

ROSICRUCIAN BEACON

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CONTENTS

Bringing Heaven to Earth - by Sven Johansson	2
The Crystal - by Fraser Lawson	5
Mesocosm and the Wellness of the Earth - by Lucy Crawford-Sandison	6
The Nature of Compassion- by Cecil A Poole	12
Walking in Beauty - by Bill Anderson	14
A Mystic Eye- by Philip Clausen	17
Brethren of Purity- by Marc Cornwall	18
For Meditation - by Zhuāng Zi (3 rd Century BCE)	28
Six Traditional Laws of the Brethren of the Rosy Cross - by Amelia	29
What Do You See? - by Jenny Butler	34
Dreams of an Ideal Society - by John Agbor	35
Flights of Fancy - by John Alger	37
Shadows - by Helen Williams	38
The Influence of Service - by T Wilcox Putnam	39
$E = mc^2$ - by William Hand	41
Duality in Science and Philosophy - by Walter J Albersheim	43
True Friendship - by Doreen Eustice	47

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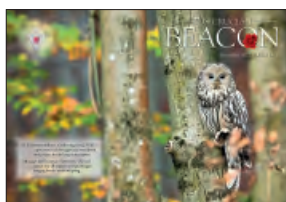
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Cover spread

Guardian of the Forest,
Observer of the Seasons





by **Sven Johansson**
English Grand Master of AMORC
(Europe, Middle East & Africa)

Bringing Heaven to Earth



Faced with so many distressing things happening in the world today, we need to remind ourselves how incredibly brief our sojourn on planet Earth is against the backdrop of the age of the universe. Brief, in fact, even when compared to the age of our human species. Armed with this realisation we know, therefore, not to waste a single moment on thoughts, words or actions that are unworthy of our status as members of the most complex and intelligent species ever to have evolved in this tiny corner of the universe.

Despite the daily barrage of news about appalling war crimes being committed and of rampant corruption within political parties often on open display with no redress to justice, we must do our best to live our lives on a higher plane of existence, as genuine mystics intent on working quietly in the background to bring Light to a darkened world. For without doubt, there are always opportunities to do good if we are sufficiently attuned to the needs of mother earth and the many people and animals that pass us daily.

Each day can be an invigorating opportunity of advancing our attunement with the ultimate guiding force of our life

Each day can be an invigorating opportunity of advancing our attunement with the ultimate guiding force of our life, that intimate, personal realisation of the most refined creative force in the universe, something Rosicrucians refer to in deeply personal terms as the *'God of my Heart.'* Communion with that inner *'divine spark'* leads us to the discovery of ever more complex and refined levels of personal intellect, and a rediscovery of our past and how it so neatly dovetails into our present and future. Harsh as the realities of life are for many of us, it is still a good time to be alive.

Solutions to world-wide problems are ours to apply, just there for the taking if we would but accept the challenge and do what is necessary to assist our increasingly damaged planet. Not only do we see a world greatly diminished and suffering on all levels due to human-created global warming, we also see the far greater damage that is occurring daily, by the steady loss of bio-diversity, a loss that is almost entirely due to the far

too large human footprint on earth. As is so patently clear for all who live in countries where accurate information is free to circulate, war..., and this time the possibility of a third world war..., is all too plain to see.

Despite all these worrying signs of approaching disaster for humankind, as spiritual beings we are still obligated to live our lives in the most kind, gentle, compassionate and constructive manner we can, and to help in practical ways wherever our assistance can do good for the world. This is the bare minimum of what we, as spiritual beings should do daily.

Putting aside for a moment the broader, more glaring issues of misgovernment in many countries, we can still live lives of goodness and kindness to all; and we are entirely capable of exerting a positive influence within at least the small communities in which we live. It needs only a little bit of caring effort each day in order to make a constructive, positive difference. And best of all, is to strive to live according to our highest ideals of justice and fairness to all. We have a vast storehouse of knowledge from the past to draw upon, and through history books and, sometimes through direct experience, we have knowledge of the bitter experiences of innumerable past wars to draw upon too. At no time in the past have people, on a mass scale, had available to them information about the folly of war in such abundance. But most important of all, we have the few periods of true peace and rapid intellectual advancement that we and our immediate parents and grand-parents have enjoyed. And from those periods of stability, we must actively draw upon the ethos and moral values that we have created during such times of peace and plenty.





Surely we can see that only in the absence of war and strife, only in the presence of a true and abiding love of humanity, can we find any assurance of peace, harmony, goodwill and personal inner development on a global scale? Our universe is not a mere chance arrangement of particles. It is an orderly, complex system of millions of instances of highly refined creative intelligences and, most importantly, ones that are capable of connecting with each other in a new and far higher form of collective consciousness, one which Rosicrucians refer to as an *'egregore'* of united life with all the indications of being itself as alive, cognitive and capable of decision-making as any individual human part of that *'group consciousness.'*

**As advanced as we believe
our intellect is, we are but
specs in an ocean..., tiny parts
of an immensely greater
'collective whole.'**

As advanced as we believe our intellect is, we are but specs in an ocean..., tiny parts of an immensely greater *'collective whole.'* We individually live and experience life, but so does the *'human collective'*, the *egregore*. Consider the galaxy in which we live. Among the billions of planets that exist in it today, and even many more that have existed in the past but are no longer in existence, how many other civilisation similar to ours must have risen to even greater heights than ours, yet still fallen into oblivion because of foolish, small-minded, selfish decisions resulting eventually in hasty and ultimately catastrophic actions. We must avoid such pitfalls, for as we grow in scientific knowledge and

power, we also expand our ability to destroy our world in a matter of mere hours. Slowly, as we are doing at present through overpopulation, global warming and pollution, or catastrophically quickly, as could happen with an all-out nuclear war, we must be aware that the time has come for people world-wide to realise what a treasure the world is and act as if it is the greatest of all treasures that will ever exist for us. It is a gift beyond compare.

As I ponder the majesty of our beautiful world in awe, jam-packed as it is with the ugly and the beautiful and all shades between, I am filled with enthusiasm and gratitude for being alive *now*, in this era, and for being part of the unique family of humankind. What a privilege it is to live in these exciting days. I cannot escape the feeling that unborn or discarnate entities (if such exist) envy us immensely for being here and experiencing life on this particular planet at this particular time. What a privileged species we are and what great responsibilities we must willingly share.

And as each of us strives toward fulfilment, an admirable enduring human spirit survives, an *egregore*, a *collective consciousness* which sets our species apart from all others on our planet. We must be seekers of Light and Life foremost and strive to manifest Love at every available opportunity. As simple, uncomplicated humans bent on making good happen, let us actively visualise *'the Good'* as the ancient Greek philosophers referred to their concept of sanctity and earnestly strive towards the dream of a collective liberation of the *egregore* of humanity into its inheritance of matter infused with wisdom and indeed, holiness. As avatars, masters, philosophers and religious leaders of the past have shown us repeatedly, it is possible to bring the heavens down to earth and to live in harmony with nature. We simply need to try, try and try again..., until we eventually succeed!





by **Fraser Lawson**

It lay in my hand, a ball of pure crystal glittering in the light, with rainbow colours dancing from the many facets cut upon its surface. How strange, its fascinating beauty! There it lay, transparent, its centre apparently empty, its boundaries hardly discernible against my hand. The pleasure it gave rested entirely in its ability to reflect and refract light. What a perfect symbol of the human consciousness!

The material form of the body we can see and touch, but the personality, the infinite being living in the body, can be known only by the reflection from the many facets of our abilities, and the aspects of our individual responses to the outer world. Each of us determines the colours we will reflect: the warmth and brilliance of love for all, kindness and light which brings joy to all who see its presence, or the dark hues of selfishness and an existence enveloped in the clouds of materialism.

But the reflections on the crystal are only its surface, bounding a formless centre where nothing obstructs the light. Within our material being, our eternal soul exists, without shape, without form. In meditation we can sense this higher self, resting as it were in the centre of the crystal, which allows the cosmic light to flow through us. Undisturbed by the reflections on the surface, calm and aware of the Light, the higher self rests in Peace Profound.



Mesocosm and the Wellness of the Earth

by **Lucy Crawford-Sandison**

English Grand Master of AMORC

(Australasia)

Throughout history, humankind has had only one planet to call home..., the Earth. Setting sail on an uncharted sea of limitless mystery and unlimited potential, we are the sentinels who are guarding the Earth. From space, astronauts look down upon the Earth; they see a planet without borders, they see that we're all part of the same team: *Team Earth*. If we're going to move forward, the only way is to do it together.

2014 saw the publication of the Rosicrucian manifesto *Appellatio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*. The Appellatio is a call to humanity. It is an appeal to bring to worldwide attention three of the most urgent areas of consideration for the betterment and wellbeing of humanity and all life on Earth in the 21st Century. This trinity is Spirituality, Humanism and Ecology.

We Rosicrucians tend to be very familiar with and good at navigating the language of spirituality and humanism, but what about the language of ecology, something so very relevant in these times? Some people have asked, *'What even is ecology?'* Technically, it is a form of natural science about the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings. However, ecology is more broadly thought of as the relationship between all living things. It has become synonymous with the preservation and wellbeing of all natural systems that support life on Earth.



These systems, which unite the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms of life, are intelligent, complex and collaborative. If we liken each species to musical notes of the natural world, the ecologies are the melodies and the harmonies. In their natural state, there is a profound wisdom and beauty that plays out in their relationships, and we see this celebrated in the complex collaborations between different expressions of life.

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The relationships are so refined, so exquisitely balanced, that they form both the foundations and the details of that great symphony named *'the circle of life.'* In the outer, measurable 21st Century world, these complex systems have been studied and analysed across many scientific fields, generating scientifically sound answers but also coming up with new questions. However, there are many areas in the immaterial and invisible realms that mystics can become more aware of as a counterpart to this enquiry, and that is an important area of research and a new language to develop.

We can draw upon our mystical consciousness and, using our soul qualities, experience a sacred affiliation with all other life forms. We can tend that precious flame, our reverent thoughts, and develop a deeper bond with the mesocosm, the sanctuary of all life on Earth, the biosphere of life which lies between the macrocosm and the microcosm.



Biophilia

This is a calling to awaken to a language of spiritual ecology. Some mystics have even spoken of it as a *'transcendental ecology.'* Academics in the lecture halls of universities have even begun using the word *'biophilia'* as a philosophy, meaning the *'love of living things'*, or the inborn affinity that humans have for nature. It is likely that discovering a relevant inner language of *mystical consciousness of the natural world*, and how to speak of it outwardly, will be a significant part of the mystic's quest in the 21st Century.

However, this is not a new endeavour. Mystics throughout the centuries have contributed their good thoughts, their reverent feelings and a helping hand behind the scenes towards the enhancement and preservation of nature. And Rosicrucians are never far away from a deep reverence for the natural world. Nature's pristine beauty, truth and goodness is an inspiration to them in their quest for perceiving the universal intelligence that pervades all. From the most exquisite tiny flower held in the palm of your hand to the hauntingly beautiful calls of a blue whale, there is Universal Soul at work trying to be expressed upon each and every inch of our Earth wherever it can.

When an ecology is well, it has the potential to express itself fully, to reach its full reflection of the divinity at work. Nature in its pristine state or in a beautifully cared-for garden reflects this full potential. Affiliating with nature helps us to connect with this wellness, with this love at work in all relationships. Therefore, the spiritual ecology we learn from nature teaches us how to fulfil collaborative, harmonious relationships between one another.

The natural world on Earth, as mesocosm, reflects a middle ground of a unity between humanity, nature and cosmos. The affinity and connectedness that we can



develop with the natural world and all living beings, each and every day, is an intrinsic part of understanding nature's true purpose and the mysteries of life.

The renowned naturalist Sir David Attenborough suggests that the essential principle that nature teaches us is that a high level of refinement grows out of collaborative diversity and inclusive hierarchy.

The natural world on Earth, as mesocosm, reflects a middle ground of a unity between humanity, nature and cosmos.

In his recent statement, he says that the living Earth is a unique and spectacular marvel. Billions of life forms work together to form a unique, dazzling variety and richness of expression. They collaborate to benefit mutually from the energies of the sun, and the minerals of the Earth. Lives interlock in such a way that they sustain and benefit from each other. We, as humans, rely on this finely-tuned instrument of life, and it relies on its precious collaborative balance, diversity, complexity and inclusive hierarchy of all life forms.



