of 49 species of flowering subtropical plants from the family of Bignoniaceae, native to the tropical and subtropical regions of Central and South America as well as islands of the Caribbean. Today it can be found in virtually all subtropical parts of the world. It is extremely popular, not only because of its singular beauty but also due to its reputed medicinal properties.

The word *'jacaranda'* is believed to derive from the native Guaraní words *'haku'* (meaning *perfume*) and *'renda'* (meaning *place*), resulting in the name *hakurenda*. The trees live for up to 100 years and are ideal for urban areas because of their high resistance to pollution. However, they are not so good for parking your car under, as they constantly shed tiny droplets of a sticky, sugary substance that's extraordinarily difficult to clean off. But what a small price to pay for such spectacular beauty, not to mention the plants' many healing properties!

Worldwide

Of course, Pretoria isn't the only city to be graced with jacaranda trees, and in my home city of Mexico City the jacarandas make a spectacular view in the streets and parks. Their presence, thousands of trees, completely transforms the ambience of the Paseo de la Reforma, the wide avenue running through the heart of the city. The sweet scent from these trees helps me to relax and find moments of quiet and tranquillity during my spring walks as the flowers gently rain down.

Jacarandas can also be found in great numbers in the warmer parts of eastern Australia; southern Africa, including Zimbabwe and Zambia; Hawaii; southern California; the southeastern USA; and parts of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. It has also been planted widely in other countries such as Nepal, New Zealand, Israel, Italy, Portugal and Spain, particularly in Malaga. The town of Grafton, in northern New South Wales, Australia, is also famous for its jacarandas. Each year, in late October and early November, the city has a Jacaranda Festival during the period of maximum flowering.

Living Trees

It is estimated that there are 120 species of trees and shrubs belonging to the jacaranda genus. The trees are deciduous and need a sunny area with well-drained, preferably sandy soil; grass should be prevented from growing near or under them. An adult jacaranda tree can reach a height of 20 metres, depending on the conditions.

Jacaranda mimosifolia is fast growing and regrows easily if damaged. Its bark, which is thin and grey-brown in colour, is smooth when the tree is young and eventually becoming finely scaly. The twigs are slender, slightly zigzag and light reddish-brown in colour.

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The trees' spectacular, fragrant, lavender-blue blooms have led to their popularity as an ornamental tree. The tubular flowers are 2½ centimetres long and appear in dense 15–25 centimetre clusters, with often the entire tree in flower before the blooms fall to the ground, carpeting it in purple-blue hues. The fleshy blossoms have a mild, sweet, honey smell, and when they are stepped on they tend to smear and make pavements slippery. They are a joy to all except the drivers who may park underneath them and come back to find their cars covered in lavender flowers and a coating of sticky excretions from the tree.

Medicinal Properties of the Jacaranda

While not a substitute for allopathic medicine, the tree is used to treat hepatitis. In folk tradition, the flowers, leaves and bark are used to ease neuralgia and varicose veins. The jacaranda is efficient in treating a wide range of bacterial infections. As about one-third of the world's population is allergic to penicillin, which is the primary drug used in fighting many diseases, it is beneficial to have an option offered by the *jacaranda mimosifolia*.

The jacaranda is efficient in treating a wide range of bacterial infections.

Extracts are also used to treat mental health issues and epilepsy. The tree has antiseptic and antibiotic qualities: hot jacaranda-leaf baths treat wounds and skin infections and are said to help in the treatment of acne.

The method of using jacarandas varies. Some healers use distilled essential oils derived from the leaves, while others use oils from the bark and the seeds (which look like a cross between a tiny turtle shell and a nut). Others use a water extract of any of these parts, for either internal or external use.

Drinking a blend of the jacaranda root can induce sweating, which helps to expel toxins from the body and stimulates the immune system through perspiration. A syrup made from the roots is also used to aid in liver conditions, skin inflammations, haemorrhoids and detoxification of the blood because of its diuretic and diaphoretic properties. The daily dose is four ounces.

Due to the strong antiseptic properties of parts of the tree, various decoctions have been used for thousands of years by Native American healers, in the form of external washes to treat acne, syphilis, varicose veins, chickenpox, sores and superficial wounds. Another option is the use of infusions of 30 grams of leaves per litre of water to treat the aforementioned illnesses, as well as rheumatism, anaemia (lack of iron), the viral forms of mouth ulcers, and the immune system overdrive that results in some forms of psoriasis. The daily dose is 130 grams of infused leaves per litre of water.

Not least of all, the graceful jacaranda, garlanding many streets in subtropical and warmer temperate cities for two months of the year with its clusters of fragrant lavender-blue flowers, is an intense blossom experience that compels the gaze and lifts the spirits. As Professor Jonathan Drori, author of *Around the World in 80 Trees*, puts it:

> To those impoverished souls for whom gladness needs further justification, street trees should be regarded as a great investment. Ample research demonstrates their contribution to air quality, urban cooling, flood prevention, good mental health and community cohesion: a profusion of benefits far outweighing their cost.

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Edith Piaf
The Little Sparrow

by **Nomis Rassac**

Edith Piaf was born Edith Giovanna Gassion, in Paris on 19 December 1915, on the steps of a building in Belleville, a poor district of Paris. Her mother, a 17-year-old singer, soon abandoned her, and her father, a street acrobat, enlisted to fight in World War I and sent Edith to live with her paternal grandmother, who happened to be the matron of a brothel. It was in this far-from-ideal environment that she was brought up.

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Edith Piaf (centre).

Piaf became one of France's most famous and beloved singer-songwriters. As a singer, performer and actress, she was one France's most widely known international artists. She became famous for her ballads, many of them tragic and brooding and some of them reflecting the hard knocks she endured throughout her life. But what is seldom mentioned is that she had a secret, '*mon secret*', which was her devotion to deep spiritual and humanitarian ideals, a side of her that runs like a golden thread from beginning to end.

She became famous for her ballads, many of them tragic and brooding...

Due to contracting *keratitis*, an inflammation of the clear cornea, in both her eyes between the ages of three to seven, the vulnerable child Edith was almost totally blind. In desperation to help her, the prostitutes in her grandmother's salon pooled their savings and took her on a pilgrimage to the shrine of *Saint Therese of Lisieux*. It was here that her blindness was miraculously cured, and this was for Edith the deciding moment of change in her life. In 1928, at age 13, the diminutive Edith finally left the relative safety of the brothel and joined her father as a street performer, where she first began to sing in public. During this time she met her half-sister, *Simone Berteaut*, who became her constant companion for the rest of her life. In 1932 she fell in love with *Louis Dupont* and, at the age of 17, gave birth to her only child, her daughter Marcelle, who tragically died of meningitis a few years later, a loss that deeply affected Piaf.

Aged 19, singing in the Pigalle area of Paris, in 1935 Piaf was 'discovered' by nightclub owner Louis Leplee, who persuaded her to sing in his club. Her diminutive size of four foot and eight inches (1.42m) and her nervousness inspired him to affectionately call her *'La Môme Piaf'*, 'The Little Sparrow'. Within a year, Edith met the songwriter *Marguerite Monnot,* who wrote many of the songs that made Piaf famous. Her collaboration with Leplee and Monnot was a long and successful one. The year 1935 was the definitive start of Piaf's career.



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Edith's raw, emotional singing drew crowds and soon she had a devoted following of admirers. During the occupation of France in World War II, she sang at some of Paris' top brothels, which were reserved for German officials and high officials of the Vichy government. Turning down an order to entertain officers of an occupying force was something very few people would dare to do, and so too it was for Edith. Because of this, some labelled her a collaborator, but she also sang at a few prisoner-of-war camps in Germany and was thought to have been instrumental in helping around 300 prisoners escape from one of them. Indeed, at her funeral she received the highest honour from the French government when the tricolour flag was draped over her coffin in recognition of her assistance in enabling those prisoners to escape.

Her raw, emotional singing drew crowds and soon she had a devoted following of admirers.

Piaf's 'secret', that is, her firmly held spiritual beliefs, stayed with her throughout her life. In 1955, in her 40th year, she joined the Rosicrucian Order and remained devoted to its broad spiritual and humanistic ideals for the rest of her short life. In 1957, while on tour in San Francisco, she travelled to Rosicrucian Park in San Jose, where she was welcomed by her Rosicrucian brothers and sisters. The hardships of her life, the early loss of her daughter, addictions to drugs and alcohol, and her many difficult relationships with men were all made more bearable by allowing her spirituality to support and guide her through the difficult times.

On 10 October 1963, when Edith was in her 48th year, she passed away due to liver failure. Her last words were: *"Every damn thing you do in life, you have to pay for"*, perhaps indicating the karmic debt she had accrued through her lifestyle of alcohol and drugs. Her friend Jean Cocteau died the day after hearing of her death. His last words were: *"Ah, Piaf is dead. Now I can die too."* She was buried in Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. Tens of thousands of people followed her funeral procession, with more than 100,000 attending the ceremony at the cemetery. It was reportedly the only time since the end of the Second World War that Parisian traffic had come to a complete standstill, as her coffin, draped in the French flag, slowly made its way to the cemetery, with crowds lining the streets in honour of their dear *'Môme Piaf'*.



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Working in Harmony with the Cosmic

by **Simon Palmer**

istockphoto / Ridofranz

We need to appreciate every element of our lives, even those things that are sometimes unpleasant. It's from the unpleasant things, our difficulties and problems, that we learn life's greatest lessons. It's through these trials and tribulations that our inner resources rise up and help us most. If we develop the inner right attitude, we will attract the Cosmic that is always there for us.

However, we can't expect good things from the Cosmic unless we give our wholehearted support to moral and ethical standards, especially to those obligations we have assumed. In other words, if we've created obligations towards others, we must uphold them, without complaining about 'our lot'. If we're married and have promised to honour and respect our children, spouse and family, we must live the ideal life that will bring love and respect from those who depend on us. No matter what the laws of the land may be, we must not work just within the law but always try to uphold the highest moral and ethical standards we know. For only this will advance civilisation and help us build a better world.

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We should willingly spend a few moments as we fall asleep, allowing our consciousness to enter into the highest realms of spiritual achievement we can imagine. Then we should think of some of the problems that other people have, forgetting ourselves entirely and becoming a living, conscious soul in harmony with its Source. In this way we become a companion worker with all others seeking to assist a deteriorating, suffering world. At the same time, we should send out thoughts of love, health and harmony to all who are experiencing difficulties.

This is the work done by Rosicrucians and other seekers of spiritual self-realisation each day to bring about changes in the world for the good of all. We may think of some unfortunate persons in our lives. They may not be related to us or even really well-known by us, but as we become aware of others in need and send good thoughts to them we will start setting in motion circumstances that could assist them a lot.

Reach for the Highest

We should try to emulate the highest ideals of spiritual thought and service to others, always saying something kind, thoughtful, pleasant and loving to others at every opportunity. We can't afford the degrading luxury of harbouring thoughts of jealousy, envy, hatred or even dislike or unpleasantness towards others. Our attitude should be one of of broadcasting kindness, thoughtfulness and consideration. But the best challenge is to always think of something useful and kind. Even sending good thoughts to people we pass on the street will help them considerably. A smile and a courteous, "Good morning," can go a long way in helping their day along.

Our attitude should be one of broadcasting kindness, thoughtfulness and consideration.

When we do such things, our relationship with our Inner Master is deepened considerably, and we lift ourselves and expand our consciousness to higher levels of achievement. We can be serious students of mystical literature, and that will help us, but if that study doesn't result in elevated thoughts and actions in harmony with universal justice, then clearly we've not reached a higher



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level of consciousness. Raising our consciousness to a higher level assures us of a closer association with the Consciousness of the Cosmic, and our life will become more aligned to the true purposes of the Cosmic plan for humankind and the part we can play in the Great Work for the future.

Radiating constructive thoughts to other people assures us of a close and loving relationship with the Cosmic...

