

The background of the entire page is a photograph of sunlight streaming through a dense forest of green trees. The light rays are visible as bright, diagonal lines cutting through the soft, hazy green atmosphere of the woods. The leaves are vibrant green, and the overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Rosicrucian Heritage

March 2018, Vol 25 No 1



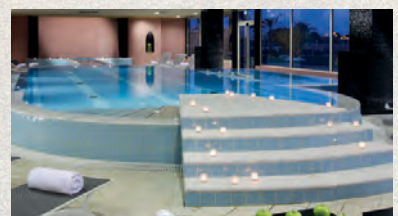
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Rosicrucian Heritage

March 2018 - Volume 25, No 1

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State Housing Estate, PMB 1220,
Calabar, Cross River State,
NIGERIA

Tel: +234-803-0956805
+234-807-0679044
enquiry@amorc.org.ng
www.amorc.org.ng

DIRECTOR
Kenneth Idiodi

Design and Layout
Cloud White
Paul Goodall

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Cover spread

Morning Mist



Saint Columban

The Beginnings of Europe's Development

by *Christian Bernard*
Imperator of AMORC



Dear God, please awaken me from the lethargy of my indolence; make the Fire of Divine Love burn within me; let the flame of Your Love rise up higher than the stars; may the desire to respond to your infinite gentleness burn inside me, and never cease.

-- Saint Columban, 6th Century --

WITHIN the *Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis* we make reference to all religions, for they are an integral part of the history of our world, this history in itself being inseparable from what in overall terms is known as "The Tradition", which includes Rosicrucianism.

We are often familiar with the history of Christianity and its saints, even if not followers of this particular religious path. Over the centuries, this history has become every bit as much to do with culture as with spiritual matters, and many proverbs and sayings that we use in everyday speech make references to it without





Megalithic standing-stones Carnac, France.

our even recalling where they originated. The Bible and other sacred texts are always close to hand, and we come across the faces and lives of those called saints at places and landmarks we visit wherever in the world we go; so widespread are the countries which have been touched by Christianity.

Although non-religious, AMORC is imbued with this Christian culture, as well as with others: for example, reference is made to Saint John in the Traditional Martinist Order. By means of this short article, therefore, I would like to acquaint you with a figure who is less well-known than the saints who are more often mentioned, such as Saint Peter, Saint Joseph, and Saint John the Baptist: this figure is Saint Columban.

In the last few years I had the opportunity when in Brittany, north-west France, to stroll around a picturesque little hamlet by the name of Saint-Colomban (“Saint-Columban” in English), very near to the small town of Carnac which is famous throughout the world for its alignments of megalithic standing-stones. I naturally pondered on this name “Columban”, that of an Irish monk who played an important role in the converting of a number of countries in western Europe, and was also renowned for his humanitarian feats and the vision he had of the unity between peoples. Not being a theologian and having had no in-depth education on the history of Christianity, I had never taken an interest in this religious and historical figure; and yet, although, as I mentioned earlier, he is less well-known than many others in the Church, as a result of what he thought, said and did, he is not only one of the cornerstones of Christianity, but also part of the very foundations of the European mindset.

At a time when the concept of Europe is coming under the spotlight more than ever, with some countries wanting to leave this union of nations while others wish to become part of it, it is worthwhile dwelling on the subject

and approaching it not in strategic or economic terms, but by taking a look at one of its roots.

This great and wonderful principle of unity between peoples is, unfortunately, one that has often been envisioned in a spirit of conquest, and therefore by means of warfare: many have made such attempts, including Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Emperor Charles V, Napoleon, and others... This utopian concept has also been kept alive, fortunately this time, by means of spirituality and a coming together of minds. In this connection we are familiar with the thoughts and actions, and role of the philosophers – including the part played by the Rosicrucian, Comenius – who worked for a better and more humanistic world, and who “dreamt” of it in a peaceful manner.

One of such people is the man who in his individual way, started the development of Europe: Columban (Columbanus or Columbatlus in Latin). As a true “Messenger of God”, throughout his life he encouraged the uniting of peoples. At this early point in the Middle Ages, often referred to as the Dark Ages, his ideas led to closer relations between the various tribes occupying Gaul at the time, the former Roman colonies, and the new kingdoms created following the invasions of the barbarians, and also brought together the religion of Christ with the pagan religions that were still very active. Columban, who was made a saint some 30 years after his death, thereby made an enormous contribution to the constructing of Europe.

Numbering almost 750 million, we Europeans are spread out across some 50 countries in a continent whose past history, and particularly its recent one, is quite appalling, punctuated as it is with abominable conflicts causing millions of victims; a landmass that is divided up by political frontiers that have been made and unmade through wars that no one wanted, except of course those who had a vested interest, rather than the interest of Europe’s peoples, in them.

And yet over the centuries, there have sprung up many signs of hope. New ideologies have intermingled with the old ones, and little by little built up this union of nations made out of rapid changes, yet also worrying divisions. It is said that “Rome was not built in a day”, so what can be said of Europe? A long road has been travelled and there still remains a long way to go, but if we look back with a fresh perspective, we can see and appreciate what St Columban has contributed to our civilisation and to this project that is not only the Europe of peoples, but also the Europe of minds and spirits – or rather, of “the spirit.”

Dozens of localities throughout the world, large and small, bear the name of St Columban. The respects



paid to him are remarkable, not only across Europe, but also in other countries including the USA, Canada, Australia, Peru, Chile, Japan, China, and others, this being the case because his work went hand in hand with the missionaries over the centuries. Nowadays, his message is still being spread via a number of missions and organisations, and dozens of works have been written about him. I have not read them personally but I know that they exist, and if this subject interests you and you want to know more about his story, you will be able to find these works in whatever language you wish. There is one point I would like to emphasise: not having received a traditional religious education, I am not a specialist on the life of St



Fresco of Saint Columbanus on a column at Brugnato Cathedral in Italy.

Columban, or any other saint for that matter; and as I mentioned before, I have not read any of his works; I do not know all about his life and journey or what he did, but initially was simply attracted by his name, and then by the principal idea that radiates from him – namely, the uniting of peoples in cultural sharing and peace.

And so 1400 years ago, one of these innovative thoughts permeated people’s minds and saved a Europe

In the chaos of a divided Europe, he was a beam of light. He put forward a concept that was modern, practical, and redeeming: that of unity and humanism.

that was in crisis, through the actions and work of a monk from Ireland. Accompanied by 12 disciples, Columban criss-crossed a part of this continent that was being consumed by tribal conflicts. In the chaos of a divided Europe, he was a beam of light. He put forward a concept that was modern, practical, and redeeming: that of unity and humanism. He was convinced that human beings can all get on together and, beyond their differences, live in peace. Most certainly he converted people, but without using weapons or torture, and throughout his life’s journey he had no qualms about contradicting or lecturing kings and bishops, and even the Popes that he rubbed shoulders with.

Columban was born into a wealthy family in the year

543, in the province of Aileach in the north-west of Ireland, a land which had now ceased to be a remote, windswept place – quite the reverse, it was a society with a rich culture. It was one of the few western countries not to have been conquered by the Romans. Far away from everywhere, 6th Century Ireland still abounded in ancient customs that were often harsh and violent. The Druids, who had been sole rulers there until that time, had gradually given way to Christian thought. It was in this environment of profound change that Columban grew up, in the midst of pagan beliefs and the appeal of the new religion that was coming in. The century in which Columban was born witnessed a radical revolution in a land said to

be primitive and backward. Ireland naturally felt the influence of Rome as well as other civilisations, with recent discoveries revealing that links had been forged not only with Gaul but also with the African continent.

He was convinced that human beings can all get on together and, beyond their differences, live in peace.

Known to be a good-looking young man, Columban turned his thoughts at an early age towards mysticism and the monastic life; an excellent student in numerous fields, his brilliance in science, literature, and geometry made him a fine scholar; at the same time, he nurtured his spirituality, standing out for his piety; and, sensing a deep and genuine vocation, he donned the monk’s habit at the age of about 20. His inner quest directed him to enter the Abbey at Bangor, near Belfast, where he led a very austere and devout life.

Columban’s mind was a gifted and visionary one, and he was known for his intelligence. He liked the strict, military-style monastic rules: emphasis was put on obedience and



Bangor Abbey, near Belfast.





St Colombano Abbey Bobbio.

asceticism in his particular monastery, and he was not scared by the harshness of the regulations – quite the opposite, in fact; his monastery appealed to him above all for the teaching he was able to obtain from the manuscripts in its scriptorium.

He was noticed and liked by all, and it was with nothing but regret – at being deprived of his presence and influence on the whole of the community – that its leadership agreed to his request to travel and carry the Christian thought beyond his own country. In the tradition of the travelling monks, Columban felt he had a mission, and had no fear at leaving his monastery, his colleagues, and Ireland, his country.

At this point in the mediaeval period, which in many lands saw the ending of the influence of the Roman Empire and when many peoples were still steeped in the old religions or in primitive and pagan traditions, there was born in Columban's heart another vision of the world, another faith, another concept of nations: he knew deep within himself that all people are one, and that it was possible for these nations to come together.

Strong in this conviction, therefore, he started out on his journey in 580, accompanied by his disciples: he crossed the Irish Sea and traversed England, where he preached his doctrine; having carried out his work there, in around 585 he landed on French shores, in Brittany; he converted

Ancient Gaul with his particularly ground-breaking and innovative ideas, and uncommon strength of spirit.

In an exile from which he never returned, he journeyed throughout the western part of Europe, his little group of travelling monks going among other places to Reims, Rouen, Soissons, and other important sites. He was welcomed and befriended by the King of the Franks, Chlotar II. Columban's reputation was such that the King of Orleans and Burgundy, as well as several bishops, requested him to build monasteries. Wherever he went, it was the same. He appealed for more restraint from kings and churchmen, and openly opposed the Merovingian bishops. At times he put his life in danger, by criticising those in power whose failure to adhere to the rules he had no time for, leading as it too often did to a life of violence and debauchery.

The strength of his persuasive powers opened up frontiers and the gates of palaces to him, and what he said touched the hearts of those who heard it. After Queen Brunehilde had ordered him to leave her lands following a difference of opinion, Columban received permission from Childebert II the King of Austrasia, which was then the eastern part of the kingdom of the Franks, to take up residence for a while in his kingdom, and went as far as the Vosges. Having carried out many good works such as clearing of woods, constructing buildings, educating



the local population, treating the sick, and so on, in 587 Columban founded a monastery within the former castle at the holy site of Annegray, built on top of an old Roman temple at the foot of the Saint-Martin mountain. In 590, he founded a new monastery at Luxeuil on the site of a Christian church erected in the 5th Century, near curative natural thermal springs which still exist today. He then built a third monastery, followed by numerous others across the whole of Europe, thereby giving Christianity a firmer foundation; he travelled across several countries, constantly promoting the idea of peace among people and unity between nations.



Abbey of St. Colombano, Bobbio.

In the company of his fellow travelling monks and others whose calling he had inspired by his example, he led a life that was contemplative, as well as active in the service of others and of his faith. Throughout his life, with

...may we... also find within ourselves the inspiration, energy and determination to create a world that is happier, fairer and more noble.

great conviction, he continued his work of converting. Just as he had during his youth in Ireland, he drew the admiration of those around him who listened to him and believed in him, such was the extent to which his sincerity penetrated people's hearts. His virtues were contagious, and his conduct and that of his companions inspired devoutness, for everyone wanted to follow their example. With his fine understanding of the human soul, Columban was politically very astute and knew how to have a positive influence on those he mixed with: this was why kings and the powerful listened to him, and took his advice. He continued his work, particularly in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy, right up to his death which is said to have taken place on 21 November 615 at the age of 72 years at Bobbio, where the King of Lombardy had given him some land to set up a monastery on; this was to be his final work, and the last place he lived.

Columban left us numerous writings, which must of course be approached in the context of the age, as well as his religious vocation. It is through his vision of "universality" and his peaceful spirit, a rare thing in his era, that we should gauge the work and spirit of this man

who left his imprint on his times. I have neither the courage nor the desire to live like St Columban, but I admire the selflessness, fortitude, and strength of soul of this traveller and indefatigable builder.

In 1929, there appeared in the Rose-Croix magazine an article by François Jollivet-Castellot entitled "The United States of Europe." Here is a short passage from it:

The peoples of Europe today are not so different that they have to cut themselves off or fight one other. Quite the contrary, the core of their concepts and

heritage is a shared one, owing to the way that things have evolved in ethnic, economic, and even geographic terms. All interests therefore can, and should, work together to shape a Europe that is united and better, prosperous and peaceful, within which countries and people alike would find security in stability and contentment, at least relatively, in the work undertaken under truly democratic forms of government.

This vision of the future, inspired by the great tragedy of the World War (1914-1918) that Europe had just undergone, already existed in centuries past in the minds of many men and women, known and unknown, in the form of a hope, a prayer, a natural and instinctive attraction to that which is Good. St Columban was one of these "people of goodwill", with a heart overflowing with kindly and altruistic sentiments.

Just like St Columban and the Rosicrucians of the past, may we, men and women of the 21st Century, also find within ourselves the inspiration, energy and determination to create a world that is happier, fairer and more noble. So Mote It Be!



Image: Daniela Papadini / Wikipedia

Remains of Columbanus, Bobbio Abbey crypt.





by *Kenneth U Idiodi*

*Grand Administrator for English speaking West Africa
of the Rosicrucian Order, and Director of the
Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC*

Sanctum Musings



The Volunteering Spirit

*Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless,
but because they are priceless -- Sherry Anderson*

SOMETIMES the desire to be of service to others in a particular way can become so strong that we are willing to invest our personal resources to render the service. And when we do this without any hope of reward other than the satisfaction of completing of the endeavour, then the true volunteering spirit is born. This passion to put our talents to practical use for the benefit of others has mainly been responsible for the technological and cultural advancement of humankind.

However, the desire for personal profit is another very powerful force that drives the activities of people. There is no doubt that the profit motive has also played a significant part in the direction that technology and culture has gone. Individuals seeking profit have been very useful in spreading products and services all over the world. In order to gain profit, these people are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to bring goods and services to us. Profiting is not bad; in fact it is necessary for profits to be made to keep most products and services in existence.

However, commercialism has a tendency of getting out of hand as a result of greed which drives people to look for excessive profits at all costs. As a result of this, an originally beneficial service or product can become compromised by runaway commercialism; so much so that

the final product or service delivered to end-users could end up being more harmful than useful. Unfortunately there is a lot of evidence of this today. It is really sad to note that many commonly used household products, packaged foods, and pharmaceutical drugs known to be dangerous to the health by their producers continue to be aggressively marketed and consumed.

Well known toxic materials continue to be used to make many of the things we handle and consume on a daily basis. It would be easy to come to the conclusion that the commercial spirit in man has overshadowed the volunteering spirit if we go by the apparent dominance of the spirit of greed that human beings have displayed all over the world. However, without the volunteering spirit, the commercial spirit will have no foundation on which to operate and human development will very quickly grind to a halt or even go into regression.

