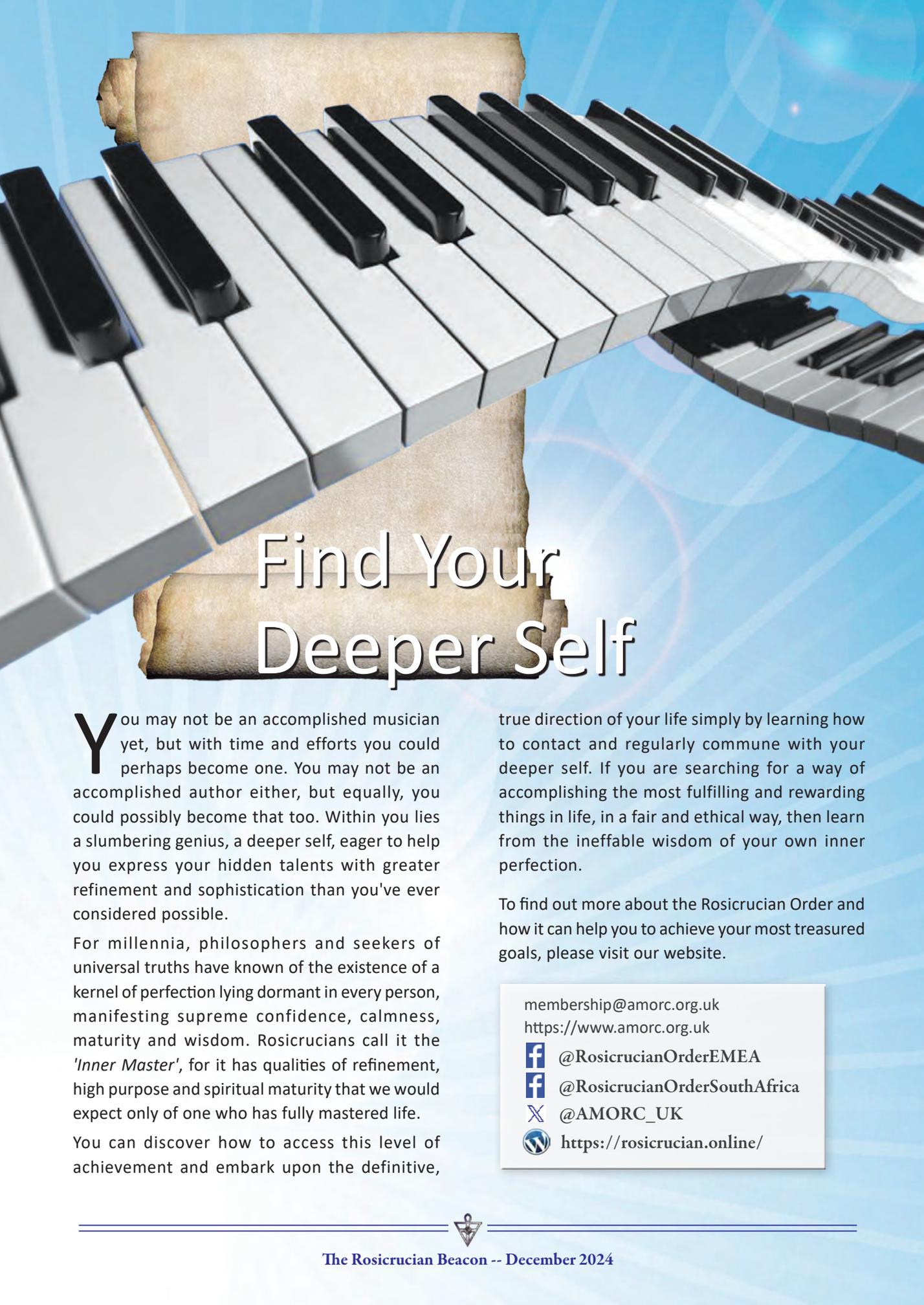


— ROSICRUCIAN —
BEACON



December 2024, Vol 34, No.1



Find Your Deeper Self

You may not be an accomplished musician yet, but with time and efforts you could perhaps become one. You may not be an accomplished author either, but equally, you could possibly become that too. Within you lies a slumbering genius, a deeper self, eager to help you express your hidden talents with greater refinement and sophistication than you've ever considered possible.

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You can discover how to access this 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 your own inner perfection.

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Cover spread

Winter has come.





On the Mystical Path

Getting to know who we are

istock.com / XiXinXing

by Siontai Myrie

Getting to know who we are as mystics is a deeply personal and spiritual journey that involves discovering our true self through the exercise of *free will* and the experience of *inner freedom*. The teachings of Harvey Spencer Lewis, the first Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order in the early years of the 20th century, particularly in works like his book '*Mental Poisoning*', provide a framework for this self-discovery, emphasising the importance of breaking free from cultural conditioning, societal expectations, and mental limitations. As a mystic, the path to self-knowledge involves aligning with our *deeper* or *higher self*, also known as our '*Inner Master*', and using our free will to explore our authentic spiritual identity.

1. Understanding Free Will as a Path to Freedom

Free will is the divine gift that allows each person to make choices and take responsibility for their spiritual growth. As mystics, our journey begins by realising that true freedom comes from within by choosing to align with our higher self, rather than being swayed by external pressures or the opinions of others. In his book, Lewis teaches us that free will is sacred and, the more



one exercises it consciously in service to one's spiritual development, the closer one comes to knowing one's true self.

In our mystical practices, this means recognising and rejecting the cultural conditioning that tells us what success, happiness or morality should look like. Instead, we allow our free will to carve out our own path, following the guidance of our *'Inner Master.'* Through meditation, introspection and attunement with the divine, we can make choices that honour our authentic self, rather than conforming to societal expectations.

2. Recognising and Guarding against Mental Poisoning

As Lewis explains in *Mental Poisoning*, negative influences from society, culture and even well-meaning peers, can act as mental toxins that cloud our judgment and hinder our spiritual progress. To know oneself as a mystic, we must be vigilant in guarding our mind against these toxic influences, which can manifest as fear, anxiety, doubt and even the judgments of others within our spiritual community.

This vigilance involves setting strong boundaries to protect our free will. Just as we must resist external pressures in our personal life, we must also guard against the temptation to impose our will on others. In any spiritual setting, it is crucial to respect the free will of our fellow human beings, acknowledging that their spiritual tests and journeys are unique to them. By doing so, we create an environment where true spiritual freedom and growth can flourish, both for ourselves and others.

3. The Personal Test with the Inner Master

One of the key principles taught by Lewis is that each mystic's journey is a personal one, guided by each person's Inner Master, a profoundly deep aspect of one's own being. This internal guide, or higher self, represents our true nature and the source of our deepest wisdom. To get to know who we are as a mystic, we must develop a relationship with this Inner Master through quiet reflection, meditation and spiritual practice.

The personal test with the Inner Master is not about meeting the expectations of our peers at work,

at church, mosque, temple or in society in general, but about aligning our thoughts, actions and intentions with the higher principles of truth, love and wisdom. Our spiritual growth is determined by our ability to listen to this inner voice, to trust our own experiences, and to walk our path with integrity and authenticity. The test is one of self-awareness and self-mastery, not of external validation.

4. Honouring Free Will for Generational Healing

Honouring free will is not only crucial for our personal spiritual growth, but it also plays a vital role in healing across generations. When we respect our own free will and that of others, we break the cycles of control, domination and manipulation that are often passed down through families and societies. By embracing our own autonomy and allowing others to do the same, we contribute to an environment of healing, where future generations are freed from the harmful conditioning and power dynamics that perpetuate anxiety, depression and inner conflict.

However, this process of generational healing also involves forgiveness, particularly in the face of those who may have infringed upon our free will or the free will of others. Forgiveness is to *'...forgive them, for they know not what they do.'* Many people who impose control or judgment on others, are themselves victims of cultural conditioning and mental poisoning. They act out of ignorance rather than malice, repeating patterns that were imposed upon them. Recognising this allows us to practise compassion and forgiveness, rather than harbouring resentment or anger.

Forgiveness, however, does not mean tolerating continued harm or control. Instead, it is about releasing ourselves from the mental and emotional chains that bind us to the actions of others. By forgiving, we free ourselves from the cycle of blame and anger, allowing our spiritual journey to continue unimpeded. This act of forgiveness is not only for the benefit of those who may have wronged us, but also for our own liberation.

5. Reflection: It's About You

As we walk the mystical path and seek to know who we truly are, it is essential to remember that the reflection





istock.com / J.Loo - Julia Amaral

is about us. The spiritual work we do, whether through meditation, introspection or interactions with others, is ultimately about our own growth and inner transformation. When we encounter difficulties, judgments or challenges in life, especially within the context of cultural conditioning, it is often a reflection of something within ourselves that needs attention and healing. Rather than focusing on the actions or judgments of others, we must ask ourselves:

What is this experience revealing about me? What fears, insecurities or patterns of thought are being triggered, and how can I address them?

This reflective approach helps us to take responsibility for our own spiritual progress, using each experience as an opportunity to grow closer to our true self, rather than becoming entangled in external conflicts or control dynamics.

By honouring free will, both our own and that of others, practising forgiveness and engaging in deep self-reflection, we can transcend the limitations of cultural conditioning and the mental poisoning that often arises from societal pressures. In doing so, we create a path of freedom and healing, not only for ourselves but also for future generations. This healing ripples outward, breaking the cycles of domination and fear that have held many captive, and allowing true spiritual enlightenment to flourish.

6. With great power comes great responsibility: Humility, Compassion, Kindness, Boundaries.

In our journey as mystics, understanding that *'with great power comes great responsibility'* is essential. As we develop spiritual insights, attuning regularly with our Inner Master, and gaining ever deeper awareness of ourselves and the world, the power we hold, both within ourselves and in how we affect others, grows significantly. However, this power must be balanced with a deep sense of humility, compassion and kindness, and a firm understanding of the importance of boundaries.

Humility

As mystics, the more we progress, the more we realise that true power does not come from controlling others or from external recognition, but from the quiet mastery of ourselves. Humility allows you to acknowledge that our spiritual path is an ongoing journey, and that enlightenment is not a final destination but a continuous process of growth and learning.

Humility reminds us that no matter how far we advance, we are always students of the divine, and our power is only meaningful when used in the service of truth and love, not serving the ego or dominance.

Compassion

With greater spiritual awareness comes the ability to see the struggles and suffering of others more clearly. Compassion becomes a guiding principle, as we recognise that many people act out of ignorance or pain, trapped by cultural conditioning or mental poisoning.



Compassion allows us to forgive, to release judgment, and to offer support to those who are still finding their way. In practising compassion, we acknowledge that our power should be used to uplift and heal others, not to judge or control them.

Kindness

Kindness is the practical expression of compassion. As mystics, we are called to embody kindness in our thoughts, words and actions; understanding that small acts of kindness can have profound effects on the spiritual paths of others.

Kindness is a way to honour the free will of others, recognising their inherent worth and allowing them to walk their path at their own pace. And this kindness extends to ourselves as well, offering self-compassion and patience as we navigate our own challenges and growth.

Boundaries

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of wielding spiritual power responsibly is the establishment of boundaries, both for us and for others. As Harvey

Spencer Lewis taught, true spiritual growth is personal and internal. We cannot force enlightenment upon anyone, nor should we allow others to impose their will upon us. Boundaries ensure that free will is respected, protecting our own autonomy and that of others.

Setting boundaries also means knowing when to step back from situations or relationships that drain our energy or compromise our integrity. It involves recognising when our help or guidance is no longer needed or wanted, and allowing others to make their own choices, even if those choices differ from what we believe to be best. Boundaries safeguard the healing process, ensuring that we do not become enmeshed in cycles of control, manipulation or co-dependence.

Finally, by honouring *humility, compassion, kindness* and *boundaries*, we ensure that the power we develop through our spiritual journey is used in the service of healing and enlightenment, not domination or control. By doing so, we contribute to a world where free will is respected, and the potential for generational healing and growth is fully realised.



istock.com / Szepey





by **Richard Rawson**

The Art of Compassion

The word '*compassion*' derives from the Latin words '*com*', meaning *together* and '*pati*' meaning *suffering* or *feeling*. This has generally been taken to mean the feeling of *sorrow* or *deep pity* for the suffering of others. Compassion is not so much an uncommon word as an uncommon experience in Western culture. As a word, it is difficult to define and as an experience, it is often confused with pity and sympathy.