So it is important to give of ourselves and our thoughts, even for just a few minutes each day, working on behalf of the Cosmic for the benefit of all life on Mother Earth. By radiating appreciative, loving, kind thoughts to all and sundry we become a channel for accomplishing much good in the world, especially in our immediate community, in our place of work, or among the people we associate with. So much can be done with good, positive thoughts. Radiating constructive thoughts to other people assures us of a close and loving relationship with the Cosmic, and blessings and gifts will come to us automatically, without our asking for them, because of the relationship we have established with the Cosmic.

These are all things that the Rosicrucian teachings try to inculcate into our consciousness, so we may become living examples of how the Cosmic works through us. It's not a matter of just drawing upon the Cosmic to let it manifest in our lives but of daily entering into a relationship with it and allowing it to work through us. In other words, we become perfect agents of the Cosmic in allowing it to work through us each day. Then we will be assured that everything we do will be meaningful, helpful and successful. We will then experience the joy of living and of having a more meaningful and successful life.

We don't have to change our job. We merely need to live in harmony with our Inner Self, and the opportunities available to us will place us in positions in our work, in our associations with other people, where we can do the greatest good. You've heard the old saying of *'Like attracts like'*—well, try it. For some, this may mean that they take on important positions in society and may have important work to do, while for others it may mean humble work in the background that seems not to have any important function in the world, though which in the end has some deeper and very important purpose. All work in support of and in service to the highest good for all living creatures on Earth is needed, no matter how mundane it may appear, and we all have a role to play in making the world better place for all.

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The Priesthood of Ancient Egypt

by **Rob Melon**

Priest making an offering to the Ancient Egyptian god Ka.

istockphoto / AmandaLewis

The origin of priesthoods goes back to the very earliest of societies. The word *'priest'* does not do justice to what was meant, though, for priests in those days were not representatives of organised religions as they are today, for example. In the earliest times, priests were what we would term sorcerers, magicians or shamans, dealing extensively with the realm of the psychic and, in some cases, mastering the art of communicating with the so-called *'afterworld'*, the world of the dead.

Ancient priests were a breed apart, a class of individuals who acted as mediators between people and supernatural powers which only they could communicate with—or so they claimed and believers believed. In some priesthoods, perhaps only a small minority, as today, there emerged men and women of supreme psychic achievement. It is almost certain that some among them would have attained the highest regions of human spiritual attainment.

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The Egyptian Priesthood

When we think of ancient priesthoods, Egypt readily comes to mind, for their priesthood reached a high state of development as an organisation that ultimately served the interests of the pharaoh in enhancing his magico-religious powers to control the Nile flood. The pharaoh's entire purpose was to preserve order in the world; in other words, to be the ultimate defender of Maat. The organisation of the Egyptian priesthood influenced other priesthoods far and wide. In reviewing their beliefs and practices, we can see the syncretised development of the prominent priesthoods of today that arose from such beginnings.

In early Egyptian dynasties the pharaoh was the high priest, the highest earthly representative of the gods. Initially, he was primarily identified with Ra, the sun god of Heliopolis, though he was also heralded as the manifestation of Horus (the son of Osiris and Isis) and several other gods. The pharaoh was of course not able both to perform his administrative duties as well as officiate in the many sacerdotal requirements at temples throughout Egypt. It was physically impossible, and he therefore deputised most of these religious duties to various members of the priesthood. On several occasions during the 3,000 year history of ancient Egypt, this delegation of power was to challenge the authority of the pharaoh.



Imentet and Ra, from the tomb of Nefertari, 13th century.



A woman worships Ra-Horakhty.

Ancient Egypt had two main classes of priests: firstly, the Servant of the God, the Hm-nTr *(hem-netjer)*, who was of the highest category, and second, a lower class of priest called the wa'b *(wab)*, meaning the *'pure one'*.From papyrus inscriptions we know that these priests formed the staff of the temple in which they served. They were divided into four groups of service. In fact, we note that the priests of the royal mortuary temples were divided into what the Greeks called '*phylae*'[1], with each *phyle*, or group of priests, serving one lunar month of 29 or 30 days. This was done by rotation. The papyri relate that each priest was afforded an interval of three months of non-service between two periods of service. An interesting papyrus from *Illahun* of the Middle Kingdom shows that each phyle, upon the completion of their term of service, drew up a complete inventory of temple property, which was handed over to the incoming phyle.

An example of the administrative efficiency of these phylae is that both parties had to certify the list. The list had clay attached to it, upon which was impressed a seal of the chief priest and the names of

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The Opening of the Mouth ceremony being performed on a mummy before the tomb. Extract from the Papyrus of Hunefer, a 19th-Dynasty Book of the Dead (c.1300 BCE).



Statue of Horus at the Horus temple in Edfu, Egypt.

the members of the phyle. This same papyrus relates that there were certain permanent functionaries, such as the High Priest or Overseer, the Hm-nTr-tpy *(hem-netjer-tepy)* and the *'chief lector'* or reader [of hymns and magical spells], and the Xry-Hb *(kheri-heb)* who was in effect the orator. A third class of priests, known as the it-nTr *(it-netjer)* or *'Father of the God'*, walked in front of the cult image at processions, purifying the way by sprinkling purified water on it.

There were several other lesser levels of priesthood, one of them being the sm *(sem)* or mortuary priests, whose function only came into prominent and crucial use in the upholding of order in the kingdom (the preservation of Maat) when they were called upon to embalm the body of the deceased pharaoh in accordance with the correct magical rites. This would ensure that the pharaoh would pass through the underworld unharmed so he could eventually take his place among the fixed stars of the night sky.

It is interesting to observe the similarity between titles conferred upon the ancient Egyptian priests and those assumed by modern sects.

The priest was believed to be a son (one among several sons) of the particular god he served and to whose temple he was attached. In the renowned liturgy entitled *'Opening of the Mouth'*, of which more will be said later, the priest had the title of *'Son, beloved of the god'.* At Edfu in upper Egypt, the pharaoh was the living, walking, breathing incarnation of the predynastic falcon god Horus, while the high priest was a son of Horus, one whom the god loved because of his service to him.

The Memphite priesthood was based at ***Inbw-hdj*** (*white walls*), which is today modern-day Memphis, just south of Cairo. They were among the most learned and well-organised priesthoods in Egyptian history. Their god was *Ptah*, the patron god of artisans and craftsmen, and the chief priest was known as *'Chief of the Artificers'.* Ptah himself was later revered as the *'Architect of the Universe'*, an expression used in both secular Freemasonry and in some modern-day mystical organisations. In the ritual *'Opening of the Mouth'*, the high priest is referred to as *'...he who is great in directing craftsmen'.* The priests of Ptah were therefore the directors and instructors of craftsmen.

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Before their religio-magical doctrines evolved into a coherent philosophy, priestly rituals were regularly performed in the workshops of craftsmen throughout their working day.

The chief title of the high priest of the god Ra, the sun deity at *Iunu* (modern-day Heliopolis in Cairo), was the *'Great Seer.'* He was described as being *'...over the mysteries of heaven'*, or *'He who sees the mysteries of heaven.'* This signified that the high priest, in his capacity as mediator between ordinary mortals and Ra, was blessed with an unrestricted vision of the mysteries of the universe. His 'vision' did not allude to physical sight but to inner vision, the faculty of prognostication, foreseeing future events. The high priest of the *Aten* at Akhetaten, the *'City of the Horizon'* at modern-day Tell el-Amarna, was also called the *'Great Seer'.*

Although Egypt had several prominent gods during its 3,000 year history, the solar deity *Ra* was unique in that he was worshipped at set hours, day and night, at virtually all temples along the length of the Nile, regardless of what the main god of that temple was. Ra was the premier god of Egypt and revered in all temples, even though rituals for other gods sometimes took prominence due to local beliefs. The pre-eminent site of the worship of *Ra* was *Iunu* (Heliopolis), and it was here that the highest repository of ancient wisdom was supposedly kept, right up to the final destruction and dismantling of *Iunu* in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.



Artist's impression of Heliópolis.
'José recibido en Heliópolis', by Francisco Gutiérrez.



Ancient relief of a woman holding a sistrum.

The Role of Women

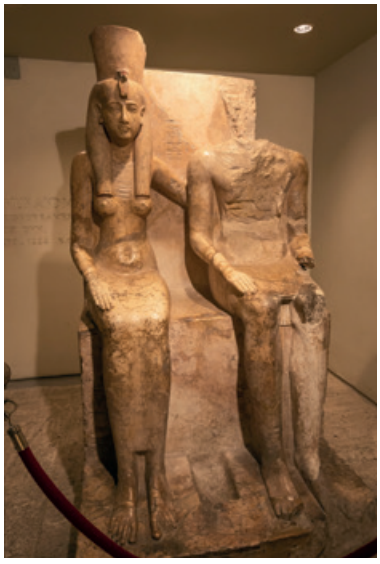
Although not nearly as prominent as men, women also functioned as religious dignitaries in ancient Egypt, and their titles and duties were recorded in official documents.

Concubines were assigned to the temple of Amun, where they served as *'wives of the god'.* From the 5th Dynasty onwards, the pharaoh was believed to be the physical son of the solar deity *Ra*. The queen therefore was called *'the god's wife',* Hmt-nTr *(hemat netjer)*. A papyrus relates that her principal duty in service to the god was to rattle the sistrum, a musical instrument consisting of loose metallic rods in a U-shaped device. This rattling, we are told, was done *'before his beautiful face'*, alluding to the face of the god. Musician priestesses received the special title of *'playing with the sistrum in front of* [the god]*'*. The chief priestess was, in

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most cases, the wife of the high priest, and her duties included rattling the sistrum in a formal manner, no doubt accompanied by chanting and a form of sacred dance within the private confines of the temple. In the Middle Kingdom, women of noble birth bore the title of prophetess and served as functionaries in the temple. From the time of the New Kingdom onwards, priestesses were divided into phylae, as were the priests. The chief priestesses of these phylae were known as the *phylarchs*. Priestesses of the goddess Hathor bore the title of *'Confidential Royal Favourite.'*

In Thebes (modern Luxor), the religious see of the god Amun, a priestess was known as the *'wife of the god'* and also as *'worshipper of the god'.* Although their main duty was the playing of musical instruments in the temple, priestesses were also required to pour libations to the god in the making of offerings and performing mortuary rites or funerary ceremonies. They were required to meet almost the same qualifications of purification as were demanded of the priests, but they never reached the levels of temporal power that the priesthood held.



Amun and Mut sitting together (Luxor Museum).

In Ancient Egypt every priestess, though particularly the high priestess, bore the titles of 'wife of the god' and 'worshipper of the god'.

A Position of Power

Priests were deputies of the pharaoh, who was revered as the earthly incarnation of the deity. He was therefore reverentially referred to as *divine* and as a *pure person.* As the pharaoh's personal representative in the temple duties, the chief priest was therefore also often assigned a name that meant 'pure'.



Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II, holding a sistrum.

The investiture or ordination of a priest was a highly solemn and dramatic event—and many of the ceremonial elements have passed into similar rituals that exist today. Egyptian priests were generally married and had children, and their priestly profession was often a hereditary one. Having passed through a ritual of lustration (rite of purification), the neophyte priest was *'crowned'* (the meaning of this is not fully understood) and solemnly conducted into the sanctuary or *naos* of the god, which was the innermost part of the temple where the effigy of the god was housed. In this part of the ritual the priest was *'embraced by the god'.*

It was necessary, through sacred and symbolic gestures and acts, to show that the priest had been accepted by the god. In ancient inscriptions it is stated that the priest, during the investiture of his office, *'took communion'*; namely, partook of the offerings of food and drink meant for the deity. In other words, at some point in the ritual, he was fed sacred food that had a symbolic relationship to the substance or nature of the god whom he was to serve.

An interesting account relates the investiture of the chief priestess of Amun. A silver container for the

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libation of milk, to be offered to the god, was held in her right hand. In her left hand she held a silver sistrum. Hung around the neck of both priests and priestesses were their jewels of office, indicating their rank. The high priest of Ptah wore a curious chain that depicted his obligations, duties and powers (which reminds us of similar devices worn today by mayors, in many parts of the world, when officiating in some function). Although many priests acquired their office through heredity (from father to son), some were appointed from non-priestly families. All high priests had to receive their appointment from the pharaoh, although, in practice, appointments were often made through the office of the local governor who acted on behalf of the pharaoh.

