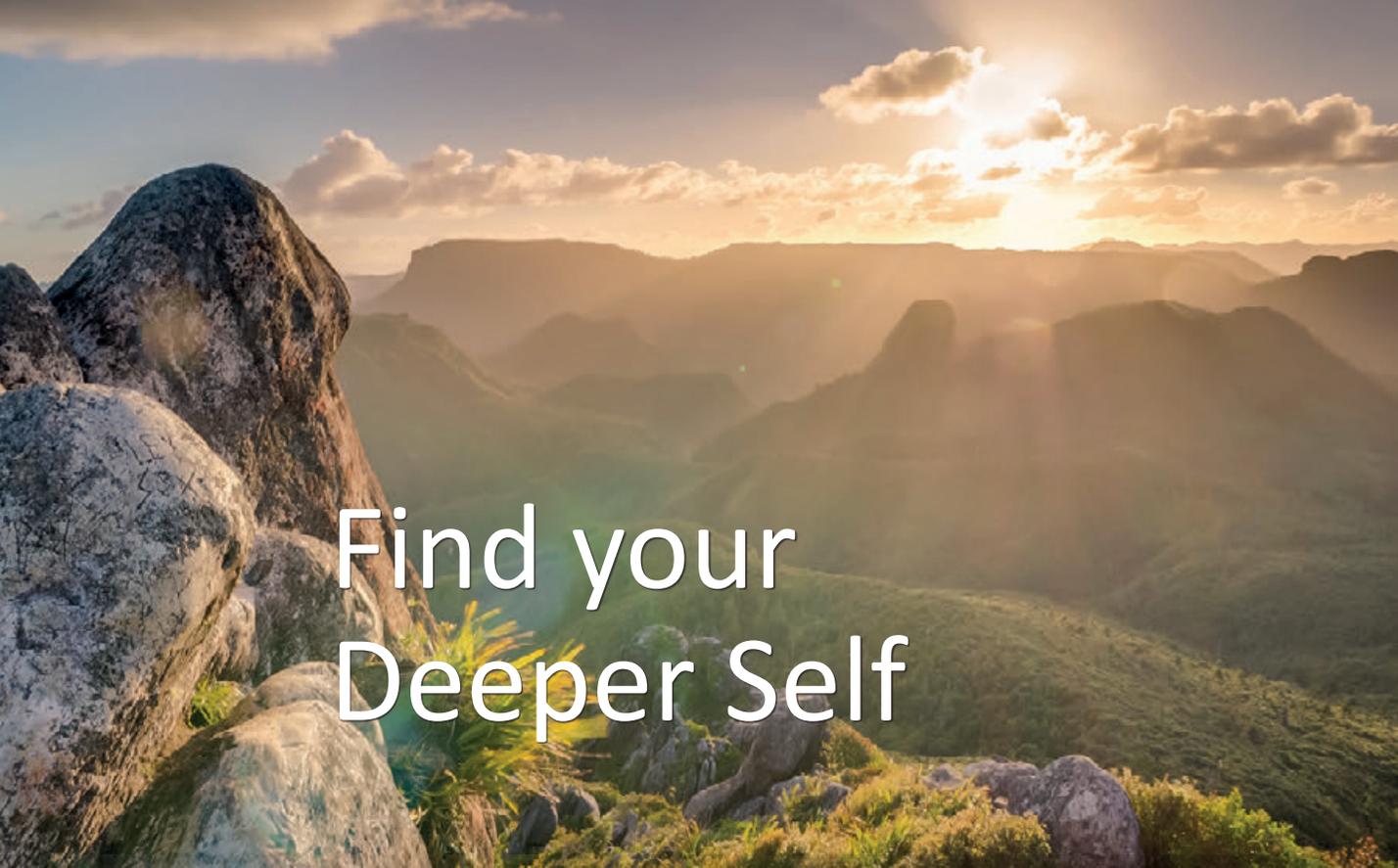


— ROSICRUCIAN —
BEACON



June 2024, Vol 34, No. 3





Find your Deeper Self

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

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

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

For millennia, seekers of universal truths have known of the existence of a kernel of perfection lying dormant in every person, manifesting supreme confidence, calmness, maturity and wisdom. This

deeper Self is called by Rosicrucians, the 'Inner Master', for it has in abundance, qualities of refinement, high purpose and spiritual maturity we would expect only of the most accomplished of humans.

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

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

membership@amorc.org.uk
<https://www.amorc.org.uk>

 [@RosicrucianOrderEMEA](#)

 [@AMORC_UK](#)

 <https://rosicrucian.online/>



ROSICRUCIAN BEACON

June 2024, Vol 33, No. 3

CONTENTS

Freedom of Thought - by Claudio Mazzucco	2
Know Thyself - by Amelia	5
Cosmic Religion - by Albert Einstein	7
The Radiant Dawn - by Bill Anderson	10
Maimonides - by Mary Jones	17
Book Review - I Saw Your Light from Afar	25
The Praying Hands - by Albrecht Dürer	28
The Mystic Celts - by Andrew Urquhart	30
Finding Our Ideal Path Through Life - by Raynor Millen	33
Don't Come Second in the Race Against Time - by Shirley Elsby	37
Postures for Spiritual Growth - by Alvin Sedoya	41

ISSN 0966-033X

Published quarterly by the
English Grand Lodge for Europe,
the Middle East and Africa of
THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER®
A.M.O.R.C.®

Greenwood Gate, Blackhill,
Crowborough TN6 1XE
UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: +44-1892-653197
Email: info@amorc.org.uk
Web: www.amorc.org.uk

EDITORS

Bill Anderson
Sven Johansson

Design and Layout

Cloud White

Statements made in this publication are not the official expressions of The Rosicrucian Order or its officers unless specifically declared to be so.

All material published in this magazine is copyright of the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC and may not be copied or reproduced in any form without the prior consent of the copyright holder and the individual contributors.



Cover spread

Sunrise at the *Old man of Storr*
on the Isle of Skye, Scotland

Image: iStockphoto/TomasSereda





Freedom of Thought

by Claudio Mazzucco

In 2023, our planet's human population reached just under 7.9 billion inhabitants. That is a lot of people on a small planet and, according to the projections of experts, our population will continue to grow. What I would like to reflect on though is that every one of those billions of people have their own thoughts, their own beliefs, their own faith and their own world view. Even among the faithful of a church, the understanding of the divinity to whom they direct their prayers differs from person to person, just as is the case within a political party where ideas about how society should be organised differ.

In the Rosicrucian Order there is a fundamental rule, namely, that everyone should have the freedom to think as they wish. Freedom, often mistaken for the idea that *'I can do whatever I want'*, is a very complex notion that takes on various nuances as we reflect further upon it. It is closely linked to the concept of responsibility. Our Order respects the personal convictions of each member, and that makes it possible for there to be members of various religious and political denominations without this leading to tensions of any kind. In our invocations and prayers we use the expression *'God of my heart, God of my*



understanding' because we recognise the fact that this understanding of God varies from person to person according to their life experience. For example, we study reincarnation, but we do not consider its acceptance as being essential for us. Some members accept it, others do not, and yet others develop their own ideas about it.

Although what I am writing may seem normal and obvious to you, in truth it consists of one of the most difficult human experiences. Developing our own vision, while at the same time accepting a vision that differs from ours, is neither easy nor an obvious thing to do. The most common impulse we have is to try and convince others that our vision is the clearest, fairest and most relevant to tradition or faith. Today, the mechanism behind this attitude is better understood by science as well.

As a result of brain studies, we learn that the satisfaction we feel when many people agree with us on an opinion, causes the secretion of certain substances in the bloodstream that produce a sense of wellbeing. This is also the mechanism used by social networks when they continually offer us theories and opinions that reinforce our idea or understanding of life, preventing us therefore from seeing other perspectives. We spontaneously seek consensus and the confirmation of our beliefs. When we do not find this, our automatic reaction is to turn away and seek out another group that can provide us with these satisfactions; or, alternatively, we engage in aggressive behaviour towards people who think differently from us.

One of the main sources of destructive conflict occurs when people believe they have the right to impose their thoughts on others, in the mistaken conviction that it is their mission to convince others to adopt their ideas. It can certainly happen in an environment where the personalities present, for various reasons that I will not address here, are of a weak disposition and have not reached the maturity needed to have sufficient critical sense. It is the phenomenon of a cult, where there is a leader who dictates the rules and states how everyone should behave and what the right choices are to be for each member of the group. Individuality ceases and freedom of thought disappears. In sects, a false harmony often prevails because, as there is no diversity of thought, apathy and

lack of reflection produce a general stagnation that is mistaken for harmony. In AMORC we advocate the need for freedom of thought, but we also emphasise that it must be accompanied by an essential attitude of responsibility. The etymology of this word originates from *'to answer to oneself or others for one's acts and behaviour.'*

Concerning freedom and free will, I propose a reflection that shows how complex the topic is. Let us imagine we are walking along a street when we catch sight of an old man walking in front of us. As he walks with slightly unsteady footsteps, a wallet falls out of his trouser pocket. Following behind him, we pick up the wallet and immediately notice that there are banknotes carelessly arranged inside. We realise that he must have withdrawn his pension. No-one sees us, not even the old man, who is walking well ahead of us.

The question is: are we free to keep the wallet? Some would say yes, because we are free individuals, we have free will and we can decide to do whatever we want, even to keep the wallet. While we know that some



people would keep the wallet, we also know that many, including ourselves, would not. This is not because we are afraid of punishment - remember, no-one can see us - but because something inside us tells us that keeping the wallet is wrong. The very thought of it causes us discomfort. A law within us dictates that we should behave in a specific manner. Where then, is the free will? What meaning does this expression have when I am faced with a situation where I know perfectly well that I am not free to choose? Let us observe this particular absence of freedom where the resultant behaviour of not taking the wallet, produces an inner satisfaction in us because we have adhered to a higher principle: *'to a moral law within us'*, as the philosopher Kant would say; to the *'voice of the Master within'*, as we would say.

As we know that not all people would act honestly and return the wallet, we need some rules. The coexistence and survival of any group is assured by the existence of shared values and rules, and it is therefore not left to the individual's personal understanding, or moral sense, to decide in which way to behave best. The greatest difficulty lies in keeping people united despite their very different understandings of life. Common experience has shown that, when there are people in a group who think differently, what often happens is fragmentation instead of a civilised discussion that would enable the development of a vision superior to

the current one. The idea prevails that, because my understanding is better than yours, I can create my own group based on the very gratifying illusion that it will be composed of people who will agree and think like me. In the age of social networking this process is intensifying out of all proportion.

As Rosicrucians, we seek to develop a more advanced vision of human nature. By combining mystical experience with scientific knowledge we seek to understand the best way to remain united in a community composed not only of people who think the same way about everything, but of people who explore transcendental dimensions of life together. These are people who are united by common ideals and who therefore understand that diversity is precisely the tool used by Nature to enable us to see different perspectives, namely, different vistas that we would otherwise never have been able to see.

Freedom, therefore, must guarantee diversity though, at the same time, be protected by rules to allow everyone to coexist in the most constructive manner possible. This also holds true for the formation of a country, which has its supreme law in its constitution, down to the smallest sports club. This approach has secured the existence of AMORC for more than 100 years and will continue to be the beacon that guides us.





Know Thy Self

by Amelia

Those powerful words above the portal to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in Greece, are the only instruction we need to find peace, harmony and happiness. The greater our awareness of our Self is, and the greater our awareness is of our eventual connection with all things within that profoundly mysterious *'envelope of perception'* that defines who we are..., the more accomplished, at peace and happy we will be.

There are several intuitively revealing expressions that describe who or what we really are. We sometimes hear someone referring to an *'energy envelope'* or an *'envelope of perception'* when describing the ethereal cloud-like energy that surrounds the physical body of any living creature, especially humans. It is more commonly referred to as the *'aura.'* But there is another word for it too, one that extends the bounds of perception far beyond our aura: it is our *'envelope of karmic proximity'*, an energy field encompassing all things of relevance to our lives at any given time and, specifically, those things that we are karmically bound to

and with which we have some obligations that need to be fulfilled sooner or later.

In the deepest sense of the expression, to *'Know Thy Self'* means being fully aware of all things within one's *'karmic proximity'* and therefore, being keenly aware of one's responsibilities in relation to the many karmic obligations within that *envelope of perception* that is our *'Greater Self.'* The more we allow ourselves to open up to the multitude of possibilities available to us within our *'karmic envelope of perception'*, the more we will understand our true purpose in life and what we need to do in order to empower and move to a higher level, the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual sides to our multifaceted being.

Each cell in our body is like a hologram, potentially holding information about all other cells in the body, and potentially connecting us to all other living creatures, all of them animated by a mysterious energy called the *'Vital Life Force.'* Our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual



faculties are connected through this universe-wide energy field, often described simply as *'Light.'* Through meditation and the constructive use of visualisation, we can learn to loosen our grip on the comforts of materialism and start focusing instead on delivering to ourselves and others the compensatory thoughts, words and deeds that our karmic proximity requires of us.

We believe we have free will and, when we choose to acknowledge the intelligence of each of our 28 to 35 trillion body cells, and allow them to do their work unimpeded by negative thoughts and emotions, overall harmony in the body is enhanced and we begin to function optimally within the limits of our karmic obligations. We must remember that while we may have chosen to experience certain conditions for the duration of our life in order to appreciate their purpose at a deep level, we may also have chosen to undergo those conditions in order to help others to understand, learn and progress along their personal evolutionary paths too. It takes discipline, courage and, above all, focused training, to arrive at the sort of unconditional love that will one day radiate from us when we have accepted our place in the vast tapestry of life, and are ready to follow the path best suited for us.

We are not merely physical beings. If we stop a while and use our powers of perception, we can subtly feel the Vital Life Force coursing through every part of our body. It is not random in its delivery of the energy but specifically delivers parcels of this life-enhancing energy to the parts of our body that need it the most. This highest of all energy forms known to us, is what gives life to every cell; and it does so especially when we focus our deepest wishes for health and harmonious interaction between cells to the entire conglomeration of cells which is our human body. Expressing such a wish with confidence and love, indeed willing and guiding our desire for all cells to work harmoniously for the greater good of our body, can have surprisingly beneficial health-restorative effects for both us and others within our karmic proximity.

As our cells respond to working in greater and greater harmony with each other, we sense the heightening of our vibrational energy in the form of pulses of what can only be described as *'cold heat'* as we become imbued with a sense of calmness and alertness to what is occurring. With this influx of energy, we also become aware of other forms of energy, not the physical, health-giving sort but the sort that carries with it information about ourselves

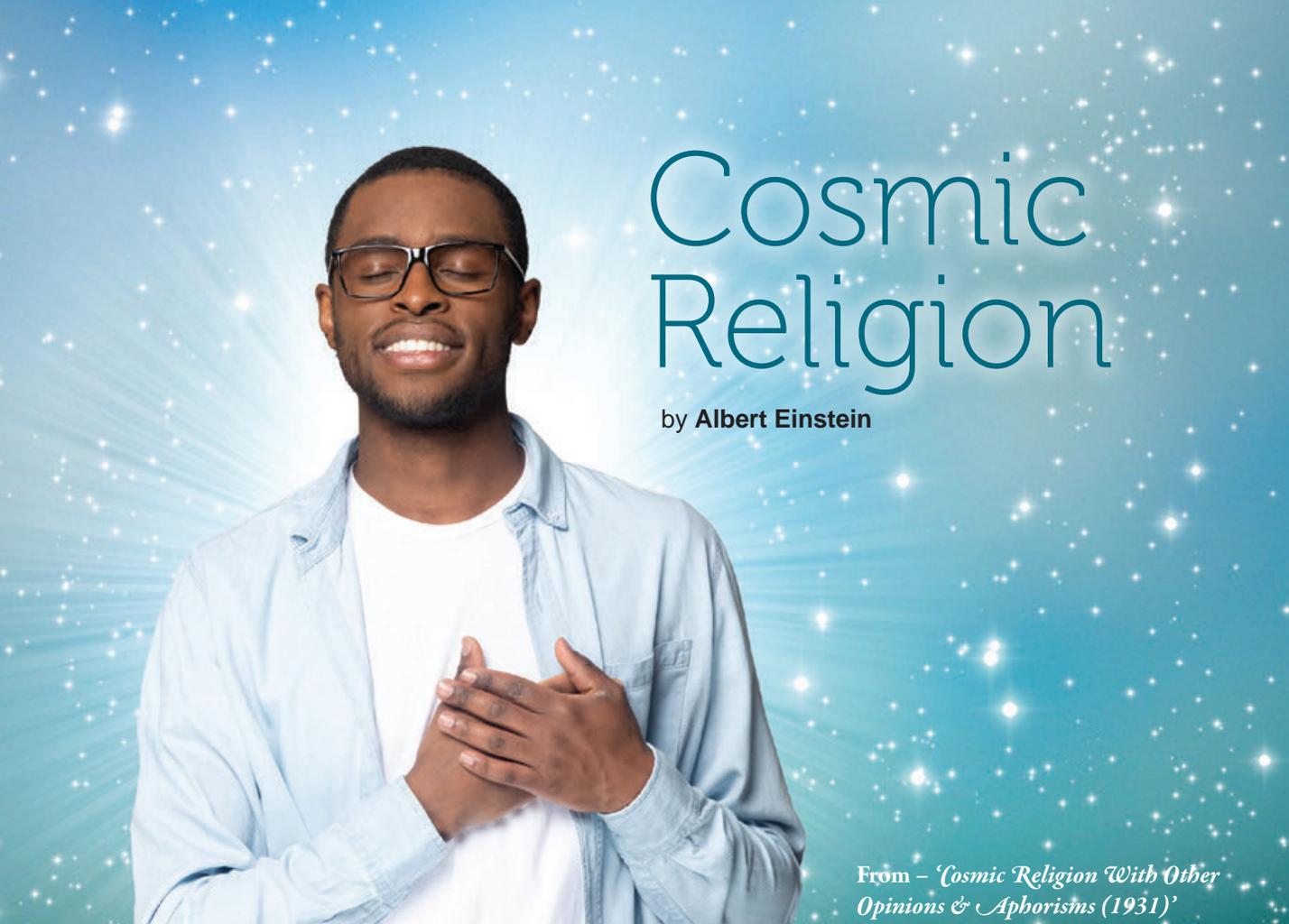
and all other animate and inanimate things within our *envelope of perception.* The information we receive at such times is often of an inspiring sort, the sort that helps us to understand in greater, more focused and accurate detail, our present situation in this incarnation. It is through one or more of the so-called *'psychic centres'* of our being that we receive this information in ways that are the most beneficial we can receive at any given time. And all this is accomplished through the deliberate directing of Vital Life Force to our body.