Compassion is neither an emotional nor a mental state, but a quality of consciousness beyond ordinary awareness. Yet, it operates *through* ordinary awareness. It can be likened to emotions or rather, to qualities of consciousness which relate to the emotions of passion, sympathy or love, feelings of regard for or toward another person. Compassion is an attribute of the higher self, the personality of the soul itself.

Compassion Transforms

In Western culture, the connotation of compassion has developed from concepts developed in the Old and New Testaments. In more contemporary terms coined by a modern-day Rosicrucian:

Compassion lets the other person know they are not alone, that we are connected, not isolated, that there are other people who understand, who do not judge us or others involved and, that no matter what we do, they will be here for us, supporting us to be where we most want to be, namely, where we, our Inner Self, most wants to be. Those who have compassion for me, support me to be free of regrets and guilt, resentments and blame, and all fears that hold me locked into fixed and



compulsive attitudes and behaviour. Compassion supports genuine freedom, growth, evolution and unity with self and others. This is true Love.

The act of sympathy, and its refined cousin empathy, is the basis for a caring regard for others. We may feel consoled by sympathy and empathy and, to a degree, the distress felt in a painful situation, may be cushioned by sympathy and empathy, even though the distress remains. The essence of compassion, however, is that of a truly extraordinary quality of emotion. Compassion transforms and makes whole the narrow and often painful personal experience. The recipient of compassion finds the experience virtually divine, a *'gift from God.'* We can pray that we may one day be blessed with such divine grace, but can we ever hope to truly exhibit toward others this exalted quality of love?

A Divine Quality

Implicit in the connotation of compassion is the idea of the divine source of this emotion. To achieve the capacity for compassion toward others, we ourselves must, in some way, become more fully affiliated with

the Divine. In practice, conventional wisdom dictates that affiliation with the higher self and the Divine is achieved by becoming more religious. In true mystical traditions though, this is accomplished through identification with the Infinite.

It may be observed that the outward act of pity or of cultivated empathic behaviour does not assure attainment of the quality of compassion. The conscious desire to be exalted in our emotion and dignified in our behaviour does not necessarily result in the attainment of these goals. With practice, we may become quite skilful in simulating the appearance of a spiritual demeanour and compassionate regard but, the experiential result is still short of the desired level.

As aspiring artists may desire to achieve greatness but find their creative strokes burdened by that desire, we too, as aspiring mystics, are burdened with the self-consciousness of our imperfection. This same burden of imperfection is what we would hope the blessing of compassion would relieve. In our deepest being we long for, and earnestly pray for a compassionate heart in all circumstances, for the rest of our days of Life.



istock.com / ChayTee





An Act of Compassion

by James Wilson

It's easier than
you think.

It was my partner Linda's birthday and we were in London to meet with her daughter and grandson. We had been invited to join them for a dinosaur-themed tea in a posh hotel. Although it was Linda's birthday treat, the dinosaurs were to keep young Henry interested and engaged, and, I suspect, myself!

After a very enjoyable repast and a pleasant time together, we took a short walk to the Natural History Museum where we spent a couple of hours looking at the exhibits. But by mid-afternoon Henry was starting to tire and Mum decided it was time to take him home. So, we said our farewells

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and, after a diversion to Kensington Gardens to watch the skills of teenage skateboarders and admiring the elaborate Albert Memorial, we finally took another slow walk back to Victoria Station where, sitting at a table in the forecourt eating our barely tolerable fast food, our attention was caught by the interactions of an elderly couple on the table next to ours with a man who had approached them to ask for money.

It was a barely audible conversation because the couple were soft-spoken and the other gentleman was, I supposed, trying to be discreet, perhaps out of embarrassment or shame. As a result, we didn't hear the story or explanation he had given them, but we did hear him direct the older gentleman to a cashpoint nearby. I have to say that the beggar did not look hard-up or scruffy, nor did he look like he had been sleeping rough on the streets, so it would have been interesting to know what yarn, if indeed it was a yarn, he had given to convince the couple to hand over some money. The elderly man soon returned from the cashpoint with the money, no doubt wondering if he was being duped, but handed some of it over to the beggar. The man then left their table, and we were half expecting him to approach us.

We were quite happy to see him walk away from us but, shortly after this, another young man did approach us and asked if we could spare some cash. This man, however, looked quite pathetic and indeed looked far more in need than the former man. However, I politely refused him, and he wished us a good day and left. I refused him because I am very wary of people begging for money as

it happens so often that they are doing so either simply because they are taking a lazy option to make easy money, or are desperate to feed their drug habits. But there are, of course, also, genuinely desperate people who are homeless and in need of help. But the trouble is, how does one determine the genuine cases from the fraudsters? It is always a difficult situation and makes me feel conflicted between my rational and spiritual selves. I am sure it does to most people who find themselves in similar situations.

'Why won't anybody help me? I keep asking and nobody will help me!'

Perhaps half an hour later, after finishing our meal, we got up and made our way to one of the forecourt shops that we wanted to look in. When we were close to the shop, we came across the same young man who had approached our table, and who was now standing near the centre of the forecourt, shouting in despair. He had rolled up one of his trouser legs to reveal a very badly ulcerated leg. He had no doubt done this so that passers-by could see that he was in a poor state of health and perhaps would be sympathetic toward him. He was shouting desperately: *'Why won't anybody help me? I keep asking and nobody will help me!'* He was shouting this repeatedly and seemed to be on the verge of a breakdown.

As we stood in the shop doorway, watching the scene unfold, people passed him by without even a glance. Some did look at him but looked very uncomfortable with the scene and passed him by with anxious looks on their faces. Others looked at him with indifference and one or two even with a look of disdain. One young man gave him a little change, but on the whole, he was ignored. We watched for perhaps a minute or so but I was still reluctant to get involved for the reasons already stated. Eventually, it got to the point where we could bear it no longer, we had to help. As he seemed to get more and more agitated and desperate, we were convinced that this wasn't an act and that he was in genuine need of assistance.



istock.com / Punnarong



We walked over to him and asked him how we could help. Did he need a meal? He said frustratingly, *'People only ever want to buy me sandwiches. I don't need sandwiches!'* So, we asked him what it was he needed. He told us he needed £28 so he could get into a hostel for the night where he could get cleaned up and get some fresh dressings for his legs. We asked how much he had got so far. He opened his hand and showed us the few coins he had been given, and it amounted to just over £8. Immediately Linda said she would go to the cashpoint to get him some money, but there was no need as I had a £20 note in my pocket and gave it to him. He now had the amount he needed and was genuinely grateful. Putting his hand over his heart he thanked us several times and then we watched as he went on his way.

...what he needed more than anything was some kindness and compassion.

We are not naïve and we were well aware that perhaps he was heading straight for his nearest drug dealer. But what if he was telling the truth and was off to find a bed for the night. We were not going to judge. It didn't matter what he needed in material terms; what he needed more than anything was some kindness and compassion. He needed someone to acknowledge him and see that he too was human, not merely a piece of street litter to be simply walked past and ignored. Whatever he did with the money, we can only hope that it helped him get through another night off the often-desperate streets of London. I don't know what could have caused his skin to become so badly ulcerated, but that festering sore was enough to trigger a compassionate response in anyone. While we initially had reservations about giving him any money, upon witnessing such a desperate and pitiful display, we simply could not turn away the opportunity to help a person in distress. We could do nothing less.

Real-life dramas like this bring home to us how



istock.com / Andrey Popov

fortunate we are ourselves. No doubt we will encounter similar situations again in the future. Unfortunately, people living on the streets and asking passers-by for money has become an all too common and familiar sight and especially so because so many of them use the money to fuel their desperate drug addiction. Some people make bad choices in life and as a result end up in dire circumstances; but they, all the same, still deserve help and a chance to better their circumstances.

We can only hope and pray that, one day, such desperate people will get all the material, emotional and mental help they need

We can only hope and pray that, one day, such desperate people will get all the material, emotional and mental help they need, and everyone's basic needs are met in a world that is, in so many ways, fruitful and abundant. But sadly, it is also a world where that abundance is shared very unequally. Did we give this poor man any genuine relief? Perhaps, just for a short while; but at least he was touched by some human kindness and maybe that was more important than the money he took away with him. I wish we had taken the time to ask his name but, whoever he is, we wish him hope and peace wherever he now is.





Egyptian God Ra and Maat in KV 14, the tomb of Tausert and Setnakht in the valley of the kings, Luxor, Egypt.

istock.com / stigalenas

Traditional Beginnings

by **Connie James**

In ancient Egypt, the concept of *Order* or, more specifically, a ‘*Universal Cosmic Order*’, was called ‘*Maat*.’ The goddess Maat and the principles of *truth, justice, balance* and *cosmic order* that she stood for, underpinned everything that was good and well-administered. What she represented stood in direct opposition to the chaos of a lack of justice and good governance that Egyptians believed had existed before the first dynastic pharaohs emerged some 5100 years before our present 21st century era.

Maat was the most primaeval, fundamental of concepts of thought, philosophy and activity in Egypt throughout its recorded history. It underpinned everything needed by the top-down, deeply religious governance that was the moral and religious aspiration of all but a few Egyptian dynasties, right up to the beginning of the Ptolemaic period.

Often depicted as a goddess wearing an ostrich feather in her headdress, Maat may have existed among the early Neolithic tribes inhabiting the Nile Valley before the emergence of the first Egyptian ruling dynasties at the turn of the 4th to 3rd millennium BCE. But unlike the existence of the falcon god Horus among pre-dynastic



Egyptian tribes, firm evidence of a pre-dynastic female deity Maat, has yet to be found. For this reason, it has been suggested that Maat became a ruling principle of all religious and secular life through the unified actions of the pharaohs of the first few dynasties.

Maat was one side of a concept of duality that had emerged by the time of first dynasties. A universal deity influencing and guiding the actions of all other deities, Maat represented *stability* and a *world order*, indeed a *universal principle* which became the foundation of the Egyptian concept of a *divine ruler* who ruled, with fairness and justice, every aspect of daily life. That divine rule was based upon two concepts: a deity above all other deities, ('*Neter*'), and the existence of a *World Order* ('*Maat*').

Neter (or '*Ntr*') is the origin of our English word '*Nature*' and represents, in the ancient Egyptian pantheon, the infinite, raw power of Nature, infinite energy. Neter was not only the all-embracing *physical being* of Nature, but also its *inherent power*, from which an '*indwelling spirit*' infused all Egyptian gods and, through them, all living creatures. One fundamental quality of Neter was '*mind*' and all thought processes associated with human cognition. This mental, intellectual manifestation of Neter was infused in all Egyptian deities and manifested, through them, the distinct qualities of



Sphinx of Pharaoh Thutmose III.

the gods which, in turn, were part of the great Neter, the source of all existence. The supreme human among all humans, the pharaoh, was believed to be the earthly incarnation of *Neter Horus*, the one-and-only '*son of the god*' and the premier, strongest reflection of Neter in the material world.

The Greek historian, Herodotus, wrote around 500 BCE...

Now I will tell you more about Egypt, because it has many admirable things, and what is seen there is better than any other country. The excellent monuments of ancient Egypt are the result of their deep faith and the application of the principle: '*As above, so below.*'

This eternal correlation between *that which is above* with *that which is below*, was repeated in Asclepius III in the Hermetic texts:

In Egypt, all the actions of the forces that govern and act in heaven were transferred to the earth below. It should rather be said that the whole of the cosmos dwells in [Egypt] as in his sanctuary.

Scenes of daily activities found in Egyptian monuments show the strong, ongoing correlation between earth and sky, that which is below with that which is above.

As far as we know, the 18th dynasty was the most mystically inclined of all dynasties. Not just Thutmose III



Egyptian Goddess Maat.

wikicommons / Eternal Space



but under his grandson Thutmose IV and great-grandson Amenhotep III, we can see a movement culminating in the reign of Amenhotep III's son, Amenhotep IV, the 'heretic pharaoh', *Akhenaton*.

Traditional histories of the Rosicrucian Order speak of the creation of a unified mystical body by the Pharaoh Thutmose III during the 18th dynasty in the New Kingdom. As the founding Emperor of the resurgence of the Rosicrucian Order in the 20th century, Harvey Spencer Lewis put it in 1929, it...

...was Thutmose III who organised the present physical form followed by the present secret Brotherhood and outlined many of its rules and regulations.

The text goes on to caution that it...

