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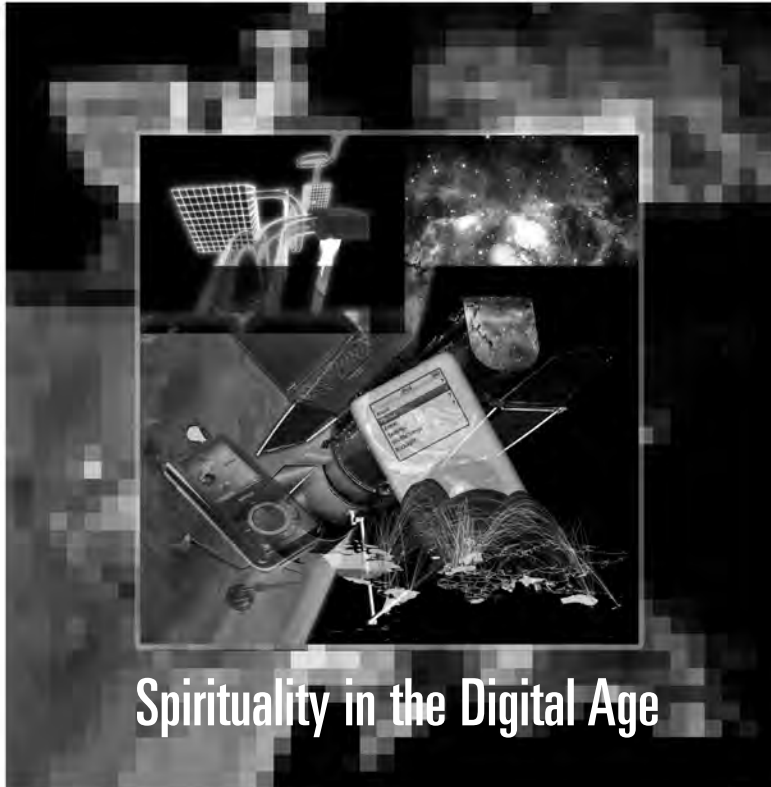
COVER SPREAD

“The Promise of Spring”



Thoughts from the Editor

by Bill Anderson, FRC



Spirituality in the Digital Age

*I am the light that shines forth, that gives joy to souls.
I am the life of the world, I am the juice that is in all trees,
I am the sweet water that is beneath the sons of matter.*

-- Manichaeian Psalm 246

*Man evolves over time,
just as everything connected with life does,
just as the universe itself does.*

-- Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis)

I HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT A BOOK of images from the Hubble Space Telescope, an instrument which has allowed us not only an unprecedented look outwards into the Universe but also backwards in time. The wonder of creation

that this orbiting telescope has revealed to an astonished public reminds me of the axiom: *As Above, So Below*. What it reveals in the macrocosm that is the universe, is reflected in the microcosmic world of the human body with all its cells and constituent parts. The photographs taken with



an electron microscope reveal many wonders we would otherwise remain unaware of. If only we were able to see the sub-atomic particles and strings that are currently thought to be the building blocks of our universe, what wonders might we see then?

Non-Locality

Classical physics maintains that physical locality is local: something occurring at one point of space cannot *immediately* influence what happens at another point. Until 1997, this was a given fact. However in that year an experiment was conducted where photons or light particles were split and sent off in opposite directions to detectors located some seven miles apart. It was found that when something affected one half of the split particle, it instantaneously affected the other half of the particle. In other words they “communicated” with each other instantly. As Henry Stapp put it in *Quantum Theory and the Physicist’s Conception of Nature*: “Each atom turns out to be nothing but the potentialities in the behaviour pattern of others. What we find is a web of relationships in which no part can stand alone; every part derives its meaning and existence only from its place within the whole.”

The relationship between all the constituent parts in a whole is vital to the running of that whole. If one part can influence other parts instantly, it is positive feedback for members who may doubt aspects of our teachings such as telepathy and visualisation techniques. They do work, and science is well on the way to proving empirically what we have intuitively known for centuries.

Music

In the same way that the Hubble Telescope has brought us those images from far away and allowed us to be moved by them, we can now download music from a myriad of websites to our PCs, laptops, iPods or MP3 players and listen to our chosen music whenever we want. The latest product is said to be the iPhone where you can even download music and videos to your mobile phone.

We have the ability to take our music

with us wherever we go. We can thus meditate anywhere we wish, on a train, on a park bench, wherever we can find a peaceful few minutes, and we can bring our music with us; we are no longer tied to any particular room or place.

Podcasts

A podcast is a media file that is distributed by subscription, paid or unpaid, over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on mobile devices such as MP3 players and personal computers. We can listen to podcasts and view vodcasts (video podcasts) through the Internet. A wonderful set of new ways to communicate and stay in touch as never before! Some Rosicrucian websites already use this as a means of interacting with members and potential new members, and you can download them for free. In the future it will be possible to download discourses quickly and easily from a podcast, to be listened to when it suits us.

Mobile or Cell Phones

There has been a phenomenal uptake of mobile phone use. The spread of mobile or cell phones in Africa is having profound effects on life there. A BBC Newsnight reporter recently suggested that the widespread use of these in Kenya and South Africa is transforming life to such an extent that Africa in general is set to leap from the pre-industrial age to the digital age, bypassing the need for an African Industrial Revolution. Mobile phones are having an amazing impact at a local level, even amongst the Masai. Most of them have these devices and they use texting when they are out of talktime. And it has made a huge difference to their society.

How long will it be before we can all e-mail or have a “real-time” conversation with our class master via a VoIP telephone; what about one class master for each language jurisdiction instead of each Grand Lodge with its own specialists. Will we be able to have video-conferencing in place of Affiliated Bodies, where members can join together for Convocation?

Cyberspace is the equivalent of the universe, a sea of potentiality at our fingertips,



an unseen realm with a stream of data mimicking the stream of consciousness.

Can it bring about a spiritual re-awakening? Can it lead to the regeneration of humanity? I believe so. As the *Positio* states: "Science and mysticism were very close in ancient times..., to such an extent in fact, that scientists were mystics and vice versa. It is precisely toward the reunification of these two paths of knowledge that we must work in the coming decades."

Epilogue

"Scientists have long been baffled by the existence of spontaneous order in the universe. The laws of thermodynamics seem to dictate the opposite, yet all around us we see magnificent structures: galaxies, cells, ecosystems and human beings that have somehow managed to assemble themselves," says Steven Strogatz.¹ The tendency to harmonise or synchronise is one of the most far-reaching drives in the universe.

This is the information age, a brave new era that has created a virtual explosion of educational opportunities for everyone; more than the world has ever seen before. The original three Rosicrucian manifestos that appeared at the beginning of the 17th century, urged a universal reformation of ideas and outlook. Today, in the digital age of the 21st we have the means to bring

about another such universal reformation. No longer do people have to slavishly follow the party line or religious dogma. The Internet in particular, which is open to all, has facilitated a mental re-awakening of mankind. It has allowed us to think for ourselves!

The universe is a seamlessly interactive system that is evolving to higher levels of complexity, and modern physics is coming round to the idea that the cosmos may after all be a single significant whole. And as Robert Nadeau and Menas Kafatos state in their book: "Since human consciousness evinces self-reflective awareness in the human brain, and since the brain can be viewed as an emergent property of the whole, it is not unreasonable to conclude, in philosophical terms at least, that the universe is conscious."² As Above!

O soul, raise your eyes to the heights, and you see your form: Go aboard your ships of light and receive your glorious crown; and return to your kingdom and rejoice with all the aeons.

-- Manichaeon Psalm 246

Footnotes:

1. *Sync* by Steven Strogatz; ISBN: 0-713-99621-8
2. *The Non-Local Universe* by Robert Nadeau and Menas Kafatos; ISBN: 0-19-514408-2

Eternity by Affectatrix

WEEP NOT THAT YOU CROSS THE threshold, for you are a part of the eternal world of Life, Light and Love!

Once, long ago, I heard the sea, steady and rhythmical, washing over the rocks, keeping time with the movement of life and death in all of nature. As the waters ebbed and flowed, they told of all creation, everlasting and beautiful, and their message was deep and unforgettable for it spoke to the soul.

Now, in the stillness and quietness of the mountains, I hear the same soft message in the whispering of the wind. Here, the ebb and flow come with the mists, which slowly flow and billow gently over the snow-capped peaks and down into the valleys. I hear it too in the hot desert wind that moves steadily toward the plains, never ceasing its

faint humming as it travels over the landscape.

Trees in the forest may fall; summer birds may come and go; friends may vanish; and all things change before our eyes. But always there is the steady sound of eternity, whispered in the wind or roared in the waves; the message of the flowers, birds, trees, rocks and the rivers: Life and death are but two sides of the same coin. They are expressions of the eternal, spoken in brief lessons so we may hear and understand, and not lose faith or hope in the daily struggle with ourselves and the world.

For one who reads the *Book of Nature* reads of all nations and peoples. One comes to know the God of one's heart and the God of all hearts as the same, and to accept Life, Light and Love everlasting...



Scientific Mysticism

The Soul

Part 7

by William Hand, FRC

In the first three parts of this series we introduced the topics of Quantum Theory, Systems Theory and String Theory. These provided the basic scientific tools for exploring the mystical topics of ESP, Consciousness and Vital Life Force that we discussed in the next three parts. Now for our third journey around the triangle we will begin by examining the Soul in detail and see what science may have to offer in helping us to understand this very important aspect of ourselves.

FOR MANY CENTURIES MAN HAS contemplated the nature of Soul. Great philosophical debates have taken place discussing whether indeed man has such a thing as a Soul and if he does, where might it reside? Some attempts have been made in order to determine the precise location and

nature of the Soul in the human body, often in and around the brain. However, such searches have always proved to be futile. Many sceptics, because of the lack of clear physical evidence, have dismissed the idea of a Soul entirely. So from a scientific viewpoint, *if Soul exists then it must be of an immaterial nature representing some kind of*



energy. But what would constitute the Soul?

Surprisingly, with the aid of some clear logical thinking, backed up by the element of mystical insight, we can come up with some answers. Let us therefore briefly look back to Part 6 where we argued that there was one unified force operating throughout creation: we called it the *Vital Life Force* or VLF for short. This force is dual in nature having an immaterial aspect operating in the hidden dimensions of String Theory and a material aspect (called Spirit energy by Rosicrucians) that gives rise, through String vibration, to the forces and elementary particles studied in conventional physics.