As we become attuned to higher, more complex frequency clusters, leading to specific, vital and helpful information perceived through our psychic senses, we develop a sense of *'knowing'* rather than relying on mere beliefs which are usually dependent on what others think rather than what we receive from within ourselves. When we cease limiting ourselves and go beyond traditional structures with their limited patterns, we open ourselves to other powers held within our being and create the experiences of our desires, attracting the corresponding vibrations for us to manifest.

We have become used to certain limitations to what we can do, and this habit of believing we can't do more, holds us back. While we must trust medical science and allow doctors to deliver the healing they are trained to do, we also have our own inner team of doctors from whom we can receive advice and assistance when needed. So, by all means see a doctor when necessary, but sit down also in quiet solitude and deep meditation in order to listen to what the body is lovingly trying to tell you. This silent communication between your body and your mind is what is often referred to as *'intuition.'* And when done properly, such moments of communion with the trillions of cells in your body, is more beneficial than any medications you may think you need.

When you trust the guidance of that *'still, small, voice within'*, namely, your inner communion with the highest form of sanctity available to your consciousness, you tune yourself into many new avenues of healing, both physically and mentally. Unless you are facing an emergency situation when swift, physical remedies are needed, it is often advisable to first seek the guidance of your body, listening attentively and sympathetically to its whispered words of loving support and advice; and then putting that advice into action. Then you may come, one day, to *'Know Thy Self.'*





Cosmic Religion

by **Albert Einstein**

From – *‘Cosmic Religion With Other Opinions & Aphorisms (1931)’*

Albert Einstein, has been viewed by some as the silent heir-apparent to Isaac Newton. But whereas Newton was a devout Christian, Einstein, through his deep understanding of the inner nature of the universe, found a belief-system that far transcended the orthodoxy of his day.

Everything people do or think concerns the satisfaction of the needs they feel or their escape from pain. This must be kept in mind when we seek to understand spiritual or intellectual movements and the way in which they develop. For feeling and longing are the motive forces of all human striving and productivity, however nobly these latter may display themselves to us. What then, are the feelings and the needs which have brought humanity to religious thought and to faith in the widest sense? A moment's consideration shows that the most varied emotions stand at the cradle of religious thought and experience.

The Three Levels

In primitive peoples it is, first of all, fear that awakens religious ideas; fear of hunger, of wild animals, of illness and of death. Since the understanding of causal connections is usually limited on this level of existence, the human soul forges a being, more or less like itself, on whose will and activities depend the experiences



which it fears. One hopes to win the favour of this being by deeds and sacrifices, which, according to the tradition of the race, are supposed to appease the being or to make them well-disposed to mankind. I call this the *'religion of fear.'*

This religion is considerably stabilised, though not caused, by the formation of a priestly caste which claims to mediate between the people and the being they fear, and so attains a position of power. Often, a leader or despot, or a privileged class whose power is maintained in other ways, will combine the function of the priesthood with its own temporal rule for the sake of great security. Or an alliance may exist between the interests of the political power and the priestly caste.

A second source of religious development is found in social feelings. Fathers and mothers, as well as leaders of great human communities, are fallible and mortal. The longing for guidance, for love and succour, provides the stimulus for the growth of a social or moral conception of God. This is the *'God of Providence'*, who protects, decides, rewards and punishes. This is the God who, according to man's widening horizon, loves and provides for the life of mankind or even loves life itself. He is the comforter in unhappiness and in unsatisfied longing, the protector of the souls of the dead. This is the social or moral idea of God. It is easy to follow in the sacred writings of the Jewish people the development of the religion of fear into the moral religion, which is carried further in the New Testament.

The religions of all civilised people, especially those of the Orient, are principally moral religions.

The religions of all civilised people, especially those of the Orient, are principally moral religions. An important advance in the life of a people is the transformation of the *'religion of fear'* into the *'moral religion.'* But one must avoid the prejudice that regards the religions of primitive peoples as pure fear religions and those of the civilised races as pure moral

religions. All are mixed forms, though the moral element predominates in the higher levels of social life. Common to all these types is the anthropomorphic character of the idea of God.

Only exceptionally gifted individuals or especially noble communities rise essentially above this level; in these there is found a third level of religious experience, even if it is seldom found in a pure form. I will call it the cosmic religious sense. This is hard to make clear to those who do not experience it, since it does not involve an anthropomorphic idea of God; the individual feels the vanity of human desires and aims, and the nobility and marvellous order which are revealed in nature and in the world of thought. He feels the individual destiny as an imprisonment and seeks to experience the totality of existence as a unity full of significance. Indications of this cosmic religious sense can be found even on earlier levels of development, e.g. in the Psalms of David and in the Prophets. The cosmic element is much stronger in Buddhism as, in particular, Schopenhauer's magnificent essays have shown us.

Cosmic Religious Experience

The religious geniuses of all times have been distinguished by this cosmic religious sense, which recognises neither dogmas nor God made in man's image. Consequently, there cannot be a church whose chief doctrines are based on the cosmic religious experience. It comes about, therefore, that precisely among the heretics of all ages we find men and women who were inspired by this highest religious experience. Often they appeared to their contemporaries as atheists, but sometimes also as saints. Viewed from this angle, men like Democritus, St Francis of Assisi and Spinoza are near to one another. How can this cosmic religious experience be communicated to people, if it cannot lead to a definite conception of God or to a theology? It seems to me that the most important function of art and of science is to arouse and keep alive this feeling in those who are receptive.

Thus we reach an interpretation of the relation of science to religion which is very different from the customary view. From the study of history, one is inclined to regard religion and science as irreconcilable antagonists, and this for a reason that is very easily seen. For anyone who is pervaded with the sense of causal

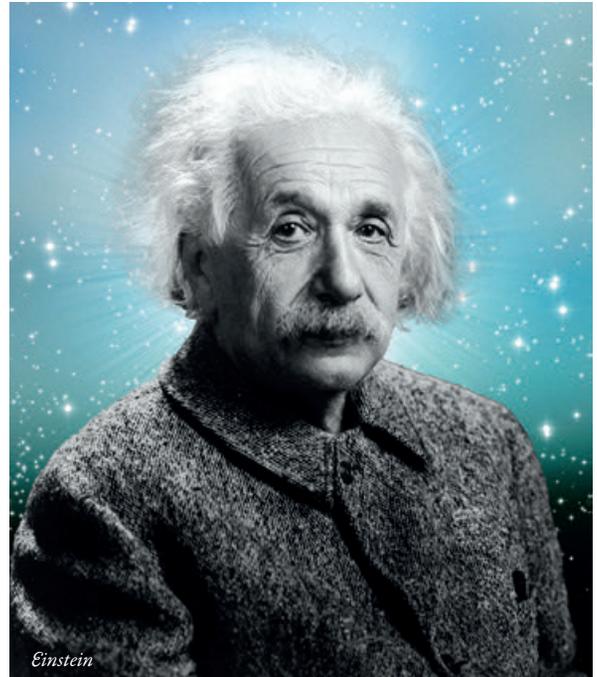


law in all that happens, who accepts in real earnest the assumption of causality, the idea of a Being who interferes with the sequence of events in the world is absolutely impossible. Neither the religion of fear nor the social-moral religion can have any hold on him. A God who rewards and punishes is for him unthinkable, because man acts in accordance with an inner and outer necessity, and would, in the eyes of God, be as little responsible as an inanimate object is for the movements which it makes.

Science, in consequence, has been accused of undermining morals – but wrongly. The ethical behaviour of man is better based on sympathy, education and social relationships, and requires no support from religion. Man's plight would, indeed, be sad if he had to be kept in order through fear of punishment and hope of rewards after death. It is, therefore, quite natural that the churches have always fought against science and have persecuted its supporters. But, on the other hand, I assert that the cosmic religious experience is the strongest and the noblest driving force behind scientific research.

No-one who does not appreciate the terrific exertions and, above all, the devotion, without which pioneer creations in scientific thought cannot come into being, can judge the strength of the feeling out of which alone such work, turned away as it is from immediate practical life, can grow. What a deep faith in the rationality of the structure of the world and what a longing to understand even a small glimpse of the reason revealed in the world there must have been in Kepler and Newton to enable them to unravel the mechanism of the heavens in long years of lonely work!

Anyone who only knows scientific research in its practical applications may easily come to a wrong interpretation of the state of mind of the men who, surrounded by sceptical contemporaries, have shown the way to kindred spirits scattered over all countries in all centuries. Only those who have dedicated their lives to similar ends can have a living conception of the inspiration which gave these men the power to remain loyal to their purpose in spite of countless failures. It is the cosmic religious sense which grants this power. A contemporary has rightly said that the only deeply religious people of our largely materialistic age are the earnest men of research.



In his 1949 book *'The World as I See It'*, Einstein wrote:

A knowledge of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, of the manifestations of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty, which are only accessible to our reason in their most elementary forms — it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitute the truly religious attitude; in this sense, and in this alone, I am a deeply religious man.

[...]

Even though the realms of religion and science in themselves are clearly marked off from each other, there are strong reciprocal relationships and dependencies, for aspirations for truth derive from the religious sphere.

Einstein referred to his belief system as *'cosmic religion.'* The belief system recognised a *'miraculous order which manifests itself in all of nature as well as in the world of ideas'*, devoid of a personal God who rewards and punishes individuals based on their behaviour. It rejected a conflict between science and religion, and held that cosmic religion was necessary for science.





Ruins of the Miletus amphitheatre.

era some 540-250 million years ago. That era was a time of dramatic geological, climatic and evolutionary change, which witnessed the most rapid and widespread diversification of life in Earth's history.

Across the fields to the south of Priéne, and on over a large bay, lay the territory of Miletus, an area known as Mílesia in ancient times, some 25 kilometres (16 miles) away from Priéne. Here, among the ruins of this former city, it is easy to imagine times long gone, of times when this part of the world was one of the great, intellectual hotspots of the planet, a place deeply sacred from the dawn of civilisation itself, a time when someone else was watching the stars and contemplating the mysteries of the universe.

New Dawn

Miletus was originally built on top of a peninsula as well, jutting out into the sea. By late antiquity, after the close of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the large bay had been silted up by the Maeander river and today, the sea is some 10 kilometres (6 miles) away. What is interesting though is that Miletus lies in a straight line, equidistant from Priéne, north of it, and the sanctuary of Apollo at Dídyma to the South. The Dídyma sanctuary was, after Delphi, Apollo's most celebrated temple, with its own oracle. Apollo himself, or rather, his role as the son of the father of the gods, Zeus, is believed to have had an Anatolian origin.

Near the mouth of the Maeander River in ancient

Caria, Miletus must have been a truly marvellous city. Before the Persian invasion in the mid 6th century BCE, Miletus was considered the greatest and wealthiest of Greek cities. It controlled a large territory which included rich agricultural lands and tree-covered mountains that supplied timber for its navy and grazing for its flocks. The sea was the main connection with the other Greek city-states while the Maeander valley led deep into Anatolia which was considered the ancient heartland of all cultures and ideas.



Thales of Miletus was recognised in antiquity as the first of the great Greek philosophers. He was one of the Seven Sages of ancient Greece, and was said to have been the originator of the phrase 'Know Thyself'. Although believed to be a bust of Thales, the provenance of this sculpture has been called into question and it is not known any longer if it is a true image of the first of the philosophers.





The Priene ruins

In the early to middle Bronze Age, the settlement, then known as *Millawanda* came under Minoan influence. Legend has it that an influx of Minoans from Crete occurred, displacing the indigenous people. Following the devastation caused by the eruption of Thera (somewhere between 1600 and 1450 BCE), colloquially called Santorini, and the demise of Minoan civilisation, the Late Bronze Age (c: 13th century BCE) saw the arrival of other Indo-European *Luwian* language-speakers from south central Anatolia known as the *Carians*. Millawanda was destroyed in the 12th century BCE and, starting about 1000 BCE, the territory was resettled extensively by the Ionian Greeks and became Miletus. Legend relates of an Ionian foundation event sponsored by a founder named *Neleus*, (a Mycenaean Greek,) from the Peloponnese in the south of mainland Greece.

Apart from Greece proper, the Greeks had spread around the Aegean Sea and along the coast of modern Turkey. The *Greek Dark Ages* that followed were a time of Ionian settlement and consolidation in an alliance called the *Ionian League*. There then followed the *Archaic Period* of Greek civilisation that began with a sudden and brilliant flash of art and philosophy on the coast of Anatolia. In the 6th century BCE, Miletus was the site of origin of the Greek philosophical and scientific tradition, when Thales, followed by Anaximander and Anaximenes (known collectively, to modern scholars, as the '*Milesian School*') began to speculate about the material composition of the world, and to propose speculative, naturalistic, as opposed to traditional, supernatural explanations for various natural phenomena. Science was born.

First of the Seven

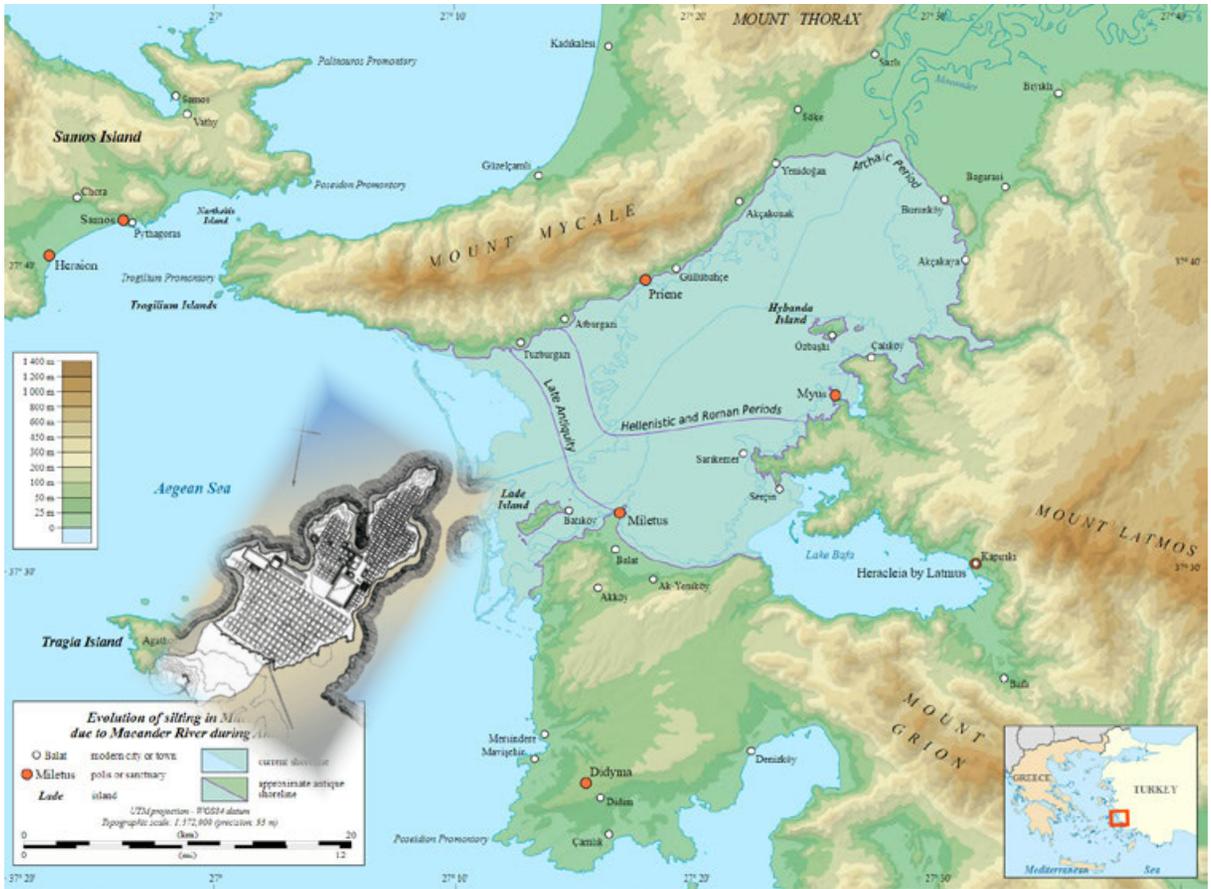
If there is one word to describe Thales of Miletus, that word is amazing. He was the first of the great Greek philosophers, one of the Seven Sages of Ancient Greece, who was said to have been the originator of the phrase '*Know thyself*' which was engraved on the front façade of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. There is a question mark about Thales' birth year, which is believed to be around 640 BCE, but all sources agree that he died in 546 BCE, aged 94 years.