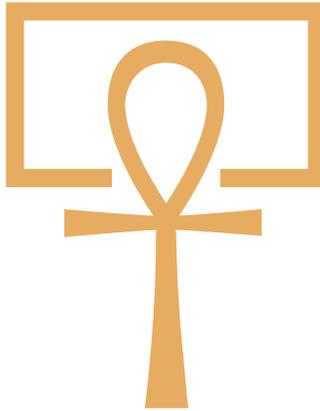
...must not be construed that the word Rosicrucian, or any variation of it, was used by, or applied to this ancient brotherhood; rather that the modern manifestation of this ancient tradition is found in the Rosicrucian Order (AMORC) which derives its principles and objectives from it.

Recent research has rediscovered another aspect of this foundational event which has gone, if not completely unnoticed, then decidedly unremarked upon for a very long time. Shedding new light on a significant feature of the Rosicrucian tradition, this is mention of a collection of documents dealing with the appointment of an individual to be the head of the united priesthoods of all Egypt during the time of Hatshepsut and her co-regent Amenhotep III.

Houses of Life

The Houses of Life perpetuated the mystical work of temples throughout ancient Egypt.

Ancient Egyptian priesthoods were not only concerned with external Temple duties such as the taxation of privately owned lands and the management of large temple-owned plantations with grains, herds of cattle, sheep and goats. Attached to most Temples was a building



The hieroglyph for *Per Ankh (House of Life)*.

known as the '*Per Ankh (House of Life)*' where the most precious archives were housed. In those precincts neophytes were trained as scribes, healers and priests with the primary purpose of guarding and perpetuating the ancient mystery traditions of Egypt, which included medicine, dreams, healing, prognostication, among many other topics and practices. The Hermetic historian Garth Fowden wrote:

The sacred books of the ancient Egyptian priests were copied out in the Houses of Life, which served, subordinate to their primary cultic purposes, as temple scriptoria or libraries.

Among these volumes were 42 that were attributed to the god *Thoth*, who, in later centuries became known as '*Hermes Trismegistus (Hermes the Thrice Great)*'. The Christian Gnostic and teacher *Clement of Alexandria* testifies to having seen a procession carrying books from such a collection (around 200 CE) containing works on the gods, astrology, hieroglyphs, hymns, prayers, spiritual training and medicine:



Hermes Trismegistus.



...then two-and-forty books of Hermes, indispensably necessary... of which the six-and-thirty containing the whole philosophy of the Egyptians and the other six, which are medical... [were carried forth]

The archaeologist James Henry Breasted, in 1906, wrote about these deeply venerated records of ancient Egypt. It seems probable that much of the literature and teachings from the many Houses of Life situated in temples throughout the length of the Egyptian Nile, are likely those we have received today in Hellenised form as the *'Hermetica'*, including the *'Corpus Hermeticum.'* The Houses of Life were much more than a priestly apprenticeship; they were the true mystical heart of the priesthood.

The appointment of an individual to be the head of all of the Egyptian priesthoods unified not only the priestly orders in their external manifestation, but also brought into harmony and union the mystical component as well, the esoteric work which centred around the Per Ankh. In this way, the traditional Rosicrucian statement of the unification of these into a single mystical Order, is consistent with external historical facts as well as inner spiritual truths.

Unification of the Priesthood

What is fascinating and apparently unremarked upon, at least in recent times in connection with Rosicrucian



Sphinx of Hatshepsut.



Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt.

history, is that this historic appointment and unification was not the sole work of Thutmose III. The unification appears to have begun during the co-regency of pharaohs Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, roughly during the 21-year period from 1479 to 1458 BCE.

It was during Hatshepsut's reign of political and financial stability, that gradual change in culture was made possible under Thutmose III's guidance with the reinvigoration and emergence of an extraordinary ancient mystery school at Luxor. Hatshepsut's influence though is seen in the fact that it was her own trusted vizier, *Hapuseneb*, the most important man in her entourage, who was appointed as the first *'Chief of the Prophets of North and South'*, a title found on his statue in the Louvre in Paris.

By 1984, the German Egyptologist *Jan Assmann* wrote of the joint religious work of the two Pharaohs:

Hatshepsut and Thutmose III founded and propagated not a new religion, but a new form of Amun religion that was enhanced by the fourth dimension of Divine spontaneity and action in the world and in devotees.

He then goes on to connect this evolution with the Atenism of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. As Henry Breasted explains...

The formation of the priesthood of the whole land into a coherent organisation, with a single





Akhenaten, Nefertiti and their three daughters.
-- 1352-1336 BCE --

individual at its head, appears for the first time during the joint reigns.

Breasted provides further translations of Hapuseneb's appointment from the inscription found on the Louvre statue, an appointment which was made during the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. We can safely assume that it was, at least at the beginning, with the full consent of both rulers. The alternation of masculine and feminine may result from later alterations in the text, or it may indicate independent actions by both rulers, portending a growing rift between them which was, in later decades to manifest in the erasure of Hatshepsut's name from many monuments.

Breasted himself, perhaps due to the presuppositions of his times, seems to have resisted or vacillated about the idea that Hatshepsut was involved with the appointment, later arguing against the evidence of the inscriptions:

Hapuseneb, the first High Priest of Amun who occupied the position at the head of the new sacerdotal organisation, was the vizier under Hatshepsut. But it is more likely that her co-regnant, Thutmose III, effected this organisation than that she should have done it.



**Long may that Light shine bright
for all who are yet to come.**



*Statue of Hapu, Hapuseneb's father
and third lector priest of Amun.*

This opinion may well have influenced others in the early 20th century. The viewpoint excluding Hatshepsut from significant religious activity connected with Amun, fortunately did not survive the 20th century. When building her mortuary temple on the West Bank at Luxor, Hatshepsut employed the renowned architect *Senenmut* who built it 'according to an ancient plan.' He wrote:

I was a nobleman who was listened to. Moreover, I had access to all the nobility's writings. There was nothing I did not know about what happened from the beginning.

Archives existed in all official institutions, such as courts, public works as well as in temples. High officials, as well as pharaohs, had access to these archives, some vast and detailed, others mere summaries. Senior officials were required to study and implement the specifications. Amenhotep, son of Hapu, the distinguished scholar and architect of Amenhotep III (1405-1367 BCE), describes his early education as follows:

I was appointed as an aspiring royal scribe; I was introduced to the divine book; I saw the wonderful things of Thoth; I was equipped with their knowledge; I opened all their [passages]; in all their affairs I was consulted.

From this initial *Per Ankh*, this Theban 'House of Life', stories about the so-called 'Primordial Tradition' emerged and continued in many forms down into our own times through many and varied spiritual traditions and on into our own beloved Rosicrucian Order. Before ancient Egypt, I stand therefore in awe at all it accomplished and, above all, for the Light it bequeathed to our world.





The Will to Serve

by **Raymund Andrea**

istock.com / Maria Vitkowska



The great souls of the world have always been those who have greatly served; and we little dream how humble was their service in the beginning.



Life, and the experience of life, is the great teacher. You may say that if this is so, then all people must at some time experience a new level of consciousness. It is true that all people are subject to the general influence of life with its critical periods of pain and sorrow, loss and bereavement. Even the acute strain of everyday existence can change individuals almost beyond recognition in their conception of themselves and their attitude to life. If we do not willingly cooperate with life, then we will be pushed to do so.

It makes a great deal of difference whether we pass through a critical period of life with a keen sense of its meaning and importance and make an intelligent adjustment to it; or whether we merely acknowledge, with the majority, that it is indeed a critical period, regret very much the disturbance and inconvenience it has caused us, and wait patiently for it to pass.

Peace, calm, serenity and self-contemplation may be the ideal of certain religions and mystical groups, but it is not the role of a true mystic. The history of Rosicrucians of the past furnishes the best examples of lives of action and self-expression of the most versatile sort. The secret of their development lay mainly in their devotion to service towards others. They rose to eminence not merely by what they thought, but largely by what they did.



This applies no less to the Rosicrucians of today. If we were to rest back upon the teachings we have received as just another means of intellectual satisfaction, or with a morbid desire to lay eager hands upon secrets of development which might place us in a privileged position in advance of others, it would be a poor acknowledgement of the great souls down the centuries who made supreme sacrifices even unto the surrender of life itself under the persecution and tyranny of state and church. They did that so that the living flame of inner truth might not die out but be handed on to us as worthy custodians of it.

Service

The great souls of the world have always been those who have greatly served; and we little dream how humble was their service in the beginning. It matters not what service is, whether great or small, but some form of service there must be. There is no appeal against this and no other way. It is not expected that we should render a perfect service. A more modest task remains for us; but it has no limits, it can be infinite in variety and self-educative while it is helping others.

A sphere of useful service should be deliberately sought by each Rosicrucian. Too many members are concerned because they have not reached a certain level

in their studies. They need to reverse this attitude and ask themselves what knowledge and practical ability they already possess, to give. It is important that the member is a server, it matters not how clever or well-informed they may be. The time must come when a mystic pledges him or herself not merely to the Path, but also to service.

Upon every successive spiral of advancement new forces are released on the psychic and mental levels which must find adequate channels of expression. I think that there are a few really progressive mystics who do not instinctively feel this truth. This is why they often voice a strong desire to find an appropriate field of service in which their abilities may be exercised. When that point of inward development and tension is reached, and a persistent silent demand is made for it, I do not think it will be long before a door of opportunity opens in response to it.

If we permit this demand to be in the forefront of our consciousness and a settled resolution to any leading that is given to us, we may be sure that our guidance will be productive. Then we may find that that which may be done as a duty or obligation, will soon become a daily habit of thought and action, and possibly later, a definite goal and mission in life.

The time must come
when a mystic pledges
him - or herself not
merely to the Path, but
also to service.



istock.com / Vadym Pastukh





by Jason Winter

Cosmic Forces at Work

There are fatalists who maintain that we humans have no choice in life but to follow our *'destiny.'* This would make us akin to puppets with no control over our lives. However, the universe is a mystery which is constantly unfolding, and the direction we should take is not always obvious.

Every one of us varies greatly in our talents, creativity and motivation to pursue certain actions. Divine law, as it operates within our universe, allows us to be flexible,



especially regarding our individual freedom. We discover limits through our trial-and-error experiences, the risks we take and also through meditation.

Change is an essential component of the universe; everything changes from moment to moment; nothing stands still forever. *'Everything flows'* Heraclitus said, indicating that we cannot step into the same river twice. There is no point in lamenting the fact that things are not what they were! In fact, were they ever truly what we think they were? In my office, when staff return from vacation, the very first thing they ask is *'what has changed?'* Why? Because it surely has. We accept that without question. It's really not a problem. If new circumstances have arisen, you learn how to accept them and discover how to deal with them.

Change is an essential component of the universe; everything changes from moment to moment; nothing stands still forever.

There are many actions of which we may not be aware of or have no control over but influence our life. There are also many aspects of our daily life which we have no choice but to experience. Things happen with or without our say-so. Yet, not all things that happen are equally meaningful or useful for our personal evolution. We must be consciously aware of an action at least some time before we can determine how best to act on it.

Inner World

Mystics have an inner urge to constantly study their inner being, seeking to better focus their will and consciousness for their personal evolution. All things we do, invite one important question: *What are our limits?* Should we be narrowing them down or widening them up when we use our will to deal with poorly understood matters? How will the answers to these questions improve us as human beings?

No one can tell us definitely which path to follow in order to achieve a meaningful life. Different paths allow us to make choices, and they will appeal to the essential

nature of our being: our body, our mind and our soul. Of these three components of being, the body is the most visible and the one with which we can most easily identify. Mind and soul comprise the inner world of our being. Our personal evolution depends on the extent to which we can satisfy the needs of each of the three components of our being. While the paths to satisfying the body, mind and soul may differ, no one mode of being should be ignored.

Choosing to satisfy the needs of the body, for example, enables us to experience health and vitality as well as the removal of aches, pains and daily stresses. Poor health will affect the quality of our life and likely shorten it or at least make our life more difficult. To fully develop ourselves as individuals, if we concentrate only on our health, excluding the other two, this will have adverse consequences because the needs of the mind and soul are not being met.

The mind enables us to focus on actions, contemplate ideas and clarify our thoughts. We can use the mind to develop critical thinking and skills, but it is our will that encourages us to take that first step. Similarly, we should not seek to pursue the needs of the mind over the needs of the soul. That would limit us as human beings. The insights we receive are derived from that part of us in direct contact with our Inner Self. We search within for these insights as they seldom come unless we are receptive to the faint stirrings of wisdom that emerges from our Inner Self. And one of the best ways of connecting with that Inner Self, is through the regular use of meditation.