In religious matters the Egyptian priest was a human representative of the god. His functions were numerous and highly structured and they adhered strictly to tradition. He was an attendant of the god in a physical sense, laying before the physical carving of the god the symbolic sacred food. If this seems primitive, recall how similar symbolic rites are performed in modern Christian churches. The priest was also required to dress and bathe the image of the god. Although the priest's primary duty was to the deity, his secondary duties were ministering to the needs of the people of the pharaoh's realm. He was a physician and counsellor of humans and an intermediary between the divine realm and the earth.

Priestly Service

In the loose collection of papyri and temple and coffin inscriptions collectively known as the *'Book of the Dead*, the temple is referred to as the *'House of the God'*, a term still in use in modern Christianity, for example. Consequently, priests were looked upon as domestic servants in the deity's house. Tombs were referred to as the *'House of the Ka'* (*'ka'* being one of the Egyptian words for '*soul'*). In other words, the tomb was a place where the soul dwelt until its journey into the afterworld had been completed. The mortuary priest was the servant of the *ka*, namely, the servant to the deceased's soul.



Ceremonial fumigation is perpetuated today in modern religions; for example, in the Roman Catholic Church.



Statue of the god Ptah.

It was the duty of the priest to sprinkle the god with water (which is the simulated bathing that was referred to previously). This ceremony may have originated from the custom of a servant bathing his master. The symbolic, and sometimes physical, cleansing of the god was then followed with a rite of fumigation, namely, the burning of incense. After the anointing, the priest arrayed the image of the god in various ornaments. This custom, with some modification, is also perpetuated today in modern religions; for example, regarding images of sacred persons within the Roman Catholic Church and in religions of the East as well.

Part of the ceremony required the

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Judgement scene from the 'Book of the Dead'.

opening of the shrine housing the god's physical image, the ceremonial bearing out of the god's statue to various stations within the temple, and then ceremoniously placing it back in its shrine. An inscription alluding to this relates that the priest was *'performing the ceremonies for him with two arms'.* This was not much unlike the parading of an image of the Virgin Mary on various feast days in some Catholic countries, for example.

What took place in each sacerdotal event was recorded by the temple priest-scribe. It was his duty to keep all important records. Also officiating were the lectors or orators who directed the chanting of the sacred words.

The mortuary priesthood had the responsibility of ensuring that the *ka* was prepared for the great judgment hall of Osiris. Priests performed ceremonies in the temple and would then accompany the body of the deceased pharaoh to the tomb where the last rites were performed. According to records that have come down to us from some scribes, the oldest temple or shrine for which the deity is reported is of the goddess Neith, during the reign of Menes, the first king of the 1st Dynasty, around 3100 BCE. The earliest sanctuary specifically mentioned is that of Horus, in the 3rd Dynasty.

Priestly Revenue

Hundreds of priests were engaged for the various sacerdotal and therapeutic duties involving the god. Most of them devoted their entire lives to the obligations of their office and contributed little to the material and economic welfare of the state. They therefore had to be supported from temple revenues.

Ancient inscriptions reveal that the temple income came from two principal sources. Firstly, every person who entered a temple was obliged to make an offering, which invariably entailed bringing something edible (such as a cow or a sheep) or something of pecuniary value. A portion of such *offerings* went directly to the priesthood. The second source of revenue, as for example in Thebes, came from the lands belonging to the god *Amun*. The revenue from these sources was *'divided into 100 equal portions'.* Twenty portions, or one-fifth, was received by the chief priest, while one

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portion went to each of the 80 priests serving under him. These were received as an annual stipend.

There were many advantages and special privileges associated with the priestly profession of ancient Egypt. Then, as now, it was a privileged and preferred occupation. Herodotus, the Greek historian, relates:

> ...they consume none of their own property and are at no expense for anything, but every day bread is baked for them of sacred corn, and a plentiful supply of beef and of goose's flesh is assigned to each, and also a portion of wine made from the grape.

They were not allowed to eat fish, beans or pork but also paid no taxes, despite their sometimes vast wealth, while all other people in the pharaoh's realm paid dearly for his upkeep. During a few periods in Egypt's history, however, the temples were liable for imposts and had to furnish government officials and armies with supplies. That was no doubt because temple lands were so extensive and produced such a large proportion of the food of Egypt. There were also royal decrees granting immunity from imposts; for example, to the temple of the god Min at Koptos in Upper Egypt.

> The chief prophet and subordinates, prophets of Min in Koptos, all servants of the activity of the House of Min, the acolytes, the followers and watch of Min, the people of the workhouse, and the two architects of this temple; my majesty does not permit that they be put upon any activities of the pharaoh, whether herds of cattle, herds of donkeys, any time, labour or any forced labour to be credited in the House of Min in the course of eternity.

Such concessions by the pharaoh to the phylae or staff of the temple were political manoeuvres meant to win the support of powerful priesthoods. Most of the priesthoods became very wealthy over time. The priesthood of Amun of Karnak is a prime example. For a period during the New Kingdom, this priesthood became overly burdened with priests and temple property, and in the reign of Rameses IV, especially, the annual incomes of the temples were enormous—a clear parallel to conditions that existed in large parts of medieval Europe.



Most of the priesthoods became very wealthy over time, particularly those of the temple of Amun at Karnak. This photograph shows a section of the monumental Hall of Columns at Karnak.

Taxes imposed by the temples came in two forms. First were the agricultural taxes where income was measured in grain: *'the grain of the taxes of farmers'.* Second, there was income measured in units of silver, *'silver in property and in labour of people given for the divine offerings'.* Further advantages of the priesthood were the rite of asylum and exemption from the pharaoh's poll tax. The latter was a uniform amount levied on every living person, except of course priests and priestesses. In short, then, they had it good.

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Wikimedia / Neithsabes

Relief of Ramesses IV at the Temple of Khonsu in Karnak.

Teachings: Outer and Inner

The priesthood of Egypt were the most learned class in society. If anyone from any other class of society wanted knowledge, there was no better place to acquire it than from the priesthood—indeed, this is much as it was for centuries in medieval Europe. However, the mystery schools (schools of religious drama and initiation into secret gnosis) were not composed exclusively of the priesthood. On occasion, specially selected people were chosen to receive the preserved sacred wisdom without having to devote the remainder of their lives to the priesthood. Usually, this was with the intention of allowing such initiates to transmit the Egyptian wisdom to parts of the world outside Egypt, as happened with Pythagoras, for example.

The ethics of the various priesthoods were not all the same. Some manifested a greater discipline and higher principles and wisdom than others. There were also priesthoods that had two presentations of doctrines. One set of doctrines was expounded for the people at large who attended the outer precincts of the temples. These were the teachings for the masses, immersed as they were in superstition and emotional appeal, and they constituted the *exoteric* or outer teachings. Then there were the *esoteric* or inner teachings, which included the secret revelations, the profound knowledge of the sciences and the arts of the time. This knowledge was extended only to senior members of the priesthood and to chosen initiates.

The most senior and accomplished priests of *Ptah* at Memphis, and those of *Ra* at Heliopolis, were undoubtedly deep philosophers of life, and at times they were representatives of the numinous heights of human spiritual experience.

As with all organised methods of finding the sacred, it is certain that in Ancient Egypt, as today, holy men and women always existed in some strata of the priesthood, sometimes hidden from all others and at other times very much known and loved by many and even attaining the heights of temporal power. At other times they would remain, for the entire duration of their lives, among the lower ranks of the priesthood while carrying out their special work of maintaining at those levels and among the common people the high spiritual traditions of Egypt. Of course, temporal power in the priesthoods was often controlled by men and women of far lower spiritual insight and accomplishment than this—again, as indeed exists in most religions today.

At Memphis, when the god *Ptah* spoke his word *'went forth'*, thereby objectifying his thoughts. This is very interesting and may be the precursor and ultimate source of the much later Christian doctrine of the *logos*. The principles of democracy also appear in what were known as the *Coffin Texts*, a loose collection of spells found on various sarcophagi. A series of these relate to the utterances of the solar deity *Ra*:

> I have made the four winds that every man might breathe thereof, like his brother during his time.
>
> I have made every man like his brother, and I have forbidden that they do evil... [but] it was their hearts that undid what I had said.

Herodotus relates that the priesthood were

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instructors in divination and astrology:

> The Egyptians also discovered to which of the gods each month and day is sacred; and found how from the day of a man's birth what he will meet with in the course of his life, and how he will end his days, and what sort of man he will be.

He further relates that the priests practised medicine, with each priest-physician being a specialist in a particular disorder:

> ...and treats a single disorder, and no more; thus the country swarms with medical practitioners.

The duties of the priests and their knowledge were of course not confined to temporal matters. Their responsibility also concerned the *ka*, or soul, and its trials and tribulations in the next world. In a group of texts known as *The Book of Opening of the Mouth,* and *The Book of the Liturgy of Funerary Offerings,* rituals and spells are enumerated which were believed to enable the deceased to breathe, think, speak and walk, despite the body being bound in funerary linen wrappings.

The second of these books also contained spells for the continuance of the 'life' of the deceased in the next world. During these ceremonies for the dead, the *kheri-heb*, or magician-priest, presented to the statues of the deceased offerings such as meat, drink, unguents and clothing. Literally translated, the title of *kheri-heb* means *'the holder of the papyrus roll'*, and the knowledge and power of the title holder were deemed to be very great.

Personal Life and Power

The personal customs and dress of the priesthood demonstrate an interesting human element in their otherwise exalted sacerdotal office. Herodotus informs us:

> ...priests shave the whole body, every other day, so that no lice or other impure things may adhere to them when they are engaged in the service of the gods.

The priests were dressed entirely in linen. Their shoes were made of papyrus and they were forbidden to wear shoes of any other material. They were obliged to bathe in cold water twice during the day and twice during the night. The priests also personally inspected their foods and blessed them.

> If the animal is pronounced clean in all these various points, the priest marks him by twisting a piece of papyrus round his horns and attaching thereto some sealing clay which he then stamps with his signet ring.



Detail from 'The Book of the Dead'.

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Image: Wikimedia / Hay Kranen



Thutmose III.

Inevitably, sections of the priesthood abused their power by exploiting the faith, ignorance and fears of the common people they were meant to serve. The *Book of the Dead*, a collection of funerary liturgies, mentions many charms sold by the priesthood to the people to protect them, and special spells that could be bought for set prices. This is reminiscent of the corrupt practices of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages and later, when priests sold indulgences. The common people of Egypt, seeking security and protection from danger, were sold amulets and charms that had supposedly been infused with spells that would protect the wearers through the influence of one or other deity. As the people's confidence gave the priests the opportunity to exploit them for gain, more and more spells were formulated to sell to credulous buyers.

The influence of the priesthood was all-pervasive, extending over the entire community and even into the next world. It was believed, and the priests encouraged the idea, that they had the power of veto after death. A powerful enough priest could prevent the deceased from being buried in a properly consecrated tomb (the *House of the Ka*) and could instead consign the deceased's name to lasting infamy. In other words, if they wanted to, priests could refuse the equivalent of the Christian *last sacrament*, thereby consigning the soul of the deceased to complete annihilation, which was a terrifying thought for any average Egyptian.

The power of the various priesthoods as very real and dangerous political forces led Thutmosis III, in approximately 1449 BCE, to appoint the High Priest of Amun as the Primate of all priesthoods of Egypt, thereby uniting them into a single state religion presided over by a single high priest. Behind the sanctuary of Amun at Karnak, Thutmose III built the *Akh Menu*, or *'Temple of a Million Years'*, where, it is related, special initiation ceremonies were performed both during his reign and afterwards. The office of the Primate became the chief sacerdotal office of the kingdom, but from then on pharaohs were increasingly robbed of power and income by the effective grip of the High Priest of Amun, who exercised more and more power over the civil affairs and finances of the state.