Expanding the Self

While the drive in commercialism is powered mainly by a selfish interest that narrows towards the self only, the volunteering spirit is on the contrary powered by a selfless expansion of interest towards others. The difference between selfishness and selflessness lies in the identity





The mystic deeply appreciates and feels a connection to virtually every other thing in existence.

unconsciously assigned to the self. If the self is thought of as a separate isolated figure, without any important connection with anyone else, there will be an unconscious tendency to attend exclusively to personal wants and desires. In other words, this will lead to extreme selfishness.

This condition of complete selfishness as just described is not uncommon in spite of the fact that human beings are gregarious, instinctively seeking and enjoying the company of others, be they family members or friends. The strong bond that forges between family members unconsciously expands our identity to include them and we regard them as part of us. In such a case, we feel obliged to attend also to the needs and desires of our family members, and not just our personal needs. However, a relatively wealthy person who cares for only his family members will still be seen as selfish by the larger society.

Members of a community ideally expect every person living in the community to identify with the community and contribute to its progress. And this progress is often achieved through the more privileged members giving support to the less privileged.

If however, several communities are involved and an individual is in a position to influence the release of benefits meant for these communities, any unfair bias in favour of the individual's own community will be considered parochial or tribal. Similarly, on a larger scale, the unfair bias by an individual in favour of his or her own country over others is seen as nationalistic. In other demographics, a bias in favour of one's own race

over others is racist; a bias in favour of one's own sex over the opposite sex is sexist; an extreme bias or inclination towards a particular religion makes one a fanatic. Clearly, no matter how many people we identify with, as long as there is some form of bias against others there will remain a potential for discord. However, a person who is completely unbiased and who considers every other human being as a part of himself or herself regardless of nationality, race, sex, religion, or any other classification, is a humanitarian.

The mystic understands that it is the same life force that flows through his body that also animates all other living forms in the animal and plant kingdoms. It is the one and same Universal Consciousness that finds expression in man, the animals, plants, and even in the minerals. In moments when the mystic experiences a merging of his consciousness with universal cosmic consciousness, the connection amongst all things in existence becomes very clear. Because of this, the mystic lives in harmony with all aspects of nature.

Beyond his fellow human being, the mystic deeply appreciates and feels a connection to the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, the domestic animals, the wild animals, the trees, flowers, the hills, the rocks, the stars, the sun, the moon and virtually every other thing in existence. And this connection is not imagined because there are actually invisible bonds which link everything in existence into one unity. The true nature of a thing cannot be known without understanding its relationship to other things. So, the mystic in perceiving the connections between things, is better able understand their true natures and how to interact with everything and everyone. The mystic knows that everything and everyone in the universe is connected with everything else and anyone else!

The Power of Intuition

There is an overall universal intelligence that governs or rules over all things. Everyone is constantly in communication with this intelligence, however, mostly in an unconscious way. When we become conscious of it, it is known as our intuition. The intuition is the most important faculty of the human being. The power of the intuition to warn us of impending danger is probably most well-known.

However, cultivating our intuition serves us in countless other ways as we navigate through the complexities of life. Each of us has a specific role that we play in the cosmic scheme of things and it is our intuition that guides us in carrying out this role properly. When we understand that there are services that we are specially and uniquely positioned to render to the world we will be





moved to volunteer these without any thought of personal gain. And we will gain the greatest satisfaction from doing this because we will be fulfilling our cosmic missions.

Our Cosmic Mission

There is a general tendency to think of a cosmic mission as a very grand or spectacular service that an individual has been divinely commissioned to carry out for the benefit of humanity. It is true that in some cases a cosmic mission may bring fame and world acclaim to the individual. However, if we give it a little thought, we will realize that not every cosmic mission can be like this. And in fact, an overwhelming majority of cosmic missions will be carried out as simple common place activities that will never be heard of.

Our lives are actually made up of simple common place activities such as thinking, observing, speaking, communicating and interacting with others in various ways, moving material things around for various purposes, and attending to the various biological demands of our physical bodies. Those who are rich and famous have their lives made up of these basic components just like those who are poor and relatively unknown.

In all they do, human beings are consciously or unconsciously striving for health, happiness, and peace in their lives. And the attainment of these do not in any way depend on the achievement of fame, glamour and fortune. Many little acts we carry out in our daily lives can help us as well as help others move closer to achieving health,

happiness, and peace. What greater cosmic mission could there be than this when by the little acts we carry out, the words we speak, and the thoughts we hold, we contribute in tiny ways to the attainment of health, happiness, and peace? A smile, a gentle word of advice, a listening ear, a hug, material assistance to the needy, a positive thought of goodwill to another, these are the elements that make up a cosmic mission. And these are not done because we are told to do so by others. They are freely offered or volunteered in the true spirit of service without any thought of personal gain.

When we live our lives in this way, we enter into conscious partnership with the Universal Intelligence and all the creative and constructive forces of the Cosmic are placed at our disposal. As a result of this, we find that what we achieve in our lives by far outstrips what we have the capacity to achieve by our own solo efforts. This realisation should aid us in maintaining a sense of humility. We continue to enjoy the support of the creative and constructive forces of the Cosmic as long as we do not make the mistake of arrogating to ourselves powers and authority that we do not really have.

As we focus on our God-given talents and apply them carefully for the benefit of others as guided by the voice of intuition the volunteering spirit becomes awakened in us. When we find out that we have special abilities in certain areas, these should indicate to us the areas of life in which we should be cooperating with the Universal Intelligence for the good of all. Of what use is any talent we have, if it is not put to use for others to appreciate and benefit from.



In the biblical books of Matthew and Luke, a master goes on a trip and leaves his servants in charge of some goods. When he returned, he evaluated how well the servants employed what was in their custody. Those who were able to employ what they had to gainful ends were seen to be productive and were rewarded accordingly. The single servant who decided not to take any risks with what was in his care ended up losing more than what he was given.

In the course of our lives on Earth, we absorb a lot of our characteristics from the culture in which we live. However, there are some traits that we have that originate from our inner beings. It would be a shame if we returned back into the culture the same as we had received without the addition of some unique elements as our own contribution. And there is no better way of bringing out the unique qualities of our nature than through volunteerism. The society we belong to can easily force us into occupations that do not permit us to fully express ourselves. We make do with these occupations mainly for the purpose of earning a living. However, through volunteering, we can really be ourselves and express ourselves to the fullest.

Living out Our Values

The psychological benefits of volunteering are well known to professional counsellors who have observed from interaction with clients that a meaningful and purposeful life was only achieved when people were able to live out their values. Jonathan Hetterly, a licensed professional counsellor narrated his experience in this area as follows;

Many of the people I see in therapy benefit from volunteering. It gives them a sense of accomplishment. It provides them with positive feelings about themselves. It gives their lives a sense of purpose and meaning. But the biggest benefit for the volunteer is that it provides them a sense of living out their values.

Living out our values simply means being actively involved in things which are deeply important to us. And when we get involved in such things, it is always with the intention of making a positive impact or difference. The confidence in our capacity to make a difference in the world usually comes with age and experience. Most young people doubt their ability to positively influence their environment and many continue to struggle with this doubt throughout their lives.



A simple and straight forward self-assessment of whether or not we are living out our values and making a difference in the world could easily be done. One way of doing this involves making out a personal inventory of activities that would bring a sense of joy to our inner being and also be of benefit to others. Make a list of up to ten of such activities if you can, listing them from the most desired to the least. When you have completed the list, assess your actual activities in life to determine how many of these are in your list.

Many who carry out this exercise may find a very discouraging correlation between their values inventory and their actual activities in life. However, such persons need not remain discouraged. A simple redirection of some of their time and effort towards their areas of interest through volunteer work will correct the anomaly.

Building a Better World

The awakening of the volunteering spirit marks the beginning of self-realization. And as we engage in volunteerism we progress along the path of self-mastery and contribute to the evolution of humanity and the greater manifestation of light, life, and love in the world. As Kofi Annan former Secretary-General of the United Nations once said

If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever.

It therefore behoves each and every one of us to embrace volunteerism and indeed help make the world a better place. This is an obligation we cannot really afford to ignore. May divine inspiration, benediction and protection be upon us as we sincerely volunteer our services for the betterment of humanity.





Scepticism & Positive Thinking

by *Laura Kacoutié*

WE'VE ALL heard of the phrase “Be realistic!” It’s not a foreign concept in today’s age to carry a healthy level of scepticism. We live in a society where evidence and concrete findings are favoured. Gone are the days when someone can simply sell us a few amazing claims and expect us to blindly nod and go along with it. A lot of us have questions, we want proof. Before we believe, we are susceptible to doubt.

In this sense, many of us have heard about positive thinking before. We can all agree that adopting a positive frame of mind, adopting a positive attitude and expecting good results in all we do sounds good in theory. But then

in our personal lives and when applied to ourselves, the spark may fade after a while. We encounter obstacles, we may find it difficult and we lose motivation. Certainly, along our journey we become increasingly sceptical.

The inner sceptic will ask: “*Does this really work?*” “*Can I really do this?*” “*Is this actually realistic?*” It is not shameful or embarrassing to admit that each of us has this inner sceptic. It is natural to ask questions when trying new things. However, our scepticism can prevent us from embracing positive thinking and the benefits it provides us altogether. Therefore, how can we keep a balance and ensure that our scepticism does not shut us out from what we deserve?



Keeping a Balance

There is a saying that too much of something is not good for us. The inner sceptic likes to be sensible and rational. Therefore, applied to our thoughts, it is easy to conclude that there should be some form of balance to keep us in check. Clearly, dwelling in negative thoughts all the time is of no benefit to us. For our health, our outlook on life, and for our general wellbeing, a constantly negative frame of mind can be very damaging. So, the balance should not be tipped on the side of negative thinking. Yet it may be possible to argue that one can also be too positive. What comes to mind when we think of someone who is always so positive? Perhaps it is someone who is a bit naïve or out of touch with reality.

Therefore, our inner sceptic attempts to bring us some grounding. It balances out the pessimist in us but also stops us from being blindly optimistic. In the abstract, this balancing scale makes sense, but when applied to real life scenarios there are always exceptions that make us rethink the rule.

Positive thinking does not mean completely shutting away any rationality or intellect.

In everyday life, we can always think of someone who has defied the odds, or has done the impossible. To use a few famous examples: Stephen King's first novel was rejected by over 30 publishers but he is now one of the best-selling authors of all time. Oprah Winfrey was once fired from her job because she was "*unfit for television*"



but then went on to host the highest-rated television programme of its kind in history. Additionally, there are even claims that Einstein couldn't talk properly until the age of four. Would it have been realistic to think at that time that Einstein's name would be synonymous with the word 'genius', or that any of these people would have been successful at all? Based on these examples and the countless others that are less documented, we cannot claim to know what is realistic in every given circumstance.

Positive Thinking is Freedom!

The desires, ambitions and positive outlook we wish to achieve by using positive thinking do not need to be modified simply because our inner sceptic does not understand how it can fit into our reality today. This is because the joys and the benefits that are achieved by thinking positively are completely beyond the limitations that our inner sceptic may place on ourselves.

The inner sceptic may find it more appealing to rely solely on the intellect or our objective senses as a way of understanding ourselves and what is possible in the world today, as this way of knowing is more widely accepted; it is safer and tested. But does this way of knowing actually give us infallible knowledge in the first place?

Even with our five senses and our powerful intellect we have not discovered everything about the universe - the periodic table still has unknown elements, "new" planets are being discovered and we are constantly researching new ways to do things and new ways to understand the world around us. Indeed, relying purely on our intellect or on what we believe to be realistic has its limitations. Therefore, when we choose to think positively we should allow ourselves to go beyond our intellect. We can open ourselves up to another way of knowing that is not subject to the same constraints, an innate way of knowing what is deep within us waiting to be reclaimed. *It is the certainty that what is for us shall be ours, and that all that belongs to us is good. It is trusting that our needs will be wonderfully met in every single way and that they will continue to be met throughout our lives as long as we place ourselves in a position of receptivity to the universe and to life.*

Placing ourselves in this position of receptivity means we need to loosen our grip of the limited ideas of what is 'realistic' in today's world especially since we cannot claim to have an absolute understanding of the universe or of all that is possible.

This explanation may still appear to be unrealistic to the inner sceptic. Yet we cannot deny that if we choose to adopt this positive



frame of mind and place ourselves in this position of receptivity, we can find ourselves doing the seemingly 'impossible.' However, those that allow their inner sceptics free reign, will observe us and eventually concede that our actions were indeed 'miracles' or perhaps that we were just 'lucky.' The very things that they deem unrealistic can be observed taking place in our lives.

Hopeless Optimism?

However, this is not to say that the intellect and spirituality are at odds or that there is no place for the intellectual at all. Humans are multi-faceted; the fact that we have the capacity to rationalise and use our intellect means that it does have a place in our lives.

Positive thinking does not mean completely shutting away any rationality or intellect. This is not a question of being a hopeless optimist who ignores science and abdicates all reasoning. There are laws that science has revealed that positive thinking alone cannot bypass. For example, we can't ignore gravity and float off into the sky and we can't make a pot of gold appear out of nowhere.

We are an evolved species and have discovered many laws of our universe that we should use to our benefit. We can always find a way to compliment the different ways of knowing; we can use all tools of knowing to understand the world and ourselves. A builder, for example, does not rely only on one tool to create a house.

What is Holding You Back?

It may be worth analysing what is really behind our scepticism when it comes to positive thinking. How much of our scepticism is due to fear? Perhaps we are afraid of adopting a positive frame of mind because if we do, and then our ambitions fail or we face obstacles, it hurts us much more. We find it harder to try again or to stay motivated.

However, we must understand that obstacles and so-called failures are not the end of our journeys or our ambitions. Every so-called failure holds within it a rich learning experience and can make us much more resilient in the process of attaining what we want.

Also, synonymous with scepticism is doubt. We doubt that we can even adopt a positive frame of mind all the time or that it will make much of a difference to our lives. The strongest way to appease our doubts surrounding positive thinking is to simply put into practice this powerful tool and see what difference it will make in helping us achieve what we want. The adage of "*try it and see for yourself*" truly resonates, as positive thinking is a practical exercise that requires real work and commitment.



It in no way involves being disingenuous or dishonest with the way we are feeling. There will be days when we feel discouraged or find it hard to see a silver lining when obstacles come our way. But this does not mean we must give up, or even suppress any discontent at all. Positive thinking involves adjusting our reaction to the setbacks. In this way, it involves being mindful of what our thoughts and reactions actually are to the circumstances and then *choosing* to mould them into more positive and constructive ones.

Therefore, when it comes to negative thoughts, we need to examine how we truly feel about a situation and then like a loving friend, parent or partner we offer ourselves understanding and love. In this way, we can find out what is genuinely causing us to feel this way and give ourselves the opportunity to truly heal instead of suppressing it inside.

Choose Positivity

Adopting a positive mindset can be a long and arduous task especially in a world that can be highly stressful and increasingly sceptical at the same time. Nonetheless it is truly rewarding. There is an underlying current within us that wants us to find happiness.