...we should not seek to pursue the needs of the mind over the needs of the soul. That would limit us as human beings.

Throughout the centuries, philosophers and mystics have felt that personal evolution and spiritual development occurs when we first listen to the urgings of our Inner Self, often referred to as our Inner Master, followed by the demands of our mind and finally of our body. But the decisions we make daily are ours to make. This is our ultimate freedom!





Miletus



The principles of the Rosicrucian teachings have been compiled down through the ages. Some of the greatest minds of the past, their thoughts and discoveries, are commemorated in them.



Thales of Miletus



by Pensator

Many tourists flock to the Western or Aegean coast of Turkey. Few, however, are aware of the wealth of history that surrounds them, outside of their tourist resorts. In ancient times, this Aegean coast was known as Ionia, a Greek word referring to the descendants of Ion, son of Apollo. According to legend, Ion served Apollo in the temple of Delphi on mainland Greece, becoming king of Athens. His descendants emigrated eastwards, under pressure from the arriving Doric Greek tribes, and colonised the Western coast of Turkey. There they built many fine cities whose remains can still be seen today.

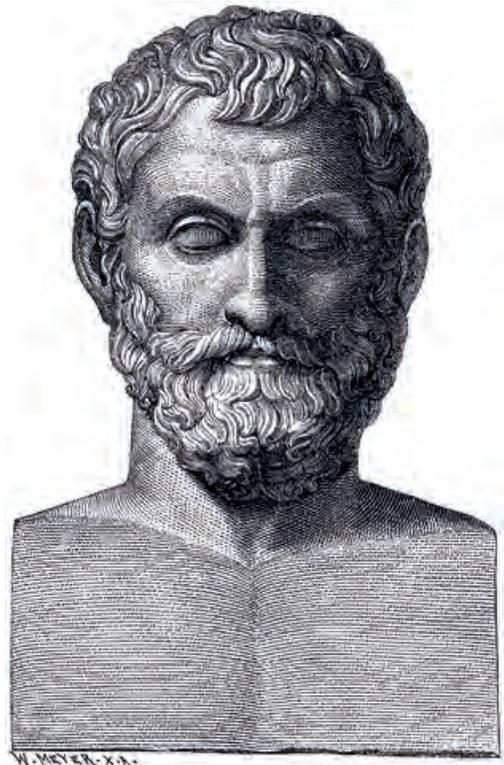
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Ionia where science and philosophy began.

Miletus, though surrounded by extremely fertile and arable land, being built on a peninsula, looked to the sea. From a very early period, the city traded and sent colonies out all around the Mediterranean Sea, even founding a colony in Egypt. With all its international contacts, Miletus became prosperous and was soon the cultural and political leader of the Ionian cities. It was into this milieu, that Thales was born in the early 7th century BCE. Miletus was a centre of intellectual activity and became one of the most important cities in the ancient world.

The Milesian school of philosophy was the product of an age already provided with the necessities of physical well-being and leisure. Its motive was simple curiosity. This city produced more famous people in antiquity than any other, except perhaps Athens. Aside from Thales and the philosophers Anaximander and Anaximenes, Miletus was the home of the historian and geographer Hecataeus, who was the first to coin the word *'history.'* Hippodamus was an architect and town planner who first applied his grid pattern in his home city. This was later copied in



Posthumous portrait of Thales by Wilhelm Meyer, based on a bust from the 4th century.



Church of Santa Sophia, in Constantinople, 1903.

other Greek cities and down to the present day. Isidore of Miletus was the architect who, nearly a thousand years later, built the *Church of Santa Sophia* or the *Holy Wisdom*, in Constantinople, modern-day Istanbul. For centuries, it was the greatest church in Christendom.

Deep-rooted tendency in the human mind to seek.

Very little is known about the life of Thales, even though he is credited with being one of the Seven Great Sages of Antiquity. Regarded as the founder of geometry, he had a wide range of interests including geography, mathematics, physics, astronomy and politics, when he advised the Ionian cities to set up a common council and federate.

He also travelled widely throughout Egypt and the Middle East, meeting their wise men. It was while in Egypt that he calculated the height of the Pyramids by comparing the length of their shadows with the shadow of an object whose height he already knew. His other successes included applying the principles of geometry to calculate the distance between the coast and ships at sea.





While in Egypt, Thales calculated the height of the Pyramids by comparing the length of their shadows with the shadow of an object whose height he already knew.

He also divided the year into 365 days. However, the one thing which made him famous was when he predicted an eclipse of the sun in 585 BCE.

From that day, his reputation grew, and he was able to dedicate himself to his studies. It is as a philosopher that he is best known. He founded the first school of Greek philosophy known as the *Milesian* or *Ionian* school, the most distinctive characteristic of which was its inquiry into the material and formative constitution of the universe. Thales was searching for the primordial element, or '*Arche*' as the Greeks termed it, from which everything arose.

...the one thing which made him famous was when he predicted an eclipse of the sun in 585 BCE. From that day, his reputation grew...

Rosicrucians, would term this '*Spirit Energy*.' He was convinced that it must exist and rejected the current view of supernatural causation, namely, that the gods were responsible for everything and there was therefore no need to look beyond that. He appreciated that a completely natural explanation could be given to a wide range of phenomena and, in this respect, he took the first tentative steps towards an understanding of the problem of change.

In his search for the Arche, '*primordial substance*', he observed that everything contains moisture. Plants, foodstuffs, even seeds, as well as all living things are partially composed of water. He reasoned therefore that water, or rather, moisture, must be this universal essence, the soul of the world. He saw that besides being a liquid, it became a solid when frozen and even a gas when boiled. He imagined the earth itself as floating upon an enormous expanse of water, like a huge raft, which pitched from time-to-time causing earthquakes. This foreshadowed the current theory of continental drift upon a pool of molten rock.

Thales also accepted the principle of free debate and public access to information on which a person or an idea could be judged. He asserted that everything had a soul and was, in his words, '*full of gods*.' In our terminology, we would call it '*Vital Life Force*.' Thales died in 546 BCE from heat-stroke and thirst while watching an athletic contest at the stadium. When everyone had left, he was found lying on the steps as if he had fallen asleep.

His importance in philosophy is that he was the first known person who asked questions. He was the first to look around himself, to ponder, to refrain from looking to the gods for the solution to every mystery. He looked for something permanent, persisting through the chaos of apparent change, as the world our senses perceive is restless and unstable. Philosophy started in the faith that beneath this apparent chaos, there exists a hidden permanence and unity. This was the first step taken by Westerners towards the interpretation of the universe.

Today, we can walk in the footsteps of Thales. As we wander among the ruins of Miletus, with its gentle inclines, grass, flowers and buzzing insects, perhaps, as Rosicrucians, we remember that in our studies, we too, metaphorically, follow in the footsteps of those mental giants who walked the streets of Miletus so many centuries ago, and whose legacy we all continue to share.





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Mystical Wisdom in Fairytales

by **Mark Cornwall**

Once upon a time: the timeless beginning of what we assume to be fanciful stories for children. In the March 2020 Rosicrucian Beacon magazine, I wrote about the inner meanings to be found in the Italian tale of Pinocchio. It is worth another read and can be found online at amorc.org.uk.

I used to think that '*fairytales*', as we call them nowadays, started in Germany with the Brothers Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm, who lived between the late 1700s and mid-1800s and published their collection of '*Märchen*' (fairy tales, myths, fables). Interestingly, they were brought up in the German state of Hessen-Kassel, where the early Rosicrucian manifestos were initially published, and the Landgrave Moritz entertained English Rosicrucians and Shakespearean plays. The brothers collected folk tales, many of





Michael Ende.

which have become famous in the English-speaking world: Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood, the Sleeping Beauty and Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, among many others.

Later, I discovered that the French folklorist, *Emmanuel Cosquin* (1841-1919), published his '*Popular Tales of Lorraine*' in 1860. And then we have '*The Arabian Nights*' or to give them their proper name in Arabic: '*Alf Layla wa-Layla*', '*1001 Nights*.' But even then, these Middle Eastern tales from the Islamic golden age when scientific thought and cultural achievements flourished before the darkness of fundamentalism took over, they hint at an even earlier birth in Persia and India. Indeed, Cosquin argued that the ultimate origins of such stories lay in India.

In this article, I will examine two relatively modern stories and see if there exists any mystical content or heritage in them.

The Never-ending Story

We are seldom aware of the positive difference that just one person can make in the life of others. And remember, the person making that difference could be you! It is often a clear struggle between light and dark, good and bad, and the two sides of the personality, the active and the passive, need to be re-integrated into a single, undivided personality in order to function the best and '*save our world*.' The first tale has been made into a film, which had mixed reviews but a famous theme song. At the end of the film, the empress gives Bastian the only remaining part of Fantasia, a piece of light. With this he can make as many wishes as he wants, and his first wish is to restore Fantasia in all its glory.

'*Die Unendliche Geschichte*', '*The Never-ending Story*', is a masterpiece, one of those classic, timeless works, popular with both children and adults alike. Written in 1979 by *Michael Ende*, it quickly became a bestseller. It was adapted as a film in 1984 with special effects and a famous musical theme. One thing we discover in *The Never-ending Story* is a parallel world called '*Fantasia*'

that can't exist without the real world, and in turn, our world can't exist without Fantasia. In fact, the health of one world depends on that of the other. The author *Ende* was heir to Enlightenment thinkers such as *Immanuel Kant*, *Lessing* and *Wolff*. Therefore, for Ende, reason and imagination would always go together.

A Beginning

On his way to school, a little boy about ten years old named '*Bastian Bux*' goes into an old book shop to hide from some bullies. He is intrigued by a strange volume bound in copper-coloured silk and decorated with two snakes biting each other's tail. He is told that it is not a book for him and, of course, Bastian '*borrow*s' the book, goes to school and hides in the school attic to read it.

The story Bastian reads is a story within a story, a '*Never-ending Story*' within a '*Never-ending Story*', within a...., you get it. In the outer story, Bastian is soon so caught up in the narrative that, like the snake emblem, each of the two snakes begin to swallow the other's tail.

The *Never-ending Story* is as much for adults as it is for children, an epic fantasy for all ages, but with a serious message. All such stories are to be read only when wide awake, for, have you not heard?, they never end and your reading too will never end unless you are ready to lose everything in order to return to your world. The enjoyment for the reader is partly in the grand sweep of archetypal adventure which rises ever higher in mystery and discovery. But it delves as well, ever deeper and deeper, into details of breathtaking sophistication and refinement almost beyond compare. They include fascinating descriptions of mythical creatures and fantastic places, including, as well, intriguing philosophical motifs and psychological reflections.

The land of fantasy Bastian reads about is called '*Fantasia*.' Like the world of *Alice in Wonderland*, Fantasia depends for its existence on the real world. But the real world, we are told, depends for its health on the wellbeing of Fantasia. The threat to Fantasia's very existence is portrayed as the advance of '*the Nothing*.'

Atreyu and the Childlike Empress

The *Never-Ending Story* relates the journey of a young boy named '*Atreyu*' and his '*luckdragon*' companion,



'*Falkor*', who venture through the lands of Fantasia in search of a cure for the ill '*Kindliche Kaiserin*', the '*Childlike Empress*' who is near death. In time, Atreyu uncovers the source of her illness, which is caused by an advancing enemy known as the '*Nichts*', *Nothing*. However, the Childlike Empress cure comes from a rather unlikely source and eventually Bastian is drawn into Fantasia and tasked with its recreation. However, when he is given the power to wish for anything he desires, Bastian begins to forget his life back home and risks losing who he really is.

Fantasia, we learn, will slip into malaise and eventual nothingness unless some human being gives its superheroine, the Childlike Empress, a new name. When we realise that the events of Fantasia rest on forgotten, unprocessed human dreams, we begin to appreciate that our mental health may require us to reclaim archetypal stories by giving their superheroes new names. So far, the message is psychological, but the Never-ending Story has philosophical morals, as well as psychological ones.

Characters use swords, magical weapons, and, at times, magic in fights. Although the Childlike Empress is dying, no details are given as to the nature of her illness. The '*Nothing*' is described as a vague force that erases

everything and everyone in its path. Bastian, of course, eventually falls under the manipulative guidance of an evil sorceress who urges him to misuse his wish-making abilities.