Sir David Attenborough goes on to say that in the evolutionary history of the Earth, over billions of years, nature has carved miraculous forms, each more intricate and complex than the last. The magnificence that is our planet's biodiversity has developed over the last 65 million years, and the Holocene, the period of the last 10,000 years, is considered one of the most stable in constancy ever in the Earth's natural history. A rich, thriving world is a key to this stability.



More than ever, there is a rapidly growing planetary awareness, an ecological consciousness that highlights humanity's adverse impact upon Earth's wellness. Humans are naturally creative, and they have continually transformed nature's gifts to satisfy their needs. Whether from coal to warmth, or from trees to buildings, they have rearranged the natural world to suit their creative desires and uphold their paradigms. But how much of this creativity is really fulfilling its true purpose of reflecting the creativity of the cosmic mind if it is damaging complex, collaborative ecosystems and thus reducing the complexity of the expression of being?

The Rosicrucian View

Anxious to raise awareness on the subject of ecology, the Rosicrucian Order published in 2012 *A Plea for Spiritual Ecology*, which was read out at the Brazilian Senate during the *Earth Summit* in Rio. As the then Emperor and President of the Rosicrucian Order, Christian Bernard, so beautifully expressed it:

The Earth is a jewel in the cosmos, a masterpiece of the divine, universal consciousness. It is a treasure of great inspiration to humanity and is respected by Rosicrucians as a special sanctuary upon which all life can evolve, physically, emotionally and spiritually.



Sacred Relationship

If we agree that the Earth is a living, conscious *'something'*, or even an *'evolving conscious being'* of some sort, can we also say that the Earth and all life forms on it might highly value a sacred relationship with us for the purpose of a mutual opportunity to evolve? We know that many traditional peoples, living close to the land, honour a sacred relationship with nature through their rituals and feel an obligation to preserve it through their way of life.

Unfortunately, this relationship is being severely eroded as globalisation has imposed its presence upon them. Can Rosicrucians use a higher form of spiritual or mystical consciousness to help with the preservation of this sacred relationship, from a metaphysical point of view? To answer this question, it is helpful to get to know the Earth a little more deeply, to touch into its very origins and maybe even a meaningful purpose. The creation mythologies of ancient Egyptian and Hermetic traditions are, perhaps, a good place to begin, for in the creation teachings we know of, there is a common thread that can be synthesised as follows:

The divine mind, or the heart of the supreme divine being, activates creation out of an eternal, unchangeable realm and begins emanating harmonious laws and principles of cosmic order. Out of the darkness of the primordial cosmic waters, density and warmth arise first, then light, then life, gradually becoming more complex until consciousness arises in life forms. In the Egyptian Heliopolitan Ennead (group of nine gods),



Ecology plays an integral part in mystical consciousness because we cannot become interested in the mysteries of life without also being concerned with what is to become of the Earth. From the moment we set out on a spiritual path, we cannot fail to be concerned with the future of our planet.

Furthermore, our present Emperor and board President, Claudio Mazzucco, reflects upon this in his article *Rosicrucian Utopia*:

Today nature is being exploited and denied its purpose. By considering it just a relaxing backdrop for our holidays, we neglect the only channel that has the power to bring us face to face with the fundamental questions of who we are and why we are here. As Rosicrucians, we need to reclaim this path to restore nature's true purpose, not as a means to an end but as an end in itself. We need to appreciate it not just as a resting place but rather as a language that points to the eternity within the smallest structure, inside and outside of ourselves.

The Rosicrucian manifesto *Appellatio Fraternitas Rosae Crucis*, issued in January 2014, declares:

The Earth is the backdrop to our spiritual evolution and what allows us to become fulfilled as *'living souls.'* It has, therefore, both a terrestrial and a celestial vocation. We use the term *'health'* when speaking about our planet, for it is obvious that our world is a living and even conscious *'thing.'*



this is described as a series of divine pairs, polarities of dual emanations: light and air, sky and Earth, and ending with the most refined energies of love, represented in the relationship of Isis and Osiris, who create Horus, who symbolises the Supreme Good. Here we have light, life, love and the supreme good as progressive emanations out of the unity of an unchangeable, eternal realm.

A very special and symbolic event is mentioned in some of the most sacred of these teachings. This is the moment a sacred Bennu bird, the phoenix, thought to symbolise a *'divine fire'*, surveys the primordial cosmic waters. Where the phoenix lands, a mound arises as the sacred *Benben* stone. This was represented in the garden of *Iunu*, the enormous temple of Heliopolis, the city of the sun, or otherwise atop pyramids and obelisks.

Is it only one small step of imagination to think that the ancients could be referring to the beginnings of the appearance of our planet Earth, the point in creation of the appearance of matter? Is it just coincidence that the Great Pyramid of Giza is alleged to contain all the mathematical proportions representing the Earth's dimensions?

Whatever one's viewpoint on this, it is surely a heart-warming imagination to feel that our Earth, our jewel in the cosmos, is entirely woven out of the qualities of light, life and love, which have, for unknown aeons, emanated out of the eternal realm..., and that each and every part of our wonderful planet contains this eternity. Its very fabric is intrinsically infused with the highest good, if only our hearts could see it. Furthermore, think about what is at work here in the grand scheme of things that



we, as humans, are granted the senses to witness all of this magnificence. And not just our five basic senses, but those refined spiritually perceptive senses that we learn so much about in Rosicrucian studies. By striving to use our more refined senses, we can attune with nature more deeply and open the doorways to nature's secrets to develop our mystical consciousness. Does this not also remind us of the biblical phrase from Genesis on the 6th day of creation...

And God saw everything that was created, and behold, it was very good.

Or, in the words of the mystic-poet Coleridge...

There is one Mind, one omnipresent mind,
Omnific, whose most Holy name is Love.

Respect

One way to begin developing spiritual, mystical consciousness towards the Earth is by simply developing a heartfelt and sincere reverence for the natural world. Just being aware and connected with the seasons; walking in natural landscapes; attuning with the trees, the flowers,



Horus



Giza Pyramids, Egypt.



the birds; the mood of the landscape, and inwardly greeting them all with a heartfelt smile, as if reuniting with old friends. Simply slowing down and breathing in the atmosphere, the scent of a flower, the light of the day. Just putting aside time amid the demands of life for contemplating nature's exquisite expressions of divinity.

Nature's moods and atmospheres reflect our own, and when we are trying to understand our emotions we can reflect upon the natural world to help picture our moods. Correspondingly, whatever occurs in nature is also being reflected in the inner life of humanity.

Scientists are becoming aware that the Earth's atmosphere possess something akin to intelligence.

As I write this, we are just few days away from a hallmark in the sun cycle of the year, the solstice. The winter and summer solstices, being the longest and shortest nights respectively, or the shortest and longest day in each hemisphere, is an event of special significance for ancient peoples, as exemplified in the very large number of ancient sanctuaries, temples and henges orientated to either the winter or summer solstice. This was a moment for beholding, protecting and giving reverence to the triumph of light out of darkness, in outer nature and also in the inner life of people. They knew the importance of renewing, through rituals, a sacred affiliation between humanity, nature and cosmos.

To draw this article to a close, I would like to bring your attention to two more areas concerning spiritual ecology. Firstly, the so-called *'earth mysteries.'* This ancient wisdom is about the Earth's subtle energy system; in other words, the Earth's unseen electro- and biomagnetic vibrational fields. It is created between the Earth's magnetic geology interacting with cosmic radiation from space. It is a part of a large legacy of knowledge handed down mainly through the intuitive sciences of esoteric geography, geomancy and vibroturgy.

The Earth's aura is produced through this interaction, but more than this, scientists are becoming aware that the Earth's atmosphere possess something akin to *'intelligence.'*

It shifts and changes to protect life on Earth from solar flares. This recalls the words of the mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who is reputed to have celebrated a cosmic mass on the battlefields of World War I, dedicating uplifting ritual thoughts to the sphere of light around the Earth. He named this sphere of light the *'noosphere'* and proposed that it is affected by human thoughts, particularly reverent ritual thoughts.

All in all, what a joy it is to be journeying upon this most precious sanctuary of life, our planet Earth!

All in all, what a joy it is to be journeying upon this most precious sanctuary of life, our planet Earth! What a joy it is to be a living expression of the divinity we share with all life forms and to be a small part of the great symphony of life. When you're feeling down, when you're feeling lonely, this is the one and only planet we know for certain contains life in all its multitudinous glory. When everything is dark, we will be the light, the Pathfinders. We don't give up. We plan, we love, we share our concern for this planet and its continued existence. Its salvation is in our hands and we will always be there because we care.

As members of the worldwide Rosicrucian community, we are urged to have good thoughts, good words and good deeds. In our efforts to improve the world for all its people..., remember: *Think good thoughts! Say nice words! Do good for others!*





The Nature of Compassion

by Cecil A Poole

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

To fully and fairly judge an individual is beyond our ability, for we cannot know all the circumstances that may have brought about that individual’s present condition. In this sense then, compassion is more important than judgment. It is the trait or sense that is inherent in every human being, the ability to understand or at least to



have a feeling that makes it possible for us to realise that what other individuals experience is echoed by our own experiences. Since we frequently flounder or feel sorry for ourselves, sorrow for others, or at least realisation of their problems, is summarised in this one word: *compassion*.

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

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



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Describing a Neanderthal burial, Eiseley wrote:

Massive flint-hardened hands had shaped a sepulchre and placed flat stones to guard the dead man's head. A haunch of meat had been left to aid the dead man's journey. Worked flints, a little treasure of the human dawn, had been poured lovingly into the grave.

And down the millennia the message has come without words. *'We too were human, we too suffered, we too believed that the grave is not the end. We too, whose faces affright you now, knew human agony and human love.'* It is important to consider that across 50,000 years nothing has changed or altered in that act.

It is the human gesture by which we know a man though he looks out upon us under a brow suggestive of the ape. If, in another 50,000 years, man can still weep, we will know humanity is safe. This is all we need to ask about the onrush of the scientific age.

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

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





Walking in Beauty

by **Bill Anderson**

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

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



The Blessingway

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

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

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

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

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



Rosicrucian Spiritual Ecology

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

1. Our Earth has existed for over four billion years. Humanity as we know it appeared about three million years ago and it has put our world in mortal danger in less than a century.
2. Two-thirds of our planet is covered by seas and oceans, and our own bodies consist of more than 75% water. We cannot survive without water.
3. Forests are the lungs of the Earth and produce the oxygen we breathe. Without trees there would be no atmosphere and therefore no life.
4. Animals lived on our planet for hundreds of millions of years before humans evolved. The survival of humankind depends on animals great and small. They are intelligent, sensitive beings.
5. All of nature's kingdoms mutually depend on each other and there is neither space nor frontier between them. Each of them, on different levels and in different forms, is endowed with consciousness.



6. The Earth is surrounded by an electromagnetic field (aura) resulting from its own natural energies. This aura, combined with its atmosphere, contributes to life.
7. The existence of our planet is not a matter of chance or a mere accident of time and place. Our planet's existence is part of a plan devised and put in place by Universal Intelligence.
8. The Earth is not merely a planet designed to optimise human life. It is also the environment in which our souls may incarnate in order to carry out our spiritual evolution through to its successful conclusion.
9. Our planet is a masterpiece of refined evolution. Although it is by no means unique in the Universe, we already know it is a rarity. It is therefore a great privilege for humans to find safe abode here.
10. The Earth does not belong to us. It is here for us to live on during our lifetimes and represents the most precious of heritages for us to pass on to future generations.
11. We do not have any rights over our planet, simply the obligation to respect, preserve and protect it. In a word..., to love it!
12. Our planet is exquisitely beautiful and the only home we have. Let us resolve therefore to get out of our houses often, go for walks in parks or the countryside, breathe fresh air and rejuvenate our souls.
13. Nature is a gift to the myriad beautiful souls on Earth. Let us therefore walk in beauty and be Divine agents preserving and, where necessary, transforming, the world around us!
14. Let us give thanks for this opportunity to meet together to walk in Beauty and to share Light with each other in the service of all life on Earth! May our lives be filled with joy, appreciation and wonder!
15. The Earth does not belong to us. It is merely here for us to live on during our sojourn through life. It represents the most precious of heritages for us to pass on to future generations.
16. We have no inalienable rights of privilege on our planet, simply the obligation to respect, preserve and protect it. In a word..., to love it!

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





A Mystic Eye

by Philip Clausen

What is the artist's eye? The artist's talent lies in their ability to truly see a particular segment of life and to reveal this to the world through art. Great art is great vision.