The priesthood managed its finances exclusively for its own affairs and withheld revenues from the pharaoh. In due course, this resulted in the emergence of a state within a state, an ulcerous condition which was stopped in its tracks for 17 years by the precipitate, though only temporary, action of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, who is also known as *Akhenaten.*

From then on, for several centuries and with few exceptions, the priesthood—once a pious conglomeration of servants of the Divine—gradually enslaved the minds of the people through their rigid doctrines. The priesthood created for themselves a preferred class, at the expense of social progress, on the pretext of assuring the security of the soul of the individual in the next life. But it was a charade by then, even for believers, though it was sufficient to preserve the power of the priesthood for several centuries to come.

End note

1. From the Greek, meaning an organisation based on kinship, constituting the largest subdivision of an ancient Greek city-state.

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A Living Earth



istockphoto / Marco Curaba

by **Irving Söderlund**

As students of the Rosicrucian Order we become well acquainted with the four elements and their laws and principles. We learn how we are a manifestation of these four elements—earth, water, air and fire—and that it is necessary for us to live in harmony on all four planes. Nowadays, more than ever, we are interested in what we eat and drink and how this affects us. In reality, this means that we are striving to strike a good balance between the four elements in our body.

If we look out on the world around us and observe our Earth as a whole, we realise that we are in fact observing a living creature, although of a different kind to ourselves. This living creature, our planet, also seeks a harmonious life through striking a balance between the four elements. We see a world that has lived through many convulsions and yet, through following the laws and principles of creation itself, has always survived and continued its existence, ever lifting itself to higher levels of evolution. Our world has hosted the evolution of many species of animal and plant, each one developing for a while and then disappearing, perhaps preparing for the appearance of even higher forms of existence.

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All this has occurred in an endless chain of evolution. After eons of time on an increasingly complex path of evolution, humans eventually came on the scene and, as time went by, began calling their species the *'Crown of Creation'*. As long as humans on Earth were few in number, Nature could support their actions and activities, and the natural balance between the four elements could remain undisturbed according to the laws of an ever-active evolution.

But in our times something serious has happened. Through our inventions and the extreme growth of our industries, we have learned to manipulate what Nature, once so carefully balanced, had built up over the aeons. The population of the world has risen exponentially, and unsuspectingly we have interfered with the very chemistry of Nature. We have broken down and consumed its natural assets and altered entire ecological systems without considering the internal balance that is so vulnerable and delicate.

When we who study the laws and principles of Nature, as seen from the perspective of inner balance and harmony, look upon the things that are occurring in the world today, we know that an alarming situation exists. We are able neither to determine nor judge when and where things are going too far, but one thing we do know: if our bodies were exposed to the same kinds of damage and imbalance that we are imposing upon our planet, and if we were bodily to become as polluted as our earth presently is, our health would soon weaken and break down. Following the principle of *'as below, so above'*, we understand that the world, our wonderful Earth, is ill—very ill.

With the insight given to us through the Rosicrucian teachings, about the harmony needed for our daily social life to function, there comes a great responsibility. The knowledge we receive through our Rosicrucian studies about the Inner Life is accompanied by a deep understanding of the many levels of this Inner Life in the world around us; and again I refer to the Hermetic law we all know so well: '*As below, so above; as above, so below*'. This law implies a responsibility not only for our own lives but also for all others who inhabit our planet. We must face the fact that planet Earth is the planet where we and our ancestors and descendants will, time and time again in the future, be reincarnated.

What Can We Do?

Those who follow a mystical path of development are blessed with an inner knowledge. But this wisdom is

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not won before we are able to use the knowledge to the glory of God and the benefit of humankind. So then, what can we as Rosicrucians do with this insight, other than not personally cause further damage to our polluted air, not contaminate the water we are in touch with, not poison the Earth from which we harvest our food, nor use fire for destructive purposes? First of all, as Rosicrucians we should use the tremendous power of visualisation and mentally try to influence those who are involved with environmental decision making.

Visualise that they open their minds to a deeper understanding of polluted Nature's needs; that the welfare of Nature becomes for them the welfare of humankind. And we must never become tired and give up. In our daily social life, among family, friends and colleagues, we must, through positive, constructive thinking, infuse in others the desire to take responsibility, to act positively and, above all, to accept that what every solitary person thinks or does *can make a difference*. Every single step we take in the right direction, we take for the whole of humankind—and *every* step counts.

Maybe we are the *'Crown of Creation'*, but the power that this implies, namely, to think, feel and act as we wish and to be conscious of our own existence, can lead us as well to consume beyond our means to replenish, thereby destroying our fragile and finite Nature instead of using it with respect and understanding. Only as we give, can we receive. What we take, we must somehow pay back, and we stand on the threshold of where Nature soon will not have any more resources to give if we don't begin to balance the account.

We must also be aware of the fact that the knowledge and understanding of our Inner Life, our Inner World, the harmony and balance that we learn through our studies, is not shared with the majority. Therefore, our important task is to spread the Light of our age-old wisdom, insight and understanding to those who wander in the darkness of ignorance.

As Rosicrucians, let us be ever more active in spreading Light where darkness prevails and in providing knowledge of the true meaning behind everything where ignorance is humanity's daily guide. May we be sincere workers for a peaceful, harmonious and loving future, where we indeed will see coming generations live in Peace, Light and Love and where the four elements are purified and in balance, both within human beings as well as in Nature.

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One Day at a Time

by **Chris R. Warnken**

It has been said that the majority of people waste half a lifetime in regret over past mistakes or anxiety about the future. In retrospect, we realise the absurdity of this as well as the tremendous waste, for we can't go back and change the past. Sooner or later we must realise that life is experienced always and only in the 'eternal now'. Philosophers and poets have taught this great principle for centuries, but few people have truly taken it on board.

Pythagoras, an early master of the mystery schools some 2,500 years ago, taught his disciples the futility of worrying over past mistakes. *"Remove the mark of the pot from the ashes!"* he said. In other words, wipe out the past and forget it. The past is history, while today is yet unmade. It's like clay in the hands of a sculptor. Each of us has the privilege of beginning every day with a fresh start, to make of it whatever we will. Whether our past errors bring harm to ourselves or others is now unimportant, to the extent that worry or regret can have no effect at all upon the past. It can cause us to have mental anguish or even mental illness that will prevent us from making the most of every present moment.

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Life is a School

We all make mistakes, for we're here to learn. Life is a school of experience. No matter to what degree others inspire us, however much they may seem exemplary and faultless, rest assured that they make mistakes and are learning too; otherwise they would not be here. At best, they have learned to conceal their errors and to keep silent about them. The oft-quoted biblical phrase of Jesus, *'He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone...'* reminds us that no-one is perfect.

Learning is a process of evolvement and there's nothing instantaneous about it. Through a system of practice, trial and error, we're taught how to reason better and to make more effective decisions. We should strive for perfection even if it seems we may never reach it. We learn to build and accomplish any human endeavour through the process of trial and error. Observing the causes of failure and striving to avoid those negative causes in the future is part of the learning process. The most important lesson is to avoid regret or worry over our past imperfection while making every effort to correct and compensate for our mistakes.

istockphoto / valtekune





The Future

An equally important lesson for us is to reject anxiety over the future. Our future is as yet unmade, and we have still to create it. We don't want to mar, with our anxieties, doubts and fears, our most beautiful plans for the future before they even manifest. We are creators! We must model our sculptures with confidence, boldness, beauty and perfection. Even if our dreams and plans are perfect, we can never hope their manifestation will be absolutely perfect. If we allow ourselves to be inspired by the perfection inherent in the Cosmic, and confidently strive to duplicate that perfect vision, then perhaps one day our manifestation may be acceptably near to our ideal. Those who have done so are true creators.

istockphoto / Alexlukin

Let us not allow ourselves to be shackled by 'fate' either. Why should we accept the theological doctrine of predestination, as if some supreme deity has foreordained every event throughout eternity? The potential for any and all things exists, but as individuals and by our own free will we must create our own future.

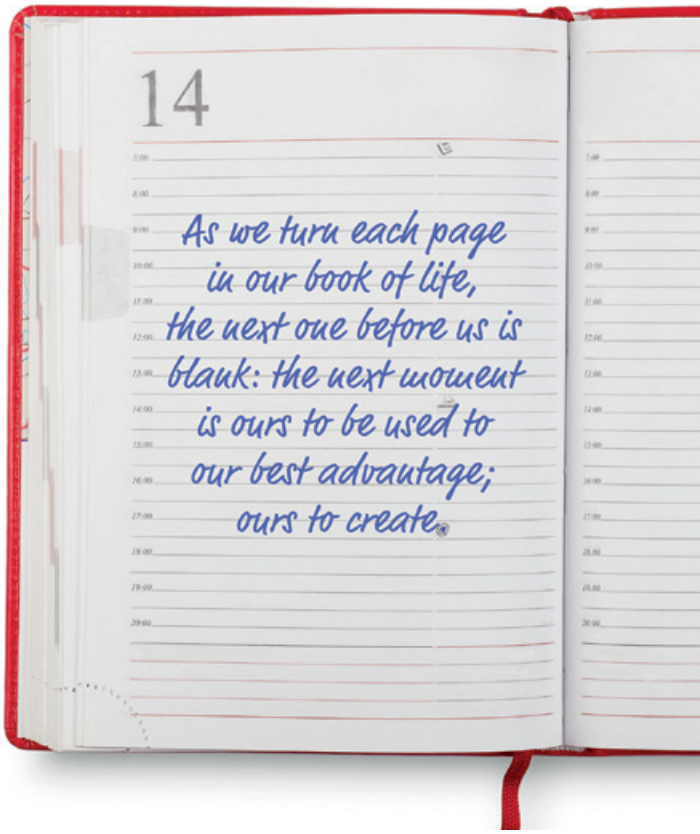
James Russell Lowe, a 19th century American essayist wrote:

> Let us be of good cheer, remembering that the misfortunes hardest to bear are those which never happen.

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Good words of advice, so let's do away with fears of the future and live positively in the present, for we honestly know so little about what awaits us later in life. As long as we approach the future with sincerity and good intent, and in line with our spiritual development, we will feel comfortable and safe in whatever surroundings and environments we happen to be in.

This is the moment to realise equally that death, or *'transition'* as Rosicrucians call it, is a bridge to the future, not a final end. Whenever it comes upon those close to us, it is comforting to confidently know that this moment is a *'passing through'* only and that those we love, in their essence, are moving on in their inner development toward their next state of existence.



istockphoto / Jacob Wackerhausen



The Present

Just as the past is done and the future is beyond our immediate control, so too the present moment, the now, is not only in our control but is our responsibility to control. As we turn each page in our book of life, the next one before us is blank: the next moment is ours to be used to our best advantage; ours to create.

istockphoto / Alexlukin

There are, and always will be, alternatives and choices to make. Admittedly, our choices are at times more advantageous and more attractive, but at least there are almost always several alternatives to choose from. As the Hindu poet Kalidasa once said:

> Look to this day! For it is life, the very life of life.
> In its brief course lie all the verities and realities of your existence!

So, let's clear away the debris and barriers of both past and future and confidently grasp in our hands our dream for today. For our most basic freedom is to live..., one day at a time.

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The Art of Dowsing

by **Hale Jones**



A dowser a field, Netherlands, 1923.



18th-century dowser.

The term *'water divining'* or *'water dowsing'* is a misnomer since the art is not restricted to water but may be applied to anything that lies buried under the ground. In general usage, it is referred to simply as 'dowsing'.

The history of the art is as old as history itself and has been brought to us through the centuries by engravings, oral instruction, woodcuts and, more recently, through lithographs and photographs. Today you can find many instruction videos on YouTube, and there are courses that teach the practical art of dowsing. In centuries past, dowsing was used to find all manner of things, such as water, oil, treasure, missing persons (much in the same way as the pendulum is used), harmful radiation, lead, tin and much more. In fact, anything we are seeking can, in theory, be discovered through dowsing.