Nearly all we do in life is to secure happiness - the jobs we pursue, the partner we seek, the environment we want to be in - we select many of those things based on what will make us happy. Therefore, why not keep our focus on positive thinking to create a harmonious worldview that can only work in our favour?





Hypatia of Alexandria

Neoplatonic Philosopher and Martyr

by Bill Anderson

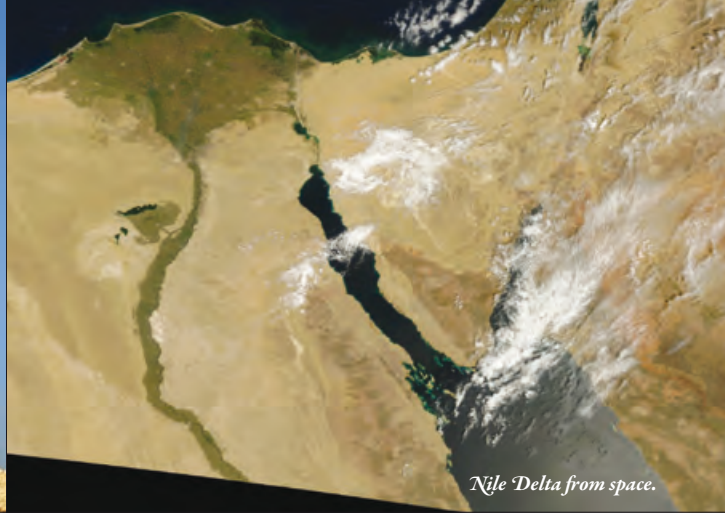
THE FLIGHT from London to Cairo passed quickly, compared to some I'd been on. It was my second trip to Egypt, a country with which I felt a great affinity, and still do. Ever since I was young, I had always felt that Egypt was my spiritual home and had been drawn to it for as far back as I can remember. The feeling of anticipation

grew inside me as the pilot called 10 minutes to landing and my heart leapt as I stared out of the window at the land below.

I had flown here to join a Rosicrucian Tour of Egypt, which was due to start in a couple of days, but I wanted to get there first to settle in with some alone time, and also take the chance to visit Alexandria, which, while not on



Pompey's Pillar in Alexandria.



the tour itself, was one place I really wanted to see. Having done a course on Greek Civilisation at university, where I first became aware of how Alexandria was one of the greatest cities of the ancient world, a centre of culture and civilisation for nearly a thousand years, I was anxious to see how much of the ancient city was still there.

Arriving at the hotel near the Pyramids in the suburb of Giza, I paid the taxi driver and went to reception for my room, but also to ask about taking a trip to Alexandria the next day. It was quickly arranged and I went to my room to relax. I had been up early that morning and needed time to meditate and consider the next 10 days in Egypt. While meditating, I fell asleep, I was so tired. Some might say that I needed to sleep more than I needed to meditate: probably true; and there would be plenty of time for meditation later on.

I usually don't sleep for long, so that evening I went for a walk in the hotel gardens. It was peaceful and serene and I was enveloped by a multitude of delicious scents. I gazed at the nearby pyramids, letting my mind wander, wondering what the Great Pyramid really was. Was it simply a massive tomb for a long-dead pharaoh, or was it used as a place of initiation into higher states of consciousness? In the West was a crescent moon, hovering above the pyramids and a red-tinged western horizon; an omen from the ancient past perhaps?

The beauty of the lord Khonsu Neferhotep inspired me. As the third member of the Theban Triad of gods, Khonsu was the embodiment of the moon as it sailed across the sky, bringing healing wherever he went. Far from his home in Luxor, 500 kilometres to the south, he would have been a welcome sight to the ancient Egyptian priests, gazing into the night sky just as I was that evening.

Journey North

The following morning, I set off for Alexandria. The bus picked up fellow Egyptophiles, or should it be Hellenophiles, from a couple of hotels and then we



headed northwards. As the tour bus passed through the Nile Delta with heart stopping recklessness, the guide calmly reminded everyone that Lower Egypt had played a vital part in Egyptian history as one of the Two Lands.

But the river channels had silted up many times and the Nile and therefore changed course often through the ages. Ancient cities that once stood proudly by the river bank now found themselves high and dry, some under the ubiquitous green fields, some under modern towns and some, incredibly, still visible, though not more than scant ruins. In my mind I pictured Alexandria as it once must have been: the broad, colonnaded avenues; the famous Museum and Great Library; the Pharos or Lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world; the Soma, the mausoleum where the body of Alexander the Great lay in state; and boats filled with revellers on the canals to Canopus and Eleusis.

I should have expected though that reality would





The Corniche of Alexandria.

come as a bit of a shock. Alexandria, the second city of Egypt, is a modern, bustling metropolis. It's a large seaport and industrial centre, but then again, so it was in ancient times too. Sometimes we raise our expectations too high, and when we're faced with reality it seems such a let-down. But it's not a let-down really, for nothing stays the same; it's just that our perception has changed and it has opened up an opportunity for new experiences, and that's always good. Despite the noisy hustle and bustle all around, the ancient city is still there if we are prepared to see between the gaps of activity and modernity. It wears a new set of clothes, but the essence, the very soul of the city is still there; it hasn't changed and it's still a vibrant and exciting place to be.

The arranged tour of Alexandria followed well-trodden paths. We saw plenty of ruins, but most of ancient Alexandria lies under the present city; indeed a lot of it is on the sea floor. Later we stopped for a refreshment break, so I found myself sitting in a café ordering a coffee and croissant, and trying out my pidgin Arabic. I may struggle with it, but the fact that anyone makes the effort was worth it. It's a way of making new friends too. I was sitting outside with a view across the Corniche at what used to be the Great (now Eastern) Harbour. It was here that the ships bearing thousands of books destined for the Great Library of Alexandria had docked. And on the far side of the harbour had been the royal palace complex from which Cleopatra had ruled.

Interestingly, Arabic scholarship refers to Cleopatra as 'The Virtuous Scholar', and cites scientific books written by her as the definitive works in their field. This is understandable considering the cultural milieu she grew up in and is in stark contrast to the prevailing Western view of a hedonistic, deceiving and over-ambitious ruler. Away over to my left was the Western Harbour that was anciently known as *Eunostos*, which can be glossed as 'Happy Return' or 'Happy Homecoming', an apt phrase

indeed for my Egyptian 'homecoming.'

And I thought, how much history this city has seen, how many of the world's greatest minds have trodden the streets of the bustling Mother City of Western civilisation! Everyone knows the story of Anthony and Cleopatra, but after their deaths and after Egypt had become part of the Roman Empire, what became of the city? What about the Therapeutae? What about the great Neoplatonic philosophers who made Alexandria their home? I fell into reverie about the brightest flame of the late Roman Alexandria – a woman, a philosopher and a great soul called Hypatia.

Fount of Wisdom

"In the starry expanse that has no dwellings: forces of the universe, interior virtues, harmonious union of earth and heaven that delights the mind and the ear and the eye, that offers an attainable ideal to all wise men and a visible splendour to the beauty of the soul..., Hypatia." (Charles Leconte de Lisle, 1857)

Hypatia of Alexandria (370-410 CE), was the daughter of the famous mathematician and geometrician Theon,



Hypatia - from a biography on her by Elbert Hubbard - 1908.





and a “*divine guide.*” As the soul journeys ever closer to union with the Divine, this “*hidden spark which loves to conceal itself*” grows into a flame of knowing. Hypatia’s philosophy was concerned with the “*mystery of being,*” contemplation of Reality, rising to elevated states of consciousness, and “*union with the divine,*” the One.

Hypatia gave Alexandrian Neoplatonic philosophy its most brilliant hour. Although she drew

one of the most illustrious scholars of his day. According to her contemporaries, Hypatia, having been taught by her father, eventually excelled him in both mathematics and astronomy. The child was a savant, an early master of everything her mind turned to.

It was in the Platonic school that she developed her ideas, based on the teachings of her Neoplatonist predecessors Plotinus and Iamblichus. However, by providing them with a scientific and methodical dimension, she immediately attracted a greater reputation for herself. The courses she taught were an unqualified success and her reputation as a woman of great wisdom spread far and wide. The Platonic school had enjoyed and was to continue to enjoy a great reputation for learning for centuries more due to the quality of its teachings. Hypatia’s students were numerous and enthusiastic, and were attracted to her not only for her knowledge and depth of thought, but also because of her exceptionally radiant personality, her beauty and the purity of her morals. It was said that she displayed an impressive authority combined with extreme modesty and humility.

Unfortunately, none of her writings survived the destruction of the Great Library of Alexandria. In the turbulence of the period, Christian fanatics attacked non-Christians who had been suppressed over the preceding three centuries due to their new and radical religious belief in a messiah with all the answers from Judea. All that remains of her works are the titles of a few of her major treatises. Thanks to the written testimonies of some who knew her, aspects of her character were captured; in particular the letters from Synesius of Cyrene, her disciple of about the same age, overflowing with respect and affection for her.

What survives from Hypatia’s teachings indicate a decidedly mystical orientation to her thoughts. Glimpses of her spiritual views have survived in the letters of her disciples, which speak of “*the eye buried within us,*”

to herself devoted disciples, among whom were Herculianus, Troilus, Hesychius, Olympius, Synesius and his brother, she decided not to establish a permanent school centred around herself. Synesius worshipped her, and she warmly supported and counselled him even after he became a Bishop of the early Christian Church. She concentrated her attention on public teaching and exercised an extraordinary influence upon the cultured populace of Alexandria. Among close associates and students she used a variety of means to direct their attention to philosophy.

Youthful students were drawn to her because of her charm, grace and beauty. Rather than reject them for their mixed motives, she practised therapeutic methods reminiscent of Pythagoras and Apollonius. She is said to have calmed one student’s emotional fervour by playing music that permanently cleared his mind. She shocked another who idolised her physical beauty by suddenly showing him her own soiled undergarments and pointing to the illusive nature of the physical plane. Yet she cast no one out, and sought instead to heal the soul and nurture the aspirations of all who came to her.

Her lectures attracted large numbers of people who were inspired by her eloquence and mastery of dialectic. Admired for her wisdom as well as her counsel, she

Rather than reject them for their mixed motives, she practised therapeutic methods reminiscent of Pythagoras and Apollonius.

became a friend and confidant of Orestes, the Augustal Prefect (Governor) of Egypt based in Alexandria. Born into the ancient religion of Greece, he had been baptised a Christian, and as Augustal Prefect deployed his considerable political skills in an unsuccessful attempt to establish harmony in Alexandria by containing the temporal ambitions of the Church. Hypatia’s interest in society and politics, as well as her intimate





The Canopic Way

not afraid of giving moral lessons to the Roman Emperor Arcadius, and who was entrusted with the military organisation of Cyrene and the Libyan Pentapolis, the five Greek cities around modern-day Benghazi in Libya.

He was no fool and didn't give praise to just anyone. Although a layman, he was, perhaps for political reasons, offered the position of Bishop of Ptolemais in 410. This made him one of the most important and influential men in the Libyan province. But he imposed two conditions on his acceptance of the episcopate: he wanted to stay married to his wife, whom he adored, and he reserved the right to retain his belief in the doctrine

connections with centres of power in Alexandria, and her uncompromising Platonic and Iamblichian teachings, eventually drew the wrath and viciousness of the Church hierarchy upon her.

Although she offered advice to governors and magistrates, Hypatia was not a political figure in the narrow meaning of the word: she applied the Platonic dialectic to society and science alike. And even while struggling to preserve the wisdom of the Academy, she retained her interest in science and engineering. Towards the end of her tragic life, she sent Synesius detailed instructions for the construction of an astrolabe and a hydroscope.

Synesius

Hypatia came to symbolise learning and science which the early Christians identified with paganism. However, among the pupils who she taught in Alexandria were many prominent Christians. Many of the letters that the aforementioned Synesius wrote to Hypatia have been preserved and we can see in them a person filled with admiration and reverence for her learning and scientific abilities.

Synesius, her greatest disciple, was born into a wealthy family in the eastern half of the Roman Empire. At 20 years of age he accompanied his brother to Alexandria, where he became an enthusiastic Neoplatonist and disciple of Hypatia. For four years between 395 and 399 he spent some time in Athens. He was not just an average student with a crush on his teacher; he was a recognised man of authority who was

of the pre-existence of the soul and the eternity of the world, which Hypatia had taught him. Oddly enough, this was accepted by the Church.

Synesius was a prolific writer in his own right, and in some of the 159 *Epistolae* or *Letters* still extant he mentions Hypatia:

To the Philosopher (Hypatia): I am dictating this letter to you from my bed, but may you receive it in good health, mother, sister, teacher, and withal benefactress, and whatsoever is honoured in name and deed." In another letter he wrote: "If it were true that the dead lose memory of each other, I would still retain memory of Hypatia with whom I have had so much friendship.

It seems he was an interesting and sympathetic person who had some quite progressive views for his

Her uncompromising Platonic and Iamblichian teachings, eventually drew the wrath and viciousness of the Church hierarchy upon her.

time, most importantly the view that a person who has money, power and privilege has a duty to speak for and to defend those who are less fortunate than himself. He tried his best to follow this maxim throughout his life. In another letter he wrote:

To the Philosopher (Hypatia): There was a time when I too was of some use to my friends. You





*The Roman Theatre
in Alexandria.*

yourself called me the providence of others. All respect which was accorded to me by the mighty of this earth, I employed solely to help others. The great were merely my instruments. But now, alas, I am deserted and abandoned by all, unless you have some power to help. I account you as the only good thing that remains inviolate, along with virtue. You always have power, and long may you have it and make good use of that power. I recommend to your care Nicaeus and Philolaus, two excellent young men united by the bond of relationship. In order that they may come again into possession of their own property, try to get support for them from all your friends, whether private individuals or magistrates.

Extinguished is the Candle

In 412 Cyril (later St Cyril) became Patriarch and Pope of Alexandria. However the Roman Augustal Prefect Orestes was his bitter political rival as Church and State fought for control of the country. Hypatia was a friend of Orestes and this, together with prejudice against her philosophical views which were seen by Christians to be pagan, led to Hypatia becoming the focal point of

riots between Christians and non-Christians. Hypatia, it was said:

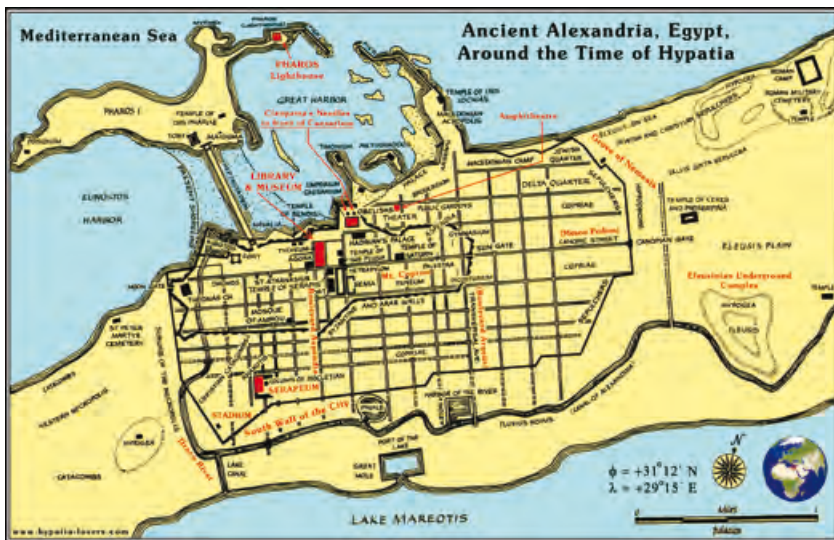
...by her eloquence and authority..., attained such influence that Christianity considered itself threatened..