Too often we allow life's great abundance of impressions to overwhelm us, shutting out these impressions rather than trying to view the mighty canvas that is at hand. This is like sitting too close to a picture. The answer is not to close your eyes but to step back. Stepping back is exactly what the mystic does in meditation, and it is actually what the artist does too. An artist sees for us and points out to us the most excellent beauty of everyday life. Yet, our heart wishes to see this for itself. The ethereal realm of art, the Vision of Beauty, is like an endless park for the mystic eye.

If a painter absorbs life fully and pours it forth again in the form of true art on canvas, his or her eyes are also opened to the beautiful truth of life. Why does a canvas inspire us? A vase and an egg painted together are not merely two objects. Together they suggest the grace and form of life and beauty, but also its fragility. We receive an insight into the significance and relationship between the portrayed objects; a relationship not fully grasped if the objects are portrayed on their own.

If painting was merely the art of reproducing the original scene exactly, then a photograph would do just as well. But photographs may also be revealing to us, to the extent that the serious photographer has isolated a scene, a moment or a slice of life so that we can see the significance of the object portrayed in its surroundings.

Yet our eyes crave to see and understand these

things for themselves, or as Henry David Thoreau wrote, explaining why he went to the woods to live for a time:

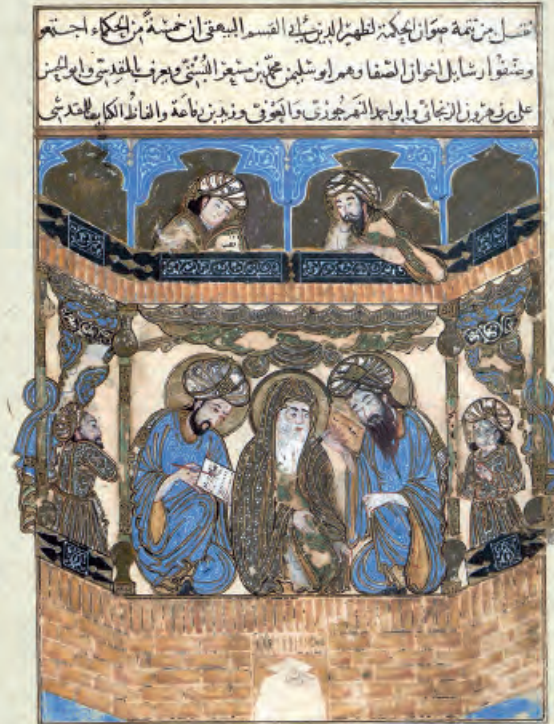
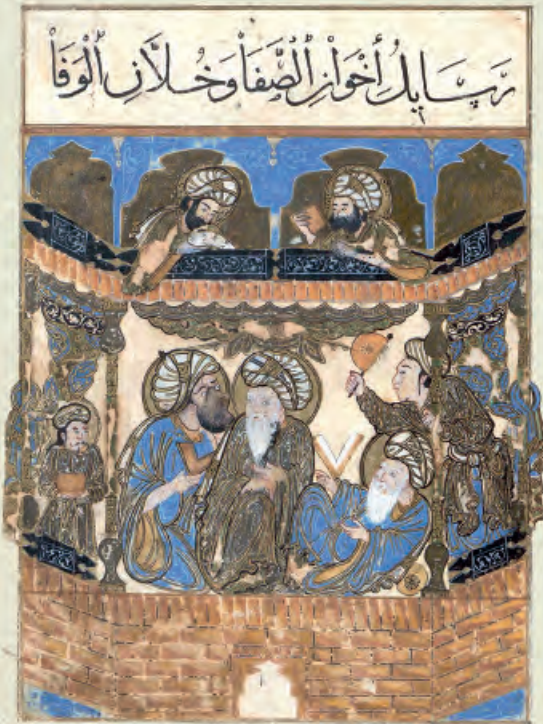
I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swathe and shave close, to drive life into a corner and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness out of it and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.

Of what value is it to visit the most beautiful and inspiring mountaintops in the world if we refuse to open our eyes or if we only briefly glance at them and then say *"Is that all?"* The mystic opens his or her eyes to the wonder and beauty of the world and then can only exclaim, as Goethe did: *"Light, more light."*

Inquisitiveness is the prerequisite to keen perception. Obviously we do not very easily come to understand the nature of a thing unless we actively desire to know its secret. *"Seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you."* So, we must know that it will be by our own efforts that the mysteries will be made clear to us. Those who have gone before us, the artists and the avatars, are the only guides on our way to the mountaintops of vision. Only the study of life leads to the love of life. We cannot love what only causes fear and consternation.

Life's mystery is never totally unveiled, but enough is given to us in promise and allurements to keep us striving on the infinite path of Truth.





by **Marc Cornwall**

Brethren of Purity

Above – Double-leaf frontispiece from the “Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity”. Baghdad, 1287. Süleymaniye Library.

Basra is Iraq’s second largest city. One wouldn’t call it a beautiful city, but it is a great port and industrial centre. Before the Iran-Iraq and two Gulf Wars, life here was good. After the first Gulf War, times were really hard for the people of Basra, as it was for people all over the country, but it gradually improved.

Now, in the aftermath of the second Gulf War and Iraq again in control of its own affairs, times are sadly returning to the bad old days of armed gangs and militias. But there is hope for the future. Perhaps not immediately, but in the next few years, Basra may rise again and become the great city it once was when *‘Sinbad the Sailor’* set off from there on his voyages of discovery at a time when Basra was one of the great intellectual centres of the world.

The Golden Age

During the Golden Age of Islamic civilisation, one of the most enthusiastic patrons of knowledge and enlightenment was the *Caliph al-Ma’mun*, who in 830 CE founded the famous *Bayt al-Hikma* in Baghdad. In this *‘House of Wisdom’*¹ the Caliph was daring enough to separate scientific studies from traditional Islamic





Abbasid Caliph Al-Ma'mun sends an envoy to the Roman emperor, Theophilus.



Scholars at 'The House of Wisdom'

theology. He not only collected rare and valuable manuscripts from all over the known world, and attracted many teachers skilled in the arts of *'ancient learning'*, but he himself regularly presided over their discussions. His dissertations, written down as treatises and aphorisms, reflect an open-mindedness and intellectual candour remarkably open and tolerant of the beliefs and opinions of others when compared to the appalling standards of today's Islamist resurgence.



Al-Ma'mun did much to build Baghdad into a major centre of learning in the Muslim world. Its prosperity and cultural influence attracted scholars from as far as *China, India, Persia, Syria, Egypt* and *Greece*. When these people, from such varied backgrounds mingled in the souks, the university or the Caliph's palace, trying to break through language barriers, they discovered exciting new facets of knowledge. Ideas sprang up in their minds like seedlings sprouting after a heavy rain. And from ideas came progress, especially in mathematics and astronomy. After the adoption of Indian ciphers, including numeral *zero*, the decimal system and the subsequent simplification of the principles and calculations of Archimedes, Euclid and Ptolemy, their advances in algebra, geometry, plane and spherical trigonometry, brought them wide acclaim.

The great Eurasian trade route network led to the intellectual advancement of cities in the Middle East such as Damascus, Antioch, Edessa, Harran and Jundishapur,² places where the influences of Greek culture had been felt since the time of Alexander the Great some 1,000 years earlier, and where now prosperous merchants and knowledge-hungry students bartered to possess precious manuscripts. In so doing they gathered those vital seeds of civilisation which they would not only nurture during Europe's long ages of darkness, but would cultivate and hand down to a knowledge-hungry Europe centuries in the future.

But even during this Golden Age there were fanatical fighters for the faith who sought to destroy all who, in their uncompromising views, were heretical. This was not just an Islamic phenomenon; witness the brutality visited on people of the Levant by Christian crusaders. We see such medieval cruelty in organisations like Daesh, al-Shabaab



*The populace pays Allegiance to the Abbasid caliph, Al-Ma'mun in 813. (from the book *Tarikh-i Alfi* 1593 (CE).*





There was a broad curricula of Arabic medical academies.
 Image: 13th Century Arabic translation of "De Materia Medica."



and Boko Haram, to mention but a few. However, and more importantly, Islam also had its corps of intellectuals who quietly and persistently besieged the citadels of truth:

... their banners, emblems of benevolence; their scimitar, the pen. The ink of the scholars is more precious than the blood of martyrs.

Were it not for their role in the recovery of ancient learning, its subsequent preservation and circulation throughout their empire and on to the eager scholars of Western Europe, our European Renaissance may never have happened and we would have lost our philosophical heritage. We owe this period in Islamic history a huge debt of gratitude for what was passed down to Western scholars.

In Baghdad, the exchange of information and ideas was electrifying. As scholars tried to give convincing arguments for their own beliefs, they discovered their own urgent need for knowledge. Questions followed questions, and the search for truth spread through all levels of society. Wealthy and influential families rivalled each other, and even vied with the Caliphs to hire wise and gifted men to

instruct their children and themselves. As time went on the Muslim world was consumed by the Greek spirit of inquiry. Every field of human knowledge was examined with probing curiosity. To know things as they are became the aim of life.

The translator's skill also contributed to the broad curricula of Arabic medical academies which included Indian preventive medicine and hygiene, and Greek and Egyptian chemistry, Hermetic metaphysics and psychology, and descriptions of the practice and theory of the foremost Greek, Persian, Indian and Assyrian physicians. This knowledge, combined with their accuracy in observation and diagnosis, produced outstanding medical men whose medical tracts and compendiums were studied by doctors and pharmacists well beyond into the 16th Century.

The greatest demand, however, was for the works of Plato and Aristotle, for in them, Islamic students found insights into ambiguous passages in the Koran. Unlike earlier Muslims who had regarded the Koran as that part of an infinite wisdom which was put into words and to be accepted without question, these later scholars found that by using the scientific approach of interpreting the unknown in terms of the known, of leading the mind gradually into the profound and abstract, they could explain even the most puzzling of revelations.

The tremendous advance of knowledge made between 800 and 900 CE captured everyone's imagination. A few searched even deeper, seeking to understand their destiny and higher responsibility to the cosmos. Insight of this kind had been held sacred and entrusted only to the worthy and disciplined within the sanctuary of such Mystery centres such as those of Eleusis and Samothrace. But when the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I ordered the Mystery schools and schools of philosophy closed, their neophytes and hierophants, alarmed by public animosity fled their homeland to continue their studies privately in the safer climates of Persia and later in the domains of the Caliph.

Intriguing and recurrent references to the existence and teachings of these mysterious brotherhoods leave little doubt that they were heirs to an ancient wisdom, and that their contribution to the enlightenment of humankind was significant. For example, there is an almost identical pattern in the teachings, conduct and dedication of the *Sufis*, *Druze*, *Sabaeans*, *Assassins* and the *Brethren of Purity*. Of these, the Sufis have since earned the respect





The beauty and nobility of Sufi mystical philosophy with its humility, devotion and lofty principles can be identified in the words and examples of such illumined men as Lāozī, Plotinus and Jakob Boehme. Image: the Mughal emperor Jahangir with a Sufi saint.



and admiration of all who find in the beauty and nobility of their mystical philosophy the same humility, devotion and lofty principles that characterise the words and examples of such illumined men as *Lāozī*, *Plotinus* and *Jakob Boehme*.

These were the qualities the earliest Sufis had adapted in part from the Greek, Buddhist and Egyptian Mystery teachings. Although Sufi philosophy contains doctrines of a cosmological world system, its ultimate goal is to attain union of the soul with God, by living a pure and devoted life.

From Harran

It is worthwhile looking at the part played by the Sabaeans in the transmission of Greek culture to the Western world. Before the rise of Islam there was located in the ancient northern Mesopotamian city of *Harran*, near the modern village of *Altınbaşak* in Turkey (24 miles or 44 kilometres southeast of *Şanlıurfa*), a Syrian fraternity that for hundreds of years had refused to submit to Christian authority. Despite persistent persecution their members maintained a religious philosophy that embodied Hermetic, Mithraic and Neoplatonic



Typical Harran house, Harran, Turkey.

teachings. However, in the year 830, their very existence was threatened when the Caliph, with a formidable army, stopped at Harran for provisions during a campaign against the Roman Empire.

Accustomed to being met with some show of fear, *Caliph al-Ma'mun* was puzzled when he received a hospitable welcome. Questioning who these fearless and obviously scholarly people were, he is said to have asked if they were Muslims, Christians or Zoroastrians and if they had a holy book or a prophet recognised by the Koran. The answer they gave was no. However, the Caliph was so impressed with the scholars of Harran that he invited them to Baghdad.