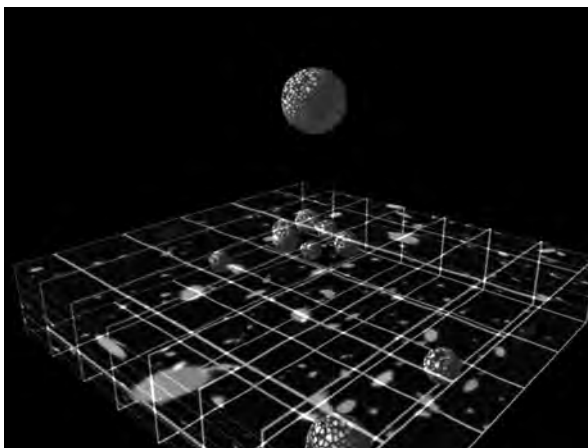
Generally, science talks about strings simultaneously vibrating in all dimensions: our everyday dimensions *and* the hidden ones. *But is it possible for strings to vibrate solely in the hidden dimensions and not in the normal three dimensions of our material world?* If this were indeed possible, such manifestations would be entirely immaterial from our worldly viewpoint and therefore, we could have a basis for exploring the nature of Soul scientifically. Amazingly, science does have a view on this issue and it all starts with gravity!

Gravity

There are four fundamental forces in our universe known to physics:

- the weak nuclear force
- the strong nuclear force
- the electromagnetic force
- gravity

The weak nuclear force is involved in radioactive decay; the strong nuclear force is the force that



Impression of a graviton leaving a brane.

binds quarks together in the atomic nucleus to form neutrons and protons; and the electromagnetic force is involved in, amongst other things, electricity, light transmission, touch, magnetism and the behaviour of electrons. Each of these forces has a carrier arising from a vibrating string. For example *gluons* are the carriers for the strong force, *photons* for the electromagnetic force

If Soul exists then it must be of an immaterial nature representing some kind of energy.

and *gravitons* for gravity. Gravity is of course, the force responsible for keeping massive objects such as planets in orbit around the sun and for keeping our feet on the ground!

Now which of these forces is the strongest? Surely it's gravity! Well, no it's not. Gravity is actually the weakest by a long way. To understand that, just look how easy it is for a small magnet to pick up a piece of metal away from the pull of gravity. In fact if your muscular bicep represented the force of gravity then the electromagnetic force would require a bicep the size of the universe! So why is gravity very much weaker than the other forces? The present thinking is that most of the gravitational force is exerted in the hidden dimensions, particularly the very large dimension that contains all the others. What we see of gravity in our world is just a small part of the overall force. In other words *gravity leaks away into the hidden dimensions.*

This theory is about to be tested in the next few years. Late in 2007 it is expected that the world's largest particle accelerator at CERN: *Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire* (European Council for Nuclear Research), near Geneva in Switzerland will be completed. The accelerator, called the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is massive; a hollow ring about 27 kilometres long built some 50 to 150 metres underground. Large amounts of energy are involved as protons are slammed into each other releasing fundamental particles. It is hoped to observe a graviton. However, if the theory mentioned above is correct then the graviton would appear and then disappear immediately as it moves off completely into the hidden dimensions. This would then be an indirect proof of String Theory. So the question is: *could gravitons be the glue for the building blocks*



of a Soul force? Let us pursue this possibility.

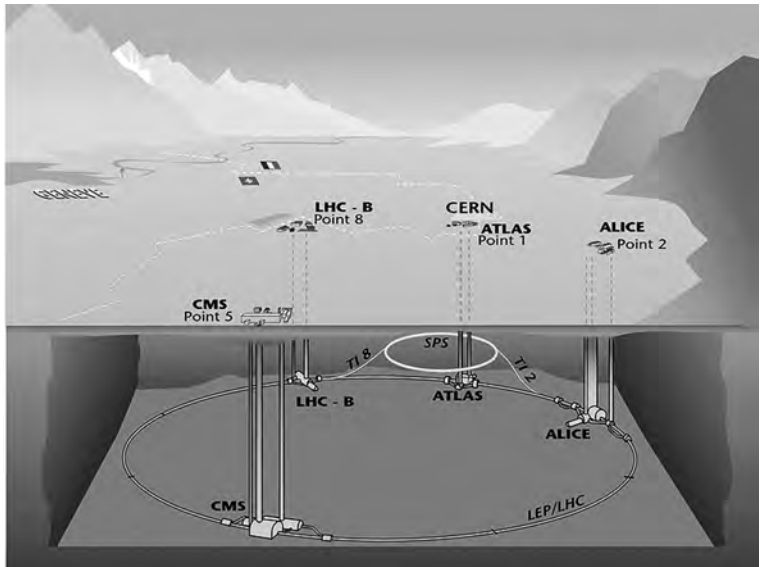
M-theory

If we accept that gravitons arising from a particular type of string and vibration can exist solely in the hidden dimensions then it is possible that other particles (string vibrations) may do so too. In fact physicists are seriously contemplating this as part of M-theory. Nobody knows what the M stands for, but essentially M-theory unites five competing string theories that were around before 1995.

In that same year the brilliant physicist Ed Witten united all the theories into one which he christened "M-theory." In order to achieve this, it required that at least one of the hidden dimensions was very large, in fact larger than the universe itself. In this theory, our universe is considered to be a *membrane* or just one slice in a hidden but higher dimension, thus increasing the number of hidden dimensions to 7 making 11 in total.

Strings could not only vibrate in these but they themselves could take on multi-dimensional form. This transformed strings into many shapes, including "sheets," "blobs" and higher dimensional objects. All of the objects can be classified as *p-branes* as the terminology goes. Thus a 1-dimensional object (1-brane) is a string, a 2-brane is a membrane and a 7-brane for example is a seven dimensional object. At present the strings at the back of all of the fundamental particles and forces (except gravity) are thought to be fastened to our everyday 4-dimensional world, even though they vibrate in other dimensions too.

However, M-theory raises the intriguing possibility that other fundamental particles and forces (string object vibrations) might exist in the hidden dimensions and not necessarily be linked to our material world. So it follows that in M-theory, *String Theory becomes a theory of fundamental vibration in all dimensions.* Out of this, physics has acknowledged that as M-theory continues to evolve there is the exciting possibility of whole new worlds opening up (literally) in the hidden dimensions. Given this theoretical background



The tunnel of the particle accelerator LHC is 130 metres underground. In the 27 km-long circular tunnel protons moving in opposite directions are accelerated and made to collide. Detectors, such as Alice, Atlas and CMS register these collisions. Graphics: Cern.

we now not only have a possible glue for a Soul force but maybe the basic building materials as well – *vibrating higher dimensional string objects or p-branes.*

The Soul Force

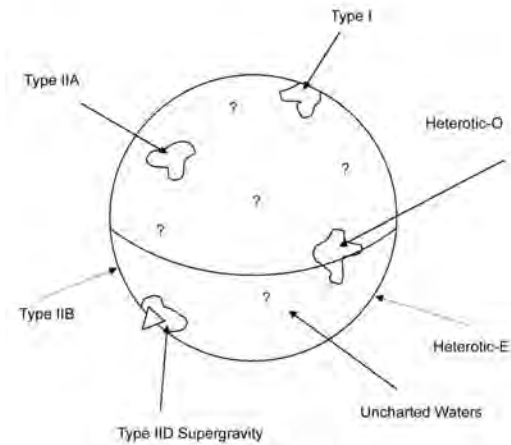
In our recent discussions of consciousness we came to the conclusion that the level of consciousness depends on complexity. Or, in other words, in order to achieve self-consciousness, a certain level of complexity is required. In mysticism it is commonly acknowledged that the perceived

At death the exhaling of the breath gives rise to a decrease in gravitational attraction in the body and the Soul Personality no longer stays connected to the material.

workings of what we call Soul or the Soul Force is like having a separate conscious entity within our being.

The Soul Force therefore, is like a current continually passing through our bodies providing an *energy* into which we can tap. Rosicrucians call this current the Soul Personality. The current is unique to each individual and can be likened to a particular waveform existing in a massive wave, which in its entirety, would correspond to what we call Soul. To borrow from quantum terminology:





The latest incarnation of string theory, *M theory*, revealed that five earlier versions of string theory were just five different aspects of one theory.

- Soul = the quantum *wave* aspect
- Soul Personality = the quantum *particle* aspect.

So how does this current arise and why is it conscious? Our argument goes that the Soul is a multi-dimensional entity built up from extended string objects joined together by the actions of gravitons, which are a part of the immaterial aspect of the Vital Life Force (VLF).

The complexity would be beyond human comprehension and existing in all universes. Parts of this entity would, through developing complexity by the exchange of information and energy, have gained a form of self-consciousness, that the Soul Personality is aware of itself, but, at the same time, also aware of the whole. In

other words, each part of Soul, the Personality, has a form of free will whose mission is to enable the consciousness of Soul to grow. The parts contribute to the whole. The *whole* in this case would encompass all multi-dimensional universes.

The Rosicrucian teachings state that the Soul Personality enters the human body at birth with the first breath. It is almost as if the vibrancy of suitable matter, and the act of breathing for the first time, creates a harmonious gravitational attraction which attracts the immaterial polarity of VLF and the conscious entity we call the Soul Personality to become the Master within the human body.

At death (Rosicrucians call it "transition") the opposite would occur. The exhaling of the last breath and the consequent decrease in electromagnetic activity in the body would decrease the gravitational attraction and the Soul Personality would no longer be able to stay connected to the material dimensions. In our next article we shall examine transition in a bit more detail and also look at the concepts of Karma and Reincarnation from a scientific perspective.

Bibliography

The Elegant Universe by Brian Greene (1999).
ISBN: 0-099-28992-X

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/elegant/program.html>. *The Elegant Universe in Video* where Brian Greene explains some of the science presented in these articles in "easy to understand" everyday language. This is highly recommended viewing.

Circles by Ruth Schweig

DRIPPING A PEBBLE INTO THE WATER, one can watch circles come to the surface, ripple out and out and on to either shore, to the mouth of the river, to the sea. There is no fathoming their depth, their number, or how far they will spread. There is no recalling a single one of them. Our lives are circles too, touching upon each other, its influence rippling, spreading to others near and far from ourselves. And our minds are circles with each thought touching upon the old which does not disappear but absorbs the new. Until our memory holds such bounty, there is no estimating its worth. And our souls are circles

taking in faith and courage, and contrition, and beauty, and most of all, God, and all things of the spirit together. And our hearts hold circles of longing, of feeling and of affections..., and its area is boundless.

No new-found friend, no new love can erase the old. The circle that's once drawn remains, although one may lose the memory of the first pebble dropped in the heart's sea. One can love so many different people in so many different ways, for so many different reasons. Yet, not one love lessens or takes away from the other, though they may touch upon each other.