Orestes enjoyed the political backing of Hypatia, who had considerable moral authority in Alexandria, and extensive influence wider afield as well. Many students from wealthy and influential families came to Alexandria expressly to study privately with Hypatia, and many of these later attained high posts in government and the Church. Several Christians thought that Hypatia's

Orestes had cultivated his relationship with Hypatia in order to strengthen his ties with the pagan community of Alexandria.

influence had caused Orestes to reject all reconciliatory offerings by Patriarch Cyril, but modern historians think that Orestes had cultivated his relationship with Hypatia in order to strengthen his ties with the pagan community of Alexandria, as he had done with the Jewish community, so as to handle better the difficult





Ancient Alexandria at the time of Hypatia.

political life of the Egyptian capital.

The encyclopaedist Suidas reported that Damascius, the “*last of the Neoplatonists*” recounted the specific circumstances of her death. Patriarch Cyril knew that Hypatia, restricted to giving public lectures on Aristotle and mathematics, met in private with small groups of disciples to study the teachings of Pythagoras, Plato, Ammonius and Plotinus. One afternoon in 415 he came to Hypatia’s house and, finding several officers of the guards and prominent patricians gathered around the door, enquired as to the reason. They told him that Hypatia was conducting a philosophical meeting, and with that, Patriarch Cyril flew into a rage. Then and there he decided that she should die.

According to the 5th Century historian Socrates, when Hypatia was returning from a ride, a mob of Christian Nitrian monks attacked her chariot and pulled her from it. Without losing her calm or uttering a word, she was dragged into the Caesarion Church, stripped naked at the altar, and flayed and battered to death with pieces of broken pottery. Her bones were scraped clean with oyster shells and the flesh was burnt to ashes. It seems hardly believable in our modern era with the Christian virtues of tolerance, love, kindness and compassion so well advertised, that such barbarous behaviour could have been orchestrated by the Church itself. But the facts are clear. John, Bishop of Nikiu in the Delta, giving the Christian version of her death wrote:

And thereafter a multitude of believers in God arose under the guidance of Peter the magistrate -- now this Peter was a perfect believer in all respects in Jesus Christ -- and they proceeded to seek for the pagan woman who had beguiled the people of the city and the prefect through her enchantments. And when they learnt the place where she was, they proceeded to her and found her seated on a (lofty) chair; and having made

her descend they dragged her along till they brought her to the great church, named Caesarion. Now this was in the days of the fast. And they tore off her clothing and dragged her [till they brought her] through the streets of the city till she died. And they carried her to a place named Kironon, and they burned her body with fire.

Thus Hypatia was killed and the last remaining light of Alexandria was extinguished. Synesius, her devoted

disciple had maintained a lively correspondence with her until the end, and the fact that he died in the same year led more than one ancient author to suspect that his death was the response of a heart broken by news of her assassination. What certainly seems indisputable is that she was murdered by Christians who felt threatened by her scholarship, learning, and depth of scientific knowledge. Why is it that the Abrahamic religions, who outwardly profess peace and love for all people, find it necessary to attack and kill all with whom they disagree? The terrible things perpetrated in the name of religion are a stain upon all humankind. Whatever the precise motivation for her murder, the departure soon afterward of many scholars marked the beginning of the decline of Alexandria as a major centre of ancient learning.

The journey on the bus back to Cairo was a lot more sedate and gave me a chance to consider all that I had seen. Alexandria, the multicultural world-city where many different peoples mixed, had been the point of departure of ancient Egyptian traditions for centuries, and was as well infused with Greek and Christian ideas. Each recipient of the perennial tradition sees it as a scintillating and iridescent mantle. Each wearer may only sense that the mantle is of one colour, but for those who stand apart, they can appreciate the totality of the light. It is not just a mantle, it is a veil, a veil that is a portal between the worlds. It attracts true seekers to pass beyond its elegant portals, to begin a journey into tomorrow, a journey into the deepest realms of Self.

From Alexandria, the perennial tradition, this long path, spread across the whole of Europe and the Middle East. We, who live today and benefit from this tradition, are its heirs and protectors, and have the great responsibility of carrying it forward safely for our descendants to benefit from. Finally with I must admit moist eyes, my thoughts returned to the great lover of wisdom Hypatia, a woman of such grace, eloquence, beauty and wisdom, a mystic and spiritual being in all but name. She was born before her time, and she died before her time, leaving the world a much sadder place.



The Great Mystery

by Pensator



WHEN THE first Europeans reached the eastern seaboard of North America, they came from a continent in the throws of religious turmoil; lands ruled by hundreds of kings, princes, dukes and other minor royalty, each vying with the other for power and prestige. There was an enormous gap between rich and poor, and education was restricted to a minority of the population.

The Church in whatever form it took in one's country or state, ruled supreme and was accountable to no one but itself. Its rulers had not the slightest doubt that their version of the truth was the only one, and all others erred in their beliefs. Europe was about to disintegrate into terrible religious wars that devastated the continent. Christian fought against Christian, each convinced that the other side was controlled by the Devil, in a kind of heretical

dualism that the early Christian church had tried so hard to eradicate in the first centuries of its existence. Devil worship and witches were discovered everywhere, and many innocent people were condemned to death simply because they were different.

Such were the Christians from Spain, England, France, Holland and Sweden who sailed westwards to found colonies in the New World. They brought with them their indigenous thought systems and way of life, which contradicted so much of what they found when they arrived. They also brought with them terrible diseases which decimated the advanced cultures of North America who had no natural protection against these plagues, produced in the disease-ridden and unhealthy towns of the Old World.

Only now, centuries after the event, can we begin to understand the phenomenal damage that was done to



both nature and the indigenous peoples of the New World. New, these ancient inhabitants of the Americas were to the Europeans, but they were immensely old to themselves, whose ancestors had lived there for at least 14,000 years before the European arrivals. They were called “Indians” because Columbus thought he had reached the East Indies, but today it is widely believed that they migrated from Asia over a land bridge between modern-day Russia and Alaska in the ancient past, towards the end of the last Ice Age.

But people with less interest in facts and plausible theories, still perpetuate stories of remnants of the lost tribes of Israel having made it to the USA, or descendants from one or other mythical continents in the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans having made a last dash to the Americas before their island continents disappeared without trace.

Languages of the New World

Nowadays we know better. Released from the shackles of medieval thought patterns, we begin to truly see what remarkable peoples inhabited this continent, so long cut off from the rest of the world. In Canada and the USA alone, we have recognised six great linguistic families, whose languages were far apart from each other by the time Europeans arrived, indicating that the native Americans had been where they were found, for a very long time indeed. Europe had only two root languages, Indo-European and Finno-Ugric, plus Basque, which is still related to no known language. In the Americas, except for the Eskimo languages, the others shows very little affinity with present-day Asian languages, though clearly, they did originate somewhere in central Asia at least 14,000 years ago. Did all the peoples from the Americas come across the Bering Straits? Some researchers are voicing doubts about this theory too.

One of the six great North American linguistic families is called the Algonquian. The various tribes and languages of this family lived mainly in the northeast of the continent, in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces of Canada, and from the Great Lakes to as far south as the Carolinas in the USA. They were the first people the European settlers came upon when they settled this “new” land. Treating them with disdain and calling them savages and devil-worshippers, the Europeans could not understand the ways of a people whose belief systems were so totally alien to their own, a barely 1600 year old religion, Christianity.

As Rosicrucians, we know that spiritual truths are real no matter whence they come. But we also know, that truth is universal. Just as the Cosmic manifests it



Algonquin couple.

self everywhere and at all times, so do its innate truths illuminate the discerning mind. It is a simple fact that some people are more spiritual than others and therefore more able to access these truths. What follows is an account of Algonquian beliefs. Judge for yourselves who were the savages and who were the civilised.

Native American languages are different in many subtle ways from Indo-European ones. They are rich in metaphors and allusions, in shades of meaning, rather than straightforward words. They may have one word for a concept that a European language would take a whole sentence to explain.

The Vision Begins

According to tradition, Kitchi-Manitou (the Great Mystery) created the world and all creatures on it, in fulfilment of a vision. The Giant Turtle offered his back to Sky Woman as a place to rest upon the waters. Land was created on the shell of the turtle, and then Sky Woman came down and breathed the breath of life, growth and abundance upon to it. In this way she passed on the attributes of giving life, nourishing it, sheltering it, and instructing and inspiring the heart, mind and spirit.

After this, she gave birth to twins, whose descendants became the nations of North America. The island continued to grow until it became a continent, “Land of the Great Turtle”, as it became known. The people believed that Kitchi-Manitou and Sky Woman had entrusted the stewardship of



the land to them, conjointly with the Manitou, birds, animals, insects, and the generations still to be born. Contrast this with the European view of Dominion over the Earth, also given to them by their God, but which they interpreted as a licence to do anything they pleased.

The Manitou came to the people and taught them about life, guardianship, healing, and teaching. As the people roamed the land, they learned to survive in what was often a hostile world. They learned to adapt and master the necessary skills for life. But there was so much to master, so much beyond human knowledge and understanding. When they had learned to provide for their material needs, there

awakened in them a consciousness that there were other things in life, beyond the corporeal and material. There was more to life than physical existence, and the Manitou, the spirit, and the mystery were all part of it. As summer was the period of the year for hunting, fishing and planting crops, in other words, for preparing the material necessities of life, winter was the time for gathering together, for community, for teaching the essentials of spiritual life to the people and their children around the fires at night.

Despite the communal spirit and way of life, they also taught the importance of individuality. People were nurtured to be resourceful and independent-minded, to be masters of their own life, and by so doing to care for the community. Men and women were instilled with a sense of obligation to the community, to pay back something for the benefits they themselves had received. Everyone was encouraged to add something to their community, to their heritage, and thereby add to its worth, certainly concepts with which we can identify today.

Leaders were chosen, not because they came from a certain family, but because they were the most successful in life, and the most useful to their community. There was no elected or divinely appointed ruler over the people, yet there was order, the authority of the elders, sanctioned by the good will of the community. They performed the rituals and ceremonies that brought them into intimate contact with the Great Mystery itself. Those who were considered especially gifted and caring received special



17th Century Algonquian village of Pomeiock.

instruction in the mysteries of life, the kinship with all living beings, the use of plants and medicines for healing. Europeans called them, somewhat derisively, “Medicine Men” or “Shamans”.

The people always felt very close to the world, they felt kinship with nature, to the Manitou or spirit forces resident in trees, flowers, grass, rivers, rocks, etc. They believed that God was everything, and that everything was God, a pantheistic concept comprehensible to us as Rosicrucians, yet anathema to the early European settlers with their rigid Christian dogma. The people prayed to Kitchi-Manitou, the Great Mystery, without whose guidance, they believed, life would be futile. If we take a closer look at the meaning of this word, we find a wealth of symbolism.

Kitchi means “great”, “immense” or “pre-eminent.” The word Manitou has many connotations: “mystery”, “spiritual”, “mystical”, “supernatural” and “essence.” The combination of these ideas gives one an insight into the mind and consciousness of these people, looked down upon as savages by those whose sense of wonder had been oppressed by centuries of religious mind control. From our privileged vantage point in the 21st Century, we must resolve never to let this happen again, for surely, all souls are ultimately linked to the same actuality we call God? The outer form of established religion does not matter, and we must seek our God, the God of our realisation, the God of our reality, in our own unique and very special way. There can surely be no higher priority than this.



Universal LOVE

by *Daniel Bitá Minsili*



This article is an adaptation of a presentation made at a Convention of Rosicrucians held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in August 2012.

LOVE IS the primordial law of Divine manifestation that extends to all beings in the immense web of life. It is a glimpse into the very source and reason for the existence of life. The sense of love we feel for other beings, even the humblest of creatures, comes from this vast universal source of inclusiveness and justice.

In general, love is a harmonious, heartfelt, inner bond established between us and our environment.

We experience it as an attractive force binding us to certain principles, things, people and of course our far distant cousins of the animal kingdom. The intensity, duration and beauty of this connection is highly variable and depends on the object of our love. The most common expressions describing this are: desire, physical attractiveness, sentimental or emotional attraction, passion, communion, fusion and ecstasy.

Love has long been celebrated by poets as the highest





Plato's Symposium, depiction by Anselm Feuerbach.

of human feelings. The early philosophers of classical Greece were the first to reflect on love. For Empedocles (495-430 BCE), love was an attractive force wrestling a force of repulsion; thus, love sparks a happy union of two human beings while hatred or wrestling is cause of separation. Is love the sign of a personal deficiency for which we ought to find a remedy? Should love be a constant quest or should it disappear when the aim is achieved? So questioned Plato (428-348 BCE) in his *Symposium* which concerns itself at one level with the genesis, purpose and nature of love.

According to Dr Harvey Spencer Lewis (1883-1939, former Emperor of AMORC), there is a hierarchical order from the lowest form of love to the supreme love. At the bottom of the ladder is instinctive love related to sexual attraction and to the satisfaction of bodily needs. These sensual desires are temporal and need to be continuously excited to be satisfied. The next level is intellectual love. It includes the desire to create, acquire knowledge and to achieve in arts or trades. Unlike sensual desires, intellectual love grows with satisfaction.

The highest type of love is spiritual motivation or mystical love.

In other words, its realisation stimulates the mental faculties and strengthens talents. This type of love is never satiated and includes the love of wisdom. It is the love of idealism and of freedom, the love of the mystery of being and nature. The highest type of love is spiritual motivation or mystical love. In this type of love, our ego wants nothing

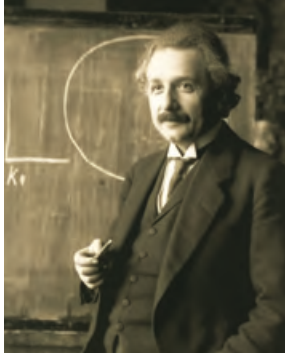
for itself, seeking instead a merger with the totality of all that exists and which is considered as the ultimate transcendence available to humans. This transcendence is commonly referred to as God, the Cosmic, the Absolute or the Universal Mind.

To raise our consciousness, we must impose our will on all levels of our being: the physical, the mental, the emotional and the spiritual. In all traditions, everything is love. It is the Supreme Force behind everything that was, is and will be. It is the Force which is the cause of all visible and invisible creation, because it is the driver of Universal Evolution. A Rosicrucian adept once said:

Since the world began, no other energy possessed an attractive power as great as love. For it is this energy that gave to the Word its initial impetus, and also in this energy lies the perpetual attraction exerted between Creation and the Creator. Humanity is the best example of this attraction, since we have been the most prone to experience this love. We must therefore learn to love the Light and the Life in addition to all the beings of creation.