When the Harranians arrived in Baghdad the question of their religion again arose and they were saved only by heeding the advice of a clever jurist: "*Call yourselves Sabaeans (as-Saba'iyūn!) The Koran mentions that ancient Roman cult, although it is now extinct.*" So it was that the scholarly infidels from Harran received official recognition in the Muslim capital. Before long, their knowledge of Greek science and culture so impressed the local intelligentsia that not only were they welcomed into the House of Wisdom, and invited to lecture and publish their writings, but were even encouraged to establish their own school of pagan Neoplatonism! The result was an academy, similar to the Greek mystery schools Justinian had closed 350 years earlier, and it contributed generously to Arabic erudition during the following centuries.





Pages from *Kalila wa-Dimna*, (*Kalila and Dimna*), a book of fables much loved by the 'Brethren and thought to have derived from the Indian classic the Panchatantra.

'*Kalila Visits the Imprisoned Dimna*' (far left)

'*Kalila Upbraiding Dimna*' (left).

Brethren of Purity

As the second city of Iraq, *Basra* lies in the extreme south of the country. It is Iraq's largest seaport and played an important role in early Islamic history. During the time of the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258), Basra became a great intellectual centre.

The *Brethren of Purity* (*Ikhwan as-Safa*) were a secret society of Muslim philosophers who were the inheritors of the knowledge and accomplishments of the House of Wisdom, and flourished in Basra in the 10th Century CE. One of the possible meanings for their name is '*Brethren of Purity*', '*Loyal Friends*', '*People worthy of praise*' and '*Sons of Glory*.'

There is also a suggestion that the name is taken from a story in a book much beloved by the Brethren called *Kalila wa-Dimna*, (*Kalila and Dimna*) a book of fables thought to have derived from the Indian classic the *Panchatantra*. We may be more familiar with this literary genre in the fables of the French fabulist Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695). In the book, a group of animals, by acting as faithful friends, escapes the snares of a hunter. The story concerns a dove and its companions who get entangled in the net of a hunter. Together, they trust themselves and the ensnaring net to a nearby rat who was

kind enough to gnaw the birds free from it. Impressed by the rat's altruistic deed, a crow becomes the rat's friend. Soon a tortoise and gazelle also join the company of animals. After some time, the gazelle is trapped by another net; with the aid of the others and the good rat, the gazelle is soon freed, but the tortoise fails to leave swiftly enough and is himself captured by the hunter. In the final turn of events, the gazelle repays the tortoise by serving as a decoy and distracting the hunter while the rat and the others free the tortoise. After this, the animals are designated as the '*Ikhwan as-Safa*', the faithful friends.

It would be wrong to consider these fables as nothing more than a collection of children's stories. They are allegories and illustrate all-too-human attitudes and situations that had long since become an accepted means of conveying a real educative message. This story described above is mentioned as an example when the Brethren spoke of mutual aid in one of their Epistles, where they illustrated an important part of their system of ethics that can be summarised as:

In this Brotherhood, self is forgotten; all act by the help of each, all rely upon each for help and advice, and if a Brother sees it will be good for another that he should sacrifice his life for him, he willingly gives it.



Who Were They?

The structure of this mysterious organisation and the identities of its members have never been clear. To them, *falsafa* (philosophy) meant philosophy in the Greek tradition. The esoteric teachings and philosophy of the learned adepts of this fraternity were produced in the form of Epistles in an encyclopaedia called the '*Rasa'il Ikhwan as-Safa or Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*', a giant compendium of 52 treatises that would greatly influence later encyclopaedias. A good deal of Muslim and Western scholarship has been spent on trying to pin down the identities of the Brethren and the century in which they were active, but to little avail. According to Rasa'il 21:

Know, that among us there are kings, princes, caliphs, sultans, chiefs, ministers, administrators, tax agents, treasurers, officers, chamberlains, notables, nobles, servants of kings and their military supporters. Among us too there are merchants, artisans, agriculturists and stock breeders. There are builders, landowners, the worthy and wealthy, gentlefolk and possessors of many virtues. We also have persons of culture, of science, of piety and of virtue. We have orators, poets, eloquent persons, theologians, grammarians, tellers of tales and narrators of traditions, readers, scholars, jurists, judges, magistrates and ecstasies. Among us too there are philosophers, sages, astronomers, naturalists, physicians, diviners, soothsayers, casters of spells and enchantments, interpreters of dreams, alchemists, astrologers, and many other sorts, too many to mention.

... and extraordinarily we find this echoed centuries later in the 1614 *Fama Fraternitatis*, the first of the Rosicrucian Manifestos.

Both Persian and Indian philosophical traditions contributed greatly to their thought. The Brethren worked in Iraq, a region where Persian was at the time widely spoken and Persian culture was all-pervasive. They cite Persian poetry without even translating it, as if it was unnecessary, and the Persian language is not at all related to Arabic. They used Persian technical terms in disciplines such as astrology, zoology and mineralogy. They had a fair knowledge of the basics of *Manichaeism* and *Zoroastrianism*. The *Indian* contribution is also significant, though not perhaps as pervasive as the

Persian. A good example of their open-mindedness is the following text:

The brethren's ideal man is; a Persian in lineage, an Arab in his religion, a true believer in his doctrine, an Iraqi in his culture, a Hebrew in his experience, a Christian in his way of proceeding, a Syrian in his piety, a Greek in his science, an Indian in his discernment, a Sufi in his way of life, angelic in his morals, heavenly in his opinion, divine in his knowledge.³

The Rasa'il

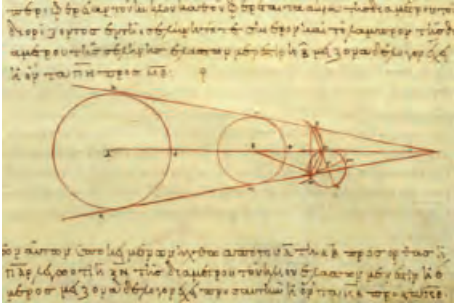
The Epistles were written in an eloquent classical Arabic and are comprised of 52 treatises on such varying subjects as mathematics, music, logic, astronomy, as well as the physical and natural sciences. They also explored the nature of the soul as well as ethics, revelation and spirituality. The corpus also included subjects like cosmology, ethics, aesthetics, revelation and metaphysics.⁴

The first part of the *Rasa'il*, which is on mathematics, groups 14 Epistles that include treatises in arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, geography and music, along with tracts in elementary logic. The second part, which is on natural sciences, gathers 17 Epistles on matter and form, generation and corruption, metallurgy, meteorology, a study of the essence of nature, the classes of plants and



Manuscript of the Brethren's Kitab Ikhwan al-Safa – The "Epistles of the Brethren of Purity." Copy created in late Safavid Iran, dated c. 17th Century.





10th Century CE Greek copy of *Aristarchus of Samos's* 2nd Century BCE calculations of the relative sizes of the Sun, Moon and the Earth.



animals, including a fable. The third part, which is on psychology, comprises 10 Epistles on the psychic and intellectual sciences, dealing with the nature of the intellect and the intelligible, the symbolism of temporal cycles, the mystical essence of love, resurrection, causes and effects, definitions and descriptions. The fourth part deals with theology in 11 Epistles, investigating the varieties of religious sects, the virtue of the companionship of the Brethren of Purity, the properties of genuine belief, the nature of the Divine Law, the species of politics and the essence of magic.

For example, in the Epistles on astronomy we find explanations of the Hermetic and Platonic teachings of worlds within worlds, visible and invisible, and how the sun is the centre of a moving family of planets, following the heliocentric model of the Greek philosopher and mathematician, *Aristarchus of Samos* (c. 310-230 BCE), some thirteen centuries earlier.

In so far as the sun is to the heavens what the king is to his kingdom and the planets are to it what soldiers, auxiliaries and subjects generally are to the king, and the spheres are like regions and the constellations like countries and the degrees and minutes like towns, it was enjoined by divine wisdom that it should be located at the centre of the universe. (*Rasa'il*, 2.)

Another section describes the creation of worlds and the evolution of life in details that would have impressed Darwin. It explains how manifestation unfolds through successive layers or stratified planes down to the mineral kingdom. In this lowest kingdom, the most developed

mineral entities live within its highest strata and blend imperceptibly into the next higher or vegetable kingdom. Similarly, the vegetable kingdom contacts, at its highest level, the animal kingdom, whose culmination is man. The most evolved men contact higher spheres and, standing between the angelic and animal orders, serve on earth as vicegerents of God.

Again and again the pages of these Epistles echo Stoic and Hermetic thought: that man is the microcosm, the epitome of the infinite universe; that correspondences parallel his physical faculties and organs with those of the celestial spheres; that analogies show one pattern throughout in earth's configuration, its meteorological phenomena and in our physical bodies. So, in the growth of a child from embryo to maturity, they saw, mirrored the soul's spiritual development, its birth being a realisation and true beginning of its higher vocation, its childhood being its achievement of self-mastery.

With maturity comes the understanding of objective and subjective world manifestations...

With maturity comes the understanding of objective and subjective world manifestations and finally, knowledge of God. However, such maturity, the Brethren taught, comes only through study and mastery of the mathematical sciences, including astronomy, music, geography, logic and the arts and crafts. For through these we gain familiarity with the laws which govern both the world without and the moral-intellectual environment of worlds within. It is this understanding, when translated and applied to the problems of daily life, that assures our progress from circumscribed provincialism into comprehension of one's true, universal Self, for "*He who knows himself best knows his Creator best.*" (*Rasa'il*, 1.)

The exact identity of the authors of these Epistles is still under debate. Some of the Epistles hint at Sufi thought, some at Sunni or Mu'tazilite thought, but most scholars believe that they belonged to a Shi'ite legacy. However, the general view is that these people were freethinkers who belonged to none of the established Muslim creeds. In their works they were quite happy to quote from the Torah and Bible as well as the Koran. They found truth in every religion



and saw knowledge as nourishment for the soul. As they state in Rasa'il 4:

...to shun no science, scorn any book, or to cling fanatically to no single creed. For our own creed encompasses all the others and comprehends all the sciences generally. This creed is the consideration of all existing things, both sensible and intelligible, from beginning to end, whether hidden or overt, manifest or obscure in so far as they all derive from a single principle, a single cause, a single world, and a single Soul.

They were also influenced by ancient Persian and Indian classics, and inspired by ancient Greek philosophers such as *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Plotinus*, *Euclid*, *Ptolemy*, *Porphyry* and *Iamblichus*. It is said that they were also influenced by Sabaeen beliefs. They saw an orderly structure to the visible universe while adopting the Neoplatonist explanation of creation through emanation in an attempt to reconcile philosophy with religion. Seeking to show the compatibility of the Islamic faith with other religious and intellectual traditions, they drew on a wide variety of sources *Babylonian*, *Judaean-Christian*, *Persian* and *Indian* elements together with *Hellenistic* wisdom. They use fables, parables and allegories to expound their views, as in the *Kalila wa-Dimna* mentioned above.

The *Corpus Hermeticum* inspired them in a substantial way. Epistle 52 seems to be a product of Harranian Hermeticism with its notion of millennial cycles connected with the successive appearance of prophets on earth. A large part of the last epistle is devoted to a description of the Sabaeen initiation ritual. Their work was an important intellectual catalyst in the development of ideas and science in the Islamic world, and their original and sophisticated reflections on matters related to spirituality and revelation were erudite and popular adaptations of early scientific knowledge.



Rabi'a ad-Adawiyya.



Marsilio Ficino's introduction to his Latin translation of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Veiled With the Veil of Sincerity

Rabi'a ad-Adawiyya or *Rabi'a of Basra*, the first female Sufi mystic whose writings have survived to the modern era, wrote:

I am going to burn paradise and douse hell-fire, so that both veils may be lifted from those on the quest and they will become sincere of purpose.

Their secret meetings were called the '*majalis al-ilm*' or sessions of science or knowledge, and the Epistles themselves are remarkably similar to modern Rosicrucian teachings.

The Brethren regularly met on a fixed schedule. The meetings (*Majlis*) apparently took place on three evenings of each month: once near the beginning, in which speeches were given, another towards the middle, apparently



concerning astronomy and astrology, and the third around the end of the month when they recited hymns with philosophical content. During their meetings and possibly also during the three feasts they held on the dates of the sun's entry into the zodiacal signs of *Aries*, *Cancer* and *Libra* (the northern hemispheric *Spring equinox*, *Summer solstice* and *Autumn equinox*) besides the usual lectures and discussions, they would engage in some manner of liturgy reminiscent of the Harranians.