Miletus, where Thales was born, was the most important city of a series of city-states known as the Ionian League, that stretched along the east shore of the Aegean Sea. His parents were Examyus and Cleobuline. Some said he was of Phoenician ancestry. Others said that he belonged to a noble Milesian family. He appears to have always remained unmarried. If he did produce any children, none of them became prominent enough to become historically recorded. And though we remember Thales



It is said that Thales wrote of his travels to Pherecydes of Syros (depicted here) who is regarded as the teacher of Pythagoras. Travel was not exceptional among notable people during those times. But what was notable and highly sought after, was the new knowledge that such travellers brought back with them to pass on as inspired wisdom from spiritual schools far, far away.





primarily as a philosopher and scientist, he was an enterprising businessman, becoming a dealer in olive oil and salt.

Plato made the point that the Greeks took from foreigners what was of value and developed their notions into better ideas. *Eudemus*, who was one of Aristotle's students, believed that Thales had travelled to Egypt. A number of ancient sources support that opinion, including some who stated that he spent time with the Egyptian priests.

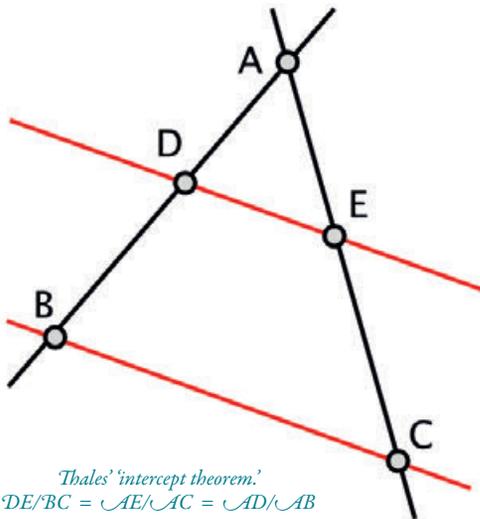
By 620 BCE, or even earlier, Miletus held a trading concession at *Naucratis* on the Canopic or westernmost branch of the Nile, and it is possible that Thales first visited Egypt on a trading mission. Travel to Egypt would not have been difficult. The wealth of Miletus was the result of its success as a trading centre, and there would have been no difficulty arranging passage on one of the many vessels which traded with Egypt. It is related that while in Egypt, he gave a demonstration to Pharaoh *Amasis* of the 26th

dynasty, by merely thrusting his staff into the ground at the end of the shadow cast by a pyramid, and thus, by forming another shadow, he compared the two shadows and measured the height of the pyramid for the pharaoh. He is also said to have given an explanation for the inundation of the Nile after witnessing the phenomenon. However, it seems possible that he could easily have learned these from the Egyptian priests.

Josephus wrote that Thales was a disciple of the Egyptians and the Chaldeans which suggests that he also visited what is now southern Iraq. It is thought that Thales visited the Babylonians and Chaldeans and had access to their astrological records which enabled him to predict the solar eclipse of 585 BCE.

Miletus had founded many colonies, perhaps as many as 90, around the Mediterranean and especially along the coasts of the Black Sea. The Milesians traded their goods for raw materials, especially iron, timber and fish. Strabo mentions a sheep-industry and the yield of soft





wool, and Aristophanes mentioned the fine and luxurious Milesian wool. The Milesian traders also had access to the hinterland. The land around the mouth of the river Maeander was fertile, and planted with olive trees. Thales himself was associated with a commercial venture in the production of olive oil in Miletus and on the island of Chios, but his interests may have extended beyond those two places. Olive oil was a basic item in the Mediterranean diet, and was probably a trading commodity of some importance to Milesian commerce.

It seems likely that Thales was one of the 'great teachers' who, according to Herodotus, visited Croesus, the king of Lydia, in Turkey, in his capital Sardis. From Sardis, he could have joined a caravan to make the three-month journey along the well-used road, to visit the observatories in Babylonia, and seek out the astronomical knowledge which the Babylonians had accumulated over centuries of observation. Alternatively, as Milesian merchantmen continually plied the Black Sea, gaining a passage on ship could have been easily arranged. From any number of ports Thales could have sought information, and from the port of Sinope he may have ventured on the long journey to Babylonia, perhaps travelling along the valley of the Tigris, as Xenophon did in 401-399 BCE.

In a letter said to be from Thales to the mystic Pherecydes of Syros, regarded as the teacher of Pythagoras, Thales stated that he and Solon of Athens had both visited Crete and Egypt to confer with the priests and astronomers, and travelled all over Greece and

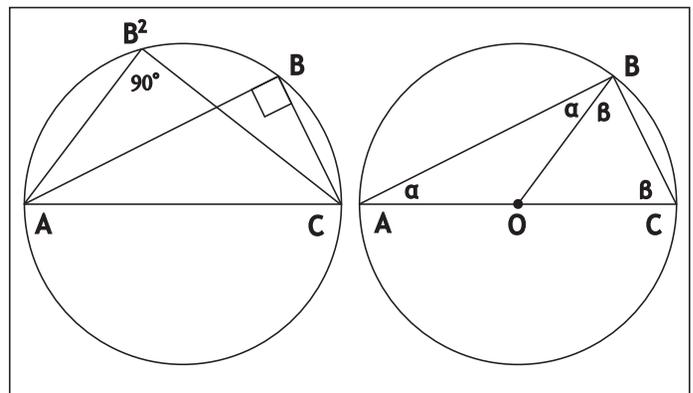
Asia. All we can say from these reports is that travel was not exceptional, with many reports describing the visits of mainly notable people to foreign lands. There must have been any number of people who visited foreign lands, about whom we know nothing.

Water, the First Principle

Looking out over what was once the sea, you can understand why Thales concluded that water must be the basis of all things. He believed this because water is colourless, shapeless, is ever-changing, ever-moving, and of great quantity on Earth, disappearing and reappearing as by magic. He observed that water always flows according to a set pattern or cycle, that it does not appear to change from this pattern. He noted that water falls from the sky, visibly, to pour into streams, rivers, lakes, then into the sea. He knew that water, wherever it existed, was only transient, even in plants, animals and people, and that from all these it returned to the sky invisibly, once again to fall visibly. So, of course, he thought water must be the basic stuff from which all else comes.

Metallurgy had been practised long before Thales presented his hypotheses, so he knew that heat could return metals to a liquid state. Water exhibits changes more obviously than any of the other so-called elements, and can easily be observed in its three states of liquid, vapour and ice. The understanding that water could generate into earth is basic to Thales' watery thesis. At Miletus he could observe that water had the capacity to thicken into earth.

Miletus stood on the Gulf of Lade through which



Thales' Theorem states that an inscribed angle in a semi-circle is a right angle (90 degrees) leading to other geometrical and mathematical theorems.



the river Maeander emptied its waters. Within living memory, older Milesians had witnessed the island of Lade increasing in size within the Gulf, and the river banks encroaching into the river to such an extent that at Priéne, across the gulf from Miletus, the warehouses had to be rebuilt closer to the water's edge. There would have been opportunity to observe other areas where earth generated from water, for example, the deltas of the rivers Halys, the Danube, the Tigris-Euphrates, and almost certainly the Nile. This coming-into-being of land would have provided substantiation of Thales' doctrine. To Thales water held the potentialities for the nourishment and generation of the entire cosmos.

Geometry

In school we learn about geometry. Geometry is the relationship of lines, curves and angles to one another. Some of these relationships are so obvious, so simple, that it can be difficult to believe that each one had to be discovered for the first time. For example: any straight line passing through a circle's centre and bisecting that circle's perimeter on both sides divides the circle into two equal parts. This fact appears so simple that it astounds us that someone had to discover it initially. That someone was Thales.

While travelling in Egypt one time, Thales looked at the very practical methods used by Egyptian assessors in measuring land for tax purposes. It occurred to him that their quite complicated system of triangles, rectangles and lines could serve other practical means. Always on the outlook for new and better ways of doing things, he set about studying these matters and soon came to realise that certain definite principles applied to all triangles, rectangles, angles and circles. As his studies advanced, he found many fundamental truths. Among these are for example, that if two sides of a triangle are equal, then their opposite angles are equal. What we regard today as an elementary geometrical fact was difficult for students of many lands over the centuries to understand.

The following are also Thales' geometrical firsts, making him the author of abstract geometry:

- He discovered that when two straight lines intersect, the opposite angles are equal.
- He found that the sum of the angles of any triangle

equals two right angles, or 180 degrees.

- He proved that the sides of similar triangles are proportional.
- He appears to have been the first person to inscribe a right-angled triangle in a circle.

Astronomy

Thales was a practical man as well as a theorist. He did things as well as thought about things. Without a computer, Thales calculated accurately the total eclipse of the sun on 28 May 585 BCE. More than this, he predicted that eclipse far enough in advance to leave plenty of time for the prediction to become known generally. The culmination of the event became of such consequence that when it actually happened, it stopped a fierce battle between Ionia's neighbours, the Lydians and the Medes. Both sides called a halt to their fighting, laid down their arms, and sat down and talked it over!

Other amazing astronomical things attributed to Thales record him as the first man to divide the Earth's year into 365 days. He also believed the earth floated in a '*sea of elemental fluid.*' This idea may well have been the initial concept of a 'universal ether'. History tells us that Thales drew maps of the stars, something never done before, but none of these have survived the 2,500 years since his death.

Electricity

As far as written history is concerned, Thales seems to be the first man to have recorded observations covering that phenomenon we call electricity. He achieved this by noting that when a piece of amber was rubbed vigorously with a woollen cloth or fur, it attracted to itself other substances like hair, feathers, straw, paper and so on. The Greek word for amber is '*elektron*', which describes its particular sunny, yellow colour rather than its electronic properties. Our word '*electricity*' comes from this Greek word, or later from the Latin equivalent, '*electrum.*'

Being a man of wide interests, Thales also knew about the force we call magnetism. He carefully studied loadstones, those naturally occurring rocks high in iron which we know as magnetite. Sailors in those days



believed that if their ship were held together by iron nails and sailed over an unknown bed of loadstones, the natural magnetic force would draw all the nails out of the ship's timbers and the boat would fall apart.

If it had not been for others who closely followed Thales' philosophy, we might not have much idea of what he did or thought. Either he neglected to record his own thoughts, which seems unlikely, or they have been lost since.

Philosophy Begins in Wonder

Those who believe that Thales inherited his views from Greek or Near-Eastern sources are wrong. Thales was esteemed in his times as an original thinker, and one who broke with tradition, not as someone who merely copied the work of others. Aristotle unequivocally recorded Thales' hypothesis on the nature of matter, and offered a number of conjectures based on observation in favour of Thales' declaration. His report provided the testimony that Thales supplanted myth in his explanations of the behaviour of natural phenomena.

Thales undoubtedly would have been familiar with Homer's acknowledgements of divine progenitors, but he never attributed organisation or control of the cosmos to the gods. Aristotle recognised the similarity between Thales' doctrine about water and the ancient legend which associated water with the gods Oceanus and Tethys, but he reported that Thales declared water to be the nature of all things. To Aristotle, Thales' theories were so obviously different from all that had gone before that they stood apart from all earlier explanations. Thales' views were not ancient or primitive, they were new and exciting, and were the genesis of scientific conjecture about natural phenomena. Aristotle acknowledged Thales as the founder of what we now call physics.

Thales was certainly what we would term today a *'polymath'*, for he investigated virtually all areas of knowledge: philosophy, history, science, mathematics, engineering, geography and politics. He proposed theories to explain many of the events of nature: the primary substance, the support of the earth, and the cause of change. He was involved in the problems of astronomy and provided a number of explanations of cosmological events which traditionally had been

attributed to the gods. His questioning approach to understanding heavenly phenomena was the beginning of Greek astronomy and philosophy, which continues today in modern science and the pursuit of truth found in mysticism and the Rosicrucian Order.

His hypotheses were new and bold, and by freeing phenomena from divine intervention, he paved the way for the rise of science. He founded the Milesian school of natural philosophy (physics), developed the scientific method and initiated the first western enlightenment. He was highly esteemed in ancient times, and a letter cited by Diogenes Laertius, and purporting to be from Anaximenes to Pythagoras, advised that all discourse should begin with a solemn reference to Thales.

Thales is the first person we know of who proposed explanations of natural phenomena which were materialistic rather than mythological or theological. His theories were new, bold, exciting, comprehensible, and possible of explanation. He did not speak in riddles like Heraclitus, and had no need to invent an undefined non-substance, as Anaximander did. Because Thales gave no role to mythical beings, his theories could be refuted, and arguments could be put forward to discredit them, an approach he would no doubt have approved of. His hypotheses were rational and scientific, and Aristotle, while acknowledging him as the first true philosopher, nevertheless criticised his hypotheses in a rational, logical and scientific manner.

Twenty-five centuries ago, Thales wondered about what the world is and how it was made and how did it relate to the rest of the universe? This form of questioning has come down to us as the scientific method of enquiry. He did not accept things on blind faith or because that is what he learned from his teachers; this is what modern Rosicrucians continue to practise to this day.

The most outstanding aspects of his heritage are: The search for knowledge for its own sake; the development of the scientific method; the adoption of practical methods and their development into general principles; his curiosity and conjectural approach to questions of natural phenomena. In the 6th century BCE Thales asked the question, *'What is the basic material of the cosmos?'* A complete answer has yet to be discovered!

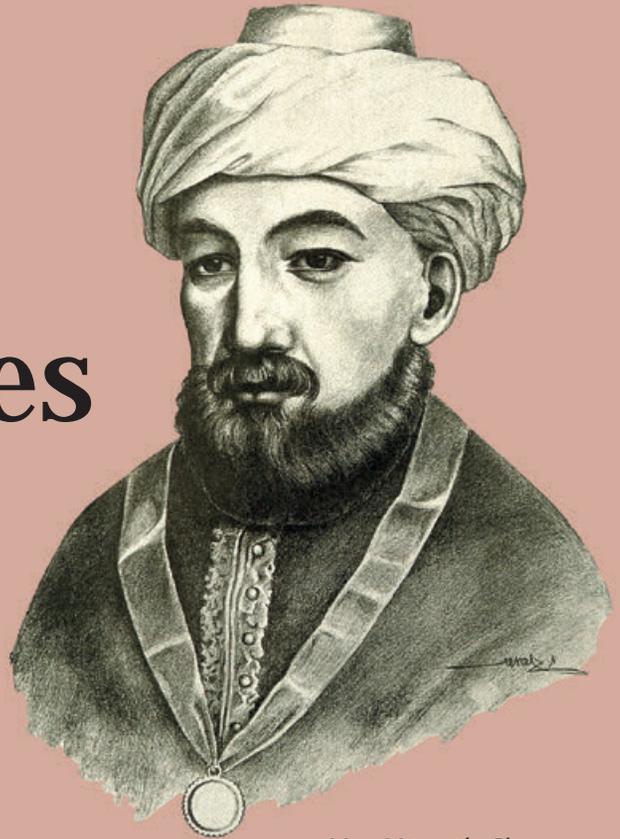


Maimonides

A Guide for the Perplexed



by **Mary Jones**



Moses Maimonides. Photogravure.
Wellcome Collection V0003789



The Oath of Maimonides

Eternal providence has appointed me to watch over the life and health of your creatures. May the love for my art actuate me at all times.

May neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to your children.

May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain.

Grant me the strength, time and opportunity always to correct what I have acquired, always to extend its domain; for knowledge is immense and the spirit of man can extend indefinitely to enrich itself daily with new requirements.



During the rule of the Berber *Almoravid* dynasty, *Moses Maimonides*, known to his contemporaries and the Muslim world as *Musa ibn Maymun*, was born on 30th March 1138, the eve of the Passover holiday, in Córdoba, Andalusia, southern Spain. He was the son of the outstanding scholar Rabbi *Maimon ibn Yusuf*, a judge of the rabbinical court of Córdoba. His family home, a book-filled Moorish-style house, stood near the Guadalquivir river.

At this time there were few material differences between Muslim, Christian and Jewish lives. They all spoke Arabic and lived peacefully together. Jews and Christians both wrote Arabic poetry, composed and played Arabic music and served in the government, sometimes in high positions. It was only later, under the *Almohad* dynasty, that Jews were corralled into the area of Córdoba still called the *Juderia*, and oppression began.

Moses Maimonides' first playmate, when he was scarcely four years old, was called Ali. At an early age therefore, he learned the rudiments of the Arabic language





The 'Guide for the Perplexed' was completed in 1190 and was originally written in Arabic. This manuscript is from a Hebrew translation made by Samuel Ibn Tibbon (died c.1230). It was produced in Spain around 1350. The text is written in a cursive Spanish hand and adorned with some two hundred illuminations, displaying mostly floral and vegetal designs in vibrant colours. (British Library: Collections).

which became his native tongue and which was renowned throughout the Western world as the language of science and culture, with Córdoba as a pivotal seat of learning.