Each is a circle in itself, adding to the richness and goodness of the heart. Bring happiness to people, and who shall blame you? What evil can come out of rich soil; out of sowing good seed...





Prayer Wheels

by Mildred McMillen, SRC

A WHILE AGO I HAD BEEN FORTUNATE to be travelling in Tibet and was particularly taken with the tradition of prayer wheels that I had witnessed turning endlessly in prayer as if to release the spiritual words and symbols carved on the outside (and inside) of the wheels to the world. These praying instruments are exclusively Tibetan Buddhist and are usually cylindrical with a central axis to allow them to spin. They vary in size, some of them being very large and others small enough to be held in the hand.

I had been reflecting upon these instruments and the power of the words they emitted as I reached a rocky vantage point which towered above the desert below. I was out on one of my trips into the Californian wilderness and gazing out from where I stood, I could observe the *bajada* terrain flowing away into the blue hazy distance until it disappeared into the mists of the far mountains. Each successive range was

fainter than the one before it, like some ancient and oriental landscape painting. Against the backdrop of receding rain-clouds, those brilliant, white ones in the foreground were designing cameos of images. I marvelled at the intricacy of the cloud shadows cast upon the mountains.

And the fragrances! If only one could distil and bottle the exquisite aroma of new rain that rises from a refreshed and grateful desert. It is scent drifted skyward like an offering of frankincense or myrrh, mingling with the intoxicating perfumes of chicory, willowy desert dandelion and the mariposa lily. At my feet lay a thick carpet of dainty purple; langloisia, rock daisies and bright-rose monkey flowers. Among the boulders, volcano-strewn upon the slope running away from me, were lush stands of purple lupine, golden poppies and blazing owl clover stirring in the breeze. Burnished leaves of the creosote bush glistened in the morning sunlight among their tiny golden flowers and minute cotton balls.



Close at hand, inquisitive lizards ventured near and then did push-ups as if to say "hello" while an occasional rabbit paused to listen, its delicate pink ear-linings angled my way, nose twinkling and soft eyes aglow. Now and then in the stillness a cascade of bird-song spilled from the heights or poured from the cool depths of an acacia. The palo verdes, a small tree or shrub, golden with bloom, were veritable dynamos of humming bees. A golden hawk drifted lazily overhead, leaning on the wind. At intervals, dark-green and velvet spires of ocotillo thrust their flaming tips tens of feet high; while the stately saguaro cactus wore its crown of ivory petals like a bridal wreath.


And all this while, as I think of the golden



benediction which is *Nous* flowing in, around and through it all, I can still see those prayer wheels performing their service; forever turning and sending out their beneficent words.

I now feel at one with this creation before me. And as I stand gazing out onto this landscape paradise, I suddenly understand the nature of those Tibetan

prayer wheels I had seen. Thousands of them whirling endlessly with praise and thanksgiving purify us of negativity and allow me to express the joy that I now feel; being permitted to be alive and free and here on this glorious day, conscious of being a part of it all. So, turn prayer wheels, turn! Whirl joyously within my heart to offer up continuous paeans of praise!



I am

by Affectator

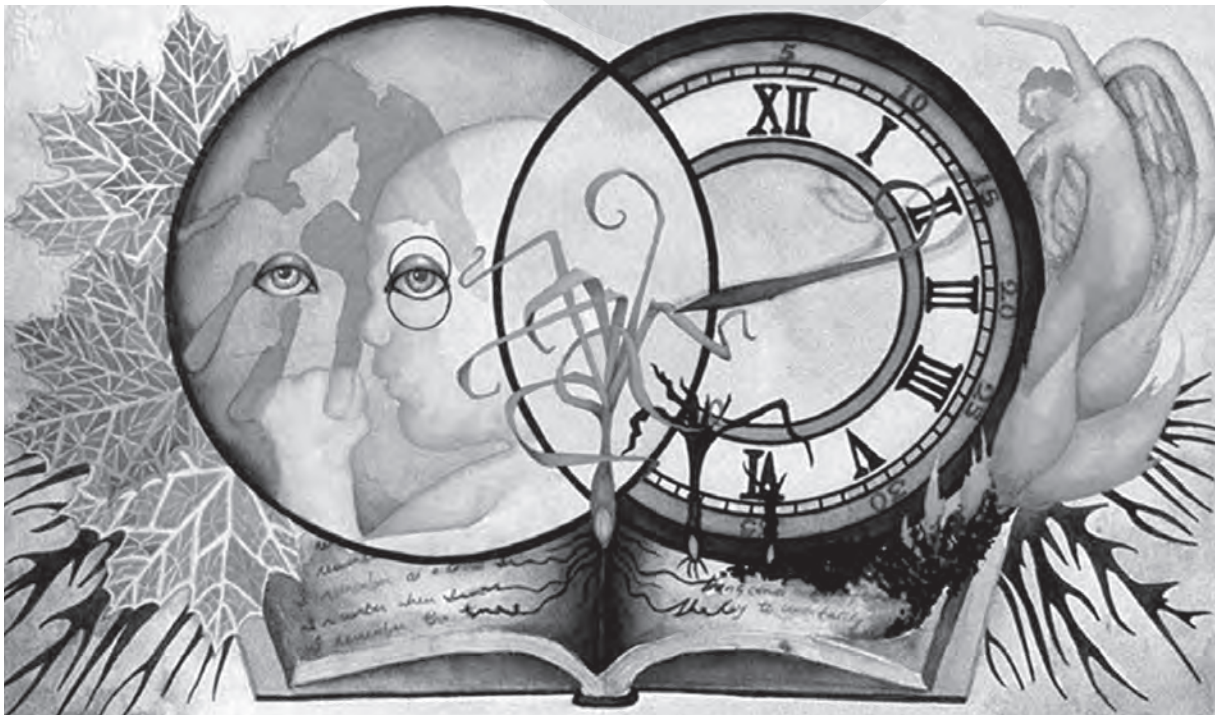
*I am not lonesome nor apart that men should cry, "Lo, there!"
 I am the all, immersed in all, behold me everywhere;
 I am the morning zephyr soft while skipping o'er the lea;
 I am the music of the brook that flows on to the sea;
 I am the kisses of the sun, I am the tears of the rain;
 I am the welcome breath of spring that brings new life again;
 I am the sprouting of the seed, the budding of the flower;
 I am the beauty that men behold unfolding every hour;
 I am the singing of the birds, the rustling of the leaves;
 I am the holy force of life in everything that breathes;
 I am the thrill of harmony men feel but cannot tell;
 I am the firm unchanging law that works all things well;
 I am the source that all men seek, I am their peace, their pain;
 I am the courage of the weak that turns all loss to gain;
 I am the hope that never dies, the ecstasy divine;
 I am the Great Eternal Love that draws all life to mine;
 I am the light that never fails, the power that never dies;
 I am the still, small voice within that bids the Soul arise;
 I am the fruit of highest thought, I am the iron rod
 that strengthens and supports the whole;*

I AM what men call GOD.



Immortality and the Afterlife

by Paul Goodall, FRC



Immortality ©2002 Ingrid Sundberg

IF THERE IS ONE QUESTION THAT dominates our thinking over all others, it is that of our own mortality. It always seems to be there at the back of our minds ready to announce itself at any time. Although the self-awareness of our physical being is so deep-seated that it allows us much of the time to ignore the eventual demise of the physical body, it is only when we are reminded of it through a life

threatening physical experience, the transition of a loved one or through the media of television and books, that it asserts itself once more. We simply cannot escape its insistence that we ponder the mystery of life and death whether for a fleeting moment or by prolonged study through reading or contemplation.

The first written record of man's discovery of death was contained within the Gilgamesh





The French essayist Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592)

Epic, the earliest known literary work from Babylon (c.2500 BCE) where its general themes are the same as now, following the notion that we must somehow continue to exist after we

It wasn't until the Renaissance and the resurrection of hermetic texts that the idea of an immortal soul was extant again.

die. Indeed, so strong are we attached to living that the idea of a continuation of life after death is an agreeable proposition and has been so for millennia. Given the particularly difficult day to day living of those in the past and the fear that such suffering might continue after death, the speculations of ancient philosophers concerning the soul's ultimate blissful immortality would have been very comforting.

Fear of Death

A pessimistic outlook on life can be seen as one remedy to conquer the fear of death although Seneca (c.4-65 CE), the Roman philosopher and statesman, advocated taking one's place, wherever it is assigned by nature or God, and exiting quietly and gracefully. Seneca's demise was not particularly graceful however; he was ordered by Nero to take his own life after being implicated in a plot to assassinate the emperor and it appears that his suicide was a rather botched affair and resulting in a painful end according to the historian Tacitus in his *Annals of Imperial Rome*.

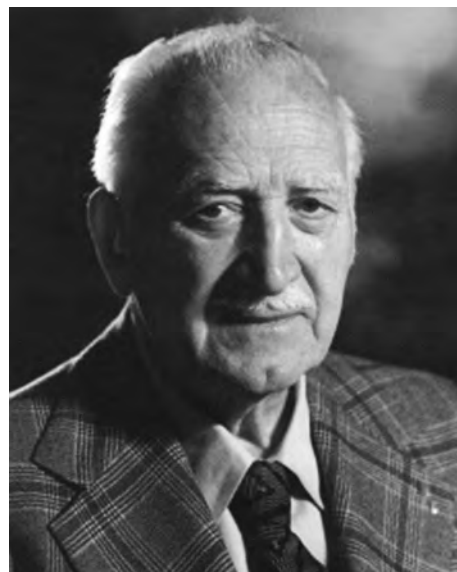
The French essayist Michel de Montaigne in his *Essays* (1580) says that "if we have known how to live properly and calmly, we will know how to die in the same manner," which reflects the attitude of those who were in a position to appreciate the Renaissance spirit and the world of which they were a part. The idea that life could be enjoyed was a far cry from the Christian custom of living in the fear of death.

Immortality and the Soul

An effective defence against the fear of death was the idea of some kind of immortality after one's life was over. Having the belief that we are reunited with our loved ones who have already died adds a personal dimension to an afterlife, and one that is also pleasant. Given this, it becomes important to find arguments that will support the notion of immortality, and this has been one of the most discussed subjects in philosophy. It is quite naturally centred on the nature and function of the soul since the physical body cannot survive once the vital life force has left it.