Hierarchy was a major theme in their treatises, and the Brethren loosely divided themselves up into four ranks determined by age. The age guidelines were not however entirely tied to age. So, an example of the fourth rank is Jesus, although he would have been too young if the age guidelines were absolute and fixed. Compare the similar division of the *Rasa'il* encyclopaedia into four sections and the Jabirite symbolism of 4. The ranks were:

1. **Craftsmen:** a craftsman had to be at least 15 years of age; their honorific title was the *'pious and compassionate'* (*al-abrār wa 'l-ruhamā*).
2. **Political Leaders:** a political leader had to be at least 30 years of age; their honorific was the *'good and excellent'* (*al-akhyār wa 'l-fudalā*).
3. **Kings:** a king had to be at least 40 years of age; their honorific was the *'excellent and noble'* (*al-fudalā' al-kirām*).
4. **Prophets and Philosophers:** the most aspired-to, the final and highest rank of the Brethren; to become a Prophet or Philosopher a man had to be at least 50 years old; their honorific compared them to historical luminaries such as Jesus, Socrates or Muhammad who were also classified as Kings. This rank was the *'angelic rank'* (*al-martabat al-malakiyya*).

The Ismaili Influence

The Brethren concealed their identity so skilfully that modern scholars have struggled in their attempts to track down specific members of the group. Using a vivid metaphor, the members referred to themselves as *"sleepers in the cave of our father Adam"* (*Rasa'il*, 4). In one place, they gave as their reason for hiding their secrets from the people, *"...not fear of earthly rulers, nor trouble from the common populace, but a desire to protect their God-given gifts..."* (*Rasa'il*, 4). Yet they were well aware that their esoteric teachings might provoke unrest, and the calamities suffered

The Brethren concealed their identity so skilfully that modern scholars have struggled in their attempts to track down specific members of the group.

by the successors of the Prophet Mohammed were a good reason to remain hidden until the right day came for them *"...to emerge from their cave and wake from their long sleep..."* (*Rasa'il*, 4). To live safely, it was therefore necessary for their doctrines to be cloaked.

We can understand this in view of the prevailing conditions at the time of the first Rosicrucians and the religious upheavals in Europe. Professor Ian Netton, writes in *Muslim Neoplatonists* (1980):

The Ikhwan's [Brethrens'] concepts of exegesis of both Quran and Islamic tradition were tinged with the esotericism of the Ismailis.

Strangely enough, in dealing with the doctrines of the Sabaeans of Harran, the Epistles do not mention the Ismailis. Yet it was the Ismailis, perhaps more than any other, who had the most profound effect on the structure and vocabulary of the Epistles. Scholars have attempted to show that the Brethren were definitely Ismailis.

The tracts are clearly of Ismaili origin; and all authorities, ancient and modern, are agreed that the *Rasa'il* constitute the most authoritative exposition of the early form of the Ismaili religion.⁵

According to Yves Marquet in *La philosophie des Ikhwan al-Safa'* (1975)...

It seems clear that the Epistles represent the state of Ismaili doctrine at the time of their compositions.

Among the Syrian Ismailis, the earliest reference of the Epistles and its relation with the Ismailis is given in *Kitab Fusul wa'l Akhbar* by Nurudin bin Ahmad (d. 849).

These da'is, and other da'is with them, collaborated in composing long Epistles, fifty-two in number, on various branches of learning.





This mysterious medieval fraternity contributed to the rise of Europe's cultural renaissance through such figures as (shown from left to right) – Al-Farabi, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas of Naples, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and many others.



This implies that the Epistles were the product of the joint efforts of the Ismaili *da'is* or missionaries.

Resting in the Garden of Splendour

During the Golden Age of Islam, and the Abbasid dynasty, Basra became an intellectual centre, surpassed only by Baghdad. Here, the Brethren of Purity offered passers-by an initiation into their Garden of Splendour.

Come, enter and enjoy rare and lovely flowers, rest beneath stately trees, taste the sweetest of fruit and drink refreshing, spring-fed water.

If any held back, sceptical or afraid, the *'wise and generous owner'* gave samples of the garden's bounty to whet their appetite and entice them to step within and partake of the rich and satisfying beneficence awaiting those who live a spiritual life.

...the many forms of religion are but various approaches to, or degrees of, spiritual enlightenment.

The samples offered were not fruits or flowers of course, but choice essays from the Brethren's Epistles, the scholarly compendium of scientific, philosophical and metaphysical information garnered from harvests of past and contemporary cultures. Issuing this work in the last quarter of the 10th Century, when other theological sects were

proclaiming their unquestionable monopoly of truth, was in itself miraculous. With it the Brethren of Purity bridged the isolation of human differences and demonstrated that truth cannot be fragmented by accidents of race, epoch or habitat, and that the many forms of religion are but various approaches to, or degrees of, spiritual enlightenment.

Discarding the ritual and dogma, their members dedicated themselves to shun no science, scorn no book, or to cling fanatically to any single creed..., for their own creed encompassed all the others and comprehended all the sciences generally. To this end they laboured...

...with painstaking care, to make complicated scientific teachings understandable, and to preserve, safeguarding without divulging, the original sanctity of occult and mystical knowledge that their own initiated members and those of other esoteric fraternities had attained through visual perception of the truth while ascending into the Kingdom of Heaven and receiving the instruction of angels.

In their 52 Epistles we therefore find delineated or hinted at the same broad range of subjects that were studied by the Sufis, Sabaeans, Druze, Assassins and other fraternal orders of that period..., the same subjects in fact, that had been pondered upon and debated in public discussions among the groves and temple courts of Athens and Alexandria. But times had changed since those former golden days of ancient Greece. It was only by meeting in secret that the Brethren had been able to



complete their monumental work. In doing this, they had set themselves a task destined to have wide significance, namely, transplanting and cultivating the vital seeds of civilisation, and then adding their own unique characteristics. In this manner, they sent their seeds out into the far reaches of the Islamic empire where later generations carried them on into the future, often oblivious of their true origins.

Behind the outer form, the student was advised to find larger concepts that unify and uplift their vision to behold luminous beings of loftier spheres, and Truth. This dedication, this lofty idealism, sustained and inspired initiated members of this mysterious medieval fraternity as well as those scholars whose writings led to the rise of Europe's cultural renaissance. *Al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina* (Avicenna), *al-Ghazali*, Maimonides, *Ibn Rushd* (Averroes), *al-Andalusi*, *Meister Eckhart*, *Raimondo* (Archbishop of Toledo), *Albertus Magnus* of Padua (Dominican friar), *Thomas Aquinas* of Naples, *John of Salisbury* and many others, each in his way perpetuated those very ideas that Islamic intellectuals adopted from the Greeks,

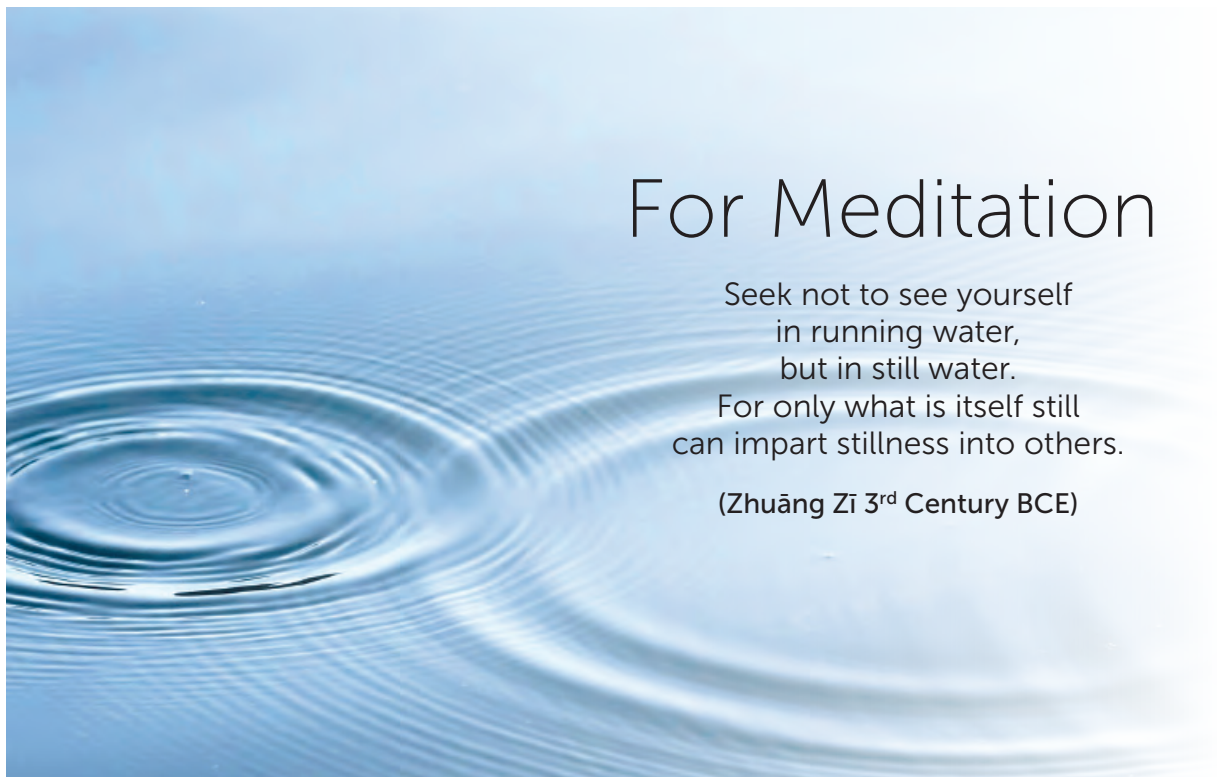
preserved and enriched. And so..., now we too may step across the ashes and splintered marble of the past into that Garden whose bounty is everlasting.

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For Meditation

Seek not to see yourself
in running water,
but in still water.
For only what is itself still
can impart stillness into others.

(Zhuāng Zī 3rd Century BCE)





Law 1: None of them should profess any other thing, than to cure the sick and that gratis.

Law 2: None of the posterity should be constrained to wear one certain kind of habit but therein to follow the custom of the country.

Law 3: Every year upon the day C. they should meet together at the house Sancti Spiritus, or write the cause of his absence.

Law 4: Every Brother should look about for a worthy person who, after his decease, might succeed him.

Law 5: The word R.C. should be their seal, mark and character.

Law 6: The Fraternity should remain secret one hundred years.

Six Traditional Laws of the Brethren of the Rosy Cross

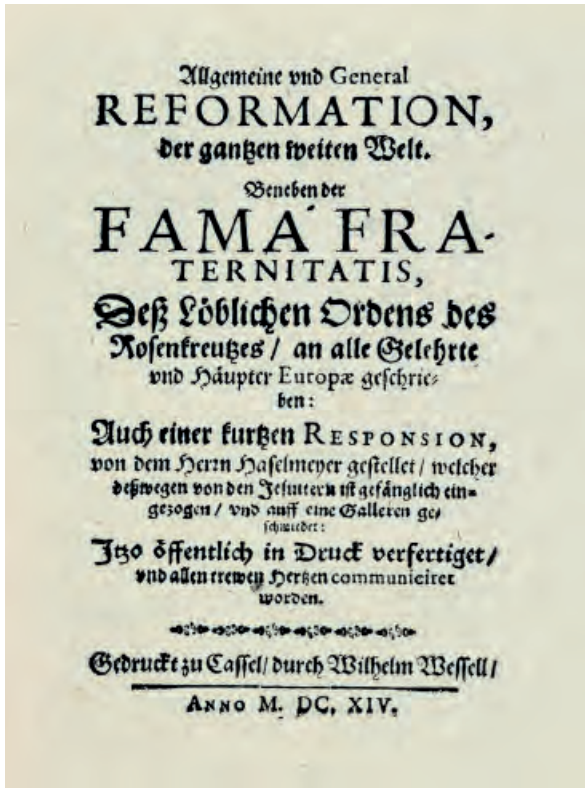
by Amelia

These are the six traditional laws of the Rosicrucians. By these six articles, the Rosicrucian brethren bound themselves, one to another, to keep their agreement, their mystical contract.