The novel also functions as a homage to those who never relinquish their imaginations. As is probably apparent, the Never-ending Story is a story within a story. As such, it uses this unique structure to praise the values of reading, having an imagination, and never forgetting tales of the past. But it also cautions us not to allow our imaginings to turn into desires that focus exclusively on the self, for that becomes a central sin for one character later on.

To start, Atreyu is tasked with seeking a cure for the Childlike Empress, which leads him into the paths of numerous characters, good-willed, neutral and villainous alike. When his quest ends, Bastian begins a new quest, following a looser structure as his journey now has no clear end goal and is more of an inner searching.

The novel also uses many alchemical symbols and images and follows a loosely-structured alchemical narrative where character developments highlight stages of the metaphorical alchemical process along with



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accompanying symbols. The Ouroboros serpent eating its tail, serves as the most significant motif. In this way, the novel makes use of the main colours of the three alchemical stages: from *dissolution* (black), to *purification* (white), to *transformation* (red).

The novel is logically divided into two parts without any observable physical division noticeable. The first dozen chapters or so highlight Atreyu's race to find a cure for the Childlike Empress, and the novel's second half focuses on Bastian and his journey to recreate Fantasia, which ends up nearly being his undoing. Thematically and structurally, both halves display similarities but also differences that cause the first half to stand stronger than the second half. For Atreyu, he learns about the positive power of imagination and fantasy, for a lack thereof creates a world devoid of wonder. But for Bastian, he explores the negative side of imagination as he uses his power of uninhibited wishing to escape from reality and change himself rather than help others.

Though he starts out likable and sympathetic, he devolves into a being, decidedly unlikable, as he allows his new powers to change who he is, and at great cost to himself. The Bastian in the second half is not the same as the Bastian in the first half; and while that is usually supposed to be a good thing, in this case it is not, and turns out to be a great regression of character. While Bastian's character's arc does come full circle, it feels unnecessarily long and padded with mini-quests that serve no real purpose.

Overall, the Never-ending Story is, despite its faults, a worthy read, thanks to its traditional story-telling and rich world-building. Readers and lovers of fantasy find a treasure trove here, from fantastic settings to intriguing creatures, to open adoration of the value of stories and imagination. While the story itself feels disconnected at times, it is still worth reading if for nothing more than to

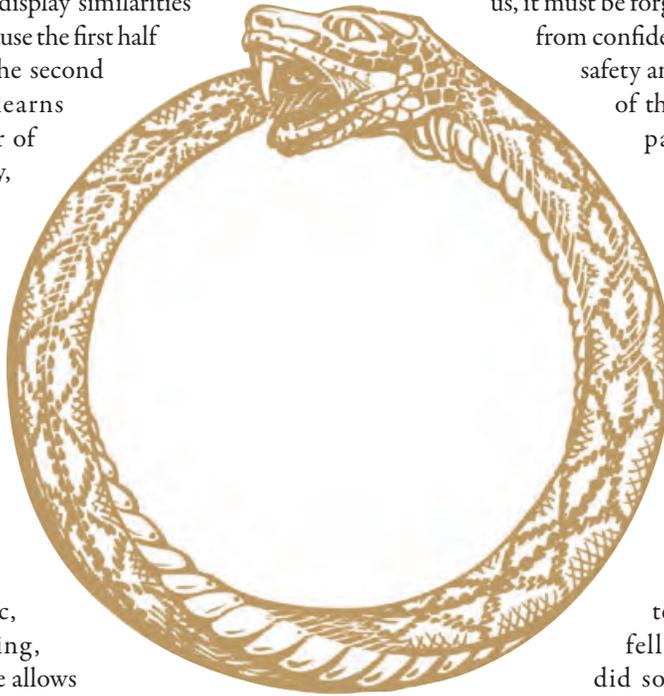
admire its expansiveness and thoughtful sentiments.

Epilogue

Imagination, tempered with reason, allows us to see reality from other perspectives. Thanks to these different views, we also learn to question reality. However, those who live, clinging to their beliefs, without questioning anything, can be manipulated and dominated. Another of the teachings of the Never-ending Story is linked to self-esteem. Although this value is often conditioned by what surrounds us, it must be forged from within. It is made from confidence, temperance, personal safety and self-love. There is a part of the film when Atreyu must pass between the titanic Sphinxes to travel to the Southern Oracle.

That, in turn, allows him to learn about the illness of the Childlike Empress and he goes on to save Fantasia. We know that some of the most battle-hardened heroes have lost their lives in that test. That said, those who fell victim to the Sphinxes did so because they hesitated and doubted themselves. On the other hand, the warrior boy advances with serenity and self-confidence. We should always remember that in real life situations, self-esteem also opens doors for us and allows us to become the heroes of our own stories.

So, what is the underlying philosophy of the Never-ending Story? In the end, the great message of the story is the importance of being who you want to be and do what you like best, facing fears and, absolutely the most important, finding your true self! It is a kind of self-initiation. It is a good story to read and think about; also a good story in which to think about stories, what they are and why we tell them.





Córdoba, Spain

by Juan Calcaño

Following the Path of Light

Contributions of Arabic Spain to Mysticism



History teaches us that civilisations, cultures and even religions have their cycles of life. They are born, grow and attain a glorious climax, only to decline and eventually disappear. The world has already known a series of different civilisations, some of them brighter than others.

What I want to explore now is how the light of mystical teachings passes from one civilisation to another. I want to trace the path of the eternal light from the old European cultures of the Mediterranean to our present civilisation.

In Europe two different civilisations have existed. The first was the old culture of Greece and Rome, the Graeco-Roman civilisation. It ended when the so-called '*Barbarians*' from central and northern Europe

invaded and occupied various parts of the Roman Empire repeatedly over many years. The second broad European civilisation started in the 12th century, and its centre was in Italy and France at first. It eventually spread throughout Europe, and today has spread outward from Europe to the Americas and other parts of the world. But, between those two cultures in Europe, there was a period of about a thousand years in which Europe was in a backward stage of development. That period of history covered the last centuries of Roman disintegration, the Dark Ages that followed, and the early times of the Middle Ages, when present civilisation was taking form. During those centuries, European culture was fragmented and in a poor condition, while Arabic civilisation ascended to great cultural heights. The Arabic or Islamic civilisation was much like a bridge between the old and new European cultures.



Mystery Schools of the Old World

The old European culture, the civilisation of Greece and Rome, had inherited its mystical teachings from the still older Egyptian culture, to which were added later some of the mysteries from other places of the Near East: from Syria, Persia and other places. The Greek tradition consisted of the Eleusinian mysteries, the Orphic mysteries, the Pythagorean Order, and some other schools of the mysteries. All of these later had their branches in Rome and, not so long ago, archaeologists found near Rome, on the road to Naples, a subterranean temple of the Pythagorean Order.

In later times, to those mystical schools of ancient Rome, were added some Oriental cults, such as the cult of Mithra from the fire religion of the Persians, the cult of Astarte from Asia Minor, the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris, and several others. Most of these had their inner initiatic circles. Other branches of the Great Brotherhood developed still later on, during the Roman Empire, as the Therapeuti and Essenes. In the very latest centuries of the culture, already within Christian times, were introduced the Gnostics and, lastly, the Neo-Platonists. These last two schools had their main centres in Alexandria, the magnificent city founded by Alexander the Great in Egypt, but their world of conceptions belonged to the Roman civilisation and not to the Egyptian civilisation, which was already finished by that time.

Chaos

The tribes from northern and central Europe were considered by the Romans as *'barbarians'*, savage, uncultured people. When these tribes invaded the Roman Empire and swept away all established standards of civilisation, the centuries-old corpus of esoteric knowledge rapidly waned and finally disappeared entirely. Those old standards and principles had already started to fade away when the first Christian emperors fostered an early Christian fanaticism and, trying to get political support from the early

churches, began a long and steady persecution that eventually wiped out everything that was not accepted by the first Christian theologians. It is well known that the esoteric message of Christianity, the inner occult circle of the new movement, was lost during the early centuries of the Common Era. The Gnostics, it has been claimed, belonged to that inner circle which possessed the secret tradition and, when the action of the early church began to be more political and less mystical, the inner circle was rejected by the new priests and theologians, and its light was spent. All other schools which perpetuated the ancient esoteric knowledge were persecuted, disbanded and even exterminated.

At that time a kind of frenzy or madness ran through most of Europe. The church wanted to do away with long-established habits and customs, replacing them with accepted and traditional ideas. All was gradually destroyed. People began to dress in another fashion. Houses were built according to new styles. Ideas changed. Everything was considered from another angle, and all those factors produced a kind of chaos which engulfed the old culture, the old knowledge and the old standards.

All the more or less civilised lands of Europe were divided in two great portions: the Western Empire with Rome as its capital, and the Eastern Empire with its capital at Constantinople (now Istanbul). Gradually the Dark Ages descended on the western half. It was in some way a kind of Obscure Night which later turned into the dawn of our present civilisation.



A votive plaque depicting elements of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

It was during this confused period, when Europeans had lost their old culture and had not yet established a new one, that Arabia began to awake. Arabia had been a land of great civilisation for a thousand years when the prophet Mohammed was born and began to preach his teachings. The people were stirred, and in a short period all the Arabian peoples found themselves well ahead on the road to a high civilisation and to the most prominent position as a political and military power.





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View from the Suleymaniye Mosque complex, Istanbul, Turkey, previously known as Constantinople.

They first conquered Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, all the coast of North Africa, Sudan, parts of Ethiopia and eastern Africa, and later extended their civilisation into Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Turkestan and India. It was a larger empire than the Romans ever had in their hands.

Rise of Islamic Civilisation

Literacy was widespread throughout ancient Arabia from at least the early 1st millennium BCE, and vast numbers of inscriptions in a variety of languages and scripts have been discovered there, with more coming to light every year. Arabia was unique in the ancient world in having its own branch of the alphabet (the South Semitic script family), varieties of which were used from the far north of the peninsula to the south. It survives in the script used for Ge'ez, Amharic, etc. in Ethiopia. One of the most remarkable aspects of literacy in ancient Arabia is that from the 1st millennium BCE until about the 4th century CE writing was used extensively by nomads as well as by the settled communities. This is the only period in history when the nomads of this area had been able to read and write, and they have left scores of thousands of graffiti on the rocks of the Arabian deserts. They invented architectural styles that were more delicate, ornate and beautiful than anything the world had seen before. Their carpets, their clothing,

their ceramics, their weapons; and their pageantry were full of new beauty never dreamed of before.

Their poets of the new religion wrote the most beautiful poems. We know some of those names: the Persians Omar Khayyam, Firdausi and Hafez.

Their scientists surpassed all those previously known. They excelled in medicine, astronomy, music, history and chemistry. Their mathematicians went further than anyone before. They developed the numerical system we are using today, which was fundamental for the development of higher mathematics. They discovered, or rather invented, algebra. Our present-day mathematics owes more to the Arabs than to any other people. Commerce and trade found new ways and systems. Large maritime enterprises were undertaken and the Arab merchants covered almost the whole earth.

Invasion of Europe

The Arabs, conquerors in Asia and Africa, were a serious danger for Europe. We have already seen that Europe at that time was in a chaotic state. After conquering all the north coast of Africa across the Mediterranean from Europe, the Arabs finally took one more step and invaded Europe. They conquered almost the whole of Spain and parts of Italy. But when they crossed the Pyrenees mountains into France,



Andalucian Mystical Schools

Very early, the Arabs started their Military Orders which were stationed in so-called '*Ribats*.' The term transformed over time to become known as centres for Sufi fraternities. The Ribats were converted to a peaceful use where Sufis could congregate. They call to mind the forerunners of the military and mystic European Orders at the same time, such as the *Knights Templar*, the *Knights of Malta*, the *Knights of St. John of Jerusalem*, and others.

During the 9th and 10th centuries the Arabs founded in Spain several secret schools and mystical monasteries for the esoteric mysteries. One of them was in the mountain of *Ibn Masarra of Córdoba*, and another was in the *Mujahid of Granada*. It is well known, and quoted in the histories of that time, that in these monasteries the disciples studied philosophy and the occult sciences. At the time of the early Caliphs we know that in Spain several secret mystical societies were in activity, but their work was concealed. One of these was the school of the *Muridin*, meaning adepts. The leader of the school in 1144 was *Ibn Kasi*, famous mystic master of the time. Another prominent mystic was *Ibn Barrajan*, who was also head of another of the mystery schools and whose writings greatly influenced *Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi*, one of the greatest Islamic mystics of the time, and undoubtedly connected with the traditional teachings of the Great Brotherhood.