What might not be so well-known is that dowsing can be carried out at a distance and that, moreover, the distance itself has

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The Welsh naturalist Thomas Pennant (1726–1798) was an accomplished user of a divining rod in finding water sources.

no bearing on the results. Whether it's for something in the next room or on the next continent, dowsing in its most general form can find it. Even with modern scientific methods available, such as ground-penetrating radar and sensors that read levels of radiation in three dimensions, the interest in dowsing persists because it can be very precise and accurate when done by an accomplished practitioner. In this article, however, I will discuss only the 'old-fashioned' traditional technique of using a dowsing rod over the ground to find water.

Psychic Sensitivity

As with any of the ancients arts of divining (pendulum, throwing the bones, reading I-Ching or Tarot cards, etc.), dowsing relies crucially on the personal psychic sensitivity of the dowser and his or her ability to enter into a state of inner neutrality whilst at the same time maintaining a clear, focused intent of discovering whatever is being dowsed for—no wandering mind and no stray thoughts, merely the clear, impartial intent that there will be results if what one is dowsing for is in the area. Using the so-called 'divining rod' requires considerable refinement of the basic psychic sensitivity that every person innately possesses. But don't let this hurdle stop you, for we must all start from somewhere and, as with every art, all you need is practice, practice and more practice.

Equipment

The equipment needed is nothing more than the dowsing rod itself and patience, lots of it! In the beginning you must expect a certain amount of failure, for success is closely allied to two things: (a) your ability to enter a state of mental neutrality, that is, a cessation of random or deliberate thoughts, and (b) the level of energy you have accumulated within your psychic being over the years. That is all. Remember, you are the instrument; the dowsing rod is merely the indicator needle.

Rods can be made of any material, though usually of wood, metal or plastic, providing there is tension or elasticity in the material. Wood in the shape of a forked twig is the most commonly used. Willow is used in particular, but you can use apple, oak (though it is a bit brittle) or any greenwood and even a bit of hedgerow. It costs nothing but a little patience to obtain the rod you want. The main thing to look for is the ability of the wood to bend at a slight tension when held in the hands. If it breaks too easily then it is no good.

The size of rod will depend on your own size and strength. Generally speaking, if you stand with your palms facing up, arms close to your side and bent forward at the elbows, then the rod should be held firmly in the hands in this position and pointing forward. There should be a slight tension on the rod as you hold it. There are many individual ways of holding the dowsing rod, the above being what is termed the 'classical style'. If you don't have easy access to living wood such as willow branches, you could try a plastic or metal rod instead.

Making your own dowsing rod is definitely more rewarding than buying one ready made. It is as if by

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crafting your instrument you are endowing it with power in a way that cannot be done with a bought, mass-produced item. However, there are many dowsing rods available to buy on the internet, should you wish to do so.

The Practice

So you've got your rod. What now? Since water is the most common mobile substance in nature and may be discovered almost anywhere, including in old drains and in hidden underground streams, we begin our training by dowsing for water. A good reason for starting with water is that the human body, being predominantly made up of water, reacts to water quicker than anything else. Don't try searching for minerals yet, for this involves a much more sophisticated technique. Try searching for water in your garden if you have one. If not, take an excursion into the countryside or to a public park.

Once you have chosen your place, hold the rod in the manner already described and walk in a slow, deliberate manner. If you are singularly sensitive to the rod it will react fast, and you won't be able to stop it other than by letting the rod fall from your hands. It will probably take a fair bit of practice to get the *'feel'* of the rod and its movement, and there is the necessity for the marriage between rod and person to become fully established. What does the rod's movement feel like? Well, it is very sudden... you sense what can only be described as a sort of independent *'power'* in the rod, like a traditional magic wand, if you like.

The incredible thing is that, no matter how hard you grip it, the rod will turn in your hands, fully against your will—this is a truly extraordinary thing when first encountered. Once the movement is exhausted, you should quickly move the rod back to its former position and retrace the route, being sure to leave preconceived ideas behind totally. That is, be careful that your hands don't *'make'* the rod turn at the point it turned before. You must move afresh, as though you had discovered nothing, and for this you need a *'blank mind'*, a state of complete inner neutrality, though dominated by an intense wish to find water.

In order to test that the rod will work over running water *(most water is running or seeping slowly underground, anyway),* turn on a cold-water tap and hold the rod over the moving water. If it moves up or down you are in business; if not, you will need to practise.

There is still a great interest in dowsing these days, especially as we are all becoming aware of the great potentialities of the human self, and not least of all because of the drying of the planet in certain places, due to global warming.

So, if you have time and want to do something really interesting, do some dowsing! Not only is it rewarding but it can be thoroughly exhilarating, for you establish a connection between your outer, mundane self and your inner being—that manifestation of your soul that has no equal on earth. With that connection in place you can in fact dowse anything, be it minerals, water, oil or hidden treasure, though set your sights low to begin with and learn to dowse for water first. Don't be shy: give it a go and do so with enthusiasm and a happy, positive approach!



'Dowsing for metal ore, from a 1556 book 'De re metallica libri XII' by Georgius Agricola.

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by **Ben Finger**

LEIBNIZ

(1646-1716) Rosicrucian Philosopher

Known in his day as the most learned man in Europe, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) was one of the last of the universal scholars before the growth of the special sciences brought rigid specialisation into our thinking. It is refreshing to survey the grand sweep of the learning of Leibniz. He searched for truth in all fields of inquiry, and many of his insights will never lose their timely significance.

The so-called *Age of Reason* brought a new prominence to candid, critical thinking and a fresh striving for human rights. However, the humanitarian quest was rooted in the spiritual tradition of Western civilisation, rather than in the world-machine dogma that was leading radical rationalists into scepticism and atheism.

Leibniz, a conservative rationalist, never forgot the ultimate necessary and eternal truths. When the Anglo-Irish natural philosopher and chemist Robert Boyle (1627–91) asked how the ills of life could be reconciled with the existence of a wise and just God, Leibniz reminded him of the limitations of our finitude...

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What we cannot understand confuses us,
for we see only the parts of a great whole.

The English poet Alexander Pope (1688–1744) followed Leibniz when he wrote:

All nature is but art unknown to thee.

It was from Leibniz that the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) derived the idea of innate mental categories. This German genius influenced many other lovers of wisdom (philosophers), including Fichte, Schopenhauer, Bjerregaard, Couturat, John Theodore Merz, Johann Eduard Erdmann and William James. Leibniz still claims the admiration of many, for the eternal truths he discovered never age. He was an absolute idealist.

This great humanitarian of the Age of Reason set forth the premises on which our modern free society is founded. He held that we all have the natural right to develop our faculties to the utmost. He maintained that the state has no moral authority to trespass upon personal rights. He showed the way to character improvement, for he realised that social institutions depend upon persons. He wrote...

If good interior principles be established in us,
then customs and passions will not draw the soul
aside from the path of virtue.

Elsewhere, he praised...

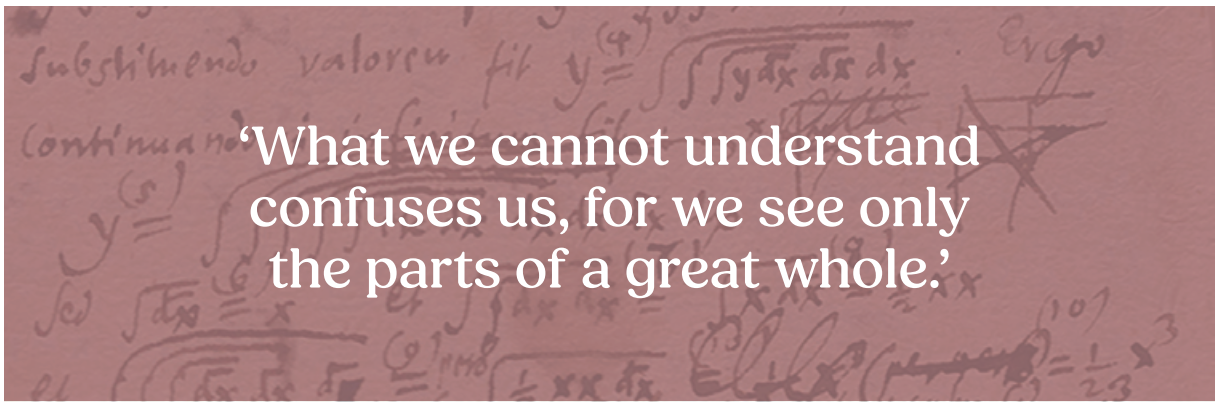
...that genuine, pure love which finds pleasure in
the happiness of those who are loved.

And above all, he urged us...

...not only to speak, and not only to think, but to
act as if the truth were so.

His ethical teachings alone would have sufficed to immortalise his name. But he also revealed a mind of the first order in civil and international law, in mathematics *(developing the infinitesimal calculus independently of Newton)*, and in history, religion, economics, philology, physics, biology, psychology, logic, astronomy, diplomacy and metaphysics. He was a polymath, synthesising all fields.

More specifically, Leibniz developed an important new metaphysical system that was consonant with the theory of an evolutionary ascent through the stages of responsiveness, namely: instinct, conscious will, self-conscious purpose and Cosmic Consciousness. He also pioneered the empirical study of the properties of natural languages and tried to develop a *Symbolis Universalis*, a universal language, in the hope that it would promote clearer thinking and unite nations. Leibniz was the forerunner of modern symbolic logic.



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This philosopher, a world-citizen in spirit, was one of the first to try to synthesise Eastern and Western thought. In this regard, he was much indebted to the Chinese wisdom-teachings that had started to make their way into European scholarly circles.

Most importantly, Leibniz was the father of the new physics. Many 17th century scientists believed in hard, solid atoms, lumps of dead matter, but Leibniz believed that atoms are centres of active energy in a living universe. The new physics similarly conceives of matter as a manifestation of energy or force and its properties as varying intensities in fields of force. Modern physicists who are metaphysically minded even tend to agree with Leibniz that time, space and matter are only well-founded appearances, with matter relegated to being '*a minor event, produced by invisible realities*'.

Current science is catching up with Leibniz's realisation that there are no absolute dualisms in nature but rather complete continuity between the kingdoms of nature. Noting that *'...everything is bound up with everything else'*, he concluded that, because of this universal interconnection...

> ...from an individual substance may be deduced all that can be attributed to it, and even the whole universe.

Leibniz said this as a philosopher, and Tennyson said it as a poet, but modern scientists say it too.

When Leibniz probed into the boundless mysteries of awareness, he provided a possible explanation of extrasensory perception—though it is beyond the scope of this article to digress into psychophysics. His acknowledgment of relativity was Leibniz's greatest vanguard service to physics proper. The philosopher Herbert Wildon Carr (1857–1931) reminds us that:

> ...precisely the defects which Leibniz indicated in the metaphysical basis of the Newtonian physics (as when he [Leibniz] denied absolute space and time) have called for a reconstruction of the whole framework of physical science.



Leibniz reconciled physics and metaphysics and was fortunately disposed by his mathematical training to reason about the world from first principles. He held that not everything can be reduced to quantity, for mechanism is but a secondary in nature:

> The principles of mechanics and of force do not depend upon mathematical extension alone, but have certain metaphysical causes. Explanations by final cause, and by efficient cause, are complementary.

This deep-minded Rosicrucian saw the world as the work of a Supreme Intelligence, manifesting through the laws of nature.

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His Genius

Leibniz was born at Leipzig in 1646, shortly before the close of a terrible religious conflict, the Thirty Years' War. It is not surprising that he would work for interfaith understanding as one of his great objectives.

Early in life he displayed the unusual genius that would place his name amongst history's greatest thinkers. From earliest childhood this professor's son had books beside him: Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Xenophon, Livy, Cicero, Pliny, Seneca and Augustine. The precocious boy familiarised himself with every book in his father's library and at age 13 began the study of logic. Two years later he entered the University of Leipzig, where he studied and tried to connect ancient, medieval and modern philosophies. Most of his inquiry was independent and unassigned.