The six laws appeared in print for the first time in 1614 within the text of a book that bore the title: *The Fama Fraternitatis of the Meritorious Order of the Rosy Cross* and these laws were addressed to the learned in general and the Governors of Europe. The Latin words *Fama Fraternitatis* are translated, simply and directly, as the *fame* (or reputation) of the *fraternity* (or brotherhood). In a broader and better sense, the word *fama* means 'legend',

and refers to the *mystical story* that surrounds and protects the truth within. *Fraternitatis* can also mean an *association* or an *assembly*, just as the term *ecclesia* (assembly), used by the Greeks, and subsequently by the Romans, came to mean a *church*. The best definition of the title *Fama Fraternitatis* is probably, the *'Legend of the Fraternity.'* This book, first published in Latin and then German in 1614 in Kassel (in modern-day Germany), fulfilled that title in that it recited the mythical origin of the *'Brethren of the Rosy Cross.'* It told about the life and works of the founder, one *Christian Rosenkreutz*, known by the initials 'RC', as well as the creation of the Order and of the six laws that were their articles of association.





First page of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, 1614.

First Law

None of them should profess any other thing, than to cure the sick and that gratis.

This first first law is the most important, for it states the primary purpose of the brethren of the Rose Cross. To take this first law literally would be to imply that the brethren were an early 17th Century medical association. This clearly was not the case, although then, as now, the healing of diseases and the comforting of the sick is among the highest of human professions.

We are given the insights necessary to interpret this first law by examining another book that was published as a companion text to the *Fama*. This book, entitled the *'Universal Reformation'*, was a fairly literal translation excerpted from a larger work previously published by an Italian humanist, *Traiano Boccalini*. Many historians of the Rosicrucian movement have considered the Universal Reformation to be unrelated to the movement, as it was essentially an amusing satire of an attempt by Apollo to

improve the conditions of the age through the assistance of the wise men of both ancient and contemporary times. In this satire, the condition of humanity is symbolised as being a disease-ridden old man. In an attempt to heal this sick man, this corrupt humanity, Apollo calls together seven wise men to a meeting on Mount Parnassus and there they debate the cause of mankind's infirmities and possible cures.

Though most historians consider the Universal Reformation to be coincidental with the *Fama*, though not really germane to a study of the Order, many consider it to be absolutely essential to an understanding of what the Order intended to accomplish. By the beginning of the 17th Century, the *'learned of Europe'*, to whom the *Fama* was addressed, were waiting for a great, general reformation, far more radical than that accomplished by Martin Luther and the majority of Protestant Europe. This was to be a reformation that not only continued the moral improvement of humanity, as advocated by the Protestant reformers, but was to extend past the religious element into the realms of art, science, literature and education. The excesses that Luther had found in the Universal Church and had attacked so vehemently were paralleled in all other avenues of human endeavour. Science, in particular, was hampered by an oppressive interpretation of the nearly 2,000 year old teachings of *Aristotle*, while astronomy had been held back for almost 1,500 years by the earth-centric teachings of *Claudius Ptolemy*. The Copernican theory of a sun-centred universe was under attack by both Catholic and Protestant forces that used certain Biblical passages in an attempt to maintain an earth-centred view of the universe.

Being, as it was, in the vanguard of this anticipated reformation, the *Fraternity of the Rose Cross*, known later as the *Rosicrucian Order*, gained considerable publicity and prominence. It became the lens that focused the hopes and dreams of an oppressed society into a movement that nurtured the legitimate aspirations and yearnings for intellectual freedom of much of Europe.



Aristotle



Claudius Ptolemy





The Copernican theory of a sun-centred universe was under attack by both Catholic and Protestant forces that used various 'Biblical passages in an attempt to maintain an earth-centred view of the universe. Image: Heliocentric model from Nicolaus Copernicus' 'De revolutionibus orbium coelestium.'

Since the vast majority of people lived in such distressing conditions that their lot was sometimes represented by the symbol of a diseased old man, it was incumbent on everyone to become a *'doctor of the heart'* and a *'physician of the soul.'* The universal panacea for such a diseased condition in which humankind existed, was the ancient and, unfortunately, little-used Christian concept of *caritas*, that special charity and concern which allows for freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of the individual mind to soar to the limits of its particular abilities.

So..., does it not behove all of us to honour this first and most important of the laws of the Fraternity to heal whatever form of *'sickness'* we encounter, whether it resides in a loved one or a friend, or permeates society as a whole. We are obliged to do so gratis, free of charge, and we should seek no personal advantage for being of assistance to those around us in society. More than that, the Latin word *gratis* is closely related to another Latin word *gratia*, meaning *'grace.'* In the Christian tradition, grace is a gift from God given freely to those who are worthy of receiving it. If we open ourselves to it, the *'Divine spirit'* will operate through us. This energy, which we might style as the *'God of our Heart'*, the *'God of our deepest Understanding'*, uses our human condition as a lens by which the Cosmic Mind can focus on correcting the infirmities of humanity.

Each of us can make an impact on the world and the material expression of our own inner divinity, commonly

referred to in Rosicrucian circles as the *'Master Within'* will guide us along that path. We should all act as physicians and begin our mission of assisting others by reaching out to those nearest and dearest to us. But first we must act as is suggested in the Universal Reformation, namely to cleanse our own soul *"from all fallacies, hidden vice, hatred and counterfeit love."* Physician, heal thyself..., and then heal others.

Because of its primacy and relevance to the 21st Century, we have dwelt considerably more on the first law than the five that follow. Let us now briefly look at the rest.

Second Law

None of the posterity should be constrained to wear one certain kind of habit but therein to follow the custom of the country.

On the simplest level, we conduct ourselves, as do all members of whatever society we live in, to do the work as outlined in the First Law within the context of our particular and individual society. Our works manifest within the cultural context of the society in which we live. We do not walk about in saffron robes, nor do we shave our heads, nor do we profess to eat only ritualistically cleansed food. We are ordinary people on the outside, drive ordinary cars and hold down ordinary jobs. But on the inside, we are very different from the average man or woman, for we have a different direction in life, a transcendent purpose and goal.

Third Law

That every year upon the day C, they should meet together at the house Sancti Spiritus, or write the cause of his absence.

This term, *'the day C'* has been variously interpreted as the day of *Corpus Christi*. It has also been interpreted as Christmas Day. Neither is correct however, for the day C goes back to pre-Christian Rome, where the calendar was divided into two sets of dates called *fas* and *nefas*. *Fas* refers to what is permitted, *nefas* to what is not permitted. On a *nefas* day certain business activities were not permitted and these *'holy days'* were indicated by the use of the letter C.

More directly, the Latin letter C conceals the Greek letter for C, which looks very much like our English letter C.



X. This X, composed of two crossed lines, represents a celestial crossing point. It symbolises the crossing in space of the Sun's apparent pathway in the sky called the ecliptic and that of the celestial equator, the imaginary extension into space of our world's own equator.

The Sun moving northward on the ecliptic crosses the celestial equator on the first day of the northern hemispheric spring, namely, the spring or vernal equinox. This is the day C, the day on which Rosicrucians celebrate the New Year. Rosicrucians do so at the house called *Sancti Spiritus*, the house of the Holy Spirit. The Latin words Sancti Spiritus ([of the] Holy Spirit) are qualified by their endings, which place them grammatically in what is called the genitive case, indicating ownership or possession. Just as Rosicrucians say their Supreme Temple is owned or possessed by the Rosicrucian Order, so the endings indicate that the Holy Spirit is possessed by something or someone. God alone possesses the Holy Spirit and its residence, and this house is the Earth upon which we dwell.

Fourth Law

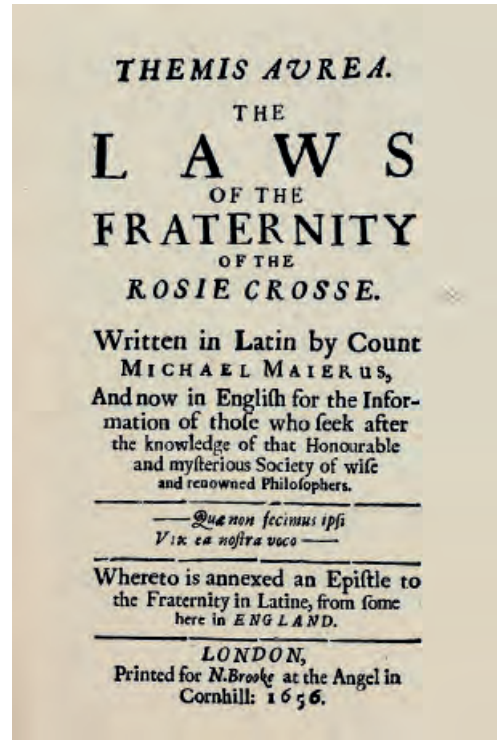
Every Brother should look about for a worthy person who, after his decease, might succeed him.

On its basic level and in its time, this law referred to the transmission of ideas and the work by a one-to-one arrangement of Master and student. In its broader, modern-day connotation, one could say that the dissemination of the Order's ideals by whatever means, would satisfy this law. Were it to have remained a one-to-one relationship through the centuries, the Order could not possibly have become the international organisation it is today.

Fifth Law

The word R.C. should be their seal, mark and character.

The letters *R.C.*, not the word '*Rosicrucian*', seals Rosicrucians' work, marks their efforts and characterises their aspirations. A leading Rosicrucian at the time of the Fama, *Michael Maier*, wrote a commentary, *Themis Aurea* (1618), on these laws and stated that the letters R.C. refer to both *Julius Caesar* and to *Pegasus*, the flying horse. In the year 45 BCE, Julius Caesar, revised the calendar of Rome and gave us what is known as the Julian Calendar which, with modifications, notably the Gregorian



Title page of the 1556 edition of Themis Aurea by Michael Maier.

changes, is still in use today. The reference to Pegasus is one of those trivial items of history that gives us insight into the thinking of people of that time.

Behind the ecliptic, namely, the Sun's apparent path across the sky during the year, are placed twelve constellations collectively called the Zodiac. One of these constellations, *Pisces* (two fish), has the vernal or spring equinox in our epoch of time. Between the two fish and slightly above them, is the constellation of Pegasus. In the Greek myth concerning Pegasus, it is said that the winged horse flew down near the Earth and one of its hooves struck the ground on a mountaintop and from this, a spring erupted to water the land. The mountain that Pegasus struck was called *Mount Parnassus*, the very place where Apollo held his meeting of the wise men as recounted in the Universal Reformation.

In the sky, if one were to consult a chart of the heavens, one would find that one of Pegasus' front hooves stands just above the point where the vernal equinox occurred in 1614, the date of the publication of the Fama. The spring of water that erupted stands for the springtime rains. Michael Maier alludes to this point in time as heralding the reappearance



of the Brethren of the Rose Cross.

Maier has therefore given us the Macrocosmic co-ordinates. Yet, according to the axiom *'as above, so below'*, we must still seek a further explanation on the Microcosmic level. Remember that by the early 17th Century, Europe had developed for centuries within the confines of a very strict and authoritarian Christian tradition. The Church had been dominant for well over a thousand years and the new phenomenon which we today call Protestantism, was still to fully mature into a well-defined movement. The Rosicrucian movement occurred at the time of this Protestant phenomenon but was not truly a part of it. To use a modern label, we might style the movement more as a Gnostic type of Christianity than Protestantism or Catholicism.

We read the letters R.C. from left to right as is common in the Latin tradition. However, if we reverse the letters and read from right to left, and use the Greek letters for R.C., we have *Chi* for the letter C and *Rho* for R. The Greek letters, when taken together, form the traditional Greek monogram for Christ. In a veiled form, the writers of the Fama were expressing their inherent Christian background. Their Christian faith was however, not what we would style today as either Catholic or Protestant but nearer to an early Gnostic type such as that expressed by *Origen* or *Eusebius*, both of whom recognised the Christian phenomenon as being of an antiquity that predated the appearance of Jesus; and both of whom had their writings condemned as heretical a few centuries after their time.



Mount Parnassus with Apollo, the Muses, and Pegasus

This Gnostic type of Christianity placed Christ not on a cross as a separate being but squarely within each individual. Today, Rosicrucians use a broader term that transcends any dogma by referring to the *'God of four Hearts'* or the *'Master Within.'* Labels, whilst interesting, are not as important as the truth they represent. To a greater or lesser degree, each of us has an element of the divine resident within us at all times, no matter what our belief system is.

Sixth Law

The Fraternity should remain secret one hundred years.

While this sounds pretty straightforward, actually it is not. The Order should remain not secret but *secreted*, held like a treasury in our hearts, protected as something of great value, not for a 100 years but forever. The reference to 100 is a play on words, for the German word *Großhundert* or *'Great Hundred'* actually meant 120. This was the period of time that Frater Christian Rosenkreutz remained hidden in the Rosicrucian Vault until the year 1604 when the vault was opened.

These then are the laws of the brethren of the Rosy Cross, then as now.





by **Jenny Butler**

What do you See

What do you see when you look at a flower? I see a living thing, I see form, colour and beauty. I see the essence of the Cosmic manifest on Earth and the light of Cosmic love that radiates from its heart.