The Iraqi mystical *Order of the Brethren of Purity* was introduced in Madrid in 1004 by *Maslamah Ibn Ahmad al-Majriti* (died 1008), who was an outstanding scholar in astronomy and astrology. He was an intrepid traveller who journeyed all over the Islamic world and beyond and kept in touch with the Brethren of Purity. Indeed, he is said to have brought the *51 Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* to al-Andalus and added the compendium to other works. Another mystical school was active in Granada in the 12th century, under the leadership of *Ibn Sabl Al-Darir*, a well-known adept who was at the same time a distinguished alchemist and celebrated mathematician. He was also known for his great psychic development, and his school was attended not only by Arabs and Moors, but by Jews and Christians as well, who travelled from Toledo and Baeza to receive his teachings.



Painting of the Sufi mystic Saadi.

they were defeated in battle by the French. That single battle in 732, won by the Frankish statesman and military leader Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, between Tours and Poitiers, stopped forever the Arabian advance into Europe.

The Arabic cycle in Spain was most important. That culture was in full activity in the Spanish peninsula. The Emirs achieved a high culture for their time, and there, as everywhere in the Arabic world, the Islamic religion was the foundation of their civilisation.

In Europe during the Dark Ages all religious or mystic manuscripts that were not orthodox were destroyed; the Arabs, although they also destroyed part of that ancient lore at the beginning, preserved it afterwards. The mystical schools of Islam, such as the Sufis, began to spread their light. Some of their more important mystics are: *Saadi*, more or less well known; *al-Ghazali*, perhaps the greatest of their mystics; *Al-Biruni*, the great astronomer and astrologer; *Jabir ibn Hayan* (Geber), the great alchemist; *Ibn Sina* (Avicenna); *Al-Razi* (Rhazes); *Ibn Rushd* (Averroes); and many others well known in the philosophical, alchemical or mystical fields.





wikimedia / Forewems

Knights Templar.

As can be seen, the Arabs had created in Spain not just one little school somewhere but rather a large movement with several schools and different branches all over Iberia, including formal monasteries. Besides, the Arabs had preserved many of the writings of the ancient mystics that had been destroyed in Europe. All through their expansion into Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor and Egypt, the Arabs had preserved many precious manuscripts, not only mystical but also philosophical, scientific and literary, which at that time no longer existed in Europe. All these went to Spain with the teachings, and scholars from many parts of Europe, including areas of modern-day France, Austria and Germany, travelled to Spain to translate into Latin or other languages some of the books of antiquity preserved by the Arabs.

The 'Golden Age' of Israel

But the Arabic culture in Spain had something else to offer: it was the so-called '*Jewish Golden Age.*' Let us consider this important development.

The Arab rulers were not outstanding for their tolerance. On the contrary, at the beginning and towards the end of their cultural period, there were persecutions and fanaticism, religious intolerance and destruction. All of this was directed mostly against the Christians, and this in turn was due to Christian intransigency and political wars. But toward other sects and creeds which did not antagonise Islamic ways and ideas, the Arabs were more tolerant.

It was in this way that the Jewish people, scattered throughout the Arab Empire, were free to pursue their Jewish cultural aims to a considerable degree. Under successive Islamic caliphates in the Iberian peninsula, Jewish culture grew and evolved as never before. Science, letters, philosophy and mysticism attained a peak, and historians call this period the '*Golden Age of Israel.*'

Some of the greatest names in Judaism outside of Biblical times, belong to this Spanish Golden Age of Israel. Authors as outstanding as *Judah ha-Levi* and the two *Benezras*; philosophers like *Moses ben Maimon* (Maimonides), the most distinguished commentator of the classical Hebrew writings, and *Solomon ben-Gabirol*, belong to this time and place. Of greatest importance to us is *Moses of Córdoba*, who wrote the *Zohar*, which is the foundation text for all Kabbalistic writings. Jews introduced into Spain, and subsequently into the rest of Europe, the Kabbalistic tradition and Kabbalistic magic, and a rich Biblical lore which is a treasure for anyone interested in the Western mystical tradition.

So we see that during the Dark Ages and early Middle Ages there was an extraordinary mystical activity in Moorish Spain. The rest of Europe was almost completely cut off from the Spanish Caliphates for several centuries though gradually, all this light spread to the rest of Europe.

We owe to the Arabs the early knowledge of the Neo-Platonists, which is nothing else than the teachings of the Egyptian Brotherhood. We owe to the Arabs the introduction of alchemy into Europe, and it was under this form of teaching that the early European Rosicrucians taught the truths they possessed. We owe to the Spanish Jews all our knowledge of the Kabala

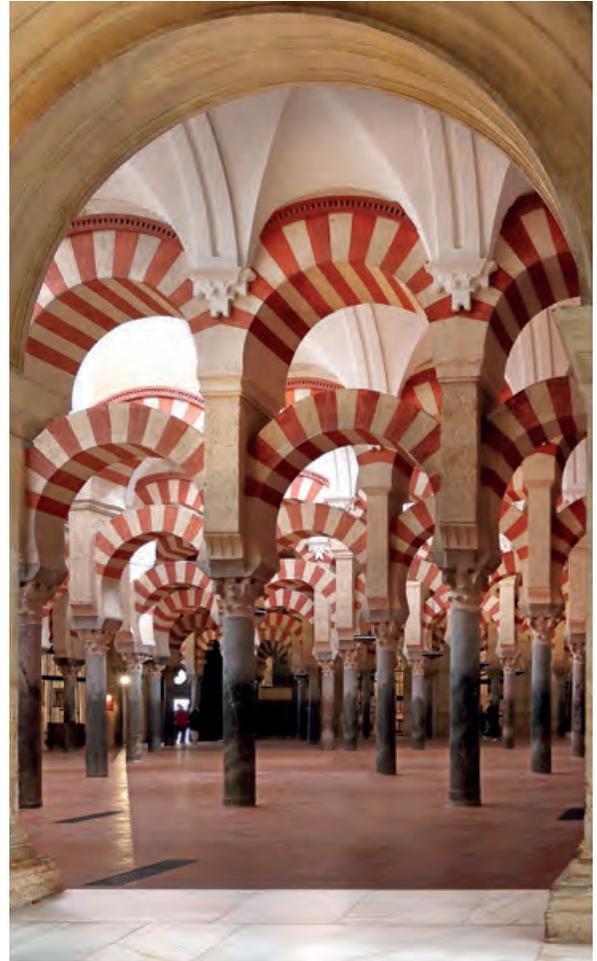


The Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides.



and magic, all closely connected with early Rosicrucian movements. From the Arab mystery schools in Spain came those great mystics such as *Ramon Lull*, *Arnold of Villanova*, and all the schools of the Illuminati which flourished in Toledo and other places until they were persecuted, later on, by the Spanish Inquisition under the Spanish Catholic kings. Such great French mystics as Flamel and his predecessors owe their light to the Hebrew tradition of Spain. And even, in much later times, *Martinez de Pasqually*, founder of the Martinist Order, proceeded from this same fountain of sacred knowledge.

It was, then, through Spain and through the Arabic world, that the light in Europe was restored after the Dark Ages. It's true that, besides this channel, Emperor Charlemagne sent a mission to the Near East (which was under Arab rule) in order to bring the hidden light. It is also true that this eminent ruler started a secret school in France, to which he himself did not belong, but this infiltration was not comparable in extent to the Arab contribution through Spain. This contribution to esoteric knowledge in Europe also worked, in a lesser



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The Great Mosque of Córdoba.

degree, through Italy, mostly through Sicily, and this was the origin of the early Italian schools, one of which was the Pythagorean, together with the Rosicrucian. To these schools belonged early great mystics such as *Pietro d'Abano* and, later on, *Pico della Mirandola* and many others.

All this historical period we have been considering is not very well known from our point of view, and more research is needed in this field. Still, the works of this period that we can read today are as enlightening to us as they were to the Arabic, Jewish or European mystic scholars 10 centuries ago.

Arabic Spain was one of the important landmarks along the path followed by the tradition of Light from East to West, in accordance with the mysterious ways of the Cosmic.



The Zohar.





Kopan Monastery *Kathmadu*

by Shirley Ellsworth

The flow of thought had ceased as ripples on a pond which, with energy expended, had finally come to rest. The calm, still, clear surface remained, mirror-like and tranquil, within which the note of the roaring silence echoed throughout the familiar peace.

Somewhere in this timeless eternity, the gentle tinkle of the bell had rung. Sensations started to impinge upon consciousness once more, bringing their reminders of that other mundane material reality, the slight ache in the back and the tingling annoyance of a fresh mosquito bite on the exposed ankle. The evening meditation was over and around the room the others were also stirring to a similar reality. The heavy haze of incense smoke had thwarted all but the most determined and hungry mosquitoes.

‘Poor females,’ the Lama had said, *‘all they need is food to make their eggs, and every living thing must feed.’* Smiling, he had stood before us, sharp eyes gleaming in the candle light, betraying an even clearer mind, illuminated





with a fiercely brilliant light. The saffron robed arms had dipped and swooped in demonstrative flight as he waxed philosophically. In enthusiastic detail, he had described the love that drove the desperate mother insect to brave death, time and time again, to gain those precious drops of blood. The monkey of the mind had grasped at a strange sequence of thoughts originating from that idea. Did Mother Earth feel oil wells in the same manner? Do big fleas have little fleas? And so it had flowed, until the discipline of meditation had intervened to still the torrent.

Leaving the meditation room, we passed through the marginally too low portal with its ornately carved, but ill-fitting, wooden doors. Outside, the faded sign requested silence, a black and white Buddha's head, with finger pursed against the stylised lips in the universal gesture of *'Silence please!'* High on the steep terraced banks of the central monastery hill, the nuns were chanting. The waves of rhythmical sound rolling down the hillside through the web of tangled prayer flags, now hanging limply for lack of vital breath of wind. Along the lower path-side edge, the clumps of bamboo speared the post sunset sky, their dark silhouettes forming a geometric pattern of nature's mind against the sky bowl's darkening blue. Here and there the first few brave evening stars punctuated the ether, while high above the bamboo spears floated the perfect silver orb of the night's full moon.

The moonlight's pale ethereal illumination gave a blue wash to the monastery and the beckoning rough stone path. Here and there the rhythmical iridescent flashes of fireflies weaved a dance above the path-side grass and through the nearby trees. Down on the plain below the monastery hill, a tapestry of electric sequins betrayed the structures of man by their night-time illumination. Clusters of artificial ground-stars, plucked by science from the fruits of nature's storehouse, to brighten the often ignoble deeds of men. Beyond the sequined tapestry of the valley floor, the torn black outline of the encircling mountains ripped the edge of the darkening sky-bowl. On the far eastern edge of this bounded world, flashes of lightning played around the distant Himalayan peaks, testimony to a tumult of nature's forces, too distant for even the great peals of thunder to wash against these monastery walls. The monsoon season surely approached, when drowned dust would again receive the kiss of torrents of celestial tears.

The rhythmic AUM of the chanting nuns filled the ether of this magic space and moment. Far away, across the valley, a dog barked, to be answered briefly by another at some distant peasant farmstead. The AUM returned, the names of God filling the space and moment created by this brief cessation of mankind's activities. Up on the hill, a portion of the chanting separated itself in space from the main body of sound, as a seed detaches from its parent



form. Crunching down the hillside path appeared two saffron robed nuns, one small child, accompanied by her older spiritual sister. Chanting as they walked, they passed alongside on their way to the nearby tin shack to answer the call of mother nature. With a screech of agonised metal, the doors opened, then clanked shut, as ill-fitting wooden frames collided with corrugated iron. The chanting continued, strangely resonant from the cubicle acoustics.

I walked on down the path, picking my way carefully between the various obstacles illuminated by the pale blue moonlight. Ahead, the pagoda roofs of the temple gompa stood proud above the bushes atop the path-side wall. Ornate gold and brass-work offered a dull sparkle beneath the silver moon, the solar embraced by the gentle lunar. The floating iridescent pulsations of fireflies drifted across the path, giving a moving depth to this tranquil sea of moonlight. Around the distant streetlight of the corner wall swarmed countless mosquitoes, dancing to the chorus of crickets and cicadas. Curled up on the concrete and basked in electric radiance was one of the monastery's dogs, asleep and murmuring in dog dreams. The ancient monastery jeep was parked in its usual place, the bubbles in its stained metallic silver paint betraying the ravages of hidden rust. The sooty dark stain on the stone beneath evidenced the wear and tear of engine oil seals and the lack of that all too unaffordable maintenance. A bald rear tyre rested against a large stone and a bent bumper rounded off the picture completely.