Past Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order AMORC, Ralph M. Lewis describes it thus: *The decay and dissolution of the material body were evident even to the people of early cultures. Consequently, survival was attributed to the intangible realities of our being. That which was thought to keep on living was the spirit or energy that animates the body.*

It was reasonable to believe that that which



Past Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, Ralph M Lewis



appeared to enter the body and to depart from it at will was not destroyed with it. The spirit then, was conceived to be as indestructible as the air breathed by the living. Thus the continuity of life after death was assumed. That which cannot be destroyed is manifestly assumed to have a continuation of existence.¹

Plato (c.428-348 BCE) advanced a number of arguments to support the possibility of an immortal soul such as:

- Our intuitive knowledge of *a priori* truths; implying that the soul exists before the body.
- The soul is the principle of life, bearing within it the life essence and as such, is eternal.
- The soul is self-moving, and being always in motion and being the source of that movement and of life, can have no beginning or end and must therefore be immortal.
- Since the soul is of an incorporeal substance, it must be incorruptible and incapable of dissolution.²

Aristotle on the other hand, proposed that the "active intellect" or mind, which he considered of



Plato with his finger pointing upwards and Aristotle holding his palm downward, depicting the differences in thought of these two philosophers. -- from *The School of Athens* by Raphael, 1509.

divine origin, was the eternal part of man's nature, denying that the whole soul was indestructible with certain parts of it being inseparable from its body.³ Since the foundation of Western learning (scholasticism) relied on Aristotelian principles, the universally accepted Platonic ideas of immortality were undermined and it wasn't until

The appeal of reincarnation can be linked to the fact that most would prefer to keep coming back to this earthly existence.

the Renaissance and the resurrection of hermetic texts that the idea of an immortal soul was extant again.

The French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) writes in his *Discourse on Method*, Part V (1637): "Next to the error of those who deny God... there is none which is more effectual in leading feeble minds from the straight path of virtue than to imagine that... after this life we have nothing to fear or to hope for, any more than the flies or the ants."

Descartes further asserted that our soul is quite naturally independent of our body and therefore not liable to die with it. The very fact that man can think, sets us apart from machines and the rest of the animal kingdom. He concludes from his argument *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am [i.e., I exist]), that it is the soul that by nature thinks, and that this essence of ourselves actually requires no physical body in which to exist since the soul is incorporeal and entirely distinct from the body.

Resurrection

Arguments and religious doctrines abound that define or explore the possibility of immortality. One that is professed by Christianity is that of resurrection. This follows the idea that there will be a universal reappearance of the dead (both the *just* and *unjust*, so called) in physical form at the "end of time." This does not follow the Platonic view on the immortality of the soul which, as we have discussed, sees it as leaving the physical body behind.

But the idea of resurrection is not unique to Christianity. It is also an inherent part of the Zoroastrian philosophy, and Muslims and Jews also share similar beliefs. The Jewish belief in bodily resurrection is enshrined in the last of the 13 principles of faith proposed by Maimonides



(1135-1204), the Jewish rabbi, physician and philosopher: *"I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator..."* It has to be said though, that there is division concerning the nature of resurrection between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism.

Reincarnation

Acceptance of the idea of reincarnation, particularly as opposed to resurrection, has in modern society been gaining ground over the last one hundred years or so. This has been mainly due to closer contact with other cultures around the world as horizons have expanded. But perhaps in today's world it has been more because of the modern media of television and the internet. The appeal of reincarnation (in theory at least) to a modern, hedonistic and largely atheistic society, can probably be linked to the fact that most would prefer to keep coming back to this earthly

existence rather than spending an eternity waiting for a final resurrection.

The Greeks gained their ideas about reincarnation from the Egyptians according to the Greek historian Herodotus (c.484-425 BCE). It appears that Pythagoras (c.570-490 BCE) was the first to teach the doctrine of reincarnation to the West although his ideas were further refined by later Greek philosophers. A famous fragment of the contemporary philosopher and poet Xenophanes (c.570-475 BCE) provides some

Immortality is the concept of the continuance of the manifestation of a force of which we are now consciously aware.

insight into what Pythagoras thought happened to the soul after death: *"once when he [Pythagoras] was present at the beating of a puppy, he pitied it and said 'Stop! Don't keep hitting him, since it is the soul of a man who is dear to me, which I recognised when I heard it yelping'"* If one thing was consistent in his thinking, it was the idea of the immortality of the soul.

Popular ideas about reincarnation in the West stem primarily from Hinduism as a result of being frequently exposed to this religion. The Hindus believe that at the heart of every person is the divine soul which they call *atman* and which also experiences multiple incarnations. The contemporary Indian philosopher S. Radhakrishnan gives the following argument in support of it: *since souls are eternal, and since their normal condition is to be associated with a body which is perishable, it is plausible to assume that in order for the soul to remain in its normal condition, it must inhabit an unending succession of bodies.*⁴

Immortality: The Mystical Viewpoint

As a mystical organisation with a long lineage and legacy of knowledge from the past, the Rosicrucian Order has its own teachings regarding immortality and the nature of the soul. With the increasing public interest in subjects such as this and the proliferation of media material advertising the same, it can be difficult for the earnest seeker to arrive at a satisfactory philosophical outlook without being swayed this way and that.

To the Rosicrucian, life is a manifestation of *energy*. Although we can't define in objective



René Descartes (1596-1650)



terms the origin of this energy or its eventual culmination, we do receive intimations in other areas that this energy is infinite. Even in the field of physics, the law of conservation of mass and energy has long been an accepted premise. This law states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. In a chemical process, matter may change its appearance, but the total energy and mass content will remain the same. The sum total of mass and energy in the universe must therefore remain constant. Mass can be converted into energy and energy can be converted into mass, but the loss of one will be exactly balanced by the creation of the other.

In other words, matter, regardless of how it may be changed or modified by heat, pressure or some other force exerted upon it, still exists in gaseous or other forms. It might be reasonable to accept that this attribute of permanency of matter and energy must also exist in the non-physical world with different non-physical characteristics.⁵

So, immortality then is the concept of the continuance of the manifestation of a force of which we are now consciously aware. This force pulsates through us in the form of life and expresses itself in physical existence, mental activity and a degree of adaptation to the environment. That these forces will continue, is hard to doubt. But in order to support and perhaps illustrate the foregoing, here is an analogy of that permanency:

We know that life can be contained in a very small area. Imagine a tiny seed waiting for the right conditions to prevail in order to begin its growth. It is known that seeds have often lain under conditions unfavourable for growth for years and even centuries. When exposed to soil and moisture however, they have successfully germinated and life in the form of a plant began again. Surely then we can make the assumption that if a seed having lain for long dormant periods can preserve the essence of life, then the life or soul that is within the human body will also survive and manifest in some form when our physical bodies can no longer serve life's purpose.

Immortality is no more than the state of total existence. We are immortal in that we live. Immortality is not ahead; it is here and now. Life is an energy that sweeps on through all time and space. As matter and energy are modified in their



Pythagoras -- from *The School of Athens* by Raphael, 1509.

use, so life may be modified in its cosmic use. But that it will continue to endure, that is an obvious conclusion from the fact of its existence.

With this in mind it is appropriate that we end with the words of Ralph M. Lewis: "*The word transition as used by Rosicrucians alludes to death not as a cessation of the human self but rather as a change to another transcendent existence.*"⁶

Footnotes

1. Ralph M. Lewis, *The Conscious Interlude*, AMORC, 1982, pp.228-229.
2. Plato, *Phaedrus*, c.370 BCE. This work was set as a dialogue between the characters of Socrates and Phaedrus through which Plato presents his philosophy.
3. *On the Soul* I 1, II 1. A treatise outlining Aristotle's philosophical views on the nature of living things.
4. Quote from Jacques Choron, "Death and Immortality," in *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, edited by Philip P. Wiener, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1973-74, Vol.1, p.646. (Online edition)
5. See also William Hand, "Scientific Mysticism," a series of articles that have appeared in the *Rosicrucian Beacon*, the most recent one in this issue which has particular relevance to the subject of this article.
6. Ralph M. Lewis, *Mental Alchemy*, AMORC, 1979, p.258.





Every Step Of The Way

by Verne W Johnson

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED ON A big project or task, whether at home, on the job, or at play; a project that was completely absorbing and constantly on your mind, a project that was your striving, your fulfillment, your reason for getting up each morning? Then, when the project was complete, the goal accomplished, you found

yourself feeling empty or dissatisfied. Remember? You found yourself asking in disbelief: *"Is that it, is that all there is?"*

During the time of your work the goal was to accomplish the task, to reach the end, at which time you expected to feel an overwhelming sense of relief and accomplishment. Instead, you felt disappointed, disillusioned, and well..., maybe



a bit cheated. And now you wonder whether it was really worth all the time and effort. What went wrong?

It is possible that we are confusing the journey with the destination, the striving with the end result, the process with the final product. In placing so much emphasis on the destination we tend to forget or overlook the intrinsic value of the *journey itself*. As a result we find ourselves wondering if success is a grand illusion, and the goal an illusive prize.

How often have you said, “*When I get that job I’ll be happy...*,” or “*When I’ve got my degree...*,”



Former Secretary-General of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld once wrote: “*The longest journey is the journey inwards...*”

or “*When I’ve managed to buy that house...*”? When you received that promotion, earned that degree or built that house, were you content, were you satisfied? Chances are you were not.

The Value of the Journey

Preoccupation with the destination causes us to diminish the value of the journey and its capacity for character building. There is great value to any journey, for that is where the victory is earned. The journey itself determines whether the venture is won or lost. It is in prospecting that we find the nuggets of reward.

What do you find at the summit of a mountain that you can’t find in the valley? What’s at the top that isn’t found every step of the way? A quote comes to mind: “*You never conquer a mountain. You stand on the summit a few moments,*

then the wind blows your footprints away.” If the possession of the summit is transient, a passing moment of elation, then there must surely be

In placing so much emphasis on the destination we tend to forget or overlook the intrinsic value of the journey.

great value in the journey to the summit. The finale is only a small part of a piece of music, the epilogue only a fraction of a book, the destination only a step in the journey.

First Steps

An old Chinese proverb begins: “*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*” The journey begins with the first step, and the first step is every step along the way. It is easy to stop when the destination is all we are striving for and the goal seems so far away. The journey begins, progresses and ends with each small step. We don’t fail; rather, we stop trying! And we stop trying when we have nothing more interesting to strive for than a distant, barely seen, goal.

Preoccupation with the end causes us to overlook the thrill, challenge, and importance of the first step, the first question, the first discovery. It is the thrill of possibility that stirs the human spirit, and the thrill is sparked by the power of the journey. We can’t get on with it until we get it started.