A pretty thing, simple, yet profoundly moving in its gentle, unassuming light of being. Taking only what it needs for life and perfect manifestation, depriving none and wasting nothing. It creates beauty but does not lay waste its surroundings in so doing. It has a part to play in the Universal Plan and fulfils its mission in accordance with Cosmic Law. In perfect manifestation it seems to say

I came, I am and I will go, but others will follow after me and it is for their sake that I am now what I am. For a purpose I was called forth from the Cosmic, here to fulfil my mission, and to the Cosmic I will return when my work here is done - until the next time.





by John Agbor

DREAMS

of an Ideal Society

The dream of an ideal society is an enduring goal of many who have devoted their lives and interests to the mystical life and all it stands for, because it is the only hope for our civilisation. Through the ages, Rosicrucians have laboured for the upliftment and inspiration of humanity and have given unrelentingly of their skills to advance society in its upward progress.

Most people dream of an ideal society in which people from all lands, cultures and interests can work together in peace and harmony for the benefit of all; for only in peace and harmony can the ideals of a great society be fulfilled. It is through the expression of the divinity within us that we come to develop those powers and abilities which bring to us a breadth of vision and service which is so needed today.

Our deepest concept of the Sacred and of holiness begins to shine and reveal itself as we seek to use the talents and abilities that we have developed. It is expressed in good thoughts and kind or helpful advice. A word of praise and encouragement whenever possible will shed *Light*. Good thoughts and good deeds send rays of illumination to others and are far more important and helpful than we realise. The radiation of loving thoughts and a compassionate understanding towards others has a subtle but tremendous influence, wherever it is directed. Therefore, we should use these tools of our *Spiritual Self* for the advancement of others and ourselves.

Our visualised ideals, good thoughts and practical works are the means whereby we advance and mature spiritually daily.



They are the stepping-stones to our successful endeavours to become ever more *soul aware*. Study and actively putting into practice mystical principles we have learned so far, lay the foundation for our good works and prepare us for the service and development we envisage.

We must never underestimate the good we can do. Our thoughts are far more penetrating and far-reaching than we think. Once we begin radiating a loving appreciation to others, a fusion of our *intellectual light* with the *Light our personal soul* will begin to take place. Our concentrated thoughts are highly effective, far more so than we know. When we visualise our desired ideals and the service we want to render through them, success will be ours.

There is deep within us, a source of immense wisdom and inspiration called by many names such as the *Divine Light*, the *Divine Consciousness*, *Soul Personality* or simply, the *Master Within*. It resides in every human being and merely awaits recognition and use by the outer mind of everyday awareness. Its Light will illuminate our mystical endeavours and trigger deeper insights into our daily affairs. Its practical value in our academic and vocational activities will prove to be a real blessing and encouragement in all we seek to accomplish.

There is deep within us, a source of immense wisdom and inspiration...

This is the mystical life, the living of a practical and useful life in the mundane world, inspired by the vision of an inner, sacred world. The mystical life ever seeks to manifest the greatest good for all; it seeks knowledge and understanding of a transcendental nature wherever it can; and it helps others when the need arises, with a mind and heart uplifted and illuminated by the light of the Divine Consciousness within.

There is a great need today for personal mystical revelation, and this can only come from those who are prepared to give their all to living in harmony with the *life of the soul* and whose training and education have prepared them for service. That service can be in science, medicine, industry or in many of the social aspects of life. Wherever we look we can find individuals who have committed themselves to some form of service to others or to a higher

goal beneficial to humanity and to the world at large. They feel the compulsion to help others by sharing and using the knowledge they have gained in ways that are constructive and helpful to all. Sometimes their methods are controversial, yet they still accomplish a great deal of good. Many new ideas are tried and old ones are dusted off and re-applied for the benefit of those who can benefit from them.

As you attune yourself with your *Inner Self* where the presence of the Divine patiently waits for your approach, you will receive inspiration and enlightenment on how you may best utilise your abilities for the good of others. Your willing hands are needed, and the good you can do will demonstrate the extent to which the *Divine Light* within you has migrated into your outer day-to-day living. This *Inner Holiness* constantly seeks to shed its light and rays of love upon you and all living creatures, great and small.

As Rosicrucians, both individually and collectively, we must make ourselves count in the spiritual life of the world.

As Rosicrucians, both individually and collectively, we must make ourselves count in the spiritual life of the world. Mystics of past centuries achieved much for the benefit of humanity in science, art and literature. They revealed a way of approaching life, a way of living that we would do well to emulate today. If we believe in a universal guiding force or principle..., call it *God* for want of a better word..., then we cannot help but believe that these luminaries were used by this universal guiding force for the betterment of humankind precisely because they had prepared themselves through years of hard inner discipline and training as well as diligent academic study and research.

Actively use the principles given in the Rosicrucian teachings. Use them each day in sending constructive, visualised thoughts to those in need, and in bringing about desperately needed changes for the better in world affairs. And as you offer yourself as a channel of service, so will the inner *God of your Understanding* provide many opportunities for you to render practical and useful service wherever the need arises. Then our dream for an *ideal society* will finally be realised, and men and women will work together for the common good.





Flights of Fancy

by **John Alger**

Recently at the beach, I was enjoying the sound of the surf crashing against the shore and the smell of the sea hanging heavy in the air around me. It was early afternoon, yet fog was still clinging tight to the shore, like a child hugging its mother's leg, reluctant to leave the comfort of the known for the uncertainty of independence.

As I sat and gazed in silence, simply observing what the world was up to without the benefit of my desires or directions, I started noticing birds gliding through the air. A small flock of seagulls hovered in the air above the beach, occasionally flapping wings when needed, but mostly allowing the air currents to keep them suspended, almost motionless, above the sand. I watched as one gull floated in the air above

me, wings spread wide, outer feathers spread apart, flexing as they fine tuned the bird's direction and altitude. The gull was a master of unseen thermals and updrafts.

After watching the gulls gliding through the air, I looked out over the water as three pelicans flew northbound, hugging the water at the shoreline. Watching, my awareness shifting from the sky above me to the waves offshore, I noticed the pelicans sailing single file, barely above the waves. They flew great distances using only the surface effect above the waves to keep them airborne. At times, they were so close to the waves that the faint, fog-muted shadows appeared to be physically part of the birds that cast them. The pelicans rose and fell with the waves, showing no effort to maintain forward progress. Seldom do we rely on available currents. We bend life to our



desire, all too aware that if we judge poorly or miscalculate, the natural rhythm of life will bring reality crashing into our awareness. Birds don't fight nature, they use it and benefit from it. The thermals and updrafts that are nature's gifts, unseen, but there for all who can sense them, allow birds a freedom from the bonds of Earth.

My awareness turning inwards, I began realising how often I am unaware of the resources and assistance available all around me. Because they are unseen by my physical eyes, they do not exist, so they are unavailable for my use. What would my life be like if I was aware of, and benefited from, the manifold gifts offered by the world around me? How much greater could this life be if I could use the unseen gifts

effortlessly and with grace, like the gulls hovering over the sand or the pelicans sailing the seas of air? How much useless effort am I expending by trying to force the world to do things my way, rather than being aware and gently bending my effort to move with the natural ebb and flow of life?

Once again I bowed my head, humbled by the wisdom that life had shared with me. Nature in its innocence was once again a gentle teacher. Smiling, I stood up, brushing sand from my clothing and headed back to my car. The world of work and commitments waited only a few feet from the sand, but it was a different world than it was an hour ago. A gentler, more giving world, it was a world that hadn't really changed, but had allowed me to change.

Shadows

by **Helen Williams**

We know that when light is obstructed that phenomenon known as shadow is created. Shadows affect our senses in different ways. In a dry and barren land, the shadow cast by a tree or building is welcome relief from the glare and heat of the sun but in a crowded city at night, they can sometimes send a chill along the spine because in shadows our fears lurk. A shadow can mean relaxation or alertness, depending on our mood or circumstances. Some shadows are restful and some are not.

If one is bent on hunting shadows, he might begin by looking at his own. First it is there, long and slender, straight ahead. It makes one feel tall. Then it hops to the left or right, galloping alongside, an elfin reflection. Stop short, and the shadow stops; step into a deeper shadow, and it disappears. Walk briskly in full daylight, and it will match one's stride.

But with one's eyes always on the shadow, the real person will never be known because the shadow is only light being blocked out. Isn't it better to look toward the light and let the shadow take care of itself?





The Influence of Service

by T Wilcox Putnam

The practical example of service to others in daily life is so simple that it is all too often overlooked. Out of great love for a person or country, many people become imbued with the desire to serve humanity and look for great wrongs to be righted, to lecture on weighty subjects, to write thought-provoking books, to create works of art, have lives saved by heroic acts, and to make personal sacrifices of money, position, health or even of life itself.

Quite often these are once-in-a-life-time opportunities for but a chosen few. The average person's zeal meets with disillusionment and a cooling of their determination as failure to find such opportunities or perhaps coming up against rebuffs and opposition in seeking to bring opportunities to a desired conclusion. This is especially so when one discovers too late that one has been merely meddling in situations one failed to fully comprehend.

It is a worthy ideal however to be ready and willing to serve others, and to be alert for such opportunities.



Also, actively to develop our capacities to resolve those situations presented to us as moral responsibilities. Such opportunities seldom occur with the routine regularity of a television drama where the hero has a problem and a ready-made solution drops into his lap each week at the same hour, all to be dealt with dramatically in an hour. Every individual, even the one chosen for his or her once-in-a-lifetime occasion, has daily opportunities for expressing love and service in practical situations. And this is available every day, even if it is just by holding loving thoughts for everyone and every thing!

Every individual...has daily opportunities for expressing love and service in practical situations.

It is simple, yet far-reaching in its cumulative effects. Essentially, nothing more is needed than to spend a few moments before arising to become attuned for the day, and then to maintain that sense of attunement. With it one is mentally receptive to the vibrations of other people and responsive to subtle situations arising within the environment. Maintaining a higher level of consciousness and response to every person, situation and condition, it is easier to view situations clearly without reacting strongly and emotionally to everything we perceive through our five senses.

Cause and effect, action and reaction, are more clearly seen. Situations in the process of becoming are visualised. And people and situations are looked upon with greater compassion and understanding. More receptive and aware, one may radiate that inner peace to all things and all people coming within range of us. It is thus easier to smile with a depth of sincere understanding, to extend courtesy, to lend a helping hand unobtrusively.

An Analogy

We might compare it to capillary action. There is a flow from a higher potential to a lower one. Generally speaking, the greater the need, the more readily the process is facilitated. A piece of dry blotting paper brought

into contact with water in a saucer will absorb a certain quantity of moisture. If the blotting paper is saturated with water, and the dish dry, moisture will drip from the paper into the saucer.

In a similar manner, the greater the attunement and the higher the level of consciousness from moment to moment, the more strongly its subtle influence enters into every situation in daily experience, and each person will draw to themselves that which is most needed at the time of contact. This may come about without any awareness on the part of the individual.

Is Such Service Unimportant?

Is the sincere smile of understanding to one who feels the world against him unimportant? Is it unimportant if one desperately in need of self-confidence regains that confidence because of a subtle exchange engendered by his contact with you?