Aristotle's *substantial forms*, Bruno's *live units,* and the *universals* of the Chinese philosophers planted in Leibniz's mind the germinal idea of his theory of *Monads*, but only his eventual contact with the Rosicrucian wisdom-teachings would enable him to develop his doctrine of the living universe.

After graduating from the University of Leipzig, Leibniz earned his doctorate in law from the University of Altdorf. He refused a professorship that was offered him there because it would have left him no time for private research and reflection. Also, he never married. Throughout his busy life he always managed to make time for his philosophising. Even so, the British essayist E.W.F. Tomlin (1913–88) noted that...

> Leibniz was born with so much talent that he had not the opportunity, in one lifetime, to unpack and set in order all that he had brought with him.

The young thinker spent a year in Nürnberg, where he was introduced to the Rosicrucian Order. He knew that René Descartes and other Rosicrucians had played a large part in the modern effort to throw off the yoke of errors, and it is very evident that Leibniz owed a great debt to the knowledge that was passed to him by eminent Rosicrucian teachers. His Rosicrucian association gained him the friendship of Baron von Boineburg, the celebrated diplomat of the Archbishop-Elector of Mainz, Philipp von Schönborn.

Leibniz went with Boineburg to Frankfurt, where he published a cogent paper on legal education, which led him to being taken into the service of the Archbishop of Mainz. His legal training led him into politics as a diplomatic agent and he was connected with many of the outstanding events of his day. His contributions did much toward the rebuilding of Germany and the preservation of peace as he strove for the reunion of Christendom on broad deistic grounds.

Leibniz travelled in Germany, Italy, England and France and had the privilege of meeting such celebrities as Newton, Huygens, Spinoza and Malebranche. While in Paris he studied *Cartesianism,* the philosophy of René Descartes, which he called *'the antechamber of truth'.* His studies included higher mathematics, and he improved upon Pascal's calculating machine.

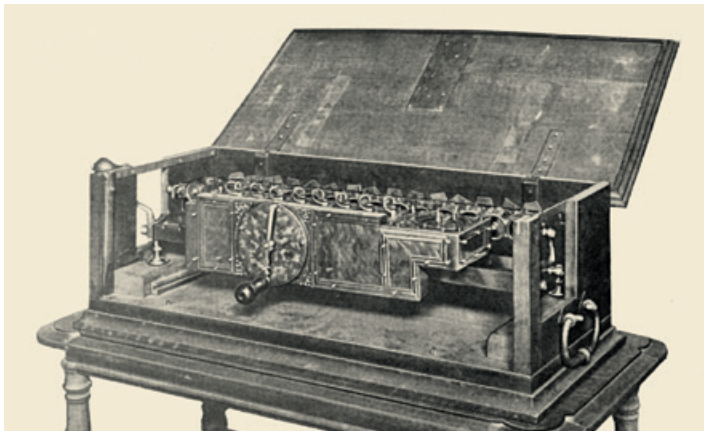
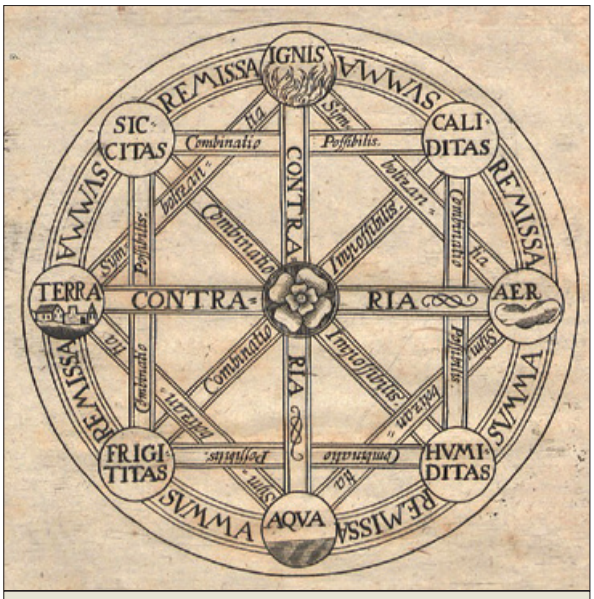


Photo of the Staffelwalze (English: 'Stepped Reckoner'), a prototype mechanical calculator invented by Leibniz in 1674 and completed in 1694.

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While working on his doctorate, at the age of 20, Leibniz wrote an essay on the art of combining concepts (*De Ars Combinatoria*, 1666). It adapted the scholastic work of Ramon Llull (1232–1316) in the form of a universal ideographic language for symbolising abstract concepts like justice, courage, etc. What he attempted to develop was a universal method of analysing concepts by means of numerical characters. Though he later confessed to the mathematical immaturity of this essay, he seems never to have abandoned the Pythagorean and quasi-Cabalistic notion of penetrating the mysteries of Nature, Humans and God by means of an esoteric universal language.

As exaggerated as most of his claims for his *'universal characteristic'* seem to us today, the fact remains that, in Leibniz's own opinion, it led him to the discovery of calculus as well as *'the true method of metaphysics and theology'*. It is therefore central to an understanding of Leibniz's contribution to philosophy to examine his concept of the function of logic. The combinatory wheel represented here was used to demonstrate a theory in which he visually shows us that all concepts (or their signs) are combinations of simple ideas. We see contraries and possible and impossible combinations crisscrossing the wheel, linking the simple ideas around the perimeter. It is illustrated with the Greek elements and, perhaps tellingly, there appears to be a rose at its centre.

During his visit to London, he taught *Deism* to the future Queen Caroline (wife of George II) and explored the latest scientific developments there. Respected as a universal genius, in 1673 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1676 he accepted the offer of an unpretentious position as librarian to the Duke of Brunswick at Hanover. En route he spent four weeks in Amsterdam with another great philosopher, Baruch Spinoza (1632–77). Leibniz buckled down to the drudgery of prosaic routine affairs. Among other duties, he had to spend four decades setting down the history of the House of Brunswick and upholding its claims. But he worked on his philosophic system whenever he found a spare hour, and sometimes he wrote little poems in Latin to help him relax.

Leibniz popularised his philosophy so that princes and princesses would understand it and thereby be moved to promote the spread of enlightenment. He founded the famous Berlin Academy, planning similar learned societies for Dresden and Vienna, and he advocated cooperating centres of learning in all the capitals of Europe.

The illumined mentor gave the world a great philosophy, a *'scientific scholasticism'*, integrating humanity's spiritual and scientific wisdom. Materialistic scientists feared that he was trying to lure them back into religious orthodoxy, while narrow clergymen pronounced him an unbeliever. Sadly, when Leibniz died he was buried like a criminal. No member of the court followed his body to the grave and neither the Berlin Academy nor the Royal Society even acknowledged his passing. Now the whole world respects Leibniz, for both his metaphysical and his concrete services. Dr Carr comments that...

> ...what lives of Leibniz in the thought of today is the principle and method to which, more than any philosopher in the modern period, he has given forcible expression.

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His Philosophy

Leibniz was unable to accept either Cartesian *dualism* or Spinoza's *monism*. Instead, he conceived the ultimate real substance as an immaterial force and pronounced the universe to be constituted of an infinite number of individual centres of force, the *Monads*.

> There are infinite degrees of perception...When you are admitted to the heart of nature, the further you go, the greater will be your delights, for you will be following a chain that goes on to infinity.

'When you are admitted to the heart of nature, the further you go, the greater will be your delights...'

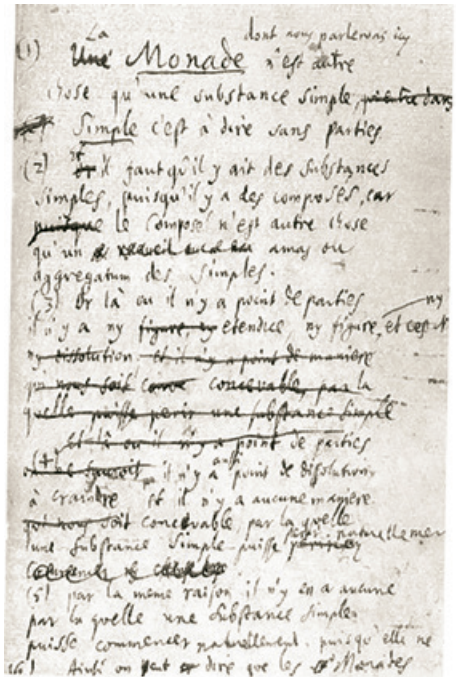
Leibniz saw, spread throughout the universe, what he called the *'mental life'* and *'something analogous to feeling and desire'*. Action and change could not be obtained from mere extension, and matter alone could not provide the ground for a purposive, coordinated world.

One source of Leibniz's concept of immaterial Monads was the ancient Oriental doctrine that material bodies are *'only phenomenal, like the rainbow'*, whereas the mental realities behind them have neither parts nor extension nor figure. The Leibnizian Monads resemble the *universals* of the Chinese philosophers, while Leibniz's theory of *pre-established harmony* calls to mind the profound Chinese concept of the *'Tao of the world'*. Like the Chinese sages, he saw the world of reality as *'...a continuously rising scale of spiritual beings developing progressively'*. This surely is the age-old universal inner wisdom of being! As the chemist and philosopher John Theodore Merz (1840–1922) said...

> It became evident to Leibniz that external or material things presented the property of extension to our senses only, not to our thinking faculties. But if their extension in space was nothing, so much the fuller was their inner life. Inner existence, such as that of the human mind, is a new dimension, not a geometrical but a metaphysical dimension. The essences of things real have only a punctual existence in this physical world of space; but have an infinite depth of inner life in the metaphysical world of thought.

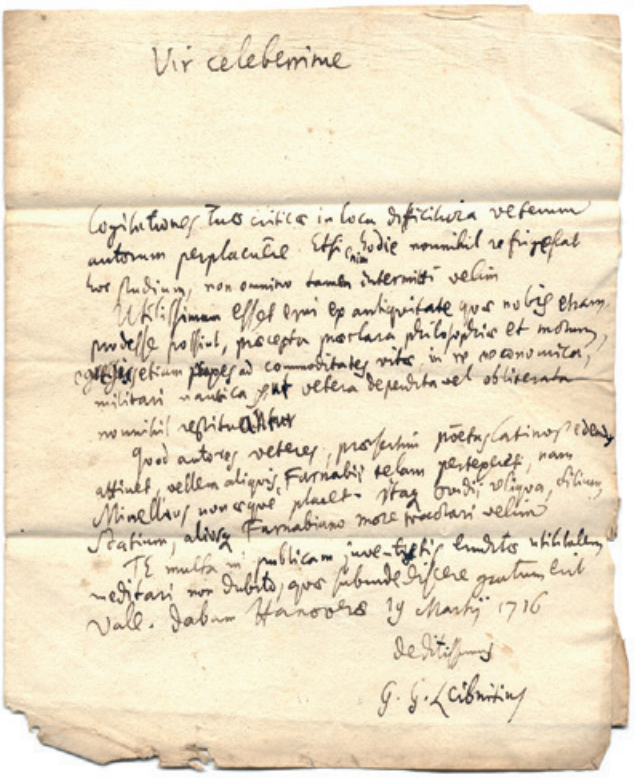
Living Mirror

For Leibniz, the Monads were the real atoms of nature, the qualitative elements of things. He could not think of the atomic elements as qualitatively indistinguishable. Indeed, contrary to modern science, he postulated an infinite variety of unique elementary entities to account for the kaleidoscopic differences in the world. He saw each Monad as a *'reduced universe'*, a living mirror of the larger universe in its own degree and from its own point



Leibniz's manuscript explaining his theory of Monads.