“*I’m an idealist,*” wrote the poet Carl Sandburg. “*I don’t know where I’m going but I’m on my way.*” Sometimes you just have to get moving, even when the way is not clear. There is a need to do something..., anything, just to get started! Anticipation and the excitement of progress will keep you going and refine your goal, but it takes a spark to light that flame. In the words of the

Any journey, any project, is a journey toward self-realisation. And such a journey is strewn with pitfalls and obstacles.

philosopher Krishnamurti: “*The first step is the only step.*”

The Journey Toward Self-Realisation

Former Secretary-General of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld once wrote: “*The longest*



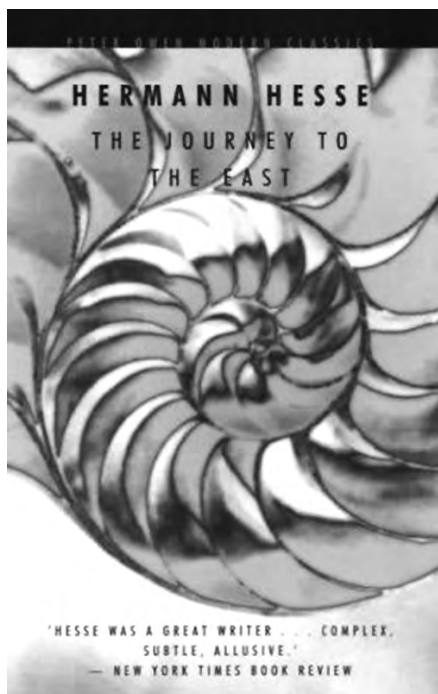
journey is the journey inwards of him who has chosen his destiny, who has started upon his quest for the source of his being." The journey, any journey, any project, is a journey toward self-realisation. And such a journey is strewn with pitfalls, obstacles and resistance. The search for self-worth and self-

The summit is one of the reasons for climbing the mountain. It provides us with another view, another perspective.

understanding is painful but necessary. It is a part of the process of becoming a whole, integrated person.

Every project, every process, every striving is a step inward, a plunge into the depths of individual personality, a thread woven into the fabric of a human being. When a particular journey ends we know just that much more about our possibilities and limitations, our abilities and inabilities, and we are eager to press on further and further, to know more, to see more, to experience more.

The late Peter Boardman, an outstanding British mountaineer, wrote in his book, *The Shining Mountain*: "Today's frontiers are not of promised lands, of uncrossed passes and mysterious valleys beyond.



In Herman Hesse's novel, *The Journey to the East*, most of us come to realise that the journey is never-ending; it is a way of life.

Only the mountaineer's inner self remains uncharted." The journey is an attempt to scale the spirit of the mountaineer, to ascend the summit of inner knowledge, and that can be a lonely trip. People are often insensitive and intolerant of those who follow a path away from the crowd, who travel a path that veers from the common thoroughfare. The question they commonly ask is: "Where can that path possibly lead? It seems to go nowhere." What they fail to understand is that every step is going somewhere, every movement is a part of getting there. Once the journey is underway, the immediate goal is to press on though the final goal often only emerges with time.

A Way of Life

Like the protagonist in Herman Hesse's novel, *The Journey to the East*, most of us come to realise that the journey is never-ending; it is a way of life. The journey is a process of becoming, not a single assault on a single goal or mountain. Though the journey never really ends, it sometimes brings us back to the place where we began with a new appreciation or a deeper understanding, causing us "To know the place for the first time." You never conquer a mountain. You never conquer the Inner Self. You seek it afresh every day, every step of the way towards perfection.



Hermann Hesse (1877-1962)

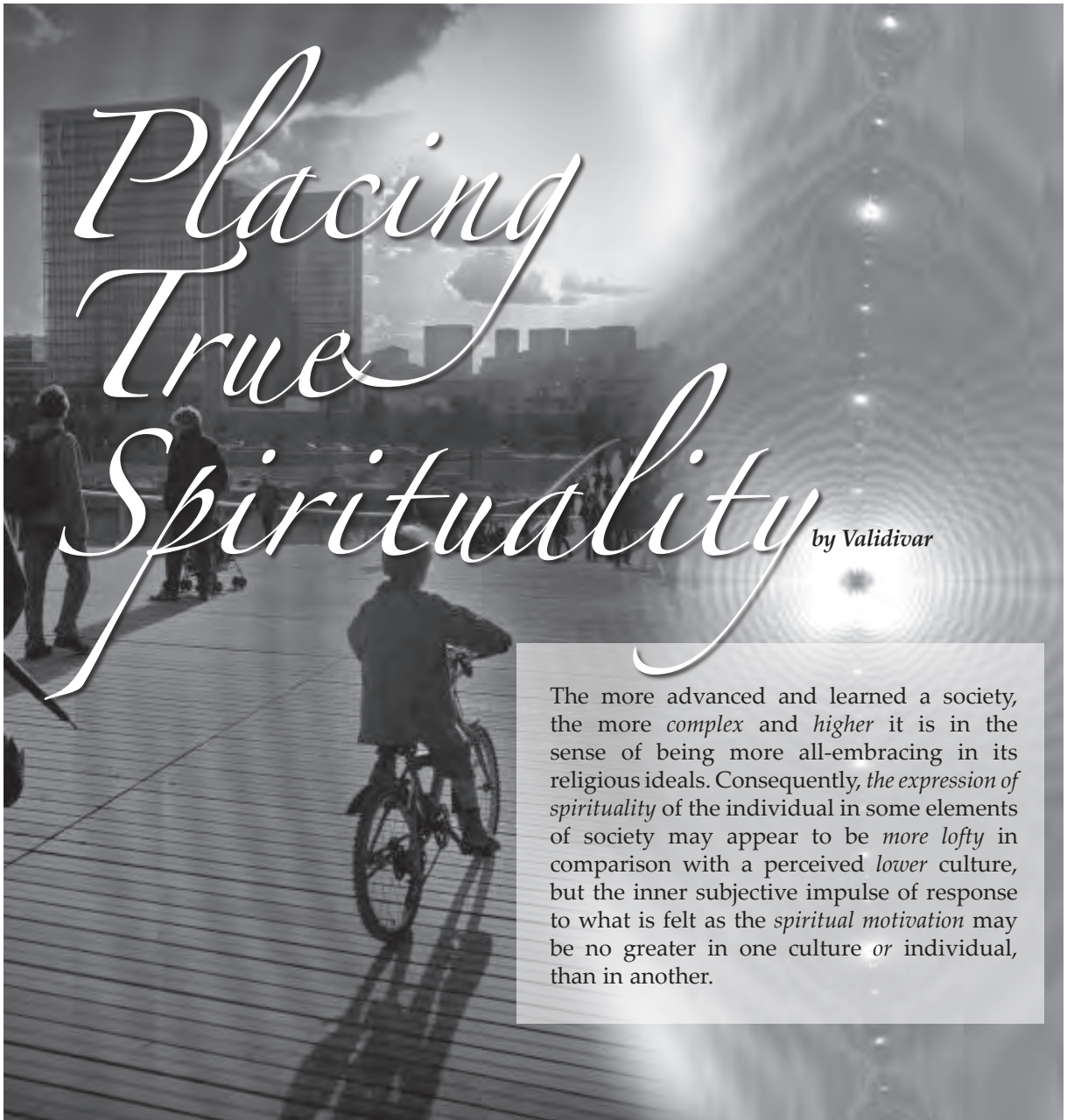
Tomorrow there will be another summit, another ridge, another journey. The next one may be a little steeper, a little farther away, somewhat less accessible. But the true seeker knows it will be assaulted, knows the road will be travelled. And every destination is a starting point for another journey. Every chapter completed means a new chapter or a new book must begin. We can't be content with the destination alone. We cannot rest forever on the results of that one big project. The process of getting there, the journey, is the key to reaching our goals, and often far more important even than those goals.

None of this is to say that goals and destinations are unimportant. The summit is one of



the reasons for climbing the mountain. It provides us with another view, another perspective. If our intent is not the top, we will not progress very far along the way. The destination is the culmination of the adventure, the pinnacle of triumph, the final and sometimes most difficult step along the way. We needn't feel that sense of emptiness, disappointment or disillusionment when the present project or journey ends; not if we have worked hard along the way and learned the lessons of the journey.

The destination can be sweet, the accomplishment pure, and the spirit of the mountaineer challenged if we understand the purpose of the *journey* and the purpose of the *destination*. It is a part of the reward for coming this far. We can climb the mountain and peer over the ridge with a sense of satisfaction. We can take time to reflect and determine the course of the next chapter because the destination has been gained, every step of the way, and we know we will journey again.



Placing True Spirituality

by Validivar

The more advanced and learned a society, the more *complex* and *higher* it is in the sense of being more all-embracing in its religious ideals. Consequently, *the expression of spirituality* of the individual in some elements of society may appear to be *more lofty* in comparison with a perceived *lower* culture, but the inner subjective impulse of response to what is felt as the *spiritual motivation* may be no greater in one culture or individual, than in another.



SYMBOL OF LIGHT

by Roshan Ushah, FRC



THE FARVAHAR IS THE NAME GIVEN to one of the best-known symbols of Zoroastrianism. It consists of a winged disc with a man's upper body that has been commonly used as a symbol of the Zoroastrian religion since the 19th century. It has a long history in the art and culture of the ancient Middle East.

Its symbolism and philosophical meaning is an ancient heritage extending through three millennia to modern times. It is a symbol reminding us of the purpose of life on earth, which

is to live in such a way that the soul progresses spiritually and attains union with *Ahura Mazda* (the Wise Lord); a state called *Frasho-kereti* in the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Zoroastrians.

The symbolism of the figure is disputed, and while it is currently thought to represent a *Fravashi*, a person's guardian angel, what it represented in the minds of those who adapted it from ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian reliefs is unclear. In the *Arda Viraz Namag*, written during the later Sassanid period (226-651 CE), the term *Fravashi* is used to mean a guardian angel



or the immortal soul of an earthly being. Since the symbol primarily appears on royal inscriptions, it is also thought to represent the "Divine Royal Glory," the *Fravashi* of the king; or it represents the divine mandate that was the foundation of a king's authority.

How it is Depicted

In the centre of the figure is a circle representing the soul of the individual. For the soul to evolve and progress it has two wings. In each wing there are three layers of feathers. These are a reminder of the *Jzhirums* with which the soul is linked. *Jzhirum* is a Persian word meaning the source of celestial light, the fountain source of the creation of different vibrational and spiritual energies.

According to Zoroastrianism, in nature there exist two opposing forces: *Spenta-Mainyu*

What the Farvohar represented in the minds of those who adapted it is still unclear.