The years passed peacefully until Maimonides was of age to celebrate his Bar-Mitzva. This was a joyous and happy time for him, though, all too quickly, his life changed due to the illness of his mother Rebecca. She became increasingly feeble in spite of the great care taken by Ali's uncle, *Abbas*, the Mufti of Córdoba. Abbas prepared the medicinal plants for Rebecca although it was Maimonides who brought and administered the medicine to her. Her illness proved too strong however, and she passed away without much suffering.

It was this sad event that persuaded Moses to become a doctor and brought to the fore in his mind one transcendent question: *'What becomes of the soul?'* This formed the basis of his mystical quest and became a driving force for the rest of his life.

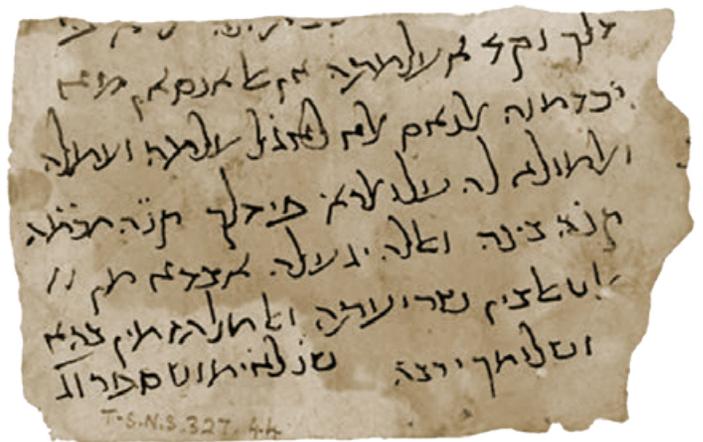
Advent of the Almohads

If you're finding the good at fault,
 you're in the dark all alone.
 If you can't see the kindness of others,
 there isn't much hope for your own.

There was another event that troubled the Jewish community at this time and that was the threat of invasion

A rare fragment of a short, previously unknown message by Maimonides. Measuring 11.7 x 7.3 cms, the text is written on paper in semi-cursive Judaeo-Arabic. The reverse of the leaf contains some honorific titles, presumably intended for the recipient (Solomon ben Yefet), and five words in Arabic that are difficult to decipher. It reads: '...in this; and I have already indicated that a man is respected by people only for his knowledge and his deeds, and the Lord has said: 'Get wisdom, get understanding' [Proverbs 4:5]. May God make him [i.e., you] ever one of the seekers of the law and those who adhere to it [see Psalms 119:31 and 44], as it is said: 'May this book never cease to be, etc.' [Joshua 1:8]. May your well-being increase.'

(Translated by Avihai Shviti of the T-S Genizah Research Unit at www.lib.com.ac.uk/ Taylor-Schechter/GF/44/).





Modern-day Córdoba, Spain, with its ancient bridge spanning the Guadalquivir. The bridge is believed to have been built over an original one built by the Romans.

by the *Almohads*. The Almohads, *al-Muwahhidun* or Unitarians, believers in the unity of God, were another Berber dynasty from North Africa which had conquered Morocco and al-Andalus by 1150.

Their founder *Ibn Tumart* taught that God was pure spirit, absolute and one. He proposed the complete separation of the sexes, the banning of music and musical instruments and the abandonment of luxury. The guardians of his doctrines were known as the Talaba, interestingly reflecting the tragic past of Afghanistan and its fundamentalist Taliban. The Almohads made Seville their regional capital in Spain, while Marrakech remained their capital and centre of power.

With them however came a strict regime of religious reformation. Maimonides' father Rabbi Maimon contacted the Jewish community in Fez, Morocco, considering it an intellectual haven and a possible place of exile. He needed to send a message, and it was Kadir, the son of Abbas, who was just about to depart for Fez, who carried it for him.

Years passed during which Maimonides studied hard at medicine. He was an avid reader. His medical writings show a profound knowledge of the ancient Greek authors in Arabic translation as well as Islamic medical works. But he also had time to reflect on esotericism and spirituality, the Talmud and the Torah being the two pillars on which he based his researches.

On the day of his majority, he suddenly left the family home and went to Samuel, the rabbi who had officiated at his Bar-Mitzva. He stayed in a small house near his mentor while pursuing his medical studies in collaboration with the local sufis. After two years he returned to his family in Córdoba.

Kadir returned from his long journey with the awaited response. The information confirmed their worst fears: the Almohads, having taken Fez, were already at Gibraltar from where they intended to conquer northwards into the Iberian Peninsula. Rabbi Maimon therefore took the decision to leave Córdoba with his family; but when? Samuel ibn Shoshan, who had written



The tomb of Maimonides in Tiberias, Israel.



the reply from Fez, estimated that it would take the Almohads two or three years to arrive at Córdoba. During the following year, Maimonides continued to work with Abbas and the sufis. His studies made him fluent in both Arabic and Hebrew. He participated in secret meetings with a Sufi, during which they studied and commented on the philosophy of Aristotle.

From Córdoba to Fez

Soul opens inside you on beauty,
then tells you to seek in the
world and ignore its flaws.

The family left Córdoba in April 1148, a time of year when nature is truly at its best, making it that much more difficult to leave. It was Kadir, together with his servant Rashid who acted as guides. Sarah and Leah, two servant girls who were attracted to Maimonides and his brother David also went along. Abbas looked after all the arrangements and procured some tents, ten donkeys and five horses for them. On the eve of the departure, Maimonides' father offered his house to Abbas, sure that one day it would be passed on to Kadir.

Instead of fleeing to the Christian north, as many Jews did, they went south into the heart of Almohad territory. The first stage took them from Córdoba to Granada, where Maimonides ran into the sufi, al-Mansur, a celebrated and much respected doctor. A letter from Abbas brought them acceptance by al-Mansur, who

suggested they take lodgings in a house near his own, as the transmission of his alchemical knowledge would take several weeks.

During this time, David used his natural talents for business to negotiate help for the onward journey. When they arrived at Almería, not yet occupied by the Almohads, their first job was to find a ship that would take them across to Morocco. Thanks to the important commercial traffic with Tangier, they were able to journey on quickly. The decision to voyage into the heart of Almohad darkness was taken because, for educated Andalusians, the Islamic world was that of civilisation and light; it was the culture in which you could read Aristotle and it was the home territory of the language of civilised Jews of recent memory.

The journey from Tangier to the great city and intellectual centre of Fez lasted about ten days (1160). The warmth of the reception in Fez by Judah ibn Shoshan and his friends assuaged the rigours of the journey and ushered in a happier time, albeit one in which they outwardly had to pretend to be Muslims. He introduced Maimonides to the Jewish and Muslim scholars with whom he would continue his education. Very quickly, Maimonides made contact with Ali ibn Hajj who had been recommended by his friend Abbas in Córdoba. Maimonides forced himself into a tough regime of study; of medicine under Ali, as well as a profound study of the Talmud, and his own afternoon consultations. His first works: the Book on Logic and the Treatise on the Jewish Calendar were written here. He also began his Kitab as-Siraj or Commentary on the Mishnah.

Some weeks later, Kadir decided to visit his father in Córdoba. It was a dangerous journey and they fervently hoped they would see each other again. A year later, Rabbi Maimon remarried, and Maimonides became the godfather to the child born of this union.

One freezing morning in December, some Almohad troops came to look for Maimonides to treat their prince, Omar, who was bedridden near Mèknes. Maimonides was already widely known as a great doctor and healer. Having no option but to go, Maimonides went to



The Mishnah Torah (British Library: Collections).



the prince and looked after him for five weeks. Omar regained his health and to thank his doctor, offered him a large sum of money. Maimonides refused, preferring to ask Omar to protect his family and all the Jews of Fez. Omar agreed to the former request, but declined the latter. The new Caliph *Abu Yakub Yusuf*, wanting to show that he was a 'propagator of the faith', had *Judah ibn Shoshan*, leader of the Jews of Fez, executed on charges of reverting to Judaism after converting to Islam. It was a dangerous time for Maimonides and his family, when they were suspected of apostatising from Islam.

It was a dangerous time for Maimonides and his family, when they were suspected of apostatising from Islam.

After this, in 1165, Maimonides and his family decided to leave Morocco and headed for Palestine. Thanks to a pass that Omar sent to Maimonides, they were able to leave Fez and made their way to Ceuta, further along the Mediterranean coast where they rested for a while. It was here in Ceuta that Maimonides met one of his correspondents, the young scholar and physician Joseph ibn Aknin, who was to become his spiritual son.

On 18th April, the family left on a fast ship calling at Syracuse in Sicily. David, who was always on the lookout for business opportunities, went into the town to make contact with the locals. In a tavern, he met some Christians who were looking for a good doctor to heal their king. David had the king taken to the ship where Maimonides looked after and healed him. Following this, Maimonides received a document dictated to a scribe, the text of which stated:

By the grace of God, in the year 1165, the 25th day of April, I deliver to Moses ben Maimon and his party a pass to Jerusalem. The Very Christian Richard the Lionheart orders that everyone aids them on their journey and by any means.

Whether this story is true or not is debatable, but

legend has it that in later years, *Richard the Lionheart* did ask Maimonides to become his own personal physician, but Maimonides declined the offer.

Egypt

Man's wisdom is in what he writes,
good sense at the end of his pen.
And using his pen he can climb to the height
of the sceptre in the hand of his king.

Some days later, the ship continued its journey and on 16th May, arrived at the port of Acre in Palestine. From there they quickly reached Jerusalem, which at that time was in the hands of the Crusaders. Thanks to their pass, they were able to spend a few days in the city and also visit the Wailing Wall.

It was impossible to stay there indefinitely, and they did not want to return to Acre. So they decided to travel to Egypt, where there was an important Jewish community. They journeyed by ship to Alexandria in 1166 and were received at an enthusiastic reception. Under the Fatimids, Egypt enjoyed an economic prosperity and cultural vitality which even eclipsed that of contemporary Baghdad. During the voyage to Alexandria, Moses prepared the outlines of his magnum opus '*Dalalat al-hairin*' or *The Guide for the Perplexed* which was written in Arabic. It was in Alexandria too that Maimonides finished and published his *Commentary on the Mishnah*.



A page from a medieval edition of the 'Sefer Madda' (The Book of Knowledge) forming part of his religious law work, the 'Mishnah Torah.' It is pictured here in a modern edition.





The many kingdoms of medieval Spain during the period 1037 to 1270.

After their arrival David, with his customary celerity, found them all a comfortable house where they thought they were destined to remain. But once again sadness overtook them. Maimonides' wife died in childbirth, giving birth to a daughter called Rebecca in memory of the mother of Moses and David. But the latest news from Morocco and Spain did not make the situation any better, for the number of forced conversions to Islam had dramatically risen. Joseph ibn Aknin had been forced to convert to Islam on pain of death. However, this sad news only made Moses work all the harder. His fame as a doctor grew until it reached the ears of *Saladin*, the Sultan of Egypt (1171-1193) via his Vizier *al-Fadil* who was cured by Maimonides.

After the last Shi'ite Fatimid Imam-Caliph *al-Adid* died, Saladin, the Kurdish vizier and general, abolished the Fatimid caliphate and became Sultan under the aegis of the Sunni Caliph in Baghdad. He called on Maimonides to come and treat his favourite *Yasmina*. The diagnosis came quickly; Yasmina was asthmatic, an illness Maimonides knew well and also knew how to treat. The medication worked better than was hoped and a few months later Yasmina became pregnant. The Sultan named Maimonides his chief physician and asked him and his family to move to Fustat, a suburb of Cairo close to the royal court. In 1171, Maimonides was also named *ra'is al-yahud* (Arabic) or *Nagid* (Hebrew), namely, *national administrator* of the Jewish community in Egypt.

A happy period now began in Maimonides' life. Kadir, his friend from Córdoba, came over to join them. He brought with him a manuscript telling of the latest discoveries of his father Abbas in alchemy and medicine. Maimonides, by now in his forties, married *Rachel*, the daughter of the sultan's librarian. From this union came a son whom they named Abraham. It was at this time that Moses edited his *Commentary on the Mishnah* and *The Guide for the Perplexed*. But the period of happiness came to an end when Maimonides' brother David died at sea on the way to India in 1174. A few years later Maimonides was pleasantly surprised by the arrival of *Joseph ibn Aknin* in Fustat. In the more tolerant land of Egypt, he was able to practise his own religion.

Philosopher and Mystic

Your manuscript shines like inlays of emerald, its margins arranged like a robe well-embroidered; a feast for the eyes like a tree's first figs, its scent like myrrh on the perfumed bride.

In his magnum opus, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, an enduringly great book, Maimonides tries to reconcile those who are philosophically minded like the dedicatee of the book, Joseph ibn Aknin, with those who wish to remain religious Jews. The work comprises three books.

In the first, he begins with an analysis of the descriptions of God in the Hebrew Bible, showing how



they are to be taken allegorically rather than literally, e.g. God's Hand, God's Eye, etc. He then argues that God cannot be accurately described using language. He reasons against the various Islamic contentions about the nature of God by their theological schools and then includes several arguments for the existence of God.

In the second book, he considers the creation of the world and Aristotle's demonstration that matter is eternal. He then goes on to analyse the nature of prophecy and the need for ethical perfection by a prophet.

In the third and final book he begins with a philosophical analysis of the most mystical section of the Bible: the description of the heavenly chariot at the beginning of the book of Ezekiel. He treats this entire section as an allegorical representation of Aristotle's thinking in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. He then moves on to the consideration of the problem of evil, which comes from the material nature of the world, and then to the nature of Divine Providence and an analysis of the book of Job. Following that, he considers the 613 commandments from the Torah of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which regulate the social and religious life of the Jews. The book concludes with an analysis of the varying forms of human perfection.

The book may not be what it seems, for it is full of inconsistencies. But this may have been deliberate, in order to disguise the fact that Maimonides' views were heretical and that the reader was required to read between the lines to understand the full meaning. Indeed, the title of the work may in some sense reflect these obscurities. It is true that the Vizier al-Fadil confirmed that Maimonides had never actually converted to Islam when the Almohads were forcing it on Jews and Christians alike, so there was no danger of him being killed for apostasy.

Over the centuries, a number of prominent Kabbalists have seen the *Guide for the Perplexed* as a work of mysticism. They argue that even given the introduction and all the contradictions contained in the book, Maimonides could not have been ignorant of the Kabbala, being so well informed about all other areas of Judaism. And they point to the fact that his son and grandson both wrote mystical books. One of the greatest medieval Kabbalists *Abraham Abulafia* even talks about the 36 kabbalistic concepts enunciated within its pages.

Jihad

I quartered the troops for the night in a fortress
which soldiers destroyed long ago.
And they fell asleep at its walls and foundations
while beneath us its masters slept on.

During this time, Saladin was assembling a powerful army. In 1187 he attacked the Crusaders, using as a pretext the violation of a treaty concluded the previous year with *Reynaud de Châtillon*, the Prince of Antioch. The decisive Battle of Hattin in early July 1187 near Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee, was the beginning of the end for the Crusader states in the Middle East.

On 2nd October of the same year, Jerusalem fell to Saladin's forces. Unlike the Crusaders' bloodbath of all Muslims and Jews following their conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, Saladin, being magnanimous by nature, spared the lives of the vanquished. He decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and freely practise their religion as '*People of the Book.*'



19th century depiction of a victorious Saladin, by Gustave Doré.



A few years later, Saladin was looking for a new way of firing up the popular imagination and he proposed conquering Iraq, where he had been born, and the neighbouring regions. But his vizier and Maimonides proposed something different. Now that he had accomplished the Jihad of the first degree by the re-conquest of Jerusalem, why not go for the Jihad of the second degree: that of the soul and spiritual elevation? They suggested he organise a peaceful religious crusade, this time to the three holy cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. If he was to create an immense popular movement, it would have the added advantage of making people forget about their everyday cares. After going on the journey, they would all be able to add the name 'Hajj' to their own name. Only those who had made the required one journey to Mecca in their life could do this.

By now, Saladin was Sultan of Egypt and Syria and he instructed his vizier, al-Fadil, to proclaim that the sultan was going on this pilgrimage, and that as many of his subjects as possible were to join him. While Saladin was away, Maimonides used the time to complete *The Guide for the Perplexed*.

By the time Saladin returned, the book was finished. Written in Arabic, it soon spread throughout the Mediterranean world and received an enthusiastic reception. Samuel ibn Tibbon, one of the most erudite rabbis of Syria wrote to Maimonides praising him and asking to translate his book into Hebrew. Maimonides agreed and asked him to bring his translation to Cairo first before he published it.

Saladin, now approaching his 60th year, finally contracted malaria. This time, Maimonides had no cure, and unable to prevent it, Saladin died on 4th March 1193 at Damascus in Syria with Maimonides' friend and his faithful Vizier al-Fadil at his bedside. It is said that when the imam, reciting from the Koran, reached the words, '*there is no God but God and in him do I put my trust*', Saladin smiled, upon which his face cleared and he surrendered his soul to god. Saladin's chosen successor as sultan was his son *al-Afdal*, who had governed Syria from Damascus for his father. He also enjoyed the full confidence of the Vizier al-Fadil, while another son *al-Aziz* governed Egypt, and yet another son *az-Zahir* governed Aleppo.

Death of Maimonides

Due to ill health, Maimonides never read the translation of his book into Hebrew, and he passed away on 13th December 1204. The Sultan al-Afdal ordered three days of mourning for all the people, Muslims, Jews and Christians of Egypt and Syria and decreed that Maimonides, now revered as the '*second Moses*', should be interred in the Holy Land.