Flapping on the pole at the entrance to the temple gompa steps were two tall, thin, and frayed prayer flags, their printed prayers now faded on the cloth. The prayer wheels stood in their brightly coloured cubicle beside the path, the legend '*Aum Mani Padmi Hum*' embossed in ancient script in their metal rims. Beside these offerings to spirit, the ancient, venerated 25-gallon white painted water drum rested on the capstone of the step-side wall. Around the drum, in uneven script was painted the legend: '*Todised for drinking. Good for your mind, better for your speech, best for your body.*' It was here that the monks or nuns stopped to bend, open mouthed, below the refreshing drinking water tap.

It was here too, at this fount of the greatest of blessings, that this quiet, contemplative traveller stopped. Spiritual and physical thirst briefly merged into one, as the inner and the outer man stopped to drink beneath the shimmering moon. Across the silence, the Himalayas tore at the sky, while the spangles in the night-sky twinkled at their lesser electric kin laid across the valley floor. Macrocosm met microcosm and there was peace profound. The flow of thought had ceased, as ripples on a pond which, with energy expended, had finally come to rest. The calm, still, clear surface remained, mirror-like and tranquil, within which, the note of the roaring silence echoed throughout the familiar peace profound. And in the calm, still, clear water was reflected the secretive, smiling face of the night's full moon.



Aum Mani Padmi Hum

We are never more
discontented with others
than when we are
discontented with
ourselves.
-- Amiel --



SILENCE

Inner Learning through the Power of Silence

by **Jeanne Guesdon**

istock.com / hexfilephoto



Silence, one of the most difficult things to achieve in our busy world, was an important key to the Pythagorean Path. Before he would initiate a neophyte into the mysteries of his teachings, Pythagoras would subject the candidate to various ordeals which were designed to strengthen their character and which would allow Pythagoras to judge the neophyte. So, newcomers amid the sages of Kroton listened but were not allowed to ask questions. For months on end, they were subjected to the discipline of silence, so that when they were finally allowed to speak again they would do so only with circumspection and respect. They had learned inwardly through introspection and personal experience, that silence is an almost divine power..., the mother of all virtues.

They had learned inwardly through introspection and personal experience, that silence is an almost divine power..., the mother of all virtues.

Alas, if only we were still under the genial authority of Pythagoras, for the main trouble with today's world is the lack of silence. Not only is contemporary society literally poisoned by noise, it is literally saturated with loud and empty words. It is a question of who can speak the loudest, and who will tell her story in the most trifling details. How correct was Søren Kierkegaard, the great Danish existentialist philosopher, when he wrote: *'The world in its present state is sick!'*

If I were a doctor and was asked for advice, I would answer: *'Be silent!'* Yes, true Rosicrucians can be recognised by their oral temperance, among of course many other virtues. They speak only sparingly, but the words they speak are rich in meaning. They practise the following advice from a Sufi teacher:

If the word you are going to speak is not more beautiful than silence you are about to break, then do not say it!

When we apply for initiation, we must remain silent not only toward others but within ourselves too. Let us understand this well. It is in silence that the Cosmic

communicates with us and in order for us to hear the advice of our Inner Divinity, to receive intuitive flashes, we must know how to silence the profane voice within. In his famous treatise entitled Maqāmāt-e Toyūr or *'The Conference of Birds'*, the Persian mystic *Farid ud-Din Attār* expresses the same truth in a different way.

As long as they walked, they talked; but when they arrived, all talk ceased. There was neither guide nor traveller; even the road had ceased to exist.

One of the greatest French mystics, *Louis Claude de Saint-Martin*, was deservedly named *'the Unknown Silent One'* by his disciples. More than anyone else, he exalted the virtue of silence. *'Great truths'* he wrote, *'are taught only through silence.'* Better yet, he made this remark which unfortunately applies so well to our times: *'Is there a greater proof of human weakness than the multiplicity of our words?'*

Silence truly is a test for one who through habit or tendency does not know how to observe it. Tradition relates that the ancients had made a god out of silence..., a male in Greece, where it was named *Harpocrates*, and a female in Rome, where it was called *Tacita*..., well named, as it is derived from the Latin word *'tacere'*, which means, *'to be silent.'* This demonstrates to what extent our ancestors worshiped this virtue.

...the discipline of silence is a power. It allows us to maintain within us a vital flux that useless words would waste away.

As explained, the discipline of silence is a power. It allows us to maintain within us a vital flux that useless words would waste away. Before you speak therefore, try to evaluate if what you intend to say is worthwhile, if it can do some good, and especially if it is not going to cause any harm. You will notice that the effort you exerted in repressing a useless word causes a reaction within, a struggle against temptation. Each victory will give you new power. That is why it is wise to follow the Sufi's advice, and if what you are about to say is not more beautiful than silence, then be silent. Great truths emerge from silence.





Old Charlie

by Madeleine Cabuche

istock.com / Ludmila Chernetska

Until the after-effects of a major operation left him unable to play to the requisite standard, Charles was lead violinist in one of Britain's most prestigious orchestras. Heartbroken at losing his career and deeply troubled that he could no longer be the main breadwinner at home, he became saddened and lonely, although without the slightest trace of self-pity or bitterness. He took solace in playing his violin to himself, playing the piano and composing the occasional solo, while in the recesses of his tiny workshop, a real alchemist's den, he invented things, mended things and perfected a method of making the most wonderful violin strings I have ever encountered.

In appearance, he was the prototype for the typical absent-minded professor; tousled hair, tobacco ash from an ever present brown-stained *'rollup'* trailing down his jacket. His deeply blue eyes, screwed up against the smoke, were never other than gentle, sad and somewhat puzzled. His wife, a plump, correct little lady, treated him as though he were a tiresome schoolboy (which, in some ways he was) and his daughter, a gargantuan woman..., well, he only ever referred to her, soto voce, as the Sergeant Major. Himself, he referred to as *'Old Charlie'*, while a gnome-sized ancient mother-in-law was *'Old Bossy.'* These names were a secret between him and my ten-year-old self!

When I first arrived for weekly hour-long sessions, he quickly became captivated. Being a timid, skinny, old-fashioned child, perhaps I epitomised the sort of little daughter he had always wanted, a stark contrast to the Sergeant-



Major. When he came to realise how harshly I was treated at home, he obviously wanted to spoil me; but having no money other than the meagre allowance doled out for tobacco each week, he could not buy me the treats he imagined a little girl would like. He took to saving a few sweets from those which came his way and these he kept secreted away within the interior of the piano stool seat, revealed only when he considered that the coast was clear, urging me to tuck the sticky mess quickly out of sight. Lessons done with, he also delighted in teaching me to play snooker. Oh, that I could have delighted him with equal brilliance where the violin was concerned!

Later, when I was grown up, he endeavoured stoically to ignore recurring symptoms of his previous illness. Maybe the trauma of his experience in hospital, plus the fact that he had faint leanings towards Christian Science, kept him from seeking aid. During the last week of his life, when I visited him, he was spending the days and nights propped in a high armchair, unable to move and scarcely able to speak. Apart from indicating a cache of very ancient sweets (and I was twenty-four by then) concealed in a little antimony box, which I still have, he told me in wide-spaced, barely audible whispers, that he had been puzzling over what wrong he had done that he should be so afflicted. He felt sure that God must be trying to teach him something. That old man, who was the gentlest and most blameless of creatures, had been searching his mind for any wrong-doing, any misdemeanour over the years. All he could come up with was the fact that maybe he had devoted too much of his time, in later years, to his workshop and mechanical things rather than to his composing which, after all, was a gift given by God. He had decided, there and then, that if spared, he would devote the remainder of his life to composing music to the glory of his Creator.

Many years later, I became close friends with a somewhat eccentric scientist, to whom Science was All. While professing atheism, this man had a deeply spiritual nature which found an outlet in art, some music and in his adoration of high mountain peaks. Tears were in his eyes

While professing atheism, this man had a deeply spiritual nature which found an outlet in art, some music and in his adoration of high mountain peaks.

when he regarded the Matterhorn and escaped down his thin face when we stood before a Piero della Francesca painting, despite the fact that his intellect scoffed at its religious context. He had obviously a deep if unrecognised longing to believe in something outside of himself and a great need for this. Many were the hours we spent in discussion and argument. On the occasions when, by pure logic, I managed to gain a point which he could not refute, he would brush me aside, much as one would a troublesome fly, and demand a cup of tea or indeed anything else which might get him out of a tight corner. And he would never resume the conversation, or refer to the matter again.

One day, he developed some troublesome symptoms, stemming apparently from a minor complaint he suffered on occasion. The general practitioner dismissed them, regarding him as neurotic, which he was; likewise a consultant surgeon, so I

concluded that all was well. Then, one evening, I sensed the presence of Old Charlie at home, bringing with him the symbol of a crab. Sometimes I can be very stupid. Taking it to indicate the astrological sign, I thought no further, although I wondered vaguely why Old Charlie had come round, especially as it was years since I had last sensed him.

A fortnight later, a second surgeon diagnosed cancer, the crab, and ordered an immediate operation. During the week preceding it, I have never seen a man more in the grip of fear. The arrogant scientist became a terrified child. As I spent each evening with him, trying to talk him through



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his coming ordeal, I became aware that, miraculously, I always seemed able to find just the right things to say, just the acceptable gentle joke, always managing to leave him more at peace with himself. Although by now I realised that Old Charlie, who had died of a precisely identical condition, had come to warn me in advance, I still had no idea of any other purpose in his coming.

The operation, which was a major one requiring two surgeons working in synchrony, was a total success. He never experienced pain during the recovery period and physically progressed better than anyone could have anticipated; but, on the third post-operative day, his mind went. For days he hallucinated, dreaming up weird and wonderful scenarios, all in lengthy, meticulous detail. He became convinced that the hospital had been hijacked by guerrilla fighters and experienced many terrifying happenings, delineation of which would fill several pages. The surgeon told me that occasionally, when a very fearful patient underwent a lengthy anaesthetic, this could happen. He said it usually resolved itself with time but that this case was particularly bad, might not even be resolved and it was imperative therefore that I did all I could to pull him back from his phantasmal world of terror.

So, during one of the coldest winters ever, on returning from work each evening, I made my way to the hospital, up to his room high in the tower block, fearful of what I would find and wondering, as I traversed the icy streets, how on earth I could be of positive help. But always, as I sought desperately for the right words to say,

the right things to do, these came to me despite myself, and I soon realised that Old Charlie was always there, strengthening and guiding me.

During the first hour of each session, I learned to let my friend talk himself through all his nightmare happenings, which he always related in graphic detail. Only then, when he had talked himself out, stopped grasping in the air for objects only he could see, would he begin to listen until, by the time it came for me to leave, he had become calm.

Night after night this continued, until I began to fear there would be no end to it. At last, the hallucinations began to lessen and eventually he realised they had not been real. Then a wonderful thing happened; at least, to me it was wonderful. Towards the end of one visit, he leaned back against his pillows and said: *'I don't understand what has been happening. You have brought me back and I don't understand how you did it.'* He paused: *'You have been doing something. No... it is not you yourself, it is something which has been coming through you.'* He paused again, seeking expression for what to him was an utter mystery, then he said: *'It is so deep, so profound...'* He waved his long hands helplessly before him. *'I don't understand what it is... but it was so very strong.'* He peered down through spread fingers as though searching for something he found impossible to see. *'Deep... like a well, so, so deep'*, he said, repeating again *'I don't know what it is.'* I assured him that I knew and would be oh so happy to tell him later when he was home and well again. Then I left him to sleep.

On his discharge from hospital, he went to live with a relative some distance away. During a telephone conversation, I asked him if he remembered what had happened between us at the hospital. Oh yes, he remembered it all very clearly. I asked if he still wanted to know what it was all about. Yes, indeed he did. I visited him a month later when he was progressing well into convalescence, but by that time his mind was bent on blotting out his hospital experience and he no longer wanted to know.

Fifteen years later, perhaps the happiest in his lonely life, spent in idyllic surroundings with a devoted niece, he passed away from something quite different, coupled with old age. I think perhaps he knows now the answers to the questions he no longer wanted to ask.