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Vir celeberrime

Letter from Leibniz, in March 1716, concerning a publication.

of view. There are *infinite* gradations of mental life, sleeping in minerals and plants, dreaming in animals, awakening in humankind. Even the unconscious levels of awareness are rich in content. Every Monad reflects the state of neighbouring Monads, and *'...its present is big with its future.'*

Maybe this is one of the keys to human extrasensory perception, this hidden connection between all things. In various degrees, the Monads not only perceive but also strive toward the future. By this principle each Monad unfolds its series of changes. Stones are unconsciously moved by gravity. Plants manifest heliotropism when they turn toward the sun. The lower animals are governed largely by instinct. Human purpose is sometimes, at times even often, fully conscious, the striving of the enlightened will.

Leibniz found it necessary to postulate this universal perception and striving because... extension expresses merely a present condition, but in no case the past or future.

He reduced all the phenomena of the extended world to *'well-founded appearances'*. The true ultimate of being is spiritual, and Leibniz reduces the universe to a hierarchy of Monads, starting with the least significant elements and ending with the Divine Monad of Monads, which has organised and graded the whole system. There is no physical interaction between the Monads, for they are immaterial, but their coexistence and intercommunication is regulated by God's rational organisation, *'the pre-established harmony'*. The changes in Monads result from their own inner principles.

Leibniz distinguishes between *'bare'* and *'soul'* Monads. Where perception is distinct and accompanied by memory, he speaks of the activity of the soul. Animals are souls in their degree, moved by simple consciousness and instinct. Humans are reasoning souls, distinguished from the lower animals by their knowledge of necessary and eternal truths and by their ability to act with fully conscious understanding and purpose. *'Man's highest end'*, says Leibniz, *'is to become capable of the intellectual love of God.'*

'Man's highest end', says Leibniz, 'is to become capable of the intellectual love of God.'

This great Rosicrucian philosopher teaches us that our highest aspirations do not deceive us. Even if our best efforts seem to fail, we should not doubt the objective reality of the good and its living influence. It is for God to know the hour and the proper place to let good designs succeed.

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The Secret Fire

by **Marcus Aurelius**
Roman Emperor (121–180 CE)

Represent incessantly the universe to yourself as a single living being composed of one sort of matter, and of one soul. This is how all that passes in it is referred to one principle of feeling. This is how one single impulse makes the whole move, and this is why all its products are an effect of a number of causes.

O Universe! O Nature! You are the source of all, the ultimate terms of all. The same species of soul has been assigned to all animals, and the same intellectual soul to all reasoning beings, just as all terrestrial bodies are made of the same terrestrial matter, are as all that sees and breathes, sees but one and the same light, and breathes but one and the same air.

The light of the sun is one, though we see it dispersed on walls, on mountains, and on a thousand different objects. Although divided into thousands of separate bodies, this is but one sort of matter. There is but one intelligent Soul, though it seems to divide itself. We are all united by a common participation in the same intelligence. You have forgotten that the soul of each of us is a god who has emanated from the Supreme Being.

Just as bodies, after a brief sojourn on earth, become changed and are at last dissolved so they may make way for others, so do souls after their sojourn in the air become changed as they return to the fertile bosom of Universal Reason. All souls form a portion of the same spiritual element, just as all seas belong to the element of water. One and the same Reason gives light to them all, just as the sun gives light to the earth and ocean.

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The Gift of Listening

by **Louise Lane**

One of the most inspiring and powerful gifts we can bestow upon another person is to really listen to them, and this means listening with our whole being in an attentive, focused way. In essence it sounds simple enough, but if we're honest with ourselves we soon admit that we seldom, if ever, manage to listen to others properly.

Listening is a creative force, and when we're listened to fully our creative urge is encouraged to expand, to come to life and to grow. We remember who we are and confidence blooms as we are increasingly able to express ourselves. This *'force'* has been called by many names: inner spirit, divine intelligence, true self, etc. Whatever we call it doesn't really matter; what does matter, though, is that it shrivels up when we are not listened to and it thrives when we are.

There are times when we come across people who need to talk. They go on and on in a nervous and very superficial manner. So often these people have never been truly listened to, and great patience is required to listen long enough for them to reach a point of tranquillity and peace. The results of such listening are extraordinary and sometimes not far short of miraculous. Listening well takes time, patience, skill and a readiness to slow

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down. We need to let go of expectations, judgements and boredom, and very often it takes great sacrifice. But the rewards can be phenomenal.

How often are we in company or at a lecture where people are constantly interrupted before they have had a chance to express themselves fully? One will always meet up with characters who are not in the least bit interested in what is actually being said. They are only interested in giving their opinions and enjoying the sound of their own voices. In retrospect, some of the most interesting people are the so-called quiet ones.

Effective Listening

Effective listening is often conceived in technical terms, with little or no grounding in the spiritual sense. There are wonderful tools and techniques to assist us in active, responsible and empathic listening. There is body language, eye contact and methods of identifying different styles of listening and speaking. All these provide us with useful skills and information. However, there is something beyond technique when two or more people are deeply listening to each other. We are aware that not only are we totally focused but that there is a deeper, almost spiritual connection. Listening is a sacred art! In order to develop and nurture listening as a sacred art, there are three qualities that are essential in this deep listening context, and they are silence, reflection and attentiveness.

Silence creates the space for attunement with the God of our hearts. It provides the time to explore our relationship with the Cosmic and nurtures our capacity to listen to others. As Rosicrucians we are always reminded to listen and access our still-point. We know that the power of silence is pure magic and that within it is the promise of deep, revealing wisdom. It can also give clarity in the midst of chaos. The power of silence slows things down, offering us the opportunity to reflect on what is happening around us and to listen to the *Master Within*, or the *'still small voice within'*.

Reflection gives us access to our own inner voice. The practice of taking a few breaths before responding to a situation, question or comment gives time for our true wisdom to reveal itself. Again, it is a slowing down, a waiting and a practising of patience. I remember reading somewhere about someone who was asked why he took so long to answer a question. His answer was that he liked to *'taste his words'* before he uttered them.

Attentiveness or presence is the awareness of connecting at the heart level. There is a very important distinction between listening and hearing. Sometimes we listen to things, but we never hear them. True listening brings us in touch with even that which is unsaid and unsayable. Mathieu, a Sufi musician, came up with the inventive phrase of *'making an altar out of our ears'*, and St Benedict, founder of the Benedictine Order, advised his monks to *'listen with the ear of your heart'*.

Humility

We often hear the words *'humility'* and *'humble'*. What does it mean to be humble? Very often the word is used to describe someone who lives a quiet, simple life, devoid of all but the essential material assets; for example, a monk or a nun, or even a peasant farmer. The word can also be used in a negative sense, as in to humble someone or to humiliate them.

A truly humble person is one who is grounded and centred, someone who knows the power of the 'Master Within' and the interconnectedness of all beings. A humble person is one who considers all people as equals, who is confident and courageous and finds it unnecessary to try to impress others. A truly humble person is one who is working on being true to Self. Isn't humility about full self-expression and service to the Cosmic? Surely as mystics we should endeavour to listen with humility, love and caring and, in so doing, reach out beyond any pre-set parameters and really connect with other human beings? Let us obey one of

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the cardinal rules of listening and learn to listen with understanding.

Mystical Silence

Sometimes the most important thresholds of mystery are places of silence and solitude. To be genuinely spiritual is to have great respect for the possibilities of silence and solitude. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger is quoted as saying:

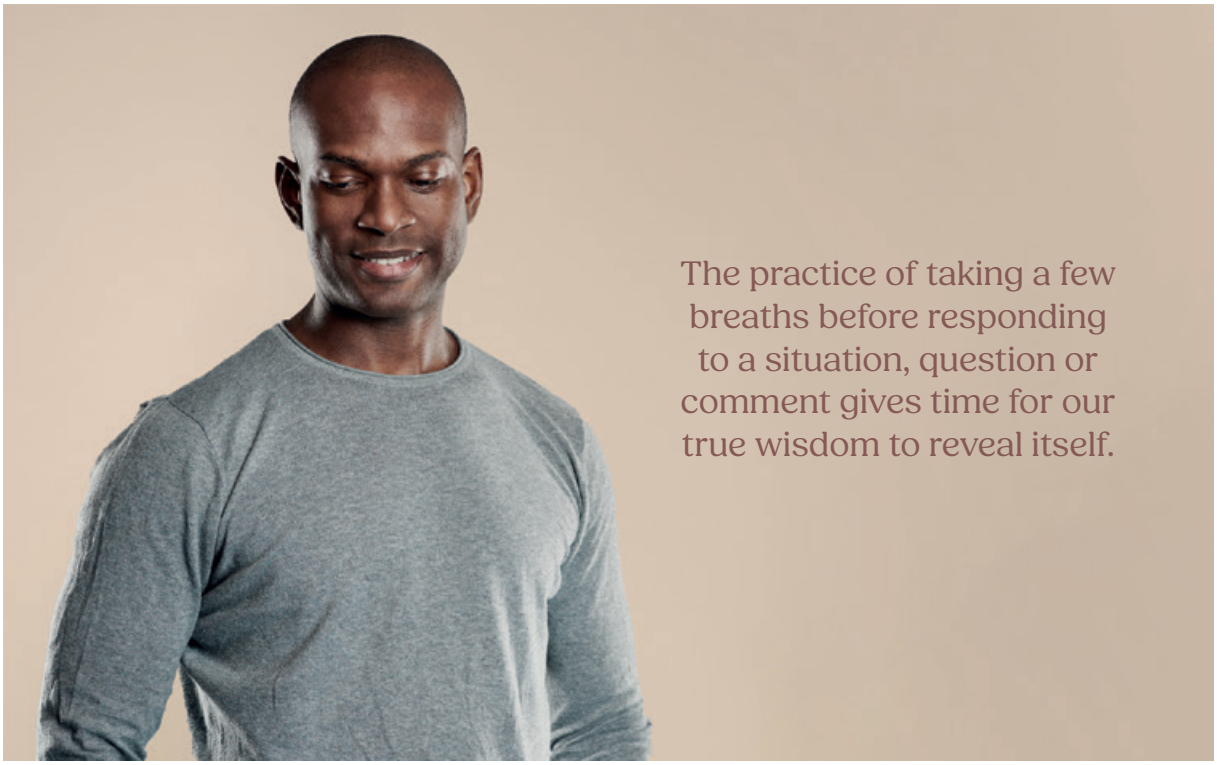
> True listening is worship. When you listen with your soul, you enter the rhythm and unity of the music of the universe.

The most sacred part of listening is the time spent in solitude with oneself. This is quality time that gives one a sense of quietude and peace, a feeling of stillness and joy in our hearts. No mobile phone, television, music or computer; simply the silence of being. Listening begins here, in the stillness of our heart. The solitude offers us relief, giving us the chance to simply be ourselves, to enjoy what and where we are, to savour just being! Alone with the God of our heart, this quiet time of meditation restores our sense of balance and focus in the world around us. It also gives us the opportunity to draw on our intuitive faculties to assist us in our everyday activities.

Epilogue

Give yourself the opportunity of experiencing silence by trying to develop your ability to listen in order to hear, deep within, the music of your inner self. Finally, spend a few moments reflecting on the following questions and how they relate to us as mystics endeavouring to practise the sacred art of listening.

> How often do you really speak? And how often do you really hear? How often do you really touch? How often do you really Move yourself and others?



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Mystical Illumination

by **Ralph M. Lewis**
past Imperator, 1939–1987

What is the purpose of mystical philosophy? We must realise that mysticism and its philosophical aspects are not ends in themselves. Mysticism's ideas and teachings are merely instruments to achieve certain specific objectives. In earlier times, the greatest emphasis was placed on the spiritual values of mysticism; in other words, a full realisation of self and a consciousness of the relationship of that self to the Divine.

Mystical philosophers have long lamented that we have a limited use of our consciousness. We are seen as resorting primarily to objective experiences, our greatest interest being in matters of the senses, worldly things and materialism. Figuratively speaking, our state of existence is therefore one-sided and worldly. Now if we accept that this is basically true, the original question still persists. In other words, what is the purpose of the mystical philosophy and the experience of Oneness, of Cosmic Consciousness?