Maimonides had been supremely educated and was heir to the long tradition of Andalusian intellectual freedom. Having lived all his life in the *Dar al-Islam*, the Muslim world, he was deeply attached sentimentally to al-Andalus and died in exile far from his home, tinged with bitterness at never being able to return.

He had mastered nearly everything then known in the fields of theology, mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, ethics and medicine. Known from then on as the acronym *RaMBaM*, i.e. *Rabbi Moses ben Maimon*, to the Jewish people he symbolised a high spiritual and intellectual achievement. All the great rabbis of the realm were consulted and they proposed that he be buried in the holy Jewish city of Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, for this was the birthplace of the great Kabbalist Rabbi *Simon bar Oharai*. The Sultan had a text penned by ibn Aknin and the rabbis engraved it in gold on his tomb:

From Moses to Moses, there has
never been another Moses.

Bibliography

Córdoba: Capital del espíritu by Roger Garaudy, ISBN: 84-85208-43-9.

La Civilización Hispano-Árabe by Titus Burckhardt, ISBN: 84-206-7951-8.

Maimonides by Sherwin B. Nuland, ISBN: 0-8052-4200-7.

Maimónides by Joaquín Lledó, ISBN: 84-483-0671-6.

Ornament of the World by María Rosa Menocal, ISBN: 0-316-16871-8.

Our Place in al-Andalus by Gil Anidjar, ISBN: 0-8047-4120-4.

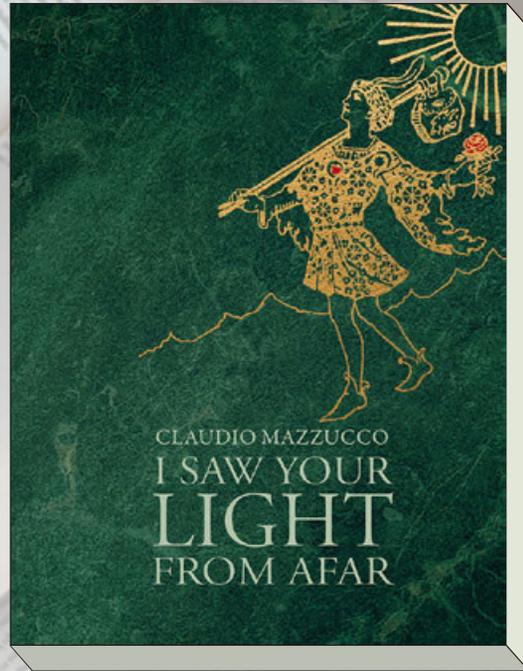
Saladin by Malcolm Cameron Lyons & D.E.P. Jackson, ISBN: 0-521-31739-8.

The Jews in Córdoba by Jesús Peláez del Rosal, ISBN: 84-86077-48-6.



Book Review

I Saw Your Light From Afar



Available from <https://amorc.org.uk/collection>

The book is light
and easy to read.
Though the chapters
are short, they all
deal with important,
and sometimes
seldom thought of
topics. Open any
page and you will
find something of
interest for the day.

The following abstract introduces a book written by
the Emperor of AMORC, Claudio Mazzucco.

The title words, *'I saw your Light from afar'*, taken from one of the Order's rituals, represent one of the main themes of this book. The Light is that of seekers, who, uniting themselves within a spirit of fraternity, walk together in search of an even greater Light. Fraternity, rather than a utopian ideal with no relevance to the reality of our lives, is a necessary requirement for humanity's evolution on this planet. There is no evolution of an isolated individual – only of groups, systems and communities.

Truth be told, we don't always read the introduction to whatever book we read, but the introduction to this book is well worth reading, for it lays down a clear foundation to the many related topics you will certainly enjoy.

The book has 43 relatively short, easy-to-read chapters, each one on a different, though related, topic. As the author explains: *'You will find here the reflections of a Rosicrucian student.'* And aren't we all, in so many ways, students of the mysteries at heart?

As humans we must act according to a new ethic, based on a new vision of reality regarding what the universe has placed in the world and generated



on our planet, namely life. This mysterious *'life force'* seeks to perpetuate itself through a near uncountable number of processes, expressing intelligence at the top and simple awareness at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder. And wherever we encounter it, we see it wielding incredible power. The messages in the book deal with many different aspects of life while constantly seeking to restore a sense of community and trust among people of all stripes and persuasions.

Chapter 1: The Mystical Path

The mystical path proposed by Rosicrucian mysticism does not intend to fuel the idea that people, in their personal quests, should turn away from life, family and friends and become recluses – far from it.

In other words, there is no need for those looking inward to migrate to a monastery or convent as in olden times. Those times are gone. Modern mystics live in the real world to learn how to live life to the full.

Chapter 2: Our Contribution to Society

The aim of Rosicrucianism is to bring forth the virtues of the soul leading to its full expression. It is a method of spiritual development that gradually and harmoniously brings each individual closer to living by the highest ideals.

That sums up the Rosicrucian ideal. How is it accomplished? Through the techniques and principles of life that are taught by the Rosicrucian Order.

Chapter 5: Eternal Postulants

In general, people who become Rosicrucians are looking for new answers to age-old questions. They want to know who they really are, whether some part of us lives after death, whether some part of us existed before this life. Our order encourages us not to accept claims purely on faith but to ask questions and to reflect, to seek, through meditation and experience, the answers that satisfy us most at any one time.

This is what a spiritual path is like. There are no shortcuts or simplifications. There are no masters who

can awaken us with a magic word or gesture to make us masters in our own right. The path lies before us, and we choose how we will follow it.

Chapter 6: Growing Together

It is essential that, upon meeting a Rosicrucian, one can sense this inner work, manifesting not so much through the beautiful words that one may be able to say but rather, by being an example to others. It is essential to cultivate good manners, to control one's speech and to pay attention to the words we choose as well as the topics of conversation – for example by avoiding negativity.

Rosicrucians are encouraged to demonstrate Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds. There is so much negativity around us in the contemporary world, we should not add to it, but try to be beacons of positivity and manifest it through the way we live.

Chapter 11: Our Dreams

As Rosicrucians, we know we are incarnated in this physical body, carrying with us the baggage of past experiences imprinted on the memory of our soul-personality. That is, we arrive with a road map showing us where we should be heading, even if not the exact mission we should accomplish. We are born with potential.

There is an ocean of potentiality out there if only we would do what is necessary to understand the full scope and nature of what is possible for us, and then put that knowledge to good use.

Chapter 15: A Brighter Future

Building a fairer and more balanced world must come through raising consciousness: an elevation of the awareness of every individual that enables us to conceive and implement new projects that can benefit all humankind, even if in seemingly small ways. A Rosicrucian is a person who keeps his or her head amongst the stars but with feet firmly planted on the ground!



In our lives we must put our ego firmly behind us and look at whatever we do and endeavour to ensure it is of benefit to other people. We must avoid selfishness.

Chapter 19: Inner Transformation

Dreaming, one of the means by which our subconscious speaks to us, utilises a symbolic language that requires some experience to understand. A sequence of images and emotions often conveys aspects of our personality that need to be understood, transmuted and integrated, where interpreting them in a logical way would lead us astray. This is also one of the reasons why the Order tells us that we should not ask others to interpret our dreams, because they are messages concerning our innermost nature and use a symbolism that is intimate to us alone and which cannot be fully grasped by anyone else.

This reminds us that there is no point asking others for the meaning of our dreams. If we want to find answers to life's big questions, and even discover just the broad outlines of the purpose of our life in this incarnation, then clearly, we must go within!

Chapter 28: Ethics and Spirituality

A process of reflection needs to take place in each of us, one which gradually leads to a new vision of who we are, our purpose in life, why we are here and where we are going. We need to develop our concept of the environment not as being 'out there' and needing to be protected, but rather as an unfolding process where we and the environment are a single entity.

We are not apart from the rest of the world, but intimately connected with it and the universe. We share the same Path and each of us needs the company of others on that Path.

Chapter 32: On Becoming Something Better

In the words of Rene Descartes, we are an *'imperfect thing'* and tend towards *'something better.'* This *'tendency'* is the process that rightly starts when we realise the need

to progress towards the Light of a new understanding of life.

From a Rosicrucian perspective, this tendency towards something better doesn't happen in isolation, separately from the natural processes happening around us all the time. We are never entirely separated from the world but always a part of it, fulfilling our destiny within the parameters that life has kindly provided us with.

Chapter 42: Freedom of Thought

In the Order we advocate the need for freedom of thought, but we also emphasise that it must be accompanied by an essential attitude of responsibility. The etymology of this word [freedom] originates from *'to answer to oneself, or others, for one's acts or behaviour.'*

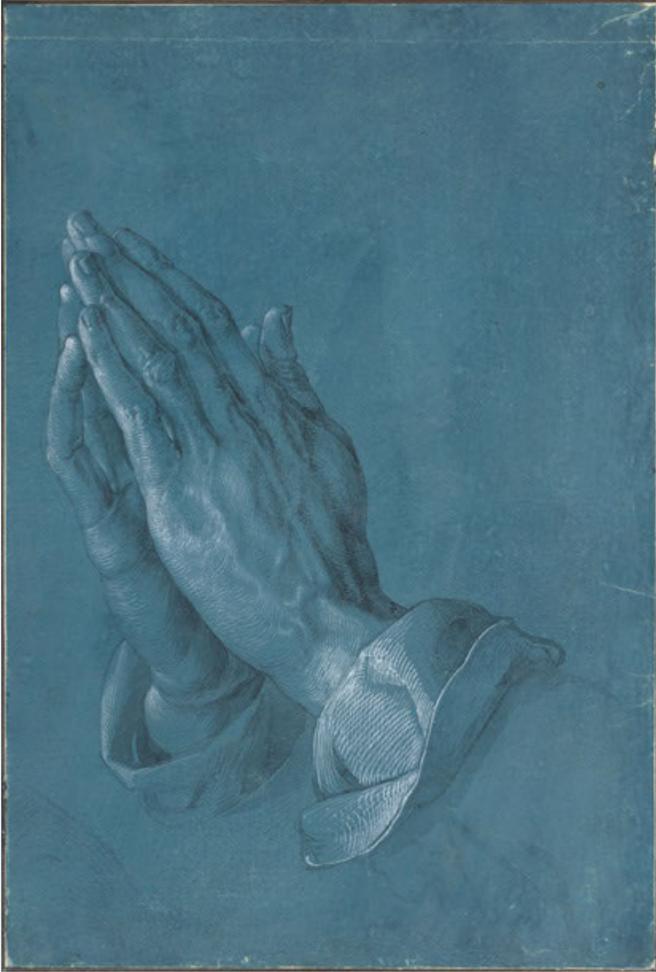
As Rosicrucians, we seek to develop ever more advanced visions of human nature. Combining mysticism with science, we find ever more practical ways of living harmoniously in communities, not only made up of people who share common ideals, but of people who tolerate and protect the rights of others to find happiness and fulfilment in ways different from our own. As Rosicrucian mystics though, we seek, as far as possible, to open transcendental dimensions of life for as many people as possible who have the innate curiosity to delve deeply into their own being.

Final Thoughts

This book is one volume you should have in your library. There is much more to assimilate than anyone could present here. Each of the chapters deserves to be read and thought about deeply and would make interesting topics in any discussion forum.

Rosicrucians have the freedom to think as they wish. Being a Rosicrucian is not simply about paying a subscription fee and having a membership card; it means adhering, through body and soul, to the ideals of true *fraternity* and *tolerance* and striving to spread a particular form of knowledge for the benefit of all.





The Praying Hands

by **Albrecht Dürer**

Several centuries ago in a prosperous German town lived a family with eighteen children. To keep food on the table for this large family, the father and head of the household, an unimportant goldsmith, worked eighteen hours a day at his trade and any other paying chore he could find in the neighbourhood.

Despite the fact that life looked rather bleak, two of the older boys had a dream. They wanted to pursue their talent for art, but they knew that their father would never be financially able to send both of them to study as apprentices in town. After many long discussions at night in their crowded bed, the two boys finally worked out a pact. They would toss a coin. Whichever one lost would go down into the nearby mines and with his earnings, support his brother whilst he was taught his profession. When that brother had completed his studies after four years, he would support the other in his learning with sales of his artwork.



They tossed a coin one Sunday morning after church. The eldest won the toss and was sent at the age of fifteen to work and learn from a well-known painter in the city. Meanwhile, the younger brother went down into the dangerous mines and, for the next four years financed his brother's studies.

Having served his apprenticeship the young artist returned home and the family held a festive dinner to celebrate the completion of his training. After a long and memorable meal, punctuated with music and laughter, the older boy rose from his honoured position at the head of the table to drink a toast to his beloved brother for the years of sacrifice that had enabled him to fulfil his ambition. His closing words were:

And now, blessed brother of mine, it is your turn. You will now go to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you.

All heads turned in eager expectation to the other end of the table where the younger brother sat. Tears were streaming down his face. Shaking his lowered head from side to side he sobbed and repeated over and over 'No, no, no.' Rising, he wiped the tears from his cheeks, and glancing down the long table at the faces he loved, he held his hands close to his right cheek and softly said:

No, brother, I cannot pursue my dream. It is too late for me. Look what four years in the mines have done to my hands! The bones in every finger have been smashed at least once, and lately I have been suffering from arthritis so badly in my right hand that I cannot even hold a glass to return your toast, much less make delicate lines on parchment or canvas with a pen or a brush. For me it is too late.

516 years have now passed. The older boy's hundreds of masterful portraits, pen and silver-point sketches, water-colours, charcoals, woodcuts and copper engravings hang in every great museum in the

world. Like most people, you are probably familiar with only one of these works. You may even have a reproduction of it hanging in your home or office.

To pay homage to all that he had sacrificed, this famous artist had painstakingly drawn his brother's abused hands with palms together and thin fingers stretched skyward. He called his powerful drawing simply 'Hands', but the entire world almost immediately opened their hearts to his great masterpiece and renamed his tribute of love 'The Praying Hands.'

Postscript

This is a very touching story that would be made more poignant if there were any written evidence that it actually happened that way. The actual title of the picture is *Hands of an Apostle* (1508) and is a highly finished preliminary study for an altarpiece commissioned by a wealthy Frankfurt merchant and executed by Albrecht Dürer, a well-known Northern Renaissance artist. He may possibly have used his brother's hands as a basis for this picture but there is no evidence to support this in the way the story relates.

However, the above story does make a marvellous parable and whatever its veracity, it serves at least as an illustration of the need we have of others and at best of an individual's sacrifice for another without material reward; a principle that lies at the heart of the Rosicrucian teachings.



THE MYSTIC CELTS

by Andrew Urquhart



Where the ancient
Celts originated is
still hotly debated.

What is certain
though is that they
powerfully shaped
the course of history
in ancient Europe.

The Celts, an Indo-European people, originated in Central Europe, where they occupied the territory along the course of the Upper Danube. They are believed to have migrated westward and southward as far as the Alps between the years 1000 and 500 BCE. Later, they travelled southeast through the Balkans to establish settlements in Galatia in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Their final migration was to the British Isles to which they came in two waves, the Goidels (Gaels) and the Brythons (Britons). By the time of the Roman conquest, they had been sharing the country for several hundred years with the native tribes of the British Isles.

No written records exist of the religious beliefs of the ancient Celts, so our meagre knowledge derives, of necessity, from their oral traditions, from archaeological evidence, and what can be inferred from mythology and the observations of some classical writers. On the whole, the latter appear to have been favourably impressed with the Celts, likening their Druids, *'the most just and wisest of men'*, to the Persian Magi and Indian Brahmins, and equating their doctrine of the immortality of the soul with that of the Greek philosophers.



Julius Caesar, quoting the Stoic philosopher Poseidonius, wrote in his *Commentaries On Britain*:

As one of their leading doctrines, they inculcate that souls do not suffer death, but pass from one body to another. The Druids, with grand contempt for mortal life, profess the immortality of the soul.

Lucan, a Roman poet and writer of the 2nd Century BCE, said in a rhetorical address to the Druids:

But you assure us that no ghosts seek the select Kingdom of Erebus, but with a new body, the spirit remains in another world. If we understand your hymns, death is halfway through a long life.

The Druids' concept of immortality differed from that of Pythagoras in that it envisaged the rebirth of the soul in another body, but not its transfer to the form of a bird or animal. It is remarkable that such an enlightened doctrine should have its origin in the philosophers of a tribal people living in what seems to us as a semi-barbaric state.

No less noteworthy was their affirmation of a mystical pantheism. Sacred groves were their sanctums rather than temples. Water, trees, stones and animals were held in reverence. The early bard who wrote:

I am the wind that blows upon the sea, I am the murmur of the surge, I am a ray of the sun, I am the most beautiful of herbs.

These words are attributed to *Arnergin the*



Two Druids, 19th century engraving.

Druid, and preserved in the *Book of Lecon*, which contains the old Irish literary records), was expressing their perception of the one underlying essence in all creation.

Evidence to support the Druids' doctrine of the immortality of the soul, with its corollary of rebirth on earth, is to be found in the early legends which tell of the reincarnation of mythical heroes after a period of time. Excavations of burial mounds

have shown that it was customary to bury with the body such articles of personal property as might prove useful in the next life.