Albert Einstein (1879-1955), on the same subject, affirmed that humanity is part of the whole called the Universe, a part limited in time and space. However, as humans we experience our own self, our thoughts and feelings as if we were separated from everything else around us. This is a kind of optical illusion of consciousness. This illusion happens to be like a prison





Albert Einstein.

for us, restricting us to our selfish desires and limiting our affection for the few people who are closest to us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures, the whole of nature and its beauty. In fact, as noted by the present Emperor, as long as the majority of people will insist in regarding themselves as being apart from other kingdoms of nature, humanity will remain blocked in its evolution and will not cross the threshold of collective initiation which should necessarily mark the transition to the Aquarian Age.

Thus, the hallmark of a true love between two people is that it arouses within the lovers the longing for God.

We tend to love another not for who they are, but for their inner traits that we intuit are lacking in ourselves. From a metaphysical and alchemical point of view, there is a true complementary half for every living being. However, human beings have lost the deep meaning of marriage, and tend to make wrong choices, taking for pure and enduring connections, mere physical attraction.

According to mystical tradition, for the alchemy of marriage to operate and to become the cosmic and celestial union of two complementary beings, the divine essence of each of them must be united by a natural attraction before the physical body can properly be united or connected. Thus, the hallmark of a true love between two people is that it arouses within the lovers the longing for God. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) said about love:

...if a relationship does not lead to God, that love is not real, even if it brings the greatest happiness and the purest joy in human terms. And that's why to love someone, is in fact to go beyond human feelings and emotions and to help them find the way of divine love; to be loved meaning then to be supported in the search for the Divine.

Love is an attribute of the soul, it is this attribute that a couple learns to cultivate through a reciprocal

abandonment, which is the key to any spiritual relationship. The desires of each individual ego melt under the purifying fire of love and turn it into a real aspiration for growth and the expression of deep spiritual feelings such as compassion and trust.

Where Are We Going?

If increased awareness has appeared in the attitude of a growing number of people and organisations around the world, much remains to be done for men and women of the whole world to recognise themselves as brothers and sisters, and come to express this bond in their behaviour.

Each of us has witnessed, either up close or from a distance, violence and horrors perpetrated by people against each other. Torn between selfishness, cruelty, ignorance of laws and a blind materialism, humanity seems to have lost its bearing, its heart and its reason. This huge lack of love in the heart of men and women alike, makes them act like wild animals seeming intent on destroying themselves.

The language of force is still prevalent in the relationships between countries as it is between individuals. Here indifference, lack of confidence, hypocrisy and the race for profit dominate people's minds. Additionally, superstition, ignorance and fear can trap consciousness. At the other extreme, a minority composed of neophytes, students and initiates of Orders of Wisdom and people with awakened minds work diligently for regeneration of humanity.



According to Rosicrucian teachings, the diversity of thoughts and behaviours among humans is due to a difference of evolution, that is to say, a difference of experience and knowledge. As energy, the soul is the same in all humanity; however, its individualised expression through our mind and body is dependent upon what each of us makes of it. The ultimate goal of all humanity is the perfection of consciousness, and to achieve this





Swami Vivekananda.

goal, humanity must confront all obstacles and all trials without diverting from its path.

This advancement is achieved by the combined action of the universal cycles, particularly the influence of successive eras and of humanity making use of its free will to express the divine wisdom in its behaviour. Past eras have contributed to the transformation that took place gradually in the minds of humanity, especially in their approach to the mystery of life and death.

Swami Vivekananda: *There is in this life, only one good we must possess at all costs, and that good is love. That's the only true treasure of life. Blessed is he who finds it..*

Dalai Lama: *Humanity is a whole. Without the human community, no human being could survive.*

André Maurois: *Whoever becomes foreign to others becomes a stranger to himself. To some extent, to be is to love.*

Mother Teresa: *If we do not experience peace, it is because we have forgotten that we all belong one to each other..*

Our teachings remind us that men and women are but cells of the one body, the body of humanity. The transition from the individual to the collective, from the human love to the love of humanity is a crucial step in the

evolution of love itself and in the evolution of humanity. Each of us needs to love and to be loved. Thus, the love of humanity cannot express itself at its best unless through a personal relationship. To live, thrive and grow in freedom, we need to find someone who recognises us as unique, encourages us to evolve and to become our true self. To overcome the negative influences arising from our diverse behaviours, we need to learn to speak the language of love.

Such language is of cosmic origin and reflects the harmony that governs all laws of creation. A thought of love, a word or an act of love, breaks all barriers that differences of language, of race and culture could create. However, like all other languages, the language of love must be learned, and that can only happen if we all learn to love one other regardless of who we are as individuals. Because of our imperfections and of material contingencies that apply to us, it is not possible to love every person with the same intensity. And it is not desirable to seek to be loved by all either. However, we do have two simple responsibilities in relation to the love of humanity:

1. The **first** is to love ourselves; for if we don't do that, how can we love others? To be able to love ourselves, we have to accept ourselves as we are, with all the physical and intellectual traits that make our personality.
2. Our second duty is to cultivate tolerance; for while we probably cannot love every person as much as various others, it is nevertheless imperative that we hate no one. Above all, love means not hating others, and not harbouring malicious thoughts about anyone.

Love towards humanity makes us feel concerned by suffering and human misery. We must create within ourselves a feeling of compassion and accept that every person is, deep within him or herself, sacred. And we can move towards this by doing at least the following:

- Do not wait to forgive another for the offense you have taken, consciously or unconsciously, due to the perceived thoughts, words and deeds of another.
- Give yourself to others, in the sense of truly caring for their wellbeing.
- With all that you give, give only with love.

Whoever is at the service of others must therefore seek to reach spiritual maturity. Their mind must be fed





with inner calm and prayer. Daily mediation, study and practice of our teachings, services in our affiliated bodies have no other purpose. What makes the difference, like in any spiritual quest, is the sincerity, consistency and perseverance with which we walk on the path. The goal of human love and of the love of humanity is to cause the heart of each and every person to merge with the heart of God, to achieve a spiritual wedding, enlightenment, or the Rose-Croix state, whichever terminology you wish to use.

The state of spiritual perfection involves the integration of love in all aspects of being. In this state, love illuminates everything, embellishes everything and brings joy. It radiates its soft rays of light and life in the cottage as well as the palace, in the valley as much as on the mountain top, on the hospital bed or on the pallet of the poor. Enlightened beings have entirely defeated the illusions of life and are devoted fully to the service of their fellow humans. And in the process, they become channels of Divine love.

We can only express the best of ourselves in ways that are inscribed in our spiritual identity. It contains our archetypal codifications and the scale of priorities of our existence. The anchor of service to the “Great Work” therefore necessarily involves discovering one’s inner being, without knowledge of which it is difficult or impossible for us to rise toward greater spiritual heights.

Communion with our Inner Master

Listening is an essential attitude with which we can respond to the need to communicate with others and gain access through their words to their inner personality. When successful, it’s almost as if we are

closer to an individual who seeks to express him/her self and who needs us to do just that. At that moment, their whole being speaks to us, not just words, but also with gestures and looks.

In its most mystical applications, listening does not consist only in listening to others with compassion. We must also turn towards the divine soul within us, because as an emanation, it constantly aspires to reveal the wisdom it has. The only way to do this is to go into meditation and purification in the depths of our heart, to commune with our Inner Master. For it is in such a communion that we can receive the influx of the Word. This is precisely what Louis Claude de Saint Martin suggested when he said that “*The great truths are taught in silence.*” To find the way to our freedom, to our divinity, is undoubtedly one of these great truths that our Inner Master will make a point to teach us. For Saint Martin, we have two keys to access communion with our Master Within: prayer and meditation.

Rosicrucian Meditation is a form of cosmic attunement which includes an active phase of reflection and analysis of a problem, followed by a passive phase of contemplation and receptivity, in which a solution can be given to us. Practised regularly, it will place our consciousness under the inspiration of the Divine wisdom within us, which opens the path to success and happiness. Prayer, meanwhile, consists in turning the human soul to things pertaining to the divine, and its purpose is to unite with the mind of God to become one with Him. True prayer leads to this state of dialogue and communion with God in the depths of our heart. The secret of the progress of humanity lies in their prayer, said Saint Martin..., and the secret of their prayer resides in the preparation.





Shams' Forty Rules of Love

by Adam Halstead

Shams-e-Tabriz, a 13th Century Persian mystic (1185–1248), is credited with having passed on a deep spiritual heritage to the Persian Muslim scholar and mystic Rumi, who originally came from Balkh in modern Afghanistan. In one of Rumi's poetic collections "The Works of Shams of Tabriz", Shams is spoken of with reverence. Before ostensibly fleeing to Damascus to avoid persecution, Shams passed his wisdom on to Rumi in Konya (in modern-day Turkey) over a period of 40 days, very likely a symbolical rather than an actual period of time. The tomb of Shams in Khoy, Iran, is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



KONYA, PERHAPS more famous as the Roman city of Iconium, had become the capital of the Seljuk Sultans of Rum (1077 - 1307). They were a Turkish dynasty who, in their journey from Central Asia had adopted Persian culture and Persian as their court language, thereby attracting Persian scholars from all over the Muslim world. In their realm the Seljuks promoted the Persian concept of *javānmardi* or the Sufi form of chivalry, which we were introduced to in Chapter 7 of the book *Rosicrucian History and Mysteries*.

Shams, it is said, entered Konya on 15th November 1244, dressed fully, head to toe, in black. When asked what his business was, he said he was a merchant seeking something he believed he would soon find in the city. When he saw Rumi reading a text next to a pile of books, he asked him politely what he was doing, to which Rumi replied: “*Something you cannot understand.*” This was in reference to knowledge that cannot be understood without proper training and specialised learning.

When he heard Rumi’s reply Shams immediately threw the stack of books into a nearby pool of water and Rumi desperately scrambled to retrieve them before they were permanently destroyed. To Rumi’s amazement however, they were all dry. Shaken by the experience, he asked Shams why he had almost destroyed such a valuable compendium of knowledge. To this Shams replied, “*Mowlana, [Master] this is what you cannot understand*”, indicating that his callous action in almost destroying a form of written learning that Rumi clearly treasured, was a form of knowledge that could not be understood by the type of academic enquiry Rumi was engaged in through his books.

And that, it appears, was the beginning of the transfer of a deep corpus of mystical knowledge from Shams to Rumi. Below now follow extracts from two books attributed to Shams of Tabriz.

The Discourse of Shams

A book entitled “*The Discourse of Shams-e Tabriz*” contains Persian prose believed to have been written by Shams himself. Although its true authorship is disputed by some scholars, others believe it was written during Shams’ last years in the manner of an old man narrating to his disciples something precious and to be remembered. The word “*Shams*” is Arabic in origin and alludes to the Sun, daily emerging from the East, symbolical source of all spiritual Light. Below are four excerpts from this book:

Blessing is an excess of everything. Don’t be content with being a *faqih* [religious scholar]. Say instead I want more..., more than a Sufi, more than a mystic, more than each thing that comes before you.

A good man complains of no-one; he does not look to faults.

Joy is like pure clear water: wherever it flows, wondrous blossoms grow. Sorrow is like a black flood: wherever it flows it wilts the blossoms.

And the Persian language, how did it come about? The abundance of elegance and goodness found in the Persian language is not found in Arabic.

The Forty Rules of Love

But the largest volume by far attributed to Shams is “*The Forty Rules of Love.*” Below are the 40 most important rules for living that Shams passed on to posterity. Once again it is worth noting that 40 was almost certainly of deep symbolical rather than practical value. Had there existed a number which Shams considered of greater significance than 40, then that would no doubt have been the number of rules for living we would be reading today.

When reading the rules it is remarkable how they resonate with Rosicrucian philosophy and its way of life, demonstrating that the true search for the divine exists in every religious tradition and every part of the world. Reading through them brings to mind the ancient Egyptian “*Confession to Maat*” and the “*Rosicrucian Code of Life.*” We are truly all brothers and sisters in a Cosmic sea of Light, Life and Love.

Rule 1: How we see God is a direct reflection of how we see ourselves. If the idea of God evokes mostly fear and blame, it means there is too much fear and blame inside us. If we see God as full of love and compassion, so are we.

Rule 2: The path to the Truth comes from the heart, not the head. Make your heart your primary guide, not your mind! Meet, challenge and ultimately prevail over your *nafs* (self, psyche, soul) with your heart. Knowing your ego will lead you to the knowledge of God.

Rule 3: You can study God through everything and everyone in the universe, because God isn’t confined in a mosque, synagogue or church. But if you still need to know where exactly His abode is, there is only one place to look for him: in the heart of a true lover.

Rule 4: Intellect and love are made of different materials. Intellect ties people in knots and



risks nothing, but love dissolves all tangles and risks everything. Intellect is always cautious and advises, 'Beware too much ecstasy', whereas love says, 'Oh, never mind! Take the plunge!' Intellect doesn't easily break down, whereas love can effortlessly reduce itself to rubble. But treasures are hidden among ruins. A broken heart hides treasures.

Rule 5: Most of problems of the world stem from linguistic mistakes and simple misunderstanding. Don't ever take words at face value. When you experience love, language, as we know it becomes obsolete. What cannot be put into words can only be grasped through silence.

Rule 6: Loneliness and solitude are two different things. When you are lonely, it is easy to delude yourself into believing that you are on the right path. Solitude is better for us, as it means being alone without feeling lonely. But eventually it's best to find someone who will be your mirror. Remember only in another person's heart can you truly see yourself and the presence of God within you.

Rule 7: Whatever happens in your life, no matter how troubling things might seem, don't despair. Even when all doors remain closed, God will open up a new path only for you. Be thankful! It's easy to be thankful when all is well. A Sufi is thankful not only for what he has been given but also for all that he has been denied.

Rule 8: Patience does not mean to passively endure. It means to look at the end of a process. What does patience mean? It means to look at the thorn and see the rose, to look at the night and see the dawn. Impatience means to be short-sighted, not to see the outcome. The lovers of God never run out of patience, for they know that time is needed for the crescent moon to become full.

Rule 9: East, west, south or north makes little difference. No matter what your destination, just be sure to make every journey a journey within. If you travel within, you'll travel the whole wide world and beyond.

Rule 10: The midwife knows that when there is no pain,

the way for the baby cannot be opened and the mother cannot give birth. Likewise, for a new self to be born, hardship is necessary. Just as clay needs to go through intense heat to become strong, Love can only be perfected in pain.

Rule 11: The quest for love changes us. There is no seeker among those who search for love who hasn't matured on the way. The moment you start looking for love, you start to change within and without.

Rule 12: There are more fake gurus and false teachers in this world than the number of stars in the visible universe. Don't confuse power-driven, self-centred people with true mentors. A genuine spiritual master won't direct your attention to himself or herself and won't expect absolute obedience or utter admiration from you, but instead will help you to appreciate and admire your inner self. True mentors are as transparent as glass. They let the light of God pass through them.

Rule 13: Try not to resist the changes, which come your way. Instead let life live through you. And don't worry that your life is turning upside down. How do you know that the life you are used to is better than the one to come?