(the good mind) and *Angra-Mainyu* (the wicked mind). A continuous conflict is maintained between these two. The individual's soul is caught between them and is pulled by each from side to side. The two long curved legs flanking left and right of the circle represent these two forces.

To help the soul balance itself between the two forces, it is given a rudder in the form of a tail. This tail also has three layers of feathers, reminding us of the path of *Asha* or truth, reminiscent of *Maat* to the ancient Egyptians. These are: *Humata* (Good Thoughts), *Hukhta* (Good Words), and *Hvarasta* (Good Deeds), by which the soul is able to make its own spiritual progress.

The head of the figure prompts us to recall that *Ahura Mazda* has given every soul a free will to choose either to obey divine laws or to disobey them. The figure also has a pair of hands that hold a circular ring. The ring symbolises the cycles of rebirths on this earth and other planes that the soul has to undergo to make progress on the path of *Asha*. If these divine laws are obeyed through good thoughts, words and deeds, the soul will attain union with *Ahura Mazda*. This



far-off event, towards which the whole of creation moves, is called *Frashokereti*.

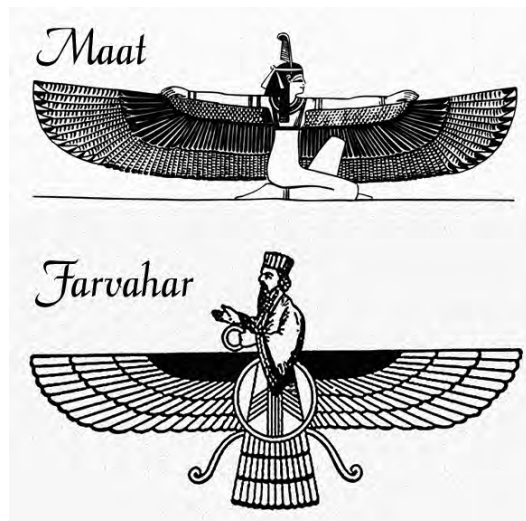
The Modern View

According to the philosopher and professor of Islamic studies Henry Corbin in his *Spiritual Body & Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran* (1977), the name *Fravashi* means "those who have chosen," that is, those who have chosen to fight in order to come to the aid of *Ahura Mazda*.

This demonstrates a similarity in meaning to the ancient Egyptian winged disk of *Horus of Behdet*.

In modern Zoroastrian doctrine a *Fravashi* is the guardian spirit of an individual, who sends out the *urvan* (often translated as "soul") into the material world to fight the battle of good versus evil. On the morning of the fourth day after death, the *urvan* returns to its *Fravashi*, where its experiences in the material world are collected.

The *Farvohar* is used as a reminder of our purpose in life, which is to live in such a way that the soul progresses towards *Frashokereti*, or union with *Ahura Mazda*. Although there are a number of interpretations of the individual elements of the symbol, it should be noted that none of them are earlier than the 20th century.



The Zoroastrian Farvohar is similar to the Egyptian Maat.



Two English Mystics



The Way of Medieval Illumination

by William J Walsh, FRC

F ENGLAND IN THE 14TH CENTURY was a fertile field for mysticism. During this century flourished two of the most significant of the English mystics, Walter Hylton (d.1396) of Thurgarton and Richard Rolle (1300-1349) of Hampole.

Both wrote of the contemplative life, though with different perspectives, and wrote

for the average Christian reader who aspired to illumination. Each was connected in some way with the solitary life and represented not so much a reaction to scholasticism¹ as a flowering of the neo-Platonic tradition of Augustine, Scotus Erigena and Cassian. At times they seem to recognise and accept the intellectual orientation of the Scholastic tradition and join it to the neo-Platonic or Eastern tradition of spirituality.





Thurgarton Priory, 1726

The elements of *Purgation*, *Illumination* and *Union* which have been identified as essential phases of the mystical life, and which have been discovered in the tradition of the Desert Fathers² through the writings of John Cassian and Pseudo-Dionysius, are just as strongly evident in the writings of Richard Rolle and his disciple Walter Hylton.

Walter Hylton

Walter Hylton was an Augustinian canon at Thurgarton Priory near Newark in Nottinghamshire, and the author of the *Scale of Perfection* first published in 1494 by the well known printer Wynkyn de Worde. This work is regarded as a complete and methodical description of the mystical life. While the book is currently published as a single work, originally it was written in two parts: Book 1 is a complete work, addressed to an anchoress of his acquaintance, while Book 2 dates from later in his career, and reflects a more mature style and a greater variety of literary devices. For the most part, the *Scale of Perfection* is a detailed, impersonal description of the mystical path. Hylton does not claim the title of mystic himself, and his description is analytic rather than an account based on personal experience.

Like the Desert Fathers, Hylton distinguishes between the active and the contemplative life. While he does not directly discount the active life, he points out that the higher stages of mystical experience can be attained only by contemplatives. For Hylton there were three levels of contemplation to be experienced after conversion, and three stages in the process of achieving Mystical Union.

Contemplation

Contemplation begins with simple knowledge of the facts of religion or the articles of faith by means of reason alone, followed by the stage

of affection. The lower degree of affection is accompanied by occasional feelings of the return of divine love and the higher degree contains a more constant life in God, with the soul at rest. The third stage is that of perfect contemplation of God, of knowledge combined with love. In this stage the person is transformed and comes to reflect divine beauty and goodness. During this stage some mystical phenomena such as the hearing of voices or music may occur.

The process, which roughly parallels the stages of contemplation, begins with conversion or reformation of the individual. The individual achieves the beginning of self-knowledge, recognising the imperfections and sins of life and realising that the soul is the image of God. This occurs along with the intellectual knowledge of the facts of religion. This recognition of knowledge by means of reason and discourse is significant in that it shows that Hylton understands the relationship between the scholastic tradition and that of the contemplative.

Purgation

After conversion, the next step on Hylton's ladder of contemplation is the beginning of *Purgation*, consisting of a reformation in the image of Jesus. This *re-formation* has two parts: a reformation in faith for beginners, and a reformation in faith and feeling for the perfect and for contemplatives. There is a movement at this point from the intellectual to the contemplative mood; the reformation begins in the intellect and proceeds to the heart. The reformation or transfiguration of the soul leads to a turning away from the

Any experience of Union is a gift of God which reveals the nature of the Trinity and is indescribable.

world, a self-examination, a reformation and desire for Purgation and a reforming of the soul in the image of God.

Illumination

Following this transmuting of the soul, Hylton describes a state wherein the soul is aware of nothing but the desire for Jesus, the "nought" which is analogous to the "dark night" or the "cloud of unknowing." In this state, the soul is empty of all that is not God, whether external





A depiction of the Ladder to the Kingdom of Heaven. (15th century miniature)

or internal. This “nought” is followed by the third stage of contemplation, or *Illumination*. In the darkness comes the dawn of understanding, constituting the beginning of the full mystical experience which is not completed until after death. The soul comes to know that there is a divine spark hidden behind the murk of self-love: that love, the gift of God, dwells within the soul, and raises the soul out of pride to the heights of Mystical Union.

Of the stage of *Mystical Union*, Hylton is nearly silent. Any experience of Union is a gift of God which reveals the nature of the Trinity and is indescribable; it is a foretaste of the experience to be had after death. In addition to

Rolle recognises that there must be a cleansing of the soul prior to Illumination.

these points, he speaks of being “ravished” by God, of the mystical marriage of the human soul to the Divine. The essential elements of knowing

and loving God remain, but they are raised to a higher level which cannot be fully understood or described.

The *Scale of Perfection* (often translated as the *Ladder of Perfection*) was one of the first systematic treatises on the subject of the mystical path, and certainly among the first to attempt to relate or synthesise the traditions of the Eastern Contemplatives with the Western Scholastics.

Richard Rolle

Much of Hylton’s inspiration was derived from Richard Rolle of Hampole, the first English author to be granted the title of mystic. Rolle was a Yorkshire man and came from a good family. While studying at Oxford he seems to have come under the influence of the Franciscans. Like St. Francis, he never



The Ladder or Scale of Perfection

took holy orders but left home to pursue the religious life. He was a prolific and popular writer, producing such works as *The Mending of Life*, *The Fire of Love* and *The Form of Perfect Living*, as well as commentaries and the first translation of the Psalter into English.

For two hundred years, his works were very popular throughout Europe, particularly among the Lollards, and his treatises and commentaries have been discovered in



private collections and religious houses, and were also given in wills. A contributing factor in his popularity may well have been his poetic language in his use of alliteration, internal rhyme and end rhyme.

Like Hylton, Rolle is concerned primarily with Purgation and Illumination. An unusual aspect of his treatment is his separation of Purgation from the process, such that Purgation and purification continue alongside the Illuminative and Unitive phases. While progress can be made, the sins of the flesh can never be completely overcome in this life. In Purgation Rolle describes



Portrait of Richard Rolle (from Cotton MS. Faustina B. VI, pt. ii, folio 8b)

nine degrees of turning to God: *“conversion, despising the world, embracing poverty, right direction of life, enduring tribulation, patience, prayer, meditation and good reading,”* all of which result in detachment from worldly concerns.

Of Purgation, Rolle recognises that one cannot love both the world and God, that there must be a conscious choice for God and away from the world, and that there must be a cleansing of the soul prior to Illumination. This cleansing is described by him as a *“chastening healing aridity”* wherein the soul and thoughts are cleansed and the will is subdued in preparation for Illumination.

Reflections in the Silence

by Judith Wolverston-Rumball, SRC

From whence came the I,
That into my new-formed body flew?
From glorious halls of light
Into the restraining arms of mother earth
Faced with lessons to be learnt.
To feel again pain's twisted fingers
And the transports of human love.
How many times has my body
Been consumed unto dust
And my soul set free to fly?
What know I, that cannot be recalled
What ancient, eternal truths
Lie hidden in my soul?



The Basis Of Spirituality

by Ralph M Lewis, FRC



IN APPROACHING THE SUBJECT of spirituality, we come to realise that this subject seems to lack a singleness of nature. Some individuals think of spirituality as a phenomenon unique to the human race; others consider it to be of supernatural origin, a divine efficacy. Then there is the rationale that spirituality is psychological, a state of mind which is engendered by both objective and subjective experiences.

There is however, the strong suggestion that each of these differing ideas regarding spirituality can be integrated into a single idea. In other words, spirituality embraces, in part

at least, some quality of each of these different concepts. An eminent philosopher once said: *"You are never an isolated individual cast off from the rest of the universe; you are always in relation to the world about you. The whole of man is greater than its parts. The reality in which man finds his own realisation is always above and beyond him."*

This realisation that we do not stand alone in existence, that in some way we have an affinity with all else, can well form the basis of what is termed *spirituality*. But while we exist to ourselves, what we experience has reality as well. These other things of the external world which we perceive can, in various ways, affect



us; sometimes beneficially, and at other times causing fear and distress.