But the teachings of the Druids came to be interpreted by the common people as a renewal of their present existence in another world. This was not, like the Hades of Greece and Rome, a gloomy underworld where shadowy figures skulked in abject misery. It was a land of life, brightness and joy where the surviving self lived a freer and more abundant life, fulfilling the aims and aspirations of the previous existence. So firm, widespread and vivid was this belief, that it was common practice for loans to be made on the understanding that they would be repaid in the afterlife. When the dead were disposed of by cremation, letters addressed to them were sometimes cast on the funeral pyre, and it was not unknown for relatives to throw themselves on it too, in the belief that they would start off together in the new world.

This Celtic Otherworld had many names: the *Land of Promise*, *Plains of Happiness*, *Land Under the Sea*, embodying the varying notions of its particular nature and location. Brazil owes its name to another, *Hy Breaseal* (the land of the mythical god *Breaseal*), given



“I AM THE WIND THAT BLOWS UPON THE SEA, I AM THE MURMUR OF THE SURGE, I AM A RAY OF THE SUN, I AM THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF HERBS”



to that land when sighted by some adventurous seamen who had sailed westwards on a voyage of discovery. There were some twelve names in all, but the two which have survived to capture popular imagination, are the island-valley of *Avalon* of Welsh legend, described in Tennyson's '*Morte D'Arthur*' as the land:

Where falls not hail or rain or any snow;
nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard
lawns, and bowery hollows crowned with
summer sea.

And '*Tir nan Og*', the (*Land of the Ever Young*) of the Gael, said to lie in the Western Seas where the sun sets. It was to this land that *Manannan mac Lir*, the ocean god, sailed after banishment from earth.

Sun Symbology

The solar motif recurs constantly in Celtic mythology and religion. The idea of rebirth may have arisen from the simple observation that the same sun, which set each evening in the west, rose the next morning in the east. *Cuchulainn*, the ancient mythical hero, had many of the attributes of the sun god. Religious festivals related to the equinoxes and solstices, the chief being the festival of *Lugh (Light)*, which was held on the first of August in celebration of midsummer. It is easy then, to understand that the Celtic heaven should lie in that land of bright wonder revealed by the departing sun as it set in colourful majesty over the Western Isles.

There are many references in Gaelic mythology to Tir nan Og, perhaps the best-known recounting the visit of *Oisín (Ossian)*, bard of the ancient heroes, who was invited to go there by *Niamh of the Golden Hair*, daughter of the king of Tir nan Og, and fairest of maidens. On the way, Oisín had to engage in combat with a *Fomor* (an underwater demon) who was holding captive the daughter of the king of the *Land of Life*. After his conquest, the journey was resumed. They found themselves forced to battle against fierce storms before the sun finally emerged to reveal the splendours of Tir nan Og. Oisín lived there happily for 300 years. Then, longing to see his old companions again, he was granted permission to revisit earth on the understanding that he would not set foot on it.



Wiki Commons / Severisaocean

'Riders of the Sidhe', by John Duncan (1911) depicts the aos sí or Tuatha Dé Danann; a supernatural race in Irish mythology, thought to represent deities of pre-Christian Gaelic Ireland. They are often depicted as kings, queens, druids, bards, warriors, heroes, healers and craftsmen who have supernatural powers.

On his return, while halting to help some workmen lift an unusually large stone, Oisín fell from his horse and his foot touched earth. Immediately, his steed vanished and he became an old man, blind, withered and feeble. Oisín described Tir nan Og as the fairest realm known to humankind. Others speak of a land '*bathed in sunshine, washed by clear streams, whose meadows are clad in flowering clover and whose trees are in perpetual blossom*', an idealised projection of Celtic mystical pantheism.

The legend of Tir nan Og is dear to the Gaelic heart. The old folk-tales spoke of '*the elect*' awaiting the call of the boatman to be ferried over the Western Seas to the Island Paradise. It has persisted into modern times in song and story of the Scottish West Highlands, still praising this '*Land of Heart's Desire*.' The silver barge needs neither oar nor rudder, but is driven by the wish of the heart. It is seen as a symbolic journey, as that of Oisín may well have been, Niamh of the Golden Hair representing purity of motive, the Fomor (the lower self) to be overcome, the storms encountered representing the test to prove worthiness, the ending of the tale, a salutary reminder of the fate awaiting those who choose to turn back.

We may similarly interpret Tir nan Og, that land of eternal spring, where '*the good that has been shall be again*', and the island-valley of Avalon, where King Arthur went to find healing balm for his wounds and peace for his soul, as symbolic expressions of the highest aspirations of the Celtic people.





Finding Our Ideal Path Through Life

by Raynor Millen

Our world increases in complexity day by day, almost like a continent-sized brain which grows and grows and becomes ever more refined and sophisticated in its thoughts. In past times, our ancestors struggled for basic raw survival, for mere existence in the tumult of battles, vendettas and political upheavals, and unfortunately that is still the case in some parts of the world. But in the quieter, more refined parts, where there is time to contemplate the deeper mysteries of the universe, the greatest and most pressing need has become to discover the true nature of one's up-till-now hidden inner self. It is only from that inner alter-ego that we can learn how to see and take instruction from the guiding light of our life, and to understand and accept our true life purpose in the face of gross materialism.

To know this greatest purpose of one's life is to be in possession of knowledge of inestimable value. How many wouldn't give a king's ransom to get even a glimpse of this! So many see life as an unfortunate accident, or a roadside stop that

In realising the pitfalls before us, and following an inner plan for living, we have an invaluable guide already within us.



was not 'meant' to happen. But that is because they have never discovered that they already have within themselves a fully formed master of life just waiting to be released. That inner self, often referred to as the 'Master Within' has needs often at variance to the desires of our outer self. And those needs are the true requirements for our inner spiritual evolution.

Restlessly and randomly, many people search in multiple directions at the same time; try this, try that, follow the latest fad for a while and then abandon it for something else, and all the time falling prey to the distractions of modern life. The tail truly wags the dog for such people. Through incessant outer superficiality, such people are never able to settle down and reach the calmness needed to discover even the possibility of there existing an inner master for every person. They may make money, they may attract social media fans galore, and they may think they are loved by everyone. But the truth of the matter is that they accomplish very little of real value and, fortunately, eventually find this out through a deeply distressing gnawing emptiness which becomes more and more difficult to suppress as the years pass.

People who have spent most of their years in the pursuit of wealth and social status often reach the pinnacle of what they thought their materialistic goals were, only to discover new challenges they never counted on having to face, and they are almost all very difficult to deal with. Things like an unfaithful wife or husband, spoiled children turning to drugs and theft, lies and deceit from close friends, and many more unsavoury yet difficult-to-solve little crises that have nothing to do with social status or wealth. The lives of such people are filled with things and people, but they have a gnawing and steadily worsening feeling of emptiness, and they certainly have no real happiness.

Who, what or where can they turn to in order to assuage that inner void? Unfortunately, because of attitudes gained through the search for possessions, such people often tend to seek the quick, easy (and foolish) solutions to life..., and none of them really

succeed. If only they would realise that this lifetime may amount to only the very first step they are going to take in their search for inner mastery over themselves, a calmness will set in and they will accept their future and main purpose in life with greater calmness.

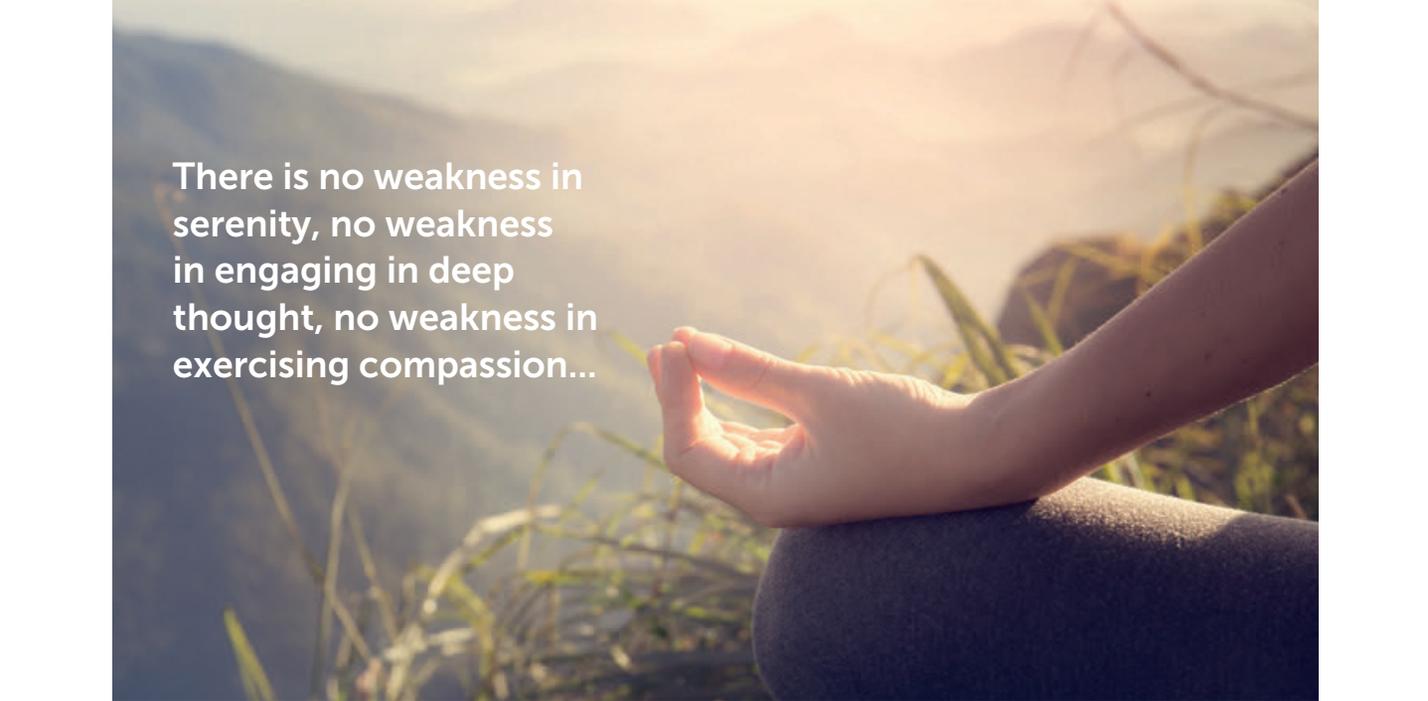
They will see inwardly a great vista before them, and understand that they stand only at the beginning of a very long journey indeed. There will be no easy lunches from then on, only hard work and rewards that can only ever come from well-earned efforts.

In realising the pitfalls before us, and following an inner plan for living, we have an invaluable guide already resident within us. But of course, guide or no guide, we are never fully immune to the demands and challenges of life, and we will absolutely fail in our endeavours many times over, and need to learn how to deal with failure and still get up from the ashes and rebuild our lives when needed. The stage of life is the material world, and material solutions are needed for many of the challenges we face, regardless of whatever high-minded solutions we may be thinking of. But if we set ourselves ever-expanding standards to live by, and do so faster than we can assimilate them, we face challenges and tests we may not be ready for.

With growing inner awareness comes a deepening sensitivity to the countless expressions of life around us.

There is no point running before we can crawl. But unlike other people who have not consciously accepted responsibility for their own evolution, mystics and people who genuinely seek a true spiritual life, know when they have pushed themselves beyond their moral and spiritual abilities, and know when it is time to take the foot off the throttle of life for a while in order to cruise rather than accelerate, so as to give the rest of their being time and space to catch up in experience, wisdom and ability.





There is no weakness in
serenity, no weakness
in engaging in deep
thought, no weakness in
exercising compassion...

With growing inner awareness comes a deepening sensitivity to the countless expressions of life around us. So many simple things we formerly would never have noticed, suddenly start appearing on our inner radar and move ever closer to centre stage. But accomplishing this requires much practise in the art of inner attunement with the Cosmic Mind through meditation for example. And, of course, there is the practical side of engaging in strong, focused periods of planning for the future. We already have within us a near infinite pool of strength and balance of idealism with practicality that we can call upon to prevent the deep ups and downs that come from facing the current of turbulent waters when we seek to change direction in life. And changing direction is, of course, sometimes imperative.

We have to be strong to cope with the stresses and demands of our world, though strength in the mystical sense of the word does not mean aggression, the type which berates others of gentler character and falsely assumes superiority. Strength based upon the confidence of one's inner conviction and attunement with the Infinite is a passive sort of strength; it is not overt, not easily noticed, for it is above the daily fray at the level it manifests. Such inner strength is unfortunately often mistaken for weakness by those who rank strength with aggressiveness and forceful behaviour. But they must beware, for there is no weakness in serenity, no weakness in engaging in deep thought, no weakness in exercising compassion, forgiveness or turning the other cheek. Quite the

opposite, there is strength and hardly ever a need for forceful displays in the lives of those who have achieved such a balance of their physical and psychic selves as accomplished mystics have. Their strength is like a quiet river, running deep and strong; and it is ready for use when the need is greatest.

A Pattern in Life

As we see the template of our life rising before our inner consciousness, we begin to fully understand the goals we have set ourselves and what is involved in accomplishing them. We measure the distance between our present self-expression and the self-expression we seek to accomplish, and we may be overwhelmed with despair at knowing, with certainty, how far we still have to go. But the humility that comes from just knowing the great distance ahead of us is a considerable achievement in itself. Knowledge is true power, and true power yields permanent results.

Recognising our mistakes quickly, and striving to compensate for them through immediate corrective actions, is always the best. There are no exceptions to this rule, regardless of whether we are seeking a spiritual life or a materialistic life. But if we fail to compensate now, there is no need to be too distressed; all is not lost, for there will be other opportunities, maybe not many, but at least some, where we can try again. The Cosmic educational system never fails its students, it simply introduces similar lessons at another time, in another



way, in another place involving other people, and it watches and applauds as we take up the challenge.

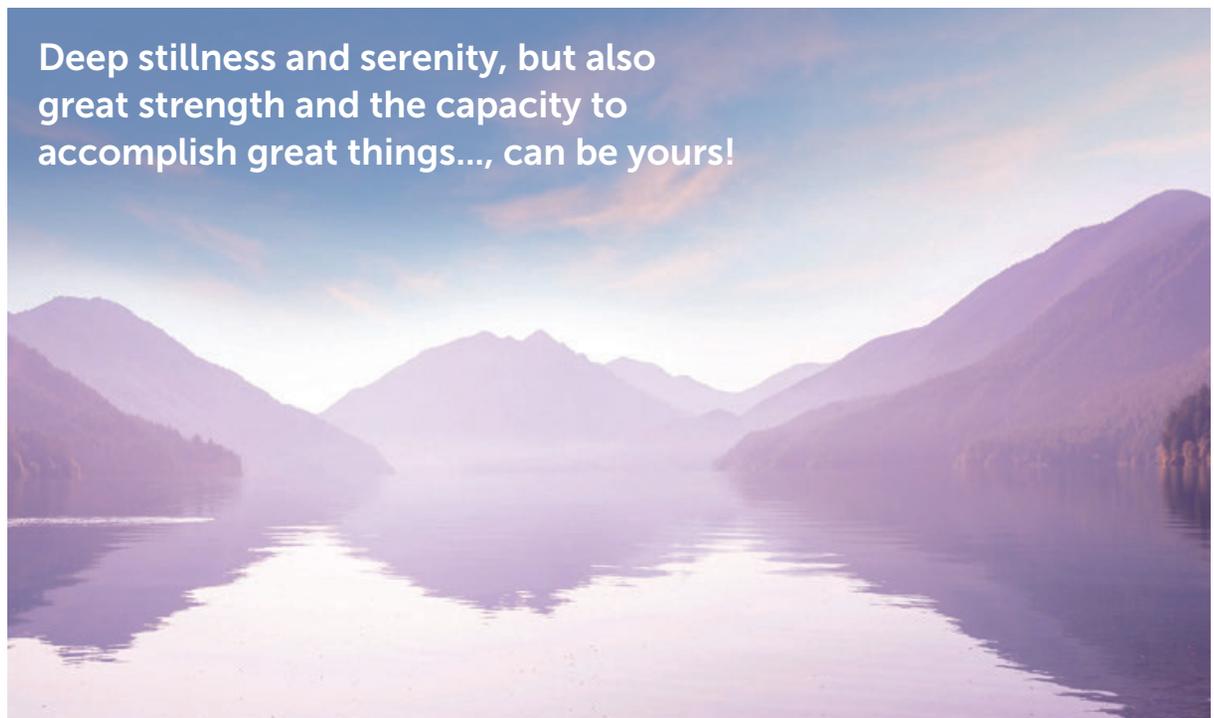
The pressures of a material-oriented world continually seek to distract us from our mystical ideals. We may sometimes feel we are living in two worlds at once, particularly if we work in a brash business environment where values are generally measured by material wealth alone, and the quality of interaction between people is little better than mean and sordid. In such situations, when all the precious, long-evolved and painfully-won mystical values seem to be entirely absent, and no recognition of the deep soul-link between all people exists, we need to call on the quiet inner strength of our Inner Master, that deepest recess of our own spiritual self, and accept the advice and words of encouragement that await us.