AURA

by **Meryl Field**

The Subtle Body

The combined auras of the soul and body determine the kind of feeling you have for things in your immediate environment. As you come into contact with other people and things, there is an interaction of force fields that yield varying degrees of attraction and repulsion. The more general the attraction, the more elated and satisfied you feel. Where there is predominant repulsion, there is a feeling of uneasiness or depression.

Harmonising with the environment is a major concern of everyone. No one truly likes an inharmonious environment, nor a sense of irritability. To bring about a longer-lasting harmonious condition between yourself and the environment, both mind and body need your concerted attention. If both are in a healthy vibrant state, you will be attracted to people and things that correspond or are in harmony with that state. If you think negatively, or are careless about your state of physical health, you will find yourself being drawn to corresponding aura patterns. They will then only add to the general negative and depressed state of your being.

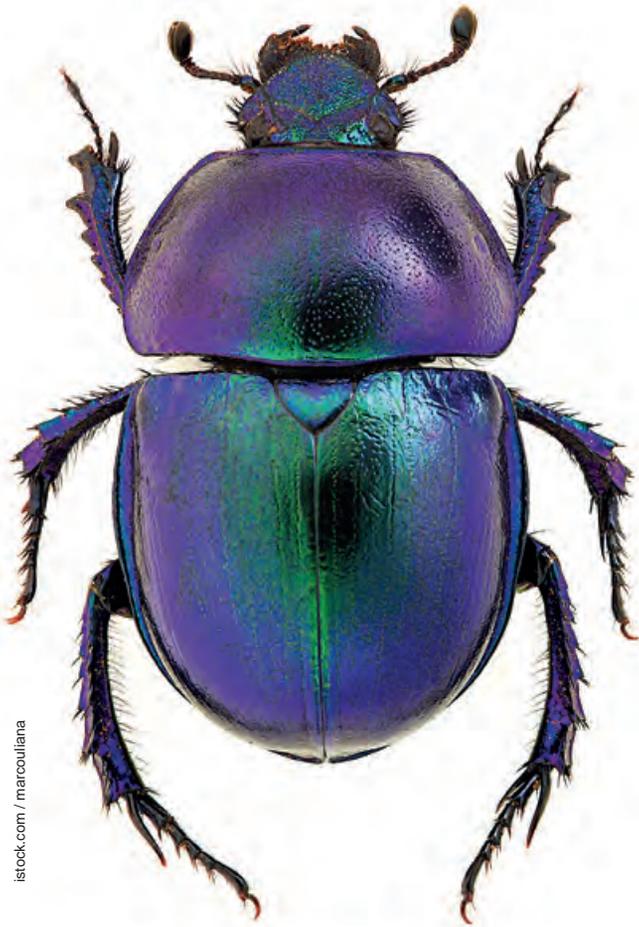
In order to attract to yourself those elements of beauty that you value and want in your life, you must live your life accordingly. There are no set rules for what brings you into harmony with your environment. Each person's needs and requirements for personal harmony are different. You need to keep in mind what you really want, and then strive to be that yourself. You not only seek it in your environment, but you also build it in yourself; for when it is in yourself, you will find it outside yourself as well.

Mentally, your personal vitality and magnetism will be determined by the way you think. It's as pure and simple as that. The more attention you give to thinking only about things that are wholesome and pleasant, the more will your aura radiate that message and attract to you others of like kind.

The condition of your body is equally important to you. The more attention you give to it, the more you will experience the attractive energy it gives off. This vitality, as measured by the amount of energy you give off, will make you feel like a new person. Your whole being should be tingling with the excitement of this effulgence. The thing to watch during the next week, and after, is that the exercises and attention you are giving to your body are being repaid by the body in the way of a stronger and more sensitive physique, able to perform with less effort and more vigour, more of the tasks you ask of it.

The body should never be looked upon as an impersonal or unimportant part of you. It is very important and certainly deserves half of your concern, love, and attention. Without it, your inner self would be severely limited in its expression, unable to perform its humanitarian and idealistic goals.





Scarab Beetles

If you ever fret about lack of progress and berate your weaknesses in life, let me invite you to compare yourself to a simple bug which drew respect from one of the greatest civilisations of all time, the ancient Egyptians.

by **Shirley Elsby**

The scarab beetle, *Scarabaeus Sacer*, is mainly famous for its daily routine of rolling balls of dung along the ground, sometimes in volumes many times their own weight.¹ Whatever your own experiences in the material world, no matter the limitations, drudgery and lack of scope they seem to offer, they can hardly be worse than the scarab's relentless chore repeated daily from the beginning to the end of its adult life. Nevertheless, this single-minded insect generated the first known incidence of beetlemania, truly an acknowledgement of qualities worthy of outright adulation by even the highest in the land, the pharaoh.

Artisans of Egypt cast, carved, painted, embroidered and embossed scarab shapes into good-luck amulets, jewellery, document seals, clothing, home adornments, funerary paraphernalia and numerous other items. Its form was elaborately preserved in the most precious stones and metals, jewelled and adorned, intricately carved and

frequently inscribed with meaningful statements such as *'happy birthday'* and *'well done for winning the war'*, though mostly with incantations and invocations to the great solar deity Ra.

Its image was placed lovingly, respectfully, admiringly and often hopefully in the highest and holiest places of the land, as well as being hidden in the folds of mummy wrappings with spells to ease the deceased's passage past the fearsome minders of the underworld and on to eternal life among the fixed stars. In a British Museum leaflet the following is said about the scarab beetle's prominence as an amulet:

It first appeared during the Old Kingdom (about 2613-2160 BC), and was often used as a seal, mounted on a ring, with an inscription on the flat underside. This use was extended to a funerary context during the Middle Kingdom



and later, in the form of the ‘heart scarab’: a stone amulet in the shape of a scarab placed over the heart of the mummy. This too was inscribed on its underside, with chapter 30 of the ‘Book of the Dead’, a spell that prevented the heart from speaking out against the deceased at his or her judgement.

So what turned the lowly scarab into a superbug? And what can we learn from the little critters to apply to our own place in the world?

It certainly was not scarcity that led to the great beetle drive of the pharaohs. The scarab beetle sub-family Scarabaeinae extends to some 5,000 species, many of which feed exclusively on dung or animal excrement. True dung beetles from this extensive family network are divided into rollers, which roll the material into balls and use it for both food and breeding chambers; tunnellers which bury the material wherever they find it; and dwellers, which neither roll nor bury the dung but simply live in it.²

The Egyptians’ favourite, *Scarabaeus Sacer*, rolled balls of dung to their burrows, where the female would lay her eggs. When hatched, the larvae would get their first meals from the ball, an ultimate convenience food, and when ready, emerge to begin toiling for the next generation. The Egyptian Myths³ website notes:

It seemed to the ancient Egyptians that young scarab beetles emerged spontaneously from the burrow where they were born. Therefore they



A scarab statue at the Karnak temple complex.



Pendant with a depiction of a winged scarab.

were worshipped as Khepera, which means ‘he has come forth.’ This creative aspect of the scarab was associated with the creator god Atum.

The ray-like antenna on the beetle’s head and its practice of dung-rolling caused the beetle to also carry solar symbolism. The scarab beetle god Khepera was believed to push the setting sun along the sky in the same manner as the beetle with his ball of dung. In many artefacts, the scarab is depicted pushing the sun along its course in the sky.

Continuing the theme of the scarab emulating the passage of the sun through the sky, in the Egyptian pantheon of gods Khepri was the early morning manifestation of the solar deity Ra, who was self-created rather than coming from the union of any higher, formerly existing god and goddess through reproduction. This act of self-creation was initially represented as a dung beetle by itself and later in Egyptian history as a god with a scarab beetle’s head. The beetle emerged at dawn ‘rolling’ the solar disk before it, shortly after the solar deity had been re-born into the day following its 12-hour journey through the underworld with all its dangers. As the sun appeared from under the eastern horizon, it brought with it all the qualities we associate with youth, new birth, freshness, forward movement, creativity and the art of getting things done. The vintage jewellery website Charm Chatter⁴ notes:

Scarabs were a symbolic motif that represented regeneration and rebirth, and were thought to bring protection, luck and vitality to the wearer.



They were given to soldiers before battle, and women for fertility. They were also put into the tombs of Egyptian royalty as grave goods. One of the most famous Egyptian kings to memorialise the scarab beetle was Amenhotep III. Anybody who has seen any of the 'Mummy' series of films starring Brendon Fraser will recognise the name and remember the scenes of millions of beetles consuming Amenhotep's enemies.

A modern oracle set devised by David Lawson, *'The Eye of Horus, An Oracle of Ancient Egypt'*⁵, links the stone of Khepri with new motivation, energy and drive, saying:

Even the simplest or lowliest of tasks can raise us to the level of the divine if we allow them to. You can either choose to view yourself as a dung beetle endlessly rolling your pile of dung over the dirt or you can see yourself as Khepri, making a journey of glory, commitment and spiritual purpose across the heavens.

Here then are points to ponder as we make our own way through life; for although some of us sometimes feel stuck, stale and stultified on the same old path, we can nonetheless at any point reflect on the journey being made, regardless of how we feel about it, and upon the opportunity in every moment to elevate life by adjusting our thinking about it. We can approach it one way or approach it another. As ever, the outcome provides the lesson of life, whether the downbeat gloom of defeatism or the upward glow of optimism and purpose.

There is something intrinsically beautiful about the scarab beetle with its multitudinous bright colours and proportionate shape, seemingly infinite variety within a

fixed structure perhaps captured most vividly in modern times by the insect art of Christopher Marley in his Jewelled Scarab Mosaic.⁶ Similarly, there is something inherently beautiful about the human form, always individual and unique, a quality artists can capture however wrinkled, bent or otherwise flawed. The outer expression may appear to those lacking the insight to appreciate the life journeys subtly mapped on the face and body, even when they have the standard issue of two arms, two legs, body and head. Individuals have their own purpose to find and follow, distinct to themselves, unable to be replicated by others. But the scarab beetle cannot stop itself rolling balls of dung, for it is in the nature of the beast to roll, just as it is in the nature of a cow to moo and of spiders to get stuck in bathtubs.

When people work in order to fulfil their reason for being, that work is as easy as it is for the scarab to make its own daily push, push, push..., even when it is really hard. Resistance is a sign that what we're doing is not quite what is right. The trick is to find the task/s about which we feel totally single-minded, so there is no other force competing for attention or drawing off part of the energy required to do it. In this way, we are not dividing ourselves between this and that, or letting ourselves be pulled one way and shoved another. People who work in line with their true reason for being are focused and flowing, unable to help themselves from doing what they do, just like one of the most successful members of the insect family always has been.

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Winged scarab beetle amulet.



Eugenius Idiodi

Officially installed as
Grand Master of the
English West Africa Grand
Lodge in Port Harcourt, Nigeria
on Sunday
3 November 2024.



Eugenius Idiodi was born into a royal family of Rosicrucian heritage in Nigeria on 26 July, 1979. His father and mother are the much-loved former Grand Administrator and, now Honorary Grand Master emeritus, Fr Kenneth U Idiodi, and his beloved wife, Sr Bridget Idiodi, both of whom have served the Order in official capacities for well over half a century.

Fr Eugenius was raised as a Rosicrucian in the Junior Order of Torchbearers and at 16, began his Rosicrucian studies as an adult member of AMORC. Completing studies in Abeokuta, he went on to obtain a degree in mechanical engineering in Ghana and an MSc in advanced manufacturing.

He worked upstream in the energy sector in Nigeria before taking up a senior position in a major international company which included working in several countries around the world, while retaining his home and family base in the South of England. Throughout much of this time, he continued serving as Master of a local Pronaos and served as well as a Regional Monitor in the United Kingdom.

Fr Eugenius has interests in temple building, metaphysical healing, the Junior Order, African heritage, membership welfare and the growth of the Order. His wife, Sr Henrietta, is a medical doctor with a practice in the UK. She was born and raised in Ghana and they are blessed with three lovely children. They have most recently lived in Houston USA and in Singapore, returning to the UK at the peak of the pandemic in 2020.

Fr Eugenius was unanimously elected in October 2021 to succeed his father, Fr Kenneth Idiodi, as Grand Administrator of the English West Africa Administration of AMORC, and on 2 April 2022 he was ritualistically installed into Office. He was elected to the office of Grand Master elect in April 2024 and was ritualistically installed as Grand Master on 3 November 2024.

Members throughout the world warmly welcome him into office as Grand Master of the English Grand Lodge for West Africa.