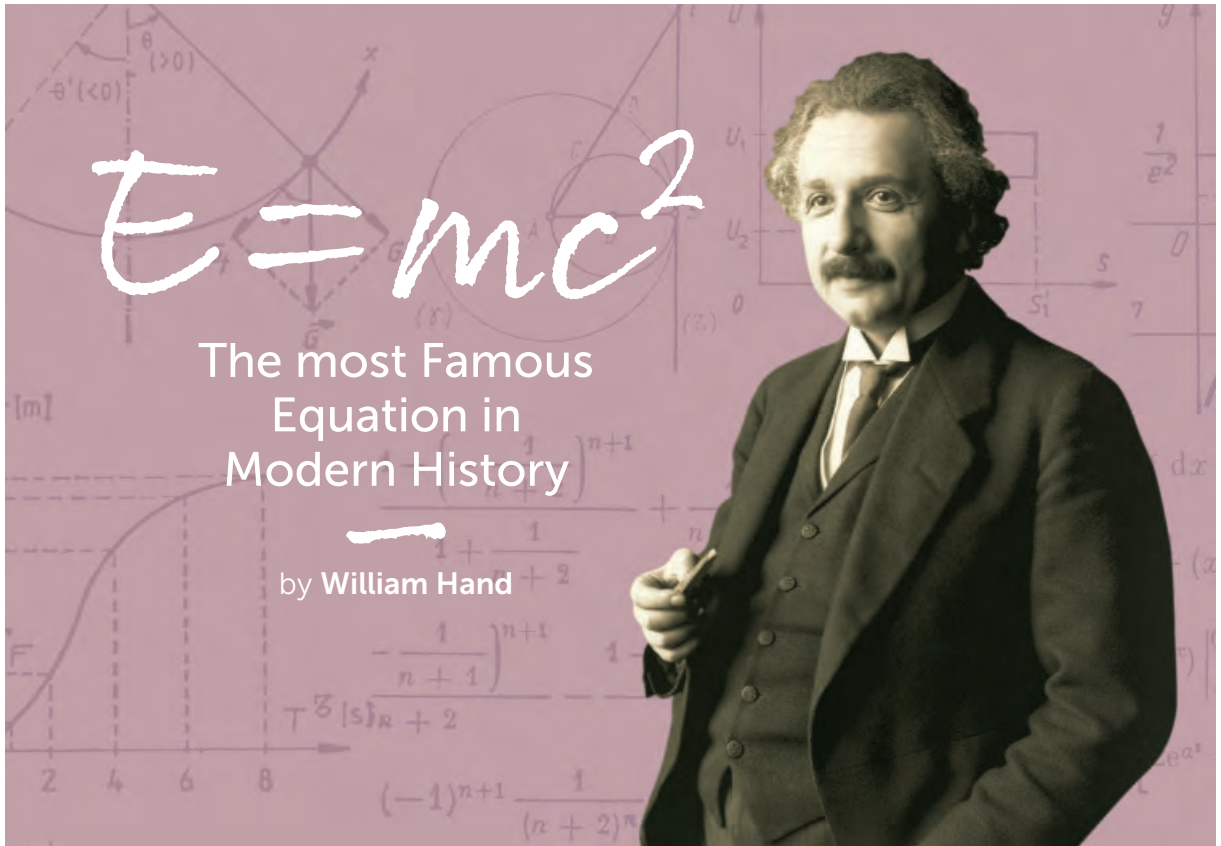
Is it unimportant if your own poise and assuredness forestalls fear, worry or panic; or if your attitude turns another's thoughts away from words of anger or malicious gossip? If a person's situation is changed for the better to some degree by your presence, your attitude, confidence, understanding and compassion? We may never know of the far-reaching effects in the lives of others by their contacts with us.

We may never know of the far-reaching effects in the lives of others by their contacts with us.

And there is no flattering of the ego here; nothing to cause us to individually think: "*I was responsible for this or that.*" There are no headlines, no publicity and probably no thanks either, not that we would expect or realise that any may be forthcoming.

This humble concept and act of service puts into motion cycles of influence constantly. Opportunities for such service do not have to be sought; they surround us constantly. Everyone is capable of rendering service as a practical exemplification of love, starting now.





Albert Einstein's equation $E = mc^2$ is perhaps the most well-known and often-quoted equation in the world. And its creator, Albert Einstein, is often cited as one of the most influential scientist of the 20th Century. His work continues to help astronomers today to study and understand everything from gravitational waves to changes in Mercury's orbit. In this short article I will explore a very simple equation in a *non-technical* way, and discover what it means for mysticism and, in particular, the nature of Reality.

The equation shows the equivalence of mass (**m**) and energy (**E**) and how one may be converted into the other using the constant, the speed of light (**c**). In other words all matter is really energy and it is not the apparently solid, unchanging mass that we all perceive. Actually, the equation is an *approximation* as it assumes that the mass [i.e. the object] is stationary relative to the observer. The full equation has extra terms concerning the speed and momentum of the mass if it is moving. However, using the simplified version does not affect the arguments and implications put forward in this short article.

The equation, *Energy equals mass times the speed of light squared* ($E = mc^2$), relates energy to mass where...

E is energy in Joules

m is mass in Kg

c is the speed of light (3×10^8 metres per second).

A mass of 1 kg would therefore have an equivalent energy of $(3 \times 10^8) \times (3 \times 10^8) = 9 \times 10^{16}$ Joules, *which is a lot!*

Now given that $E = mc^2$ is an equation, we can manipulate it algebraically and re-write it as $E/c^2 = m$. What this is saying is that in order to convert an amount of energy **E** to an equivalent amount of mass **m**, we must divide that energy by the square of the speed of light, namely c^2 . And that too is a *very large number!*

In other words, it requires a *very small* fraction of energy **E** in order to get the equivalent mass **m**. The fraction is, $1/c^2$,



which is a *very small number!* This equivalent mass is called the '*relativistic mass*', though people don't use this term much nowadays as it is really just the energy under a different name.

Now let us assume we can add up all the masses in the known Universe, i.e. all the molecules, atoms, quarks and other sub-atomic particles to get a grand mass **M**. This will obviously be a gigantic number. If we call the total energy available in the universe **BigE**, then according to Einstein, the mass equivalent of **BigE** or relativistic mass **M** is BigE/c^2 . As this is a very small fraction of **BigE**, how does the substantial remainder of **BigE** express itself? Logically it must be the part of

the Universe that is massless. But can it all be massless particles such as photons, etc. This seems unlikely since photons are linked with mass as forces.

One conjecture is that this remaining energy goes into manifestations with frequencies exceeding those known to science and which are beyond the ultraviolet and gamma radiation ranges. Perhaps one can speculate that it is these energies that drive the spiritual realms so often talked about in mystical literature? An intriguing possible consequence of $E = mc^2$.

Thank you, Albert Einstein!

Note that 3×10^8 metres per second means 300,000 kilometres per second, (186,000 miles per second). That amounts to roughly 1 billion kilometres per hour (970 million miles per hour) or the speed required to travel to the moon and back in roughly $2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds; or the time it takes to fly around the world $7\frac{1}{2}$ times in a single second; or the speed it takes to travel to the sun and back in $16\frac{3}{4}$ minutes. That's fast!



Duality in Science and Philosophy

by **Walter J Albersheim**



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

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

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

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

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

The seeming discrepancies may be inherent in the



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

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

In the 19th century, duality appeared as an essential difference between energy and matter.

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

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

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

Principle of Uncertainty

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

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

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

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

Science has detailed the dual aspects of physical knowledge in the realm of the smallest observable entities. A similar dilemma arose at the opposite end of the scale, in the vastness of astronomical space. The knowable universe



seems to be expanding at a terrific rate and would thus appear to become ever thinner and less coherent until it ultimately dissolves into emptiness.

Some astronomers, however, dispute this and hold that the intergalactic void is replenished by *'continuous creation.'* But if matter and energy increase, they must emerge, or be *'created'* from something that is not material, at least in the sense we understand the word. Whether emergent or created, there is, at the back of it, the suggestion that there exists some sort of creative force or even a mind.

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

Philosophical Aspects

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

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

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

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

Yet, where analysis fails, inner experience bridges the gap. Artists, visionaries, prophets and saints have

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

Many mystical teachings deal with *'higher'* planes and dimensions, it even being implied that illumination consists in the acquisition of four-dimensional perception, namely the experience



of all that is, entirely devoid of time. No higher dimensions can reconcile matter and mind as long as the new dimensions are subject to the limitations of the three space dimensions. For instance, attempts have been made to interpret time as the fourth dimension, in the manner of relativity. This concept transforms the flow of history into a static *'World Line.'*

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

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

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



attempts have been made to interpret time as the fourth dimension...

Unrestricted Locomotion

Unrestricted locomotion is equivalent to absence of dimensionality. This imagined condition of the inner world applies to the fundamental problem, namely, the duality of mind and matter, if we picture this higher-dimensional world as the abode of mind, your mind, mine, the Universal Mind or even all of these rolled into one.

Matter, energy and all physical events would be surface phenomena like the images on a cinema screen. Matter and mind would indeed be incommensurate, but related like the surface of a body to its volume. They would interact insofar as the interior mind stuff penetrates to the surface.

From the outside, it might appear that an individual part of the mental world could become detached and disappear from view. From the interior viewpoint, such a separation would be meaningless because in the unrestricted world every part has access to the entire domain. The ancient philosopher Plotinus may have meant just this when he said: *'The immortal gods interpenetrate each other. Each one is King, but none envies nor dominates the others.'* According to our postulations, the inner world must be free from limitation. This does not make it a lawless chaos. The laws of a mental world, however, would be visualised as laws of mind rather than physical laws of matter. Such mental laws might include Logic, Justice, Ethics, Art and Love.

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

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





True Friendship

by Doreen Eustice

T rue friendships are wonderful treasures to be found on Life's highways and byways, nuggets to be nurtured and valued for the richness they bring to our souls. Unfortunately, few of us are perfect at tending them properly and giving them the time they need to flourish and thrive. They frequently wither from neglect as we set them aside to shoulder the sundry responsibilities and pressures which beset people of all generations, especially family commitments and careers.

One of the chief reasons many good friendships wilt is the appearance of a *'life partner'*, possibly a *'soul mate'* but definitely a distraction. When that happens, many of us succumb to the charms and put them first, last and throughout the middle of who we want to spend time with. And those who have been faithful companions, the ones we can gossip to on the phone or book a three coffee lunch, are abandoned to the new *'Great One'* in our lives. It was a great piece of advice from the author of a book on Celtic Runes, Ralph Blum, to *"...let the winds of heaven dance between you."* Unfortunately the newly besotted rarely do!

A while ago an old friend I had long since shelved came to my door with a covered bowl and announced she was presenting me with a friendship cake; a German friendship cake who goes by the name of



Herman and has been circling the globe much like a chain letter since..., probably not long after time began. The bowl contained a hunk of dough and a handwritten list of instructions for Herman's future welfare, to be carried out over the ensuing 10 days.

We giggled as I read out the sheet beginning with the warning: *"My name is Herman. I am a sour dough cake and I need to be kept on your worktop for 10 days without a lid on. I will die if you put me in the fridge! I will die if I stop bubbling."* The rules demand Herman should be placed in a two litre bowl and covered with a tea towel. He needs stirring well on days two and three, and must be fed specific amounts of flour, sugar and milk before being stirred senseless and put back to sleep again under his tea towel blanket.

Days five, six, seven and eight requires more vigorous mixing to keep the dough alive and sticking. On day nine he gets hungry again and requires more flour, sugar and milk to curb his appetite. At this point you divide the goo into four equal portions, give three away to friends with copies of the instructions and add to the portion you keep an array of cake contents including eggs, spices, oil, chopped apples, nuts and raisins before baking him out of his old life and serving him up in the new, adorned with fresh cream.

For the first two days I was charmed, but on day three I forgot him entirely and on the fourth day found myself rescuing him from a dying breath at the 11th hour, literally 11pm, with the top up ingredients. Cutting a 10-day story by half, I decided I didn't like Herman much at all. It was like being in charge of a tyrannical virtual pet, like a Tamagotchi of the sort that were frequently banned from 1990s British classrooms because frustrated teachers were having their lessons disrupted by students feeding and exercising their electronic wards. I didn't like the responsibility of looking after him, pandering to his needs or the space that he was taking up in my modest kitchen.

I might have wanted to hang him – out for the birds, possibly – but did I really want to draw and



quarter Herman and distribute him to my friends? And did I later want to add a tenner's worth of ingredients to his slobby, mish-mash, squish-squash body for a dish days hence, marginally less appealing than tripe with custard? Before you answer, bear in mind that the last time I cooked a cake I had pigtails and a school uniform and I'm now drawing a pension.

In a heartless moment of resolute decision I tossed Herman mercilessly into the bin along with the contents of the vacuum cleaner. Herman bit the dust, his final bubbles were burst. But Herman

In a heartless moment of resolute decision I tossed Herman mercilessly into the bin along with the contents of the vacuum cleaner.

lives on in the kitchens of countless victims of unfulfilled friendship, and online too at the touch of a search engine. Look him up if you'd like to make his acquaintance. I won't be responsible for his actions by giving you the recipe.

Friends, readers, I can tell you from experience: if you like someone and value them, then give what really shows what they bring to your life. Give them time, a conversation, a listening ear or a gift that comes with no responsibilities and no guilt trip attached. Give them a call, write them a letter, send a card. Ask them out to lunch. Invite them to share a convivial bottle of wine, and debate enthusiastically the things that matter in life, or the things that don't, particularly! Share an outing, share a meditation journey, share whatever you've got in your pantry that cooks in 20 minutes and disappears with the washing up. But whatever you decide to do to foster this amazing faculty we call friendship, don't give them a *Friendship Cake!*