The answer traditionally given by mystics is: *Illumination*. Another word for it is *Enlightenment*, an influx of a new gnosis, an exalted knowledge. Let us remember that *knowledge is power*. But ideas have power only in their application. Unused knowledge is inert and accomplishes nothing. The power of thought manifests only in action, in doing something.

The physical and material side of life is not fundamentally evil or corrupt. This idea is based on obsolete theological notions. Our appetites and passions are part of the necessities of our being. In our growth, sustaining life and reproducing, we are only conforming to our biological imperatives.

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But what about the other aspects of human nature, namely, things from the abstract side of our being? What about the illumination that mysticism urges us to attain? Must there be a definite cleavage in our nature? Are we to be both sensual and worldly or seek refuge in mystical experience?

Inspiration and Creation

One of the basic precepts of mysticism is the unity of Self, namely, the integration of all divergent experiences that our self is capable of having. The subconscious, the psychic self, must however reflect back the illumination it receives to the objective everyday world. The psychic self must energise the objective self. It must arouse inspiration and aspiration to create in the world those things that represent the inner experience. In other words, if mysticism is to have any value the world must be part of our inner experiences.

Through the ages, every spiritual ideal or philosophical principle that has been accepted as good was a motivating force to compel us to achieve something higher in our lifetime. It is only in this way that we become a whole being and not divided against ourselves. Mysticism, then, can and should be a dynamic, constructive force in the world. False mysticism, on the other hand, is a dream world of pleasant escape from the here and now.

If we have any degree of illumination we confront the problems of the day impersonally and dispassionately. Perhaps the greatest problem of today and past eras is achieving *peace*. Peace is not a matter of passivity and quiescence. In fact, peace must arise out of conflict. However, the battle is basically with the self and not with others. This is the true meaning of *jihad*, an Islamic term we have become familiar with. Peace begins with the individual, not with groups or people collectively.

We are aggressive beings, motivated by forces, desires and drives. These are essential to us. Life impels itself toward its ends with utter indifference to all else, and we have to realise that. If there is purpose to life, it is for living things simply *'to be'* and nothing else. We are a product of such organic impulses. If we look at ourselves from the physical, mortal point of view, we are ruthless. Actually, nature itself is not ruthless, for it has not arrived at the moral concepts that humanity has established. Basically, we have the instinctive inclination to sacrifice anything to satisfy our physical self. Yet it is here that our psychic and rational aspects express themselves.

Our actions, are not always limited to the immediate self but contribute to the ideal of the collective advancement of humanity.

From the highest intellectual and moral point of view, life is not simply to live or exist. Rather, life is to live *for a purpose* where, in our purposefulness, we distinguish ourselves from the lower animals. But what must that purpose be? It is the collective welfare of all humanity. Such a phrase is not a cliché, although we often hear it. It is the only true example of human advancement. Individual incentive toward purely personal ends is elementary and primitive. We are being moved solely by life impulses and not by the higher intuition and rationalisation that we have at our disposal.

To accomplish this greater purpose requires self-discipline. In fact, acting this way does not require being less ambitious or less aggressive; rather, we extend our self-interest. Our actions, therefore, are not always limited to the immediate self but contribute to the ideal of the collective advancement of humanity. In this sense, every one of us is in some small degree every other person's benefactor instead of his competitor.

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Dynamic Mysticism

Our advancement can only be accomplished by an understanding of our emotions and of the self. Firstly, we must establish common ideals that elevate the human race. Secondly, we must be taught how to stimulate certain impulses to contribute to those ideals. We must also learn how to restrain other impulses.

This means a study of the practical points in psychology, mental states and rational codes of ethics and behaviour. Peace, therefore, is a complex attainment if we are to advance from the primitive forces of the raw life that we see existing today. Remember that peace is primarily a personal attainment. It is nice for us to meet at the United Nations, or in all sorts of other groups, to consider what humanity is to do. Yet peace cannot be regulated from outside the individual. It must be individually and personally cultivated.

Those with a gleaming of illumination realise that our inclination to resist change is another of our great problems. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus centuries ago said that all is becoming, nothing ever is. Everything is in a state of flux, becoming something else. If things were not becoming, the world, the whole universe, would be static.

Despite changing conditions, we are creatures of habit, and habits are born out of experience and tradition. Experience is a product of time and circumstance; what one period or event makes pleasurable or practical may not be so tomorrow.

Traditions and Progress

Traditions, on the other hand, are past experiences and customs. They may or may not continue to serve the purpose for which they came into existence. These traditions often become ready-made ways of acting and thinking. Even if such traditions are innocuous and don't trouble us, they often make it difficult for changes or possible advancement to take place.Tradition acquires an air of reverence of which it is often not worthy. If a tradition has merit, it is only as a stepping-stone to something better. No tradition is so sacred that



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it cannot be questioned as to its present value.

Contemporary society is cast out of the mould of its traditions. By holding to such traditions, society has many of the same festering sores that have plagued it for centuries, such as war, crime, poverty, bigotry and intolerance. Moral systems and religious precepts have not stopped these evils.

We are now in a new stage of intellectualism. This is an age of scepticism in which blind faith and unsubstantiated traditions are challenged, resulting in drastic transitions. The old foundation of many religious beliefs, political ideologies, morality and social order are now found wanting. The reaction is one of utter disdain, and it is expressed in the nonconformity we see today. All of this leaves us a vacuum in place of an ordered, traditional society. The old is cast aside, or is in the process of being cast aside, and there is nothing to take its place yet. True scepticism is of course healthy. It substitutes knowledge for blind faith and unsupported belief.

True mystical illumination is a matter of rejuvenation of our worldly consciousness.

Having found the outside world full of error, many of the younger generation want a new kind of emotional experience. They feel thrown back upon themselves, alienated and searching within for answers. They want new, lasting, guiding experiences, and they abhor old dogmatisms. This search for new experiences, alternative answers, is one of the reasons for the recourse to drugs.

True Illumination

We need to realise that true illumination is not just a different state of consciousness. It is not just supplanting fatigue, anxiety or depression with some kind of momentary ecstasy. True mystical illumination is a matter of rejuvenation of our worldly consciousness. It is a reaching down into the conscious mind of ideas for concepts that will inspire confidence. Mystical illumination compels us to confront life renewed, not to become a hermit or a recluse.

Even today we can see Brahmin priests sitting on the banks of the River Ganges in India, oblivious to the terrific heat and to all sorts of flies and insects crawling over their faces and hair. These priests are trying to find a world only within themselves; attempting to escape instead of adjusting to the world with whatever illumination they have.

Mystical philosophy plays an important part in world affairs. We need to realise that it is not something that will simply lift us up into a cloud. My father, Dr H. Spencer Lewis, would often say:

> Mysticism will lift you up into a cloud, but have your feet on the ground or you are going to come down with an awful bump.

Of the most immediate importance is explaining the real significance of inner experience. Mystical philosophy teaches how the inner experience can be related to the mundane world of today. Every conscious thought or act has a thought behind it. So, too, every true advance of humanity must have that psychic motive we term mystical experience.

How often do we realise that our greatest possession is consciousness? Is it the mirror of life? One of the ancient philosophers said:

> Where consciousness is, we are. Where consciousness is not, we are not.

But this consciousness must be polished to reflect a greater image of reality and the Cosmic.

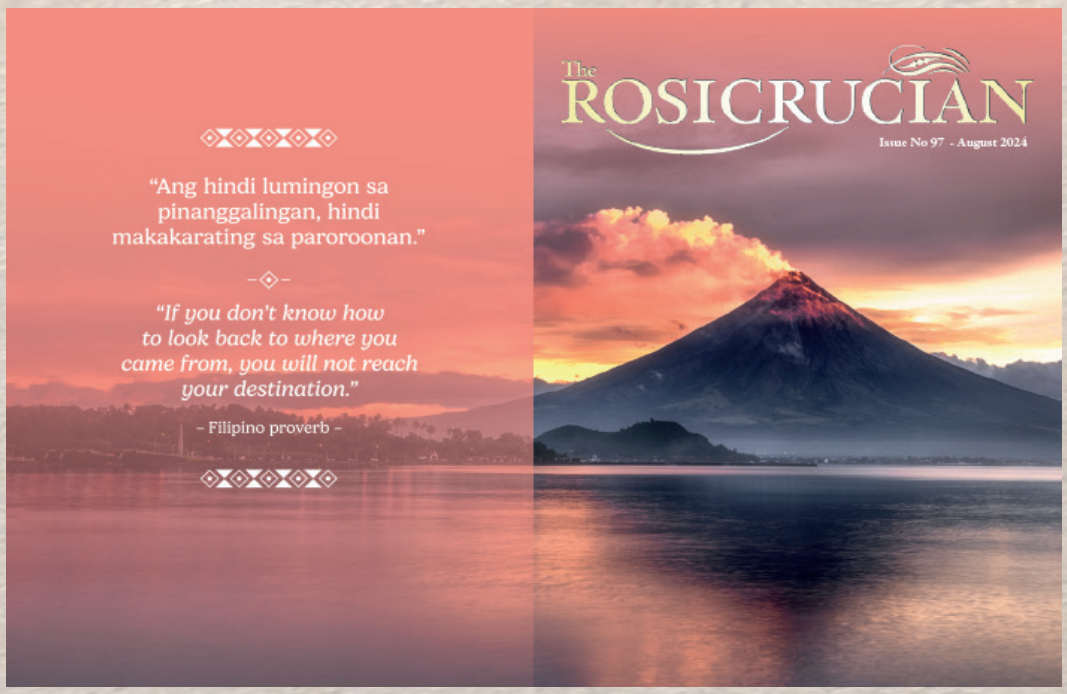
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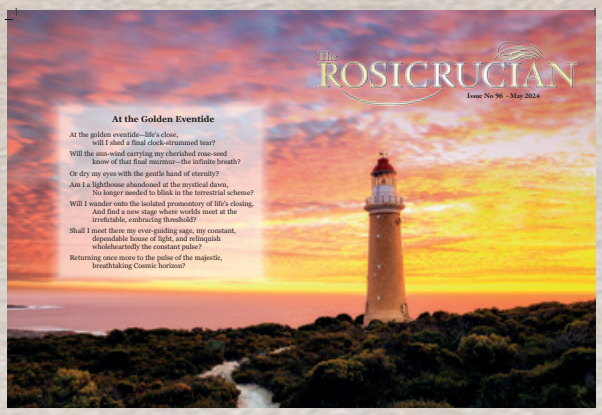
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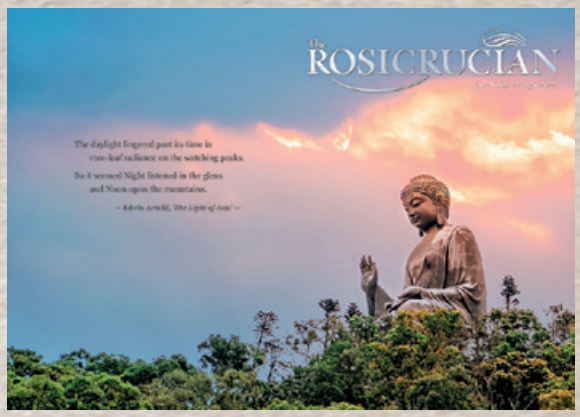
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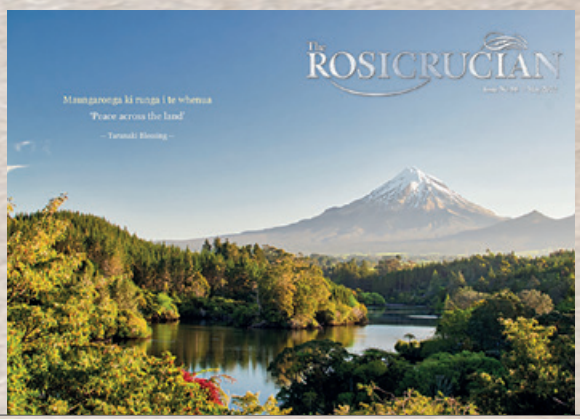
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A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.
Excerpt “Caged Bird”
by Maya Angelou