At this point we may assume that primitive man, long ago, began evaluating the particulars of the external world. This evaluation was based upon an innate *sensitivity*. This sensitivity has but two qualities to measure the value of all sensations: *pain* and *pleasure*.

Everything we experience has its final value determined in terms of the pain or pleasure accompanying it. But such sensations are *varied* in their cause and intensity. While some of our pleasure arises from the physical gratification of the appetite, we also have the more abstract pleasure of the intellect. There is also that mysterious and exotic pleasure which is experienced as the *harmony of the whole self*. It is a state of euphoria, a freedom from all irritability, and yet its sensations cannot be related to any

Our ancestors held the notion that all celestial phenomena were imbued with life.

of our peripheral senses; it seems to transcend them all. Achievements in aesthetic and cultural pursuit can often produce a state approaching that rapture of the *whole self*.

What Is Good?

Humankind however, has arbitrarily and collectively assigned the quality of good to all the pleasures which have been and still are experienced. Whatever satisfactorily fulfils the expectation of pleasure, whether from a physical or mental pursuit, is said to be good. For example, a *good* craftsman is one whose work is well performed; a *good* citizen is one who conscientiously abides by the requirements of good citizenship.

What impression did the phenomena of nature have upon the mind of early man? Among our early ancestors the concept of *hylozoism* prevailed, namely the notion that all celestial phenomena were imbued with *life*. Heavenly bodies, such as the planets, were said to be animate, thinking, superior beings. Some were given imagined characteristics that were perceived as being good and beneficial to humanity; while others their opposite; evil. It was reasoned that the idea of good naturally suggested an opposite that was not good. So that which was adverse and

distressed humankind in some manner and was associated with pain was thought to be harmful and evil.

It would appear that at some point in our intellectual and emotional evolution it was thought best to emulate the behaviour of the gods and goddesses that, it was believed, possessed the quality of goodness. The question was asked, what *benefit* did these beings representing immanent goodness derive from their benign acts? Since humankind experienced this goodness as varying kinds of pleasure, by comparison then, what was the pleasure of goodness experienced by these heavenly entities? Was it through the acquisition of a material substance, or the successful completion of some act or other?

It was thought that heavenly entities performed good deeds for mortals, and humanity benefited from such acts. But did these celestial beings also experience a personal gratification from what they had done? Let's for a moment follow the reasoning process of early man in that stage of his inquiry into the nature of goodness. Quite clearly the *goodness* that was experienced when one person aided another in distress would be retained in the collective memory. The responsive display of gratitude from the person being aided was strongly *felt* by its recipient. This *sensation* of pleasure was one of *emotion* and unlike any that satisfied the physical cravings of the body.

The Heart-Centre of Goodness

This sensation experienced after committing an act of goodness seemed to permeate the whole of man's being. The anger, fear and other forms of emotional response seemed to centre in the *heart*. We only have to reflect on how our own heart speeds up or palpitates at times of stress as well as pleasure. Was the pleasing sensation of goodness also centred in the heart? Since the heart was at one time considered to be a source of *life*, could not the impulsive act of goodness and its sensation of pleasure be likewise centred in the heart, the centre of life?

The conclusion, over aeons of time, was that the finer perceptions of life were immersed in the infinite ocean of the cosmic realm. There was an invisible power, a something that flowed from this supernatural realm to humanity. The experience was one of goodness and it was pondered upon what thoughts and human



behaviour would represent it. This impulse and motivation, of which humanity became conscious of, was the *spiritual*.

Yet this divine power infusing humankind had to be given an identity, a *form* that the human mind could realise. It was thought to be conveyed

The sensation experienced after committing an act of goodness seemed to permeate the whole of man's being.

by the breath, with which life enters and departs. Thus the word *spiritual*, in one of its original meanings, denoted the breathing of air.

The Concept of Soul

Yet it came to be thought that air was not the essence of this spiritual quality; it was only the *medium* for transporting it to humans from the cosmic realm. This gave rise to what theology and related subjects designate as *soul*. The idea of soul went through a raft of changes as to its nature and function in man. The most prominent and persistent concept is that the soul is a kind of *ethereal substance* implanted in man by the Spiritual or Divine Source which itself also became subject to various human interpretations.

The incorporeal substance concept of the soul, however, has associated with it the belief that we can manipulate its nature at will; we can corrupt it by our behaviour or we can regenerate it; returning it to its original spiritual state. Consequently, according to this notion, the quality of soul can vary.

There is also the particular metaphysical and mystical concept, a belief held by mystics from the East and the West alike, that what is traditionally termed "soul" is a super state of consciousness, in other words a higher manifestation of the stream of human consciousness. This *attribute* of consciousness pervades the whole force of life and exists in each living cell and, as an attribute of *Vital Life Force*, resides in every human being. There is no distinction in its quality in humankind. To the extent that we each become aware of this exalted state of consciousness, we exhibit that *goodness* which is known as *spirituality*.

Individual Spirituality

But what should represent this spirituality, this

oneness which is experienced as the Absolute, or the God that we conceive of? Man's reason struggled to reduce to common and comprehensible terms those rules of self-discipline by which we might become aware of our indwelling spirituality; simply, it was an attempt to establish a *mortal* goodness corresponding to *true* spirituality.

However, the conclusions of human reasoning are not universally alike. Those who had this revelation and attained a personal enlightenment felt an obligation on their part to assist others to experience it also. They attempted to reduce a state of ecstasy to common words and actions, which formed the nucleus of their religious beliefs and practices. Although carried out in good faith, this process often engendered dogma and practices which were not truly spiritual and resulted in intolerance, bigotry, and a false sense of devotion.

There is no single road which leads directly to spirituality by its material aspect and its interpretation of the *spiritual good*. There are indeed many such roads whose guidelines to spirituality deviate from what it really is. *Goodness*, which is true spirituality, cannot be realised by argument or the compulsory acceptance of a dogma. The realisation of the *goodness* of spirituality must be a *subjective* attainment. If, for analogy, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, then certainly spirituality is likewise wholly individualistic.

If we have the benevolent wish to assist others to attain the *ultimate experience* of spirituality, we may introduce them to the mystical procedure

Goodness, which is true spirituality, cannot be realised by argument or the compulsory acceptance of a dogma.

by which this *self-realisation* can be attained, either through a religion that teaches the fundamentals of mysticism, or through an organisation which traditionally perpetuates those teachings, such as the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC. We should allow ourselves to learn the meaning of spirituality through the sphere of our own understanding, whether it is in alignment with that of others' or not.

After all, no particular description of a sunset can ever equal one's *personal perception* of it.



Know Thyself

The Tradition of Delphi

Part 2

by Leonard Ziebel, FRC

"It is nice to start from the seashore and enter among the olive trees under the silver leaves of the plain of Kriseos, enumerating, as you pass by, the wrinkles on the dense gathering of trunks. And if, by any chance, this shadow weighs heavily upon you and you raise your eyes, you suddenly see, in the perpetually moving blue, the twin peaks of Parnassos. Further down you see the extension of the westernmost of the Phaedriades and even lower down, the acropolis of Krisa. Around there, the chariot races that were praised by Pindar took place. There is this rhythm that breathes, along with two or three other stark voices, over Delphi." (George Seferis).

THE EASIEST ACCESS TO DELPHI was through the gorge leading from the port of Itea that bordered on the Gulf of Corinth. Gradually, as the multitudes of visitors groped their way over the rough terrain, a winding, tortuous path was cut through the mountain, leading to the Oracle, which was set at the top. This eventually became known as the "Sacred Way" and processions of pilgrims, chanting holy songs and playing sacred music, climbed over the

sharp, projecting crags upon which Aesop, the fable writer, met his death, until they reached the sanctuary.

Delphi became the setting for the grandest displays of wealth and status of both individuals and communities. Ironically, it was this accumulation of wealth that made the sanctuary a target. Along the wayside were treasuries in which the affluent would deposit gifts of gold or works of art. Those who had nothing to offer left two twisted fern stalks, as it was thought that





If the male priests of Apollo determined the day was propitious for prophesying, the Pythia entered the Adyton of the Temple of Apollo.

the seed of this plant would enrich the possessor with an inexhaustible supply of gold. In one of these "treasuries" can even be found the first musical notes thought to have ever been written.

The temple proper consisted of three parts: the entrance hall or *Pronaos* was adorned with the

The Oracle spoke only for nine months of the year.

maxims of the Seven Sages. Behind this was the *Naos*, the largest part of the temple, where was located the hearth of the goddess Hestia (Vesta to the Romans), the home of the eternal flame or *ἀσβεστος φλόγα*, that burned in the name of all Greece. The rear portion, the *Adyton* or inner sanctum of the temple was on two levels, consisting of a ground floor with the gold cult statue of Apollo, and a lower ground floor which was divided by a thin partition into the *oikos* where the enquirer stood, and the *antron* to which only the Pythia had access.

The Oracle and the Pythia

The Oracle spoke only for nine months of the year. In wintertime, from November to February, Apollo left Delphi for the north, handing control over to his half-brother the god Dionysos and his mystical rites.

Before a petitioner was allowed to consult the Oracle for advice, a ritual cake was baked and eaten, after which the inquirer would drink from the Kastalian Spring to wash away

all impurities staining their thoughts. Outside the temple the body of a goat was then sprinkled with holy water. If the goat reacted by shivering and trembling, the petitioner was admitted into the sanctuary after removing all rings, as it was believed that a ring was associated with the binding of a body and could therefore interfere with the reception of the Oracle's message. The petitioner's question was given to the officiating priest who, in turn, would consult with the Pythia. The answer given was always in enigmatic verse. For instance, the Roman emperor Nero, after being warned to beware of the seventy-third year, was deposed by the seventy-three year old Galba, governor of one of the Spanish provinces.