Daily attunement, or seeking attunement with that highly evolved aspect of our own self, is vital to help us keep our balance and stay the course so that our spiritual quest for refinement may be a constant, continuing one, functioning fully every moment we live. If we request inwardly to remain positive in all our thoughts and actions, and accept that no matter how unpleasant a situation we may find ourselves in, we have attracted that situation as a cross for inner

unfoldment, our path through life can never again be undertaken in the shadows. We traverse the thorns of pain and suffering to reach the bloom of the rose's beauty, the fragrance of the soul itself.

It has been our great privilege to be guided onto our present path, so that the practical guidance of the spiritual teachings we receive can make our journey through life a little easier as the peaks and valleys of life's pattern become less extreme. Seek spiritual guidance from others if you wish, but have your eyes wide open and never abandon your own ability to think rationally, enquiringly, inquisitively. And whatever guidance you receive, be sure to put it to the test before accepting it as gospel truth. The greatest guide we will ever have is already within us; all we need is a way of coming into full, conscious communication with that Inner Master, the earthy personality manifestation of our own soul.

The Rosicrucian Order (which hosts this magazine) is an organisation which delivers as its mission precisely the sort of guidance and advice needed for you to one day find and enter into permanent and happy attunement with the highest part of your being. Deep stillness and serenity, but also great strength and the capacity to accomplish great things..., can be yours!





Don't Come Second in the — Race — Against — Time

by Shirley Elsby

Procrastination has famously been dubbed the thief of time. Not only is it a thief, but also a more serious villain; a merciless vampire bloating itself on the purpose and fulfilment of a human life and leaving behind a stultifying legacy of regret and frustration.

Rosicrucians are urged early in their studies to “...defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish”. It is sage advice, but the demon Procrastination is expert in diverting good intentions straight down the road to living Hell..., and the realisation that it has become too late to rescue the intended outcomes..., at least in this lifetime! The English poet and dramatist Edward Young, who identified and saw off the thief during his immensely productive lifetime from 1683 to 1765, penned the following words:1

*At thirty, man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves, and re-resolves: then dies the same.*

Edward Young unmasked the villainous saboteur of the purposeful life and some of its dastardly tactics. Having seen that Procrastination wantonly steals our minutes and hours, bagging them into precious and irreplaceable days, months and years, we of the 21st century can now use Young’s 20:20 hindsight to identify and thwart the slow bleed and set ourselves back on our rightful paths to fulfilment and purpose. Or can we?

Procrastination and I are old friends. Note that I say old friends, not good friends, because this is the kind of friend who satisfies his own need for diversionary activities at the expense of his companion’s need to get things done, and creates a richly original agenda of ways and means to distract them even when they are starting to feel desperate for a positive result. And having been a long term victim of the invisible thief cum bloodsucker, I can tell you that the major symptom of its presence is faffing.

Faffing is the art of not getting done the things you want to get done while studiously accomplishing endless other things that maybe you did want to get done but didn’t need to, at least not urgently. I have a friend who



describes it as ‘metaphorical toilet cleaning’, as in cleaning the toilet when it is gleaming. Examples might be:

- Checking that all the bird feeders are full right to the very top, even though you filled them to the brim yesterday.
- Attending to the more whimsical needs of an elderly relative like shopping for brain training gadgets, trimming shrubs or emptying sheds.
- Catching up with friendship calls and writing to people you haven’t seen in years.
- Positively welcoming unexpected requests to child-mind, house sit, give lifts or accept invitations to lunch.

Faffing is a diverse activity which takes many forms depending on the person doing it. Business types may concoct new systems for dealing with email or put networking ahead of product development. Home makers may embark on ambitious culinary projects rather than tackle the decorating. Rosicrucians may find their important work demands stop them from attending convocations or focusing on their studies.

I sometimes faff myself into a state of virtual paralysis. Like the immovable object meeting an irresistible force, my wish to do something meets my reluctance to make the effort and they cancel each other out so comprehensively that nothing happens, sometimes for months on end.



Home makers may embark on ambitious culinary projects rather than tackle the decorating.

The key to telling a faff from a fruitful pursuit lies in recognising that you are choosing an ‘any time’ task over a priority.

Here is an example of how I do it. I assign myself two priorities for the month ahead. One is to keep on with my market research interviewing job, in which I can pick my working days as long as I complete the requisite 13 interviews a week. The other is to write this article for the Beacon. Despite ring fencing ample time for both, I find I have faffed away the time with frequent visits to Mum around the premium interviewing times, for such urgent purposes as taking her shopping for orthodontics and commiserating on the death of Baroness Thatcher. When absolutely forced to confront the mission, instead of parking up and getting on with it, I have driven around the allocated area several times from each direction, checked out the irresistible shops in the locality, marvelled at the immensity of the local wind turbines and the charm of new-born lambs and found it necessary to return home for anything from coffee breaks to cat feeding duties.



Tackling the article has seen me needing to log into my email account and answer every arrival, even a questionnaire about how I like my new TV package. It is, of course, imperative to check my horoscopes, conduct a new Tarot reading and check the most up-to-date news on 16 websites before launching Word. Procrastination then appears in the form of friends turning up with bottles of wine and cheery news, must-see documentaries on television and the startlingly unexpected appearance of sunshine..., several times..., making it imperative to make the best of it by taking leisure drives to distant towns and long walks in woodland.

Addicts of procrastination may engross themselves in re-evaluating their priorities in the form of new resolutions, whatever the time of year. My own have been studiously reworked on or around the first of each month, not to mention at the autumn equinox, Christmas, traditional New Year, Rosicrucian New Year and my birthday..., with very little progress being achieved towards any of them.

Procrastination certainly makes for pleasant company and interesting activity but he also leaves unmistakable hallmarks where he has sunk his fangs, in the form of gut wrenching feelings of despair, panic and worthlessness; and, of course, the sense of time inevitably and irretrievably running out. He is not the friend he pretends but the enemy of all who would attain self-mastery in the tradition of the Rosicrucians.

Motivational writer Paul McGee writes in his insightful volume S.U.M.O.2 (Shut Up, Move On) that there is as yet no self-help support group such as Procrastinators Anonymous because even though many people have thought about forming one, none has yet gotten around to it. He however offers some straightforward advice to help put the vampire back in his coffin. First is:

- **Make a start:** He does mean on that priority task that you have identified and not whatever pastime you have alighted on to avoid it. The act of starting something frequently does release a surge of purposefulness and maybe actual enthusiasm for the task in hand. It can be quite invigorating! McGee cautions us not to get hung up on how long the overall task might take but to make progress with it, however slender.



Procrastination has been dubbed the 'thief of time.'

- **Imagine vividly how it will feel to finish:** The satisfaction of a job well done has few equals. Even the satisfaction of a job done at all feels pretty good to someone who has habitually succumbed to the thief of time, as I have found. The Rosicrucian techniques of visualisation may be put to excellent use in picturing..., with movement and full colour..., the sensations of completing the allotted task and especially lingering on the positive emotions to be experienced from the achievement, no matter whether it is a magazine article, a full scale educational course or writing that best-selling book.
- **Tackle the worst activities and most frightening and difficult tasks first:** So many of us put off the tasks that feel uncomfortable, unpleasant or downright scary. The fact is, the longer we put them off, the longer we feel the horrible inner effects. Taking action to deal with those items first has the merit that at least it puts them out of the way so you can move on. Seriously, it is a no-brainer.
- **Reward progress:** Do not reward lack of progress. In the past when Procrastination has had less of a hold on me I have thwarted him by telling



myself I will not eat until I have finished such-and-such a job and cannot uncork the wine until a certain milestone has been reached. Make sure you genuinely feel you merit a reward and that the reward is proportionate. One sentence in the writing task does not earn you a trip abroad.

- Find a companion to share your experience of Procrastination and success in fighting him off: Just like Alcoholics Anonymous assigning members a 'buddy' to help combat the demon drink, an ally - perhaps from the Rosicrucian fraternity - can be a formidable asset in getting your life back on a purposeful track.

It may also be helpful to identify the factors which feed your faffing. What stops you from doing what you

It may also be helpful to identify the factors which feed your faffing. What stops you from doing what you want to do?

want to do? There are many factors which Procrastination uses as barriers, from fear of failure to the idea that there is plenty of time when really there isn't. Many people feel they are always too busy to do what they intend, but that is invariably a myth. If you were purposefully busy you would be meeting your priorities. Does the task feel too big? Break it down into bite-sized pieces. Do you need new skills? Go on then, learn them! Are you worried about looking inadequate or failing to deliver what was expected? You certainly will if you don't do anything! The fact is that even if you fall short of your aspirations, if you have produced something then other people will have that something to work with, a starting point, and if you have produced nothing, they won't.

Another tip is to take responsibility for your own actions, or inactions. Recognise that you are the one and only author of your life and that whatever other people or duties appear to detract from your priorities you have the power and wherewithal to stay on purpose, if that is what you decide to do. Set aside the time and guard it against all intruders, Procrastination included. Disconnect the



It is a beneficial exercise for everyone to write down what they hope to achieve in their lives...

phone, invite visitors to call another time and clear your diary, your desk and your clutter to make way for the work about to be in progress.

It is a beneficial exercise for everyone to write down what they hope to achieve in their lives, and then imagine what it would feel like to reach that goal. Whatever appears on the list, from experiencing enlightenment to becoming the world's richest person, if you delve deeply enough you will find that the real desire is for a feeling or set of feelings. People want money because of the feelings of freedom, choice and security that they believe it would bring them, or perhaps power and status. They want enlightenment because they want to feel close to God or to feel certainty about their purpose for living or their place in the Cosmic grid. People's real desires are for emotions, not things; for the feeling of belonging, of being loved, worthy, purposeful and at peace. Procrastination brings none of these feelings to fruition. It stands in the way of them all, beckoning us to a miserable end. Do not give in to it! Fight the villain with positive steps, even if they are baby steps and call upon the God of your Heart to recognise and overcome. And if you catch the thief Procrastination anywhere near your priority list, lock him in a cell until your next holiday.

References

1. Young, Edward, *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality*. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174865>.
2. McGee, Paul, *S.U.M.O. (Shut Up, Move On)*; Capstone Publishing, Chichester, 2008.





Postures for Spiritual Growth

by **Alvin Sedoya**

Travelling on the path to illumination is a the greatest journey we will ever take. There are no shortcuts, no easy ways of reaching our goal, no fudges or quick fixes. For the path you take is, in its broadest terms, defined by what you presently are, which in turn depends on what you have been in the past. In other words, your personal karma plays a big part in how your life is formed and what challenges you will face along the way.

That there are no fast lanes to illumination may sound a bit boring and unexciting, but deluding oneself about the true nature of the challenges we must face and overcome on our journey is a waste of time, a bit like seeking the blueprints for the mythical perpetual-motion machine. Austere as the journey to illumination may seem, the truth is that it is far from boring or austere, even though it is certain in most cases not to be easy. Every person seeking genuine spiritual development will have a life filled with challenges, some severe, some relatively easy to overcome, but all of them will have to be dealt with sooner or later.



Procrastination, other than briefly as one takes a rest and gets one's bearings, is invariably not a good thing once one has decided upon a final goal. What one can be assured of when that goal has been defined and decided upon is, at the very least, an interesting, rewarding and thoroughly fulfilling life, where achieving one goal points to the next, and so on and so forth. Although the journey will have its flat, desolate, boring plains to traverse, as well as a few dark valleys, in the pig picture, the path points upwards, on and on to the next elevation, the next peak beyond which ever higher peaks beckon one on.

Times of seemingly rapid progress are, for the most part, mere illusions, for they are preceded by long periods of *'gestation'* as one prepares oneself and does the groundwork necessary for those rare quantum leaps in consciousness and understanding. For every such leap, there will be countless hours of boring and frustrating apparent stagnation, where nothing seems to be happening and things just aren't coming into place. But adhering to a coherent system of inner development throughout such periods is essential. One has to have before one an ultimate and transcendent goal and, most importantly, a method of reaching it. Once the method has been found to be effective, applying it through thick and thin is all that is needed. The Rosicrucian Order has over the past century provided such methods for hundreds of thousands of people the world over.

Karma is no fool. It is there to assist us to evolve, and rarely if ever presents us with difficulties we can't overcome by applying the tools and techniques we've already acquired. True progress can only be made step-by-step, hour-by-hour and day-by-day through discipline and hard effort. Our steps on the path consist of our personal thoughts, our feelings towards others, and the actions we take in dealing with others and ourselves. There is a strong element of the here-and-now in this approach and we are so-to-speak on the ground in the thick of it all among the hot, sweaty masses of confusing, noisy and conflicting paths that beckon us on. But only one path will be best suited to our needs. Intuition, that highest of all human faculties is what finally tells us which way to go, which of the many doors to open and pass through.

A More Direct Route

As we metaphorically travel on our path of spiritual unfoldment we learn through painful experience the futility of trying to find shortcuts by attempting to avoid what our accumulated past actions and the karma associated with them dictates are fundamentally important experiences for us to have. There is never a need to fret about this, but a great need to accept the lessons that lie before us. And we need more than anything else to just get on with the task of learning from the experiences that will accompany them. And learning grudgingly is of course not the right way of going about things. Gratitude and joy at being given the chance to wipe the slate clean from the stains of past thoughts, words and actions should be the spirit in which we accept our daily challenges. Focusing our energies on the task ahead, rather than questioning *'why me?'*, is paramount.

Intuition, that highest of all human faculties is what finally tells us which way to go, which of the many doors to open and pass through.

If there exists such a thing as a quickest route to heaven, then accepting your path is it. You'll find that accepting it good naturedly (indeed with gratitude!) and dealing with the challenges it presents amounts to the least painful,

most rewarding and by far the quickest and most direct route to illumination. Contrary to what many people think, the approach that brings success is crucially based on the broad substructure of one's attitudes. Attitudes have cognitive, affective and behavioural components. They determine how we think, feel or act, and it is these attitudes that allow us to have the realisations needed in order to realise in detail how to apply our toolkit of effective methods of inner development in the most economical and effective manner possible. Our attitudes are fundamental and directly govern how we, as students of the mystical life, approach and master the tasks needed for our development.

So I have come to believe that certain key attitudes are essential for any path of spiritual development to be successful. There are potentially many such attitudes of course but only a few that are effective in furthering our spiritual development. I will consider just five attitudes but refer to them more accurately as mystical or inner postures instead. For attitudes are in effect deliberately



held mental and emotional postures adopted with difficulty at first but held with a lighter and lighter touch as we begin mastering the true art of living.

Causation

The first posture is what I call *'causation.'* It is crucially important to come to understand that there are always two causes to every manifestation. Things don't manifest along a one-dimensional string of causes, with one cause leading to the next. No, all phenomena are the result of two active causes, never just one.

We can call one of them the *'positive'* polarity and the other the *'negative'* polarity or quality. The words *'positive'* and *'negative'* have, in this regard, no relation to their normal association with electric fields. They are merely two qualities in which a few aspects of those qualities (not all of them) are polar opposites like the north and south poles of a magnet or the positive and negative terminals of an electrical circuit. Only two causes can produce a manifestation and that manifestation occurs at the point of their union. Polar opposite *'sub-qualities'* of these two *'things'* are what causes the things themselves to be attracted to and eventually bind with each other in a stable union. This principle is known as the Rosicrucian Law

of the Triangle and is part of the fundamental teachings required by anyone aspiring to learn the deeper, esoteric mysteries of life.

We can consider the things as including absolutely anything at all, whether physical objects or agglomerations of mental thoughts and emotions. What is crucial though is to treat them as things even though they may not be tangible. They are things in so far as they can be mentally constructed and understood, and it is important therefore to realise that whatever the nature of a *'thing'*, it is ultimately the result of the union of two other things. Without a clear understanding of the duality of all causation, we tend to concentrate on only the most obvious cause, thereby missing half the picture and thereby failing to see the full range of causes behind a thing, i.e. a material object, a thought, an emotion, an event, etc., indeed anything whatever you can think of. Because we tend to concentrate only on one cause, we tend to attach too much importance on that single cause and lose the wider perspective needed if we are to fully understand what is happening and why.

When we understand the need for two causes we have a better understanding of our self. Usually, we will be analysing something which has happened and we will





therefore be alert to recognise the two parts that were played in the event's cause. In other words, we will see how we personally share responsibility with someone or something else.

Change

The second posture, closely related to the first, is change. It is one of the strongest of certainties we have. We may speculate about our physical existence, maybe even speculate that we are mere holographic projections from some super-mind, that we may move from one universe to another between incarnations, and all sorts of other things we can't prove, yet! But one thing is absolutely clear, we experience change all the time, and ironically it is the only constant part of our lives.

We change not only our mental concepts of ourselves and the world around us, we also change the deepest feeling we have for things, our emotions, our love for or dislike of certain circumstances and people. Few things are so stifling to our individual or collective human creativity, or as deadly to personal or social development, as a misplaced zeal for a final solution, finding a 'once-and-for-all' final situation where we can put our feet up

and relax. We've seen some truly tragic national 'final solutions' in the past with millions dead as a result, so let's never think of anything as ever being the be-all and end-all of any issue. There is never a true ending. There are stages, chapter endings, section endings but no end to our book of life, no '*final solutions*.' What was '*final*' a decade ago may seem anything but final today.