Rule 14: God is busy with the completion of your work, both outwardly and inwardly. He is fully occupied with you. Every human being is a work in progress that is slowly but inexorably moving toward perfection. We are each an unfinished work of art both waiting and striving to be completed. God deals with each of us separately because humanity is fine art of skilled penmanship where every single dot is equally important for the entire picture.

Rule 15: It's easy to love a perfect God, unblemished and infallible that He is. What is far more difficult is to love a fellow human being with all their imperfections and defects. Remember, one can only know what one is capable of loving. There is no wisdom without love. Unless we learn to love God's creation, we can neither truly love nor truly know God.



Rule 16: Real faith is the one inside. The rest simply washes off. There is only one type of dirt that cannot be cleansed with pure water, and that is the stain of hatred and bigotry contaminating the soul. You can purify your body through abstinence and fasting, but only love will purify your heart.

Rule 17: The whole universe is contained within a single human being: *you*. Everything that you see around, including the things that you might not be fond of and even the people you despise, is present within you in varying degrees. Therefore, don't look for *Shaitan* (devil) outside yourself either. The devil isn't an extraordinary force that attacks from without. It is an ordinary voice within. If you set to know yourself fully, face yourself with honesty and hardness.

Rule 18: If you want to change the ways others treat you, you should first change the way you treat yourself, fully and sincerely, there is no way you can be loved. Once you achieve that stage, however, be thankful for every thorn that others might throw at you. It is a sign that you will soon be showered in roses.

Rule 19: Don't worry where the road will take you. Instead concentrate on the first step. That is the hardest part and that is what you are responsible for. Once you take that step let everything do what it naturally does and the rest will follow. Don't go with the flow! Be the flow!

Rule 20: We were all created in His image, and yet we were each created different and unique. No two people are alike. No hearts beat to the same rhythm. If God had wanted everyone to be the same, He would have made it so. Therefore, disrespecting differences and imposing your thoughts on others is an amount to disrespecting God's holy scheme.

Rule 21: When a true lover of God goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his chamber of prayer, but when a wine bibber goes into the same chamber, it becomes his tavern. In everything we do, it is our hearts that make the difference, not our outer appearance. Sufis do not judge other people on how

they look or who they are. When a Sufi stares at someone, he keeps both eyes closed instead opens a third eye – the eye that sees the inner realm.

Rule 22: Life is a temporary loan and this world is nothing but a sketchy imitation of Reality. Only children would mistake a toy for the real thing. And yet human beings either become infatuated with the toy or disrespectfully break it and throw it aside. In this life stay away from all kinds of extremities, for they will destroy your inner balance. Sufis do not go to extremes. A Sufi always remains mild and moderate.

Rule 23: The human being has a unique place among God's creation. "*I breathed into him of My Spirit*," God says. Each and every one of us without exception is designed to be God's delegate on earth. Ask yourself, just how often do you behave like a delegate, if you ever do so? Remember, it is up to each of us to discover the divine spirit inside and live by it.

Rule 24: Hell is in the here and now. So is heaven. Stop worrying about hell or dreaming about heaven, as they are both present inside this very moment. Every time we fall in love, we ascend to heaven. Every time we hate, envy or fight someone we tumble straight into the fires of hell.

Rule 25: Each and every reader comprehends the Holy Koran on a different level of tandem with the depth of their understanding. There are four levels of insight. The first level is the outer meaning and it is the one that the majority of the people are content with. Next is the *Batin* – the inner level. Third, there is the inner of the inner. And the fourth level is so deep it cannot be put into words and is therefore bound to remain indescribable.

Rule 26: The universe is one being. Everything and everyone is interconnected through an invisible web of stories. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all in a silent conversation. Do no harm! Practise compassion! And do not gossip behind anyone's back; not even a seemingly innocent remark! The words that come out of our mouths don't vanish but are



perpetually stored in infinite space and they will come back to us in due time. One person's pain will hurt us all. One person's joy will make everyone smile.

Rule 27: Whatever you speak, good or evil, will somehow come back to you. Therefore, if there is someone who harbours ill thoughts about you, saying similarly bad things about them will only make matters worse. You will be locked in a vicious circle of malevolent energy. Instead, for 40 days and nights, say and think nice things about that person. Everything will be different at the end of 40 days, because you will be different inside.

Rule 28: The past is an interpretation. The future is on illusion. The world doesn't move through time as if it were a straight line, proceeding from the past to the future. Instead time moves through and within us, in endless spirals. Eternity does not mean infinite time, but simply timelessness. If you want to experience eternal illumination, put the past and the future out of your mind and remain within the present moment.

Rule 29: Destiny doesn't mean that your life has been strictly predetermined. Therefore, to live everything by fate and to not actively contribute to the music of the universe is a sign of sheer ignorance. The music of the universe is all pervading and it is composed on 40 different levels. Your destiny is the level where you play your tune. You might not change your instrument but how well to play is entirely in your hands.

Rule 30: The true Sufi is such that even when they are unjustly accused, attacked and condemned from all sides, patiently endures, uttering not a single bad word about any of their critics. A Sufi never apportion blame. How can there be opponents or rivals or even 'others' when there is no 'self in the first place? How can there be anyone to blame when there is only One?

Rule 31: If you want to strengthen your faith, you will need to soften inside. For your faith to be rock-solid, your heart needs to be as soft as a feather. Through an illness, accident, loss or fright, one way or another, we are all faced with incidents

that teach us how to become less selfish and judgmental and more compassionate and generous. Yet some of us learn the lesson and manage to become milder, while some others end up becoming even harsher than before.

Rule 32: Nothing should stand between you and God. No imams, priests, rabbis or any other custodians of moral or religious leadership. Not spiritual masters and not even your faith. Believe in your values and your rules, but never lord them over others. If you keep breaking other people's hearts, whatever religious duty you perform is no good. Stay away from all sorts of idolatry, for they will blur your vision. Let God and only God be your guide. Learn the Truth, my friend, but be careful not to make a fetish out of your truths.

Rule 33: While everyone in this world strives to get somewhere and become someone, only to leave it all behind after death, you aim for the supreme stage of nothingness. Live this life as light and empty as the number zero. We are no different from a pot. It's not the decorations outside but the emptiness inside that holds us straight. Just like that, it's not what we aspire to achieve but the consciousness of nothingness that keeps us going.

Rule 34: Submission does not mean being weak or passive. It leads to neither fatalism nor capitulation. Just the opposite. True power resides in submission a power that comes within. Those who submit to the divine essence of life will live in unperturbed tranquility and peace even the whole wide world goes through turbulence after turbulence.

Rule 35: In this world, it is not similarities that take us a step forward, but blunt opposites. And *all* the opposites in the universe are present within each and every one of us. Therefore the believer needs to meet the unbeliever residing within. And the nonbeliever should get to know the silent faithful in him. Until the day one reaches the stage of the perfect human being, faith is a gradual process and one that necessitates its seeming opposite: disbelief.

Rule 36: This world is erected upon the principle of reciprocity. Neither a drop of kindness nor



a speck of evil will remain unreciprocated. For not the plots, deceptions, or tricks of other people. If somebody is setting a trap, remember, so is God. He is the biggest plotter. Not even a leaf stirs outside God's knowledge. Simply and fully believe in that. Whatever God does, He does it beautifully.

Rule 37: God is a meticulous clock maker. So precise is His order that everything on Earth happens in its own time. Neither a minute late nor a minute early. And for everyone without exception, the clock works accurately. For each there is a time to love and a time to die.

Rule 38: It is never too late to ask yourself, "*Am I ready to change the life I am living? Am I ready to change within?*" Even if a single day in your life is the same as the day before, it surely is a pity. At every moment and with each new breath, one should be renewed and renewed

again. There is only one-way to be born into a new life: to die before death.

Rule 39: While the parts change, the whole always remains the same. For every thief who departs this world, a new one is born. And every decent person who passes away is replaced by a new one. In this way not only does nothing remain the same but also nothing ever really changes. For every Sufi who dies, another is born somewhere.

Rule 40: A life without love is of no account. Don't ask yourself what kind of love you should seek, spiritual or material, divine or mundane, Eastern or Western. Divisions only lead to more divisions. Love has no labels, no definitions. It is what it is, pure and simple. Love is the water of life. And a lover is a soul of fire! The universe turns differently when fire loves water.

Look Well to This Day

by Kalidasa

-- Classical Sanskrit writer --
(4th to 5th Century CE)



*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.*

*The bliss of growth, the glory of action,
the splendour of achievement,
are but experiences of time.*

*For yesterday is but a dream
and tomorrow is only a vision.*

*But today well-lived, makes
yesterday a dream of happiness,
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.*

*Look well therefore to this day;
Such is the salutation
to the ever-new dawn!*



Samothrace

Sanctuary of the Great Gods

by *Marc Cornwall*



THE ENGLISH word ‘mystery’ derives from the Greek word *mysterion* meaning “secret rite or doctrine.” The follower, male or female, of such a mystery was a *mystes*, “one who has been initiated”, from the Greek verb *myein* meaning “to close or shut”, referring to privacy or secrecy.

The Mysteries¹ were schools in which all religious functions were closed to the uninitiated and for which the inner workings of the school were kept secret from

the general public. The most famous of these were the Eleusinian Mysteries which persisted for approximately 1,000 years in the form generally known to scholars, but may have been preceded by an older version dating back at least another 600 years. Some claim that the Eleusinian Mysteries lasted from 1450 BCE until 392 CE. During the period we know the Eleusinian Mysteries definitely operated, the ritual of public religion changed significantly, from the religions of the Bronze Age, to the





Bronze and copper statues of Sabazios which were worshiped during the Roman era. Hands decorated with religious symbols stood in sanctuaries or were attached to poles for processional use.



Statue in Madrid of Cybele sitting in a chariot drawn by lions.

Iron Age, to the Hero cults of Hellenistic civilisation, and again to the imperial cults of the Roman era. But throughout this time, the ritual performances of the mysteries themselves appear to have remained unchanged and were revered throughout the ancient world.

(who worshiped the god Mithras), the Indo-European Thracian and Phrygian Sabazios (the Sky-Father god), and the Phrygian (Anatolian) mother goddess Cybele. There is a famous fountain statue of her driving a chariot drawn by two lions currently in the Plaza de Cibeles in the Spanish capital Madrid.

For among the many excellent and indeed divine institutions which your Athens has brought forth and contributed to human life, none, in my opinion, is better than those mysteries. For by their means we have been brought out of our barbarous and savage mode of life and educated and refined to a state of civilisation. And as the rites are called 'initiations', so in very truth we have learned from them the beginnings of life, and have gained the power not only to live happily, but also to die with a better hope.
-- from Cicero's *Laws II, xiv, 36*.

Samothrace

Samothrace is a calm and atmospheric Greek island in the North-eastern Aegean Sea some 11 miles (17km) long and 69 square miles (178 square km) in size. It is unspoilt with wild and luxuriant vegetation watered by many springs. The island was not politically significant in ancient times,

What we have discovered about the older Greek mysteries we can assume reflects certain archaic aspects of a proposed common ancient Indo-European religion, with parallels in Indo-Iranian religious belief, which we do know something about. The mystery schools of Greece and Rome included the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Dionysian Mysteries and the Orphic Mysteries. Some of the many gods and goddesses that the Romans nominally adopted from other cultures also came to be worshipped in the Mysteries; for instance, the Egyptian goddess Isis, the Persian Mithraic Mysteries



A map of the Aegean Sea showing the main sanctuaries and mystery schools.



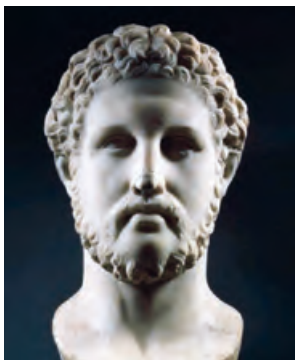


The beautiful Mount Fengari (Moon) where Greek mythology tells us that Poseidon sat to watch the Trojan war unfold.

as it has no natural harbour and most of the island is too mountainous for cultivation. It is dominated by Mount Fengari which rises to 5,285 feet (1,611 m). Though not politically significant, Samothrace was significant in another way because of a divine cult that survived from the initial arrival of the Indo-European peoples into modern Greece and Anatolia (Turkey), if not from even earlier times.

It was the home of the *Sanctuary of the Great Gods*, which was a site of importance for Classical and pre-Classical Greek religious ceremonies. Among those who visited the shrine to be initiated into the island's Mysteries were the historian Herodotus (484-425 BCE), the Spartan admiral Lysander (died 395 BCE), Philip II of Macedon (382-336 BCE), father of Alexander the Great, and the Roman Consul Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus (100-43 BCE), the father-in-law of Julius Caesar.

The island's ancient city, called Palaiopolis ("old city"), was situated on the north-west coast. South of this lie the remains of ancient walls, which were built in massive Cyclopean style, as well as the remains of the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, where mysterious rites took place which were open to both slaves and free people, unlike the Eleusinian Mysteries. The traditional account from antiquity is that Samothrace was first inhabited by Pelasgians (pre-Greeks) and the Indo-European Carians from Anatolia, and later Thracians from the Balkans. At the end of



Philip II of Macedon (ruled 359 to 336 BCE).

the 8th Century BCE the island was colonised by Greeks from Samos, from which derived the name 'Samos of Thrace', later to become Samothrace. The archaeological evidence suggests that the first major Greek settlement was started around the early part of the 6th Century BCE.

The temple complex, known as the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, is one of the pre-eminent Pan-Hellenic religious sanctuaries. The complex was independent of the city, as attested to by the dispatch of city ambassadors to the sanctuary during festivals. It was celebrated throughout Ancient Greece for its Mystery religion, a chthonic² religious practice as renowned in its time as the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Many famous people in antiquity were initiates, and it is even mentioned by Plato and Aristophanes. During the Hellenistic period, after Phillip II came to the throne (359 BCE), it became the Macedonian national sanctuary where the successors of Alexander the Great vied to outdo each other's munificence. It remained an important religious site throughout the Roman period, and even the Emperor Hadrian visited.

Who Were the Great Gods?

The identity and nature of the deities venerated at the sanctuary remains largely enigmatic, as it was forbidden to pronounce their names. Literary sources from antiquity

The Great Mother was often depicted on Samothracian coinage as a seated woman, with a lion at her side, or a lion or leopard on either side of her.

refer to them under the collective name of Kábeiroi, while they carry the simpler epithet of Gods or Great Gods on inscriptions found on the site, which was a title or state-of-being rather than the actual name.

The pantheon of the Great Gods consists of numerous chthonic deities, primarily predating the arrival of Greek colonists on the island, and congregating around a central figure, the Great Mother (Magna Mater to the Romans), who was a mediator between the "boundaries of the known and unknown", the civilised and the wild, the worlds of the living and the dead. The Great Mother was often depicted on Samothracian coinage as a seated woman, with a lion at her side, or a lion or leopard on either side of her. Her original pre-Greek name was Axieros. She is associated with the Anatolian Great Mother and the Trojan Mother





Goddess Hekate (Left) and The Great Mother - Magna Mater (Right).