People who work their entire lives towards their retirement may discover that their lives become empty and boring when there is no longer a worthwhile reason to get up in the morning, especially if they have no hobbies or interests. An article in the March 2023 edition of the Rosicrucian Beacon magazine (p17) entitled '*Go to the Light*' mentions the long deceased Michael Shoreditch who can't let go of the office environment he lived in for a large part of his life. He ends up in a psychic state of limbo rather than embracing change and moving on to the Light he's destined to experience before his next incarnation. Well, on a purely mundane level we too should avoid ending up in a situation where we feel there's little else to do than just carry on with what we've always done. Even if we feel we've finally made it, we have a healthy bank balance and can put our feet up to enjoy the fruits of our labours, we must be careful not to think this is the end



of change, that things will from now on continue on the straight and level indefinitely. The fruits of our past efforts eventually go out of season, the money dries up and we are eventually forced to face change again. Change is the law!

As the two polarities of any manifestation continually combine and recombine to produce new manifestations, we are experiencing change constantly. And change causes us to explore new avenues, try new things, seek new understandings of things, and seek new situations in the ever-changing world around us. The fast pace of life experienced by most people is the realisation of the impermanence and instability of our material and social lives. Sensitive seekers already know this and fully realise that not only does the outer world constantly change, they change too.

Our aims, our goals, our aspirations and desires all change over time. Sometimes change is forced upon us and at other times (less frequently) we initiate the change ourselves. In a sense, we wake up as new beings each morning, slightly different from the evening before, and the world is for us just slightly different from yesterday. Consequently, those who are serious about personal development examine their private philosophy each day in the light of new experiences because they know that yesterday's philosophy is inadequate for today's living. When we are trying to create perfection at the same time as coping with change, we must remember that our very concept of perfection is changing, expanding, evolving.

Of all people, mystics, though generally all people sincerely seeking genuine spiritual advancement, don't expect to live in a world where things stay as they are. They are sufficiently self-assured to live comfortably in an ever-changing world, happy to meet change as it arrives, adapt to the changed circumstances and see those new circumstances as karmic gifts meant to spur them on to new experiences that will assist them in meeting their daily challenges, and in the greater scheme of things will deepen their spiritual maturity.

The more experienced we are on our given path, the more we welcome change as a vehicle for growth.

In fact, understanding change makes us more accepting of it with the result that we try to share in the process, guiding change for the benefit of ourselves and others. We won't find any adept longing for the past or fighting change in defence of the present state of affairs. We will be fully immersed in the present, while carefully and knowingly working for the future and engineering the changes that we believe are necessary to bring that future into the present. We become transformed into willing, understanding and excited agents of change.

Self-Reliance

The third posture is self-reliance, something which flows directly from our concept of self. Of course I'm not referring to egocentricity or selfishness, or that we abandon our public duties and serve our personal needs

to the complete exclusion of the needs of others within our karmic proximity. No, we have social obligations, we have karmic obligations, we have civic duties to perform, we have our family, village, community and nation to stand up for, and we must not abandon our duties.

...those who are serious about personal development examine their private philosophy each day in the light of new experiences...

Self-reliance is more akin to courage, fortitude, inner resolve and a deep sense of responsibility. True mystics know that no answer can come from anywhere or anyone except from within oneself. We don't really accept advice from anyone for example until we inwardly agree with it; in other words before we have internalised and made that advice our own. We rely best on what comes from within us, even if we borrow the seed thoughts from others to begin with.

We carefully listen to others, enjoy exploring new ideas with others and gain much from group study where we share ideas and experiences with others. But in the end, we don't really accept anything until we've taken ownership of it and see that it resonates with our inner self. To that extent, we are relying on ourselves. We are self-reliant in that our decisions are made by us alone and not imposed upon us. To the extent we make the experiences of others our own, valuable lessons may be learned; but all the answers we seek ultimately lie within us already, and these answers can only be found there.



Impersonality

As a Rosicrucian, I have a private *'home sanctum.'* This is a small room where I retire regularly, usually each evening before I retire to bed, and do a number of important mystical exercises, quite apart from thinking the day over, noting the mistakes I made and the things I did right. Most important of all for me is to attune myself with God, or as Rosicrucians call it the God of my Heart; in other words the highest form of holiness I can reach. It is my sanctum sanctorum, my life's anchor, and I would feel most lost without at least something resembling the sanctity I'm privileged to experience in it from time to time. Each time I sit in front of the big mirror I have on my altar, I look squarely between the two burning candles into the face of the person whose inner self has all the answers. My Inner Self, like your Inner Self too, is an extension of the Divine Self, and it knows the answer, the correct answer, to every question you or I could ever ask. This is where I get my best advice.

The Inner Self, also known to Rosicrucians as the Master Within, is not the body itself, it is not the brain, it is not any possessions I have, nor any accumulation of knowledge I may possess, nor any personal achievements I've made. It is separate, apart from the outer me, it is a unique, independent, never to be repeated extension of the god-consciousness existing in all creatures; and it has a wisdom beyond our wildest dreams. This the Self to which we look for all reality.

Self-reliance then is reliance on this Inner Self, and being confident and proficient in contacting it whenever needed. Our self-reliance is part of a courageous philosophy, and although it is something everyone should possess, it is unfortunately something which only a few do. Far too many people look to an ordinary, fallible person to lean upon, like a guru, a pop idol, or some icon of intellectual fame, when all the time the only really competent guru is already *'inside'* them. We must look to our Self for all true solutions and not try and impose our personal beliefs on others. Our Inner Self is for us only, and to help others therefore, we must lead by example and create that example through reliance on our Self.

The fourth posture is impersonality. It is very important but often one of the most difficult of attitudes to maintain. The term *'impersonal'* means for some people being cold, aloof or uncaring. But that is not what's meant. For me, and I'm sure for others too, it means something quite different and is the source of both perspective and power.

When acting in a personal way, people are prone to playing God. Even when sincerely trying to help others, they take it upon themselves to control the people they're trying to help by selecting the objects and the means of help according to their limited value judgments. In other words, *they* select who should receive help from them and *they* decide what help is best suited for those they wish to help. There's a tendency to decide what someone *should* do, or suggest how they might live *better*. In the individual's great self esteem, it becomes too easy to want to evolve the understanding of others, meaning of course, to make it *more like their own*. Sounds a bit presumptuous? Of course it does.

It is far better to be impersonal. To illustrate this I'll use an analogy, one often used in the training of a mystic. How unfortunate some of us would be if candles acquired some special intelligence and will of their own and started radiating their light only to those they considered deserving of it. Of course that's not likely to happen; a candle doesn't ask who we are or how we live, nor even why we're using its light. The candle simply radiates impersonally with no sermons, no advice, no judgment. It gives its light to everyone, sinner or saint, and we may take of its light as we will, and use it as we may. It gives because that is its nature.

Acting in a personal way means limiting ourselves to helping those we know, those we approve of and those we judge deserving of our assistance. We're also limited by our emotions. Now certainly there are times when personal efforts are good and proper and even required and we should all respond to an appeal for assistance. All of us should in some way treat the ill, comfort the distressed and protect those in need of protection. But the bulk of our

Self-reliance is reliance on the Inner Self, and being confident and proficient in contacting it whenever needed.



work should be devoted to *impersonal* service, an offering of our all to the Cosmic to be used wherever required and in whatever way needed, without demanding the personal control we find so hard to let go of.

Impersonal service means serving all, known and unknown, human, animal, fish or fowl, all who are in need and who could benefit from our helping hands. Best of all, while serving impersonally, we're not held back by worries about success, nor given over to pride by what help we've given, nor worried about the possible new karmic bonds we may have inadvertently created. So, true students on the path simply give, for it is in their nature to give freely, kindly, with concern, with love, and to all who can receive: *'like the radiation of a light in a darkened room.'*

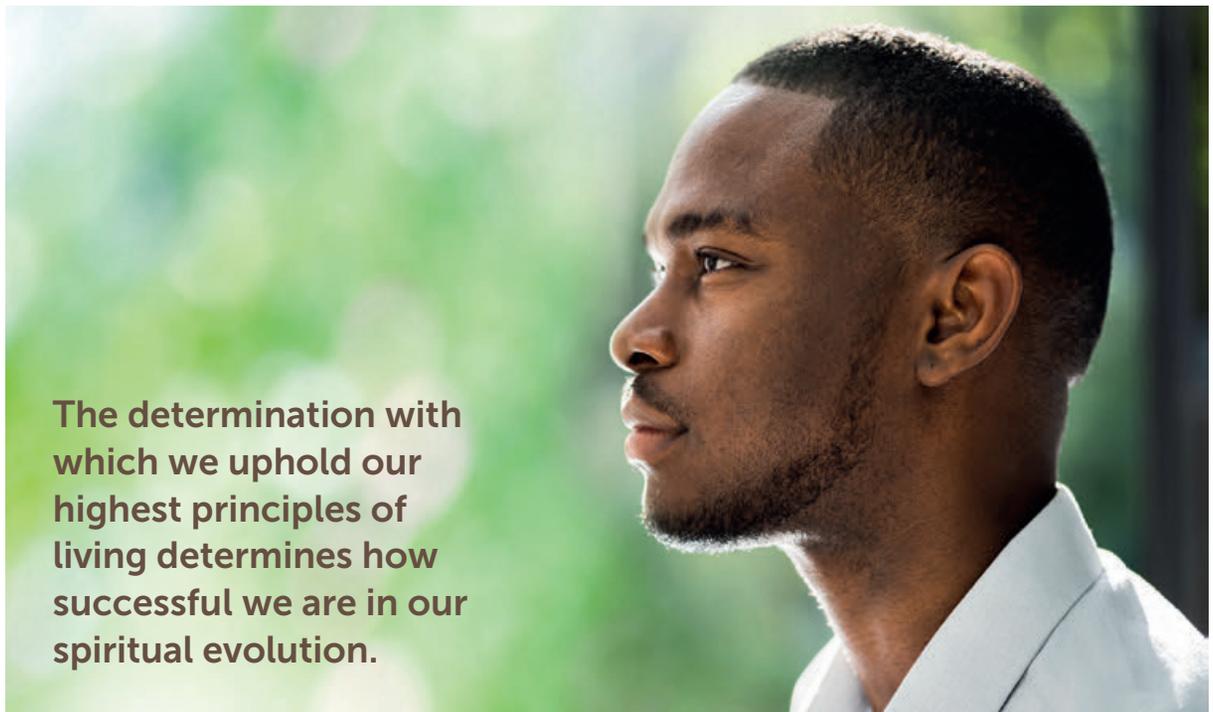
High Aspirations

The fifth and last posture is a dogged or determined holding of high aspirations as long as possible, as often as possible. Doing so requires great effort though, and sometimes enormous challenges need to be overcome. The determination with which we uphold our highest principles of living determines how successful we are in our spiritual evolution. It is in fact the most important of the five inner postures, for without it we are lost pretty

soon and find ourselves back in the humdrum ordinariness of a life without a transcendent goal. Keeping one's consciousness elevated and working at the highest level of awareness we are capable of is what is needed to uphold determined aspiration.

Far too many seekers complain about how long it is reputed to take to become an adept. Well, that's just too bad isn't it? One can't become a world-class concert pianist without years of effort; one can't become a brilliant scientist simply by attending a few night classes in physics. Some people compare themselves with great masters of the past as though they were already on the same level intellectually and spiritually with these 'super beings' and just need a little extra push to gain entry to the exclusive *'club of masters.'* What a grand delusion! Mastering life is not only a lifelong venture even when one manages to doggedly and persistently uphold one's highest aspirations; it is a venture that will continue for many lifetimes, even for the most diligent of aspirants, even when one's determination is fierce as a burning furnace and one's aspirations are truly high.

There'll be many moments when one's aspirations are tested and questioned, and one's determination to carry things through begins to falter. When that happens,



The determination with which we uphold our highest principles of living determines how successful we are in our spiritual evolution.





many people feel they've failed and stop even trying to use the innate powers and gifts they already possess. Feeling unable or not powerful enough to operate on a greatly elevated vibrational plane with ease and finesse, they do nothing, they don't even try to remedy the situation. What poor excuses for seekers of spiritual illumination. None of us can at all times be completely attuned and harmonious. We're human after all, we have our limitations, and we will fail many times over before attaining mastership.

It is better therefore to completely forget about comparisons with past masters, or with anyone else higher than us for that matter, and decide instead to operate upon the highest plane of consciousness open to us at this time and just get on with it. In this way we will always be at the upper limits of the personal range of our spiritual quest, and at this level we will receive many glimpses and even detailed visions at times of what lies even higher than we can aspire to at present. Aspiring consistently to something noble and spiritually rewarding, and doing so consistently and with determination is the mark of a true mystic, no matter what beliefs or philosophy of life s/he holds.

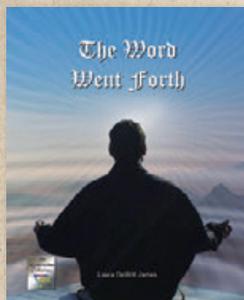
As we probably won't reach that highest plane today,

let's try instead to reach the highest plane we reasonably believe achievable. There's an old saying: *'Prove that you can be trusted with a match and you'll be permitted to hold the candle.'* Its meaning is simple and obvious; do your best now and higher development is sure to follow.

The five attitudes or inner postures discussed in this article are of course tightly interwoven with each other and mutually reinforcing. Attitudes, those deliberately held inner postures of thought, word and action, have no direct power in themselves but their implications are tremendous. They exert their power through their effects on our thoughts, feelings, words and actions. In summary, if people were suitably grounded philosophically by the society in which they lived, there would be no need to even speak of these postures. Our postures of living are there to properly orient ourselves so we can get on with the work that lies within our personal abilities to accomplish.

Rightly understood, these inner postures permit personal power and true wisdom to be acquired more quickly than without them. Create a few new postures for yourself, make them your own personal way of living, and you can be sure they will become crucial tools in your journey on the path to Illumination.





The Word Went Forth

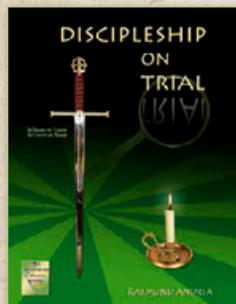
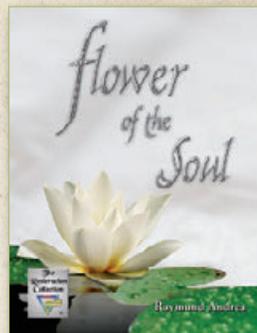
– by *Laura DeWitt James* - 88 pages / softback – Code: 1085 – £8.95

In a story-like manner, the author demonstrates from a physical and metaphysical point of view, the nature of reality through the medium of vibrations. Through simple examples and analogies involving repetitive motion, we are introduced to the fundamentals of creation. Elements such as light, sound and other forms of vibration are brought together to form the reality of the seen and unseen worlds in which we live.

Flower of the Soul

– by *Raymund Andrea* -- 496 pages / softback -- Code: 964 -- £14.95

This book is a collection of essays and private letters written by the author, one of the 20th Century's foremost mystics. The author corresponded with fellow mystics and wrote in many prestigious journals about an alternative world-view which challenged complacency and urged all seekers of spiritual revelation to call upon the inner core of goodness and strength that guides humanity to ever greater heights of spiritual discovery.



Discipleship on Trial

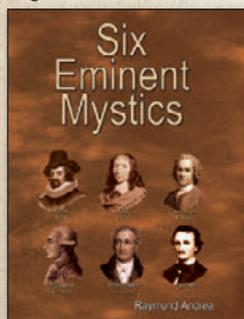
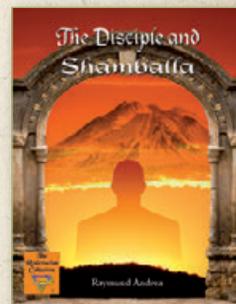
– by *Raymund Andrea* - 152 pages / softback – Code: 900 – £10.95

Written against the backdrop of the darkest days of the Second World War, when the author's home city of Bristol was being bombed daily, the momentous events of two world wars in the space of twenty five years had markedly affected the psyche of nations and brought humanity to a crossroads in history. What was also facing a crossroads was 'discipleship', a concept the author eloquently develops in this book.

The Disciple and Shamballa

– by *Raymund Andrea* - 120 pages / softback – Code: 901 – £10.95

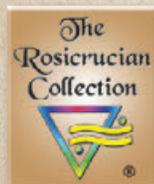
This book gives an unsurpassed account of the highest altitudes of the mystic way, the universal path of spiritual enlightenment. Written in 1960 in the author's 78th year, one cannot help but be moved by the gentle urgency of his spiritual devotion to the highest realms of holiness, and his earnest attempts to inform the reader of the landscape of the highest realms of sanctity known to humankind.



Six Eminent Mystics

– by *Raymund Andrea* - 280 pages / softback – Code: 1063 – £14.95

This collection of essays delves into the lives of six eminent literary figures of the past who, quite apart from mastering the art of writing, also conveyed clear signs of spiritual aspiration of the sort found only in the lives of eminent mystics and spiritual leaders. Each author brings one or more major contributions to the corpus of esoteric wisdom we take for granted as obvious truths today.



The Rosicrucian Collection is a catalogue of books devoted to Rosicrucian mysticism. All books in the collection focus on metaphysical, spiritual and philosophical topics aimed at serious students of mysticism, and those seeking enlightenment. The above books represent a selection of the many titles either in print or about to be published. If you wish to purchase any of them, contact us using the address details on the right, or purchase online at www.amorc.org.uk.

The Rosicrucian Order
Greenwood Gate, Blackhill
Crowborough, TN6 1XE
Tel: +44 1892 653197
email: sales@amorc.org.uk
Web: <http://amorc.org.uk>