Goddess of Mount Ida. The Greeks associated her equally with their fertility goddess Demeter.

The Great Mother is the all-powerful mistress of the wild world of the mountains, venerated on sacred rocks where sacrifices and offerings were made to her. In the sanctuary of Samothrace, these altars corresponded to porphyry outcroppings of various colours (red, green, blue or grey). For her faithful, her power also manifested itself in veins of magnetic iron, from which skilled craftsmen fashioned rings that initiates wore as signs of recognition. A number of these rings have been recovered from the tombs in the neighbouring necropolis.

Hekate, a pre-Olympian chthonic goddess, under the name of Zerynthia, and Aphrodite-Zerynthia, was especially venerated at Samothrace, her cult having been distanced from that of the Great Mother and more closely identified with deities more familiar to the Greeks. She was regarded as ruling over the earth, sea and sky, as well as a more universal role as “Saviour” and “World Soul.” These labels may seem odd to the modern mind but not so strange when we consider them in the light of spirituality as expressed in the plethora of different belief systems that have emerged in the first 16 years of the 21st Century. The concept of a “World Soul” as an agglomeration of the souls of all humans and animals sharing the Earth, has greater acceptance nowadays than it did only 50 years ago when it would not have made sense to

many people. The Rosicrucian Order speaks of a “human égrégore” in much the same terms.

Kadmilos the husband of Axieros, the Great Mother, was a fertility god identified by the Greeks as Hermes. The sacred symbols associated with him were a ram’s head and a baton. Two other male deities were his constant companions or servants. These two may correspond to the two legendary heroes who founded the mysteries of Samothrace, the brothers Dardanos and Eetion. They are associated by the Greeks with the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux), divine twins popular as protectors of sailors in distress.

There were also a pair of underworld deities, Axiokersos and Axiokersa, identified with Hades and Persephone, but they do not appear to be part of the original group of pre-Greek deities. The legend, familiar to the Greeks, of the rape of the goddess of fertility (Persephone) by the god of the underworld (Hades) also played a part in the sacred dramas celebrated at Samothrace, though less so than at Eleusis. During a later period, this same myth was associated with that

of the marriage of Kadmos, king of Thebes, and Harmonia of Samothrace, possibly due to a similarity of his name to Kadmilos.

The Kábeiroi

In Greek mythology, the Kábeiroi were a group of enigmatic chthonic deities. They were worshiped in a mystery cult closely associated with that of Hephaistos (Vulcan in Roman mythology), centred in the north Aegean island of Lemnos, but also at the Samothrace temple complex and at Thebes. In their distant origins the Kábeiroi and the Samothracian gods may include



Remains of the Sanctuary of the Great Gods.





Digital reconstruction the early beginnings of the Samothrace temple complex.



Plan outline of the site with different colours denoting different time periods.



Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.



Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.



Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.



Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.





The Korymbantes were helmet-crested warriors armed with short swords and carrying round shields. Beating their shields in frenzied dances, they worshipped the Phrygian goddess Cybele, the Great Mother of Samothrace. Being offspring of Thalia and Apollo, the Korymbantes were mentioned in several of Plato's dialogues. In this image of the Parabiago plate, Cybele is accompanied by her consort Attis.

pre-Greek elements, or other non-Greek elements, such as Hittite, Thracian, Proto-Etruscan or Phrygian. The cult was always local to Lemnos, but the Samothracian mystery cult spread rapidly throughout the Greek world during the Hellenistic period (323 BCE – 31 BCE), eventually initiating Romans.

There is some dispute about the number of deities that made up the Kábeiroi. Some consider that the Kábeiroi were twin gods who presided over the orgiastic dances of the mysteries of Samothrace which were held in honour of the goddesses Demeter, Persephone and Hecate. They were famed metal-workers, sons of the god Hephaistos, who served their father at his Lemnian forge. Like their mother Kabeiro, the pair were also sea-divinities who came to the aid of sailors in times of danger and stress. According to Clement of Alexandria (150-215 CE) who had an extensive knowledge of Greek mythology and mystery religions, the Kábeiroi were originally three in number, but two of the brothers murdered the third. In the play *The Kábeiroi* by Aeschylus, the two gods welcomed the Argonauts to their island and initiated them in a drunken orgy. But for some, the Samothracian Kábeiroi were a larger group of deities which included not only the sons of Hephaistos but also several Korymbantic sons of the god Apollo. Both groups were portrayed as shield-clashing, dancing warriors of the

orgiastic ceremonies.

The Sanctuary

The Samothrace sanctuary was open to all who wished to worship the Great Gods, although access to buildings consecrated to the Mysteries was reserved for initiates. These rituals and ceremonies were presided over by the priestess in service to the people. The head priestess, and often a prophetess, was called a Cybele (Sybil in English).

The most common rituals were indistinguishable from practices at other Greek sanctuaries. Prayer and supplications accompanied by blood sacrifices of domestic animals, primarily sheep and pigs, burnt in sacred hearths, as well as libations made to the chthonic deities in circular or rectangular ritual pits. A large number of rock altars were used, the largest of which was surrounded by a monumental enclosure, the Court of the Altar, at the end of the 4th Century BCE (site number 11).

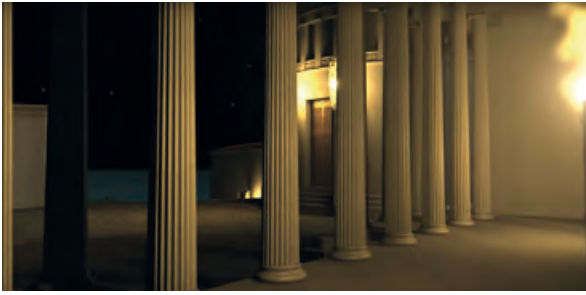
The major annual festival, drawing envoys to the island from throughout the Greek world, probably took place around mid-July. It consisted of the presentation of a sacred play, consisting of a ritual wedding which may have taken place in the building with the Hall of the Choral Dancers which was built in the 4th Century BCE. At that time, the belief arose that the search for the missing maiden, followed by her marriage to the god of the

The Samothrace sanctuary was open to all who wished to worship the Great Gods, although access to buildings consecrated to the Mysteries was reserved for initiates.

underworld, represented the marriage of Kadmos, king of Thebes and Harmonia, which took place on Samothrace.

The name Kadmos means a 'round shield' which was the attribute of the Korymbantes, the shield-clashing demi-gods of the Mysteries. The frieze on the Temenos (site number 14) may be an allusion to this marriage. Around 200 BCE, a Dionysian competition was added to the festival, facilitated by the construction of a theatre (site number 10) opposite the great altar (site number 11). According to local myth, it is in this era that the city of Samothrace honoured a poet of Iasos in Caria for having composed the tragedy *Dardanos* and having effected other acts of good will around the island, the city and the sanctuary.





Images show digital visualisations of the Samothrace site.

Numerous votive offerings were made at the sanctuary, which were placed in The Hall of Offerings, a building made for the purpose next to the Court of the Altar (site number 12). Offerings could be statues of bronze, marble or clay, weapons, vases, etc. However, due to Samothrace's location on busy maritime routes the cult was particularly popular and numerous often very modest offerings found their way there: excavations have turned up seashells and fish hooks offered by mariners or fishermen who were likely thanking the divinities for having protected them from the dangers of the sea.

The Mysteries

Like all of the ancient mysteries, the essential core remains an enigma. We can use information from other like-minded cults, information from ancient writers as well as archaeological finds, however, a unique feature of the Samothracian mysteries was their openness as compared to the Eleusinian mysteries. The initiation had no prerequisites for age, gender, status or nationality. In this way it resonates with Rosicrucian practice.

Everyone, men and women, adults and children, Greeks and non-Greeks, the free, the indentured, or the enslaved could participate. Nor was the initiation confined to a specific date and the initiate could on the same day attain two successive degrees of the mystery, as long as it took place during the sailing season from

April to November. The only condition, in fact, was to be present in the sanctuary. According to the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (c. 90-30 BCE) the rites held here in silent trust by the community of the initiated promised not only protection at sea but the opportunity for initiates to become more pious and more just and better in every respect than they were before.

The first stage of the initiation was the *myesis*. A sacred account and special symbols were revealed to the *mystes*; that is to say the initiate. According to Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BCE – 27 BCE), the ancient Roman scholar and writer, the symbols revealed on this occasion symbolised heaven and earth. In return for this revelation, which was kept secret, the initiate was given the assurance of certain privileges: Hope for a better life, and more particularly protection at sea, and possibly, as at Eleusis, the promise of a happy afterlife. During the ceremony the initiate received a crimson sash knotted around the waist that was supposed to be a protective talisman; compare this to the apron worn by members of other modern mystical groups. An iron ring exposed to the divine power of magnetic stones was probably another symbol of protection conferred during the initiation.

The site was developed over the two-century long period. The sanctuary occupies three narrow terraces on the west slopes of mount Agios Georgios, separated by two steep-banked torrents. The prospective initiates entered the Sanctuary of the Great Gods from the east through the Propylon of Pharaoh Ptolemy II which was also known as the Ptolemaion (site number 20), which spans the eastern stream and functions as a bridge. Immediately to the west, on the first terrace, on the Eastern Hill there is the Theatral Circle a somewhat circular paved depression, nine metres in diameter, containing an altar in the centre, which was



The Arlington Reservoir Rotunda is an exact replica of the Arsinoë Rotunda on Samothrace.



where the beginning of the initiation process took place. This was the primary location of the public, sacred activity. It was surrounded by a grandstand of five steps, the outermost of which held 40 life-sized bronze statues. It played a key role in completing the initiates' experience by effecting their final transformation upon leaving the sanctuary.

A winding path descends towards the main terrace, between the two streams, where the main monuments to the cult can be found. A large tholos⁵, the Arsinoëion, or Arsinoë II Rotunda, named after Ptolemy's wife Arsinoë II (site number 15), the largest covered round space in the ancient Greek world (20 metres in diameter), may have served to welcome the theores, sacred ambassadors delegated by cities and associations to attend the great festivals at the sanctuary. The decoration of rosettes and garlanded bull's heads leads some to believe that sacrifices may have also taken place here. The rotunda was built on an older building of which only the foundation has remained. At the Arlington Massachusetts Reservoir is an exact copy of the rotunda.

Prospective Initiates entered the sanctuary from the east although the preparation for the initiation took place in a small room south of the Anaktoron (or House of the Lords, site number 16), a type of sacristy where the initiate was dressed in white and was given a lamp. The *myesis* then took place in this Anaktoron, comprising a large hall capable of accommodating numerous already initiated faithful, who would attend the ceremony seated on benches along the walls. The initiate carried out a ritual washing in a basin situated in the southeast corner

...the discovery of numerous lamps and torch-supports throughout this site confirms the nocturnal nature of the initiation rites.

and then made a libation to the gods in a circular pit.

At the end of the ceremony, the initiates took their place seated on a round wooden platform facing the principal door while ritual dances took place around them. They were then taken to the north chamber, the sanctuary where they received the revelation proper. Access to this sanctuary was forbidden to non-initiates. The initiates were given a document attesting to their initiation in the mysteries and could, at least during the later period, pay to have their names engraved on a commemorative plaque.

The second degree of the initiation was called the



epopteia, literally, the 'contemplation'. Unlike the one-year interval between degrees which was demanded at Eleusis, the second degree at Samothrace could be obtained immediately after the *myesis*. In spite of this, it was only realised by a small number of initiates, which leads us to believe that it involved some difficult conditions, though it is unlikely that these conditions were financial or social. It seems to have concerned moral issues, as the candidate was auditioned and required to confess their sins. This audition took place overnight in front of the Hieron (site number 13). It was the most important building in the sanctuary and is 40 metres long by 13 metres wide. It is not known who dedicated this building, but given the magnificence, it was likely a royal.

Although it is a type of temple, there is only a single prostyle. It seems to have functioned as a *telesterion*, or place of the mysteries, as it has benches for seating down both sides of the hall just like at Eleusis. The architectural ornamentation of the facade is noteworthy for its elegance. The interior boasts the largest unsupported span in the ancient Greek world, some 11 metres. The south end of this building is an apse, which constitutes the most sacred portion. This apse may represent a grotto for conducting chthonic rituals. A foundation was recovered here which could have supported a giant torch, and generally speaking, the discovery of numerous lamps and torch-supports throughout this site confirms the nocturnal nature of the initiation rites.

After the interrogation and the eventual absolution awarded by the priest or official the candidate was brought into the Hieron, which also functioned as an *epopteion*,





*The Winged Victory of Samothrace
(Louvre, Paris)*

or ‘place of contemplation’, where ritual cleansing took place and sacrifice was made into a sacred hearth located in the centre of the ‘holy of holies.’ The initiate then went to an apse in the rear of the building, which was probably intended to resemble a grotto. The hierophant, also known as the initiator, took his place on a platform in the apse where he recited the liturgy and displayed the symbols of the mysteries. Afterwards the initiates went for a good, social meal in a banqueting hall.

During the Roman era, towards 200 CE, the entrance to the Hieron was modified to permit the entrance of live sacrificial offerings. A parapet was constructed in the interior to protect the spectators and a crypt was fitted into the apse. These modifications permitted the celebration of the Kriobolia³ and the Taurobolia⁴ of the Anatolian Great Mother, which were introduced to the *epopteia* (greater mysteries) at this time. The new rites saw the initiate or possibly only the priest by proxy, descend into a pit in the apse. The blood of the sacrificial animals then flowed over him or her in the fashion of a baptismal rite.

On the third and final terrace, west of the spiritual centre of the sanctuary, is primarily occupied by votive buildings such as the Miletean Building, so named as it was dedicated by a citizen of Miletus (site number 5), and the Neorion, or naval monument (site number 6). It is also the location of a banqueting hall (site number 7). Three other small Hellenistic treasuries are not well known (site numbers 1 to 3). Overlooking the central terrace, the space is above all dominated by a very large Stoa or portico (104 metres long; site number 8) which acts as a monumental backdrop to the sanctuary. It lies above the Theatre.

To the south of the Theatre (site number 9) is a

building called the Fountain of the Victory. In this fountain stood the world-famous statue known as ‘The Winged Victory of Samothrace.’ The statue lacks its head, but is a visually-compelling sculpture that catches one particular moment in time. It portrays the ancient Greek goddess Nike or Victory alighting on the prow of a ship. It is 8 feet (2.5m) high. It was created not only to honour the goddess, but also to honour a sea battle. The statue conveys a sense of action and triumph as well as portraying artful flowing drapery, as though the goddess were descending to alight upon the prow of a ship.

The sculpture is notable for its convincing rendering of a pose where violent motion and sudden stillness meet, for its graceful balance and for the rendering of the figure’s draped garments, compellingly depicted as if rippling in a strong sea breeze. This statue, one of the greatest surviving pieces of Hellenistic sculpture, now to be found in the Louvre museum in Paris, is my personal favourite piece of sculpture.

Notes

1. When discussing the Greek ‘mysteries’, the implication is that what was done and experienced by the *mystes* was something of a deeply sacred nature. For this reason, it is usual to capitalise the first letter “M” of “Mysteries” to honour of the spiritual nature of the ceremonies they conducted.
2. Chthonic: “in, under or beneath the earth”, thus “subterranean”. The meaning here is about deities or spirits of the underworld, especially in Greek religion.
3. Kriobolia: Sacrifice of a ram.
4. Taurobolia: Sacrifice of a bull.
5. Tholos: A circular structure, often a temple, of ancient Greece and Rome.

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THE CIRCASSIANS

by Helena Dumont

THE CIRCASSIANS are an ethnic group native to Circassia, in the northern Caucasus, who were displaced during the course of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus in the 19th Century. The term ‘Circassian’ includes the Adyghe and Kabardian people, who speak the Circassian language, a Northwest Caucasian language with numerous dialects. Many Circassians also speak Turkish, Arabic and various other languages of the Middle East, having been exiled by Russia to lands of the Ottoman Empire, where the majority of them live today, and to neighbouring Persia. From cradle to grave, the Circassian native creed or *Habze*, intertwined with their code of conduct, dictated the way they behaved, formed their system of values and also the way they conceived the world. It is this that we will briefly look at in this article.

Religion

Animism is probably the most ancient religion of all the peoples of the North Caucasus region, dating back to the Old Stone Age. It is the belief that a soul resides in every object, animate or inanimate. In animistic thought all nature is alive and it was in the New Stone Age that what we call Paganism took root.

The original religion of the Circassians was called *Habze*. It is a philosophical and religious system

promoting personal values and the relationship of an individual to others, to the world around the individual, and to a “Higher Mind.” In essence, it represents monotheism with a much-defined system of worshipping a single supreme deity: *Theshxwe*, (the Supreme God) sometimes shortened to *Tha*. During the time of the settlement of Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast between the 8th and 3rd Centuries BCE, there was an intermingling of cultures.

Interestingly, by the 6th Century BCE, the Ionian city of Miletus had constructed a maritime empire with six colonies on the east coast of the Black Sea. Miletus was the home of the so-called ‘scientist-philosophers’ Thales (c. 624 – 546 BCE), Anaximander (c. 610 – 546 BCE) and Anaximenes (c. 585 – 525 BCE). Inland from these cities were the Circassian tribes. It is difficult to know how much, if any, influence ancient Greek thought had on the Circassian beliefs, but there are similarities. Throughout subsequent Circassian history their ethnic religion also interacted with and was influenced by Christianity and Islam.

Habze

The *Habze* derives from two words meaning order/vast/universe and word/speech. It is the name given to the original Circassian religion, philosophy and worldview. Its meaning can be literally translated



as *Language of the Universe* or *Word of the Cosmos*, comparable to the concept of Dharma.

The belief system takes its name from the Circassian epic *Nart Sagas*, which were originally orally transmitted, and which heavily contributed to the shaping of Circassian values over the centuries. During the period of the Soviet Union, there was a severe weakening of Islam in the area, and especially among the Circassians. With the fall of the Soviet regime, the revival of Habze was supported by Circassian intellectuals as part of a rise in nationalism and cultural identity in the 1990s, and more recently as a force against Wahhabism and Islamic fundamentalism.

The god THA

Habze theology gives prominence to the god Tha, who created the universe. When Tha first expressed himself, he generated the Word or Cosmic Law, the primordial pattern from which all beings naturally emerged, evolving through 'internal laws.' This reminds us of the Memphite theology of ancient Egypt where the god Ptah spoke the world into creation. Enlightenment for men and women corresponds to an understanding of Tha's Law. Tha is omnipresent in his creation, and according to a Circassian cosmological text "*...his spirit is scattered throughout space.*"

In Circassian hymns Tha is referred to as "*...the One everyone asks, but who does not ask back*"; "*...the multiplier of the non-existent*"; "*...the One on whom everyone places their hope, but who does not place hope on anyone*"; "*...the One from whom gifts come*"; "*...His amazing work*"; "*...the One who permits heaven and earth to move.*" Everything is One and is unitary with Tha. The material-manifested world is in perpetual change, but at the same time there is a foundation that always remains unshaken. That is the originating principle of the world and its Law.

The always-changing world and its basis is compared to a rotating wheel: although the wheel is constantly changing, it has a central hub around which it revolves, and the hub remains still. Tha is the creator of the Laws of the Universe, which represent His expression and gave humans an opportunity to understand the laws, bringing them closer to God. Tha does not interfere in everyday life, presenting everyone with freedom of choice. He has no form and is Omnipresent: "*His spirit is scattered throughout space.*" The goal of earthly existence is the perfection of the soul, and this is accomplished through the maintenance of honour, the demonstration of compassion, gratuitous

assistance, which, along with valour and the courage of a warrior, enables the person's soul to join the souls of his or her ancestors with a clear conscience.

Worship of Tha, as well prayers to him, are expressed through rites and rituals called "requests to Tha", and can be in the form of spoken or sung prayers. Ceremonies take place in special locations, often in sacred groves rather than inside structures or temples. The location where the ceremonies are celebrated is marked with a symbol in the form of a hammer or Tau cross, in the form of the letter 'T', representative of the utmost divinity. The elders of the families, communities, and villages conduct the ceremonies. The priest officiating rituals or practices is a key figure in Circassian culture who is often an elder but also the person who bears the responsibility for functions like weddings or circumcision rites. This person must always comply in minute detail with the rules of Habze in all areas of his or her life. It has deeply shaped the ethical values of the Circassians, being based on mutual respect and above all responsibility, discipline and self-control.

Habze functions as the Circassian unwritten law yet was highly regulated and adhered to in the past. The Code requires that all Circassians are taught courage, reliability and generosity. Greed, desire for possessions, wealth and ostentation are considered disgraceful by the Habze code. In accordance with Habze, hospitality was and is particularly pronounced among the Circassians. A guest is not only a guest of the host family, but equally a guest of the whole village and clan. Even enemies are regarded as guests if they enter the home and being hospitable to them as one would with any other guest is a sacred duty.

Circassians consider the host to be like a slave to the guest in that the host is expected to tend to the guest's every need and want. A guest must never be permitted to labour in any way, for this is considered a major disgrace on the host. Every Circassian arises when someone enters the room, providing a place for the person entering and allowing the newcomer to speak before everyone else during the conversation. In the presence of elders and women, respectful conversation and conduct are essential. Disputes are stopped in the presence of women and domestic disputes are never continued in the presence of guests. A woman can request disputing families to reconcile, and they must comply with her request.

There is much food for thought here, not only about an admirable view of life, but also about the way in which our far-off ancestors may have seen the world and the universe.





*by Bob Kogel
Grand Administrator for the
English Grand Lodge for Australia, Asia
and New Zealand*

Turmeric

WATCHING MY mother cook Indonesian food was always an amazing sensory experience as each spice added would fill the kitchen with rich and varied aromas. However, the bright yellow Turmeric spice always had a particular fascination to me due to its colour. These days when I cook various curries I usually include turmeric

which you can now buy fresh from the supermarket as well as in the yellow powder form.

Turmeric grows wild in the forests of Southeast Asia. Plants are gathered annually for their rhizomes, and propagated from some of those rhizomes in the following season. When not used fresh, the rhizomes are boiled for several hours and then dried in hot ovens, after which they





The *Curcuma Longa* plant is used to make Turmeric.



Turmeric has many long term health benefits.



Curry May Slow Alzheimer's Disease

are ground into a deep orange-yellow powder.

Turmeric has become the key ingredient for many Indian, Indonesian and Thai dishes and it is a significant ingredient in most commercial curry powders. It is also widely used as a spice in Middle Eastern cooking and many Persian dishes use turmeric as a starter ingredient for almost all Iranian fry ups. Turmeric has a distinctly earthy, slightly bitter, slightly hot peppery flavour and a mustardy smell.

Turmeric is commonly called *haridra* or *haldi* in India. Turmeric is popularly known in English as *Manjal* and turmeric powder is known as *Mañcal tūl* in the Tamil language. In Tamil Nadu in India, the city of Erode is the world's largest producer and largest trading centre of turmeric in Asia. For these reasons, Erode is also known as the *Yellow City*. Turmeric is considered highly auspicious in India and has been used extensively in various Indian ceremonies for millennia.

Even today it is used in every part of India during wedding ceremonies and religious ceremonies. In recipes outside Asia, turmeric is sometimes used as an agent to impart a rich, custard-like yellow colour. It is used in canned beverages and baked products, dairy products, ice cream, yogurt, yellow cakes, orange juice, biscuits, popcorn colour, sweets, cake icings, cereals, sauces, gelatines.

Turmeric (coded as E100 or Natural Yellow 3 when used as a food additive) is used to protect food products from sunlight and is used to colour cheeses, yogurt, dry mixes, salad dressings, winter butter and margarine. Turmeric is also used to give a yellow colour to some prepared mustards, canned chicken broths and other foods often as a much cheaper replacement for saffron.

Over many years there have been many scientific studies on various spices and herbs trying to find new cures or rediscovering old ones for many of today's ailments. Therefore, I was not surprised to hear that turmeric has been the subject of these studies and in 2001 the following news item appeared on the BBC News.

A spicy ingredient of many curries may be an effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease, say researchers. A team from the University of California at Los Angeles believes that turmeric may play a role in slowing down the progression of the neurodegenerative disease. The finding may help to explain why rates of Alzheimer's are much lower among the elderly in India than in their Western peers. Previous studies have found that Alzheimer's affects just 1% of people over the age of 65 living in some Indian villages.

Dr Richard Harvey, director of research at the Alzheimer's Society, said:

Turmeric is found in everything from mild Kormas to the hottest Vindaloos. The crucial chemical is curcumin, a compound found in the spice. Curcumin has both anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

Alzheimer's is linked to the build up of knots in the brain called amyloid plaques. In the study, Turmeric reduced the number of these plaques by half and reduced Alzheimer's-related inflammation in the brain tissue. The researchers also found that turmeric had other health benefits and found it aids digestion, helps fight infection and guards against heart attacks.

The *U.S. National Institutes of Health* currently has registered 19 clinical trials underway to study use of dietary turmeric and curcumin for a variety of clinical disorders. A further search on the internet has also shown up the following interesting research. A molecule found in a curry ingredient can kill cancer cells. Reuters said:

Researchers at the Cork Cancer Research Centre in Ireland treated esophageal cancer cells with curcumin – a chemical found in the spice turmeric, which gives curries a distinctive



Twenty Reasons to Add Turmeric to your Diet

yellow colour – and found it started to kill cancer cells within 24 hours. The cells also began to digest themselves, they said in a study published in the British Journal of Cancer.

Previous scientific studies have suggested curcumin can suppress tumors and that people who eat lots of curry may be less prone to the disease, although curcumin loses its anti-cancer attributes quickly when ingested.

Sharon McKenna, lead author of the Irish study, said her study suggested a potential for scientists to develop curcumin as an anti-cancer drug to treat esophageal cancer. Cancers of the esophagus kill more than 500,000 people across the world each year. The tumours are especially deadly, with five-year survival rates of just 12 to 31 percent. McKenna said the study showed curcumin caused the cancer cells to die “using an unexpected system of cell messages.”

Normally, faulty cells die by committing programmed suicide, or apoptosis, which occurs when proteins called caspases are ‘switched on’ in cells, the researchers said. But these cells showed no evidence of suicide, and the addition of a molecule that inhibits caspases and stops this ‘switch being flicked’ made no difference to the number of cells that died, suggesting curcumin attacked the cancer cells using an alternative cell signalling system.

In Ayurvedic practices, turmeric has been used as an anti-inflammatory agent and remedy for gastrointestinal discomfort associated with irritable bowel syndrome and other digestive disorders. Some may use turmeric in skin creams as an antiseptic agent for cuts, burns and bruises. It is popular as a tea in Okinawa, Japan.

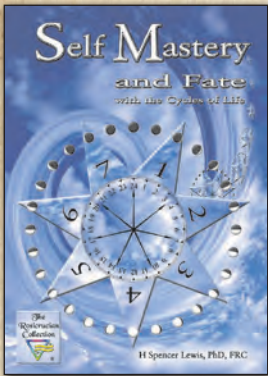
Contraindications: Turmeric should not be used by people with gallstones or bile obstruction. Though turmeric is often used by pregnant women, it is important to consult with a doctor before doing so as turmeric can be a uterine stimulant.

Turmeric can also be taken in powder or pill form. It is available in pill form in most health food stores, usually in 250–500mg capsules. The above should be enough information to convince you to eat and enjoy a curry dish containing Turmeric tonight with its many health giving properties!

1. It is a natural antiseptic and antibacterial agent, useful in disinfecting cuts and burns.
2. When combined with cauliflower, it has shown to prevent prostate cancer and stop the growth of existing prostate cancer.
3. Prevented breast cancer from spreading to the lungs in mice.
4. May prevent melanoma and cause existing melanoma cells to commit suicide.
5. Reduces the risk of childhood leukemia.
6. Is a natural liver detoxifier.
7. May prevent and slow the progression of Alzheimer’s disease by removing amyloid plaque build-up in the brain.
8. May prevent metastases from occurring in many different forms of cancer.
9. It is a potent natural anti-inflammatory that works as well as many anti-inflammatory drugs but without the side effects.
10. Has shown promise in slowing the progression of multiple sclerosis in mice.
11. Is a natural painkiller and cox-2 inhibitor (an enzyme responsible for pain and inflammation).
12. May aid in fat metabolism and help in weight management.
13. Has long been used in Chinese medicine as a treatment for depression.
14. Because of its anti-inflammatory properties, it is a natural treatment for arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.
15. Boosts the effects of chemo drug paclitaxel and reduces its side effects.
16. Promising studies are underway on the effects of turmeric on pancreatic cancer.
17. Studies are ongoing in the positive effects of turmeric on multiple myeloma.
18. Has been shown to stop the growth of new blood vessels in tumours.
19. Speeds up wound healing and assists in remodelling of damaged skin.
20. May help in the treatment of psoriasis and other inflammatory skin conditions.



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Self Mastery and Fate with the Cycles of Life

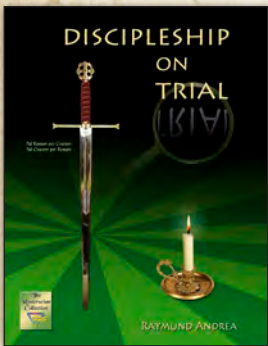
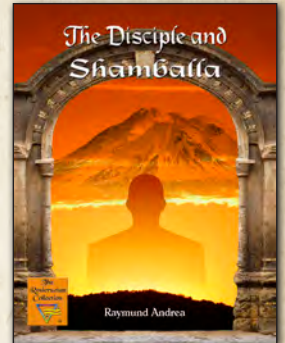
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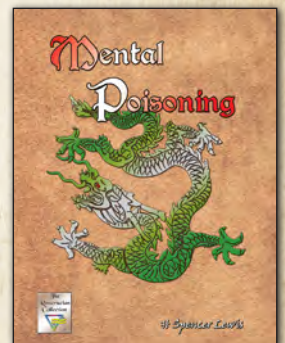
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