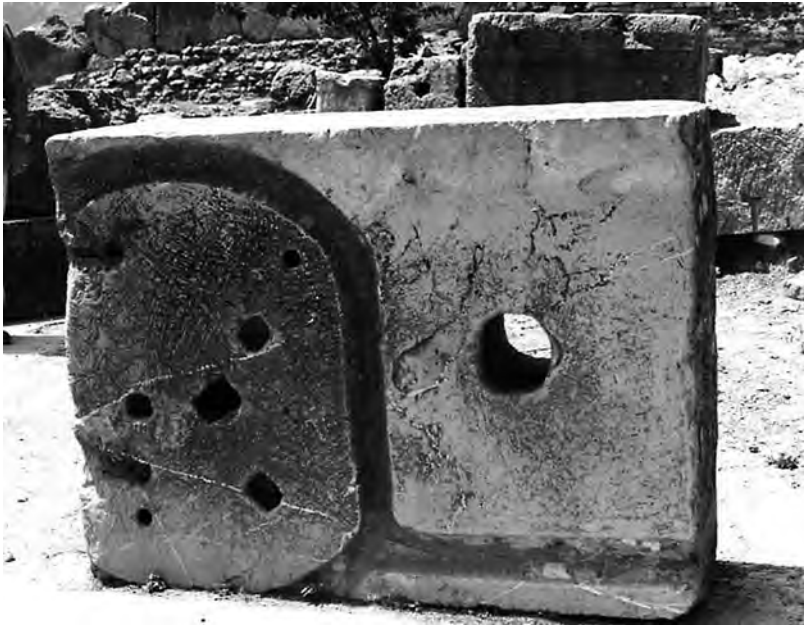
The Pythian priestess was merely the medium of Apollo; she was not herself consciously the Oracle. She had to be over 50 years old, but dressed as a young girl in memory of the earliest Pythias. There was also an association with virgin purity. After she was appointed she had to lead a blameless life. If married, she was required to leave her husband. She had a residence of her own in the sacred enclosure and her life was dedicated to Apollo from the moment she took up her post.

She was not selected from any particular family, nor was she given any particular training. She was a very ordinary woman whose special gifts appeared only when she was inspired by Apollo. It is possible that she was selected from



After entering the Temple the Pythia would chew laurel leaves and gaze into a basin of Kastalia water during which she would fall into a trance.





The tripod stone; the seat of the Pythia.

further to her left in another corner was a statue of Apollo. Between this statue and the curtain was the conical shaped stone of the *omphalos* with a golden eagle on either side (see also Part 1). The omphalos was narrower at the top than the bottom and from here issued the fumes that filled the chamber and affected the Pythia. In the exact centre of the grotto, straddling a cleft from where the fumes also rose stood a tripod with a likeness of Apollo engraved upon it. At its base, a trio of coiled serpents writhed as a reminder of the source from where the maddening gas emanated.

Prophecies

the female attendants of the temple whose duty it was to keep the eternal fire inside the temple lit with supplies of pine and laurel. There were a number of attendants working in shifts day and night. At the height of its power and influence, there were three Pythias, one of whom was always in reserve.

On oracle day, the seventh of the month, the Pythia prepared herself by washing in the Kastalian spring and undergoing a purification involving barley smoke and laurel leaves. If the male priests of Apollo determined the day was propitious for prophesying, she entered the Adyton of the Temple of Apollo to sit on the tripod, where she chewed laurel leaves, gazed into a basin of Kastalia water and presumably sank into a trance. The enquirers had to think pure thoughts before consulting the Pythia. The questions presented to her received strange and garbled answers, which were then translated into hexameter verse by the priests. A number of the lead tablets on which questions were inscribed have been found, but the official answers to those questions were inscribed only in the memories of questioners and priests.

A veil or curtain prevented the petitioners from seeing the Pythia. Her chamber was approximately square with the Pythia sitting on her tripod next to the sacred laurel tree in one corner. To her left was the grave of Dionysos and

Seated on the tripod, the Pythia soon succumbed to the fumes. Her body began to twitch in nervous convulsions and she entered into a state of delirious incoherence, uttering words and phrases that only the *Prophetes*, the Chief Priest or the *Hosioi*, the holy men of the temple, could interpret.

The *Hosioi* were thought to be descendants of Deukalion, the king who was saved when the ark that he built came to rest on Mt Parnassos after the deluge that destroyed all mankind. It was the obligation of the *Hosioi* to translate and preserve the details of each prophecy uttered by the Pythia. Just what induced the Pythia's strange actions has never been determined but one conjecture is that the laurel leaf she chewed produced a post-narcotic effect upon her nervous system, while another theory claims that the vapours themselves affected the priestess, producing a kind of auto hypnotic trance.

Those who questioned the validity of the Pythia's prophecies were soon convinced of their authenticity. Such a person was Croesus (560-546 BCE), the king of non-Greek Lydia in western Anatolia (modern Turkey). He tested the powers of the reigning oracle in many of the religious centres of Greece and Asia. He asked what he was doing on a certain day, and the only truthful reply came from Delphi. The answer so pleased the king that he presented the priesthood with





A consultation with the oracle. The omphalos stone is immediately in front of the Pythia from where the fumes issued that filled the chamber.

two enormous wine bowls, one of gold weighing 500 pounds and one of silver with a capacity of 5,000 gallons. In addition he included golden vases, silver jars and a golden statue of a lion that was four and a half feet tall. Taking advantage he asked if, having already allied himself with Egypt and Babylonia, the oracle felt it would be to his advantage to declare war on the emergent Persian Empire. The famous answer he received was *"If Croesus crosses the Halys, a great empire shall be brought down."* The River Halys was the border between the two empires. Croesus was overjoyed and ordered his army to march. History has recorded that the great empire that was destroyed was his own. Pharaoh Amasis of 26th Dynasty also sent vast sums of money to Delphi.

The Pythian Games

Since a strong body and healthy mind was necessary for defence, the priesthood introduced the *Septeria*, which consisted of a series of musical contests and athletic games to celebrate Apollo's victory over the serpent Python (see Part 1). These events evolved into religious festivals and fairs during which concessionaires and carnival performers would set up booths and hawk their wares to noisy pilgrims wending their way to the

sanctuary or plodding up the hillside to witness the games or gaze in awe at the breathtaking scenery.

The Pythian Games became so popular that all of the Greek states vied to participate and they evolved into a regular event. Three months before the start of the games, envoys from Delphi went around Greece proclaiming a "sacred armistice." In each city they summoned

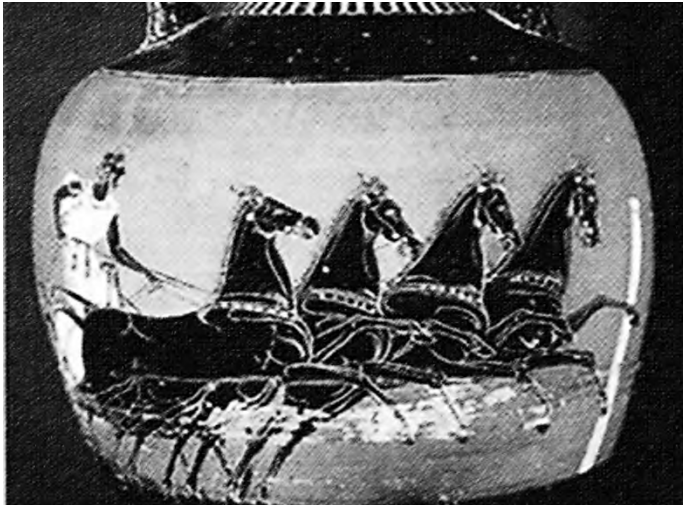
The Pythian Games became so popular that all of the Greek states vied to participate.

people to take part in the games. These *theoroi* set off in a festive procession and were received everywhere with jubilation. During the trials, a truce between all warring states was proclaimed and serious consequences were meted out to any state that mistreated or molested a traveller to the games. Only freeborn Greeks were allowed to compete, and these were elected by tribal elimination. The winners of the games were awarded a laurel crown and the honour of having



Remains of the altar at Delphi where offerings from the people are hung up by the priestesses.





The Pythian Games became so popular that all of the Greek states vied to participate and they evolved into a regular event.

their name linked with the city of their origin. As a result, bribes and other irregularities were practically unknown.

The Games, which were instituted in 582 BCE, took place during the four-year cycle known as the Olympiad, which was one of the ways the Greeks measured time. The Olympic Games were used as a starting point, being year one of the cycle. The Nemean and Isthmian Games were both held (in different months) in year two, followed by the Pythian Games in year three, and then the Nemean and Isthmian Games again in year four. The cycle then repeated itself with the Olympic Games. They were structured this way so that individual athletes could participate in all of the games.

Nothing of importance was ever undertaken in ancient Greece unless the Pythia was first consulted, yet the Delphic priesthood made no attempt to impose Apollo as the supreme god over the Greek populace. They merely indicated that he was a manifestation of beauty, justice and divination. Their chief goal was to teach *Universal Oneness* and to emphasise moral and spiritual discipline, as well as to comfort those who were in need of solace.

The Falling Asleep of Delphi

"Descending toward Parnassos from the direction of the Stadium, you can see the wide-open wound that divides the two Phaedriades from top to bottom in Kastalia and, even lower, to the depths of the ravine of Pleistos. One feels the awe of a wounded life that

struggles in order to breathe, as long as it still can, in the light and rejoices that it is dawn and the sun is rising. Or, again, as night falls, when the weary cicadas become silent, a whisper can remind one of the stammering voices of the prophetess Cassandra. It may be the only authentic sound that resembles the unknown to us - I mean 'unprocessed' - 'clamour' of the Pythia." (George Seferis).

The Roman Emperor Hadrian restored many sanctuaries in Greece, including that of Delphi, but within two centuries at most, the oracle was silent. With the spread of Christianity the ancient religion had no place in the new state. Christian attacks against pagan temples continued, reaching a head when the Emperor Theodosius the Great ordered all pagan temples to be shut. The oracle declared to the emperor in 393 CE:

*Tell the king: the fair wrought house has fallen.
No shelter has Apollo, nor sacred laurel leaves;
The fountains are now silent; the voice is stilled
It is finished.*

Within two years Theodosius was dead; the sanctuary lost its religious meaning and was permanently closed down. The oracle was abolished and a town was built over the ruins. Only in the late 19th century did French excavators begin to uncover the site of the temple of Apollo, moving the town to its present location.

These days the hospitable people of modern Delphi take great pride in their town. They maintain a tradition of comfortable, small hotels. The modern town of Delphi has one main street, thick with restaurants and souvenir shops, with the entrance to ancient Delphi reached easily from almost any point in the town centre, at most a five to ten minute walk away.

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Musings on Life

by Martha Pingel, SRC

LIFE IS NOT A GIFT TO BE taken lightly. Whatever the form it assumes, it has certain rights as such: The right to maintain itself in an environment essentially hostile to it; the right to strive not just for its sustenance, but also for its betterment; and the right to recreate itself.

Regardless of the level, life manifests itself by fulfilling functions somewhat less predictable to man than the average materialistic things with which he surrounds himself. Life's secret is contained within this element of *unpredictability* and is revealed to man only through the slow passage of time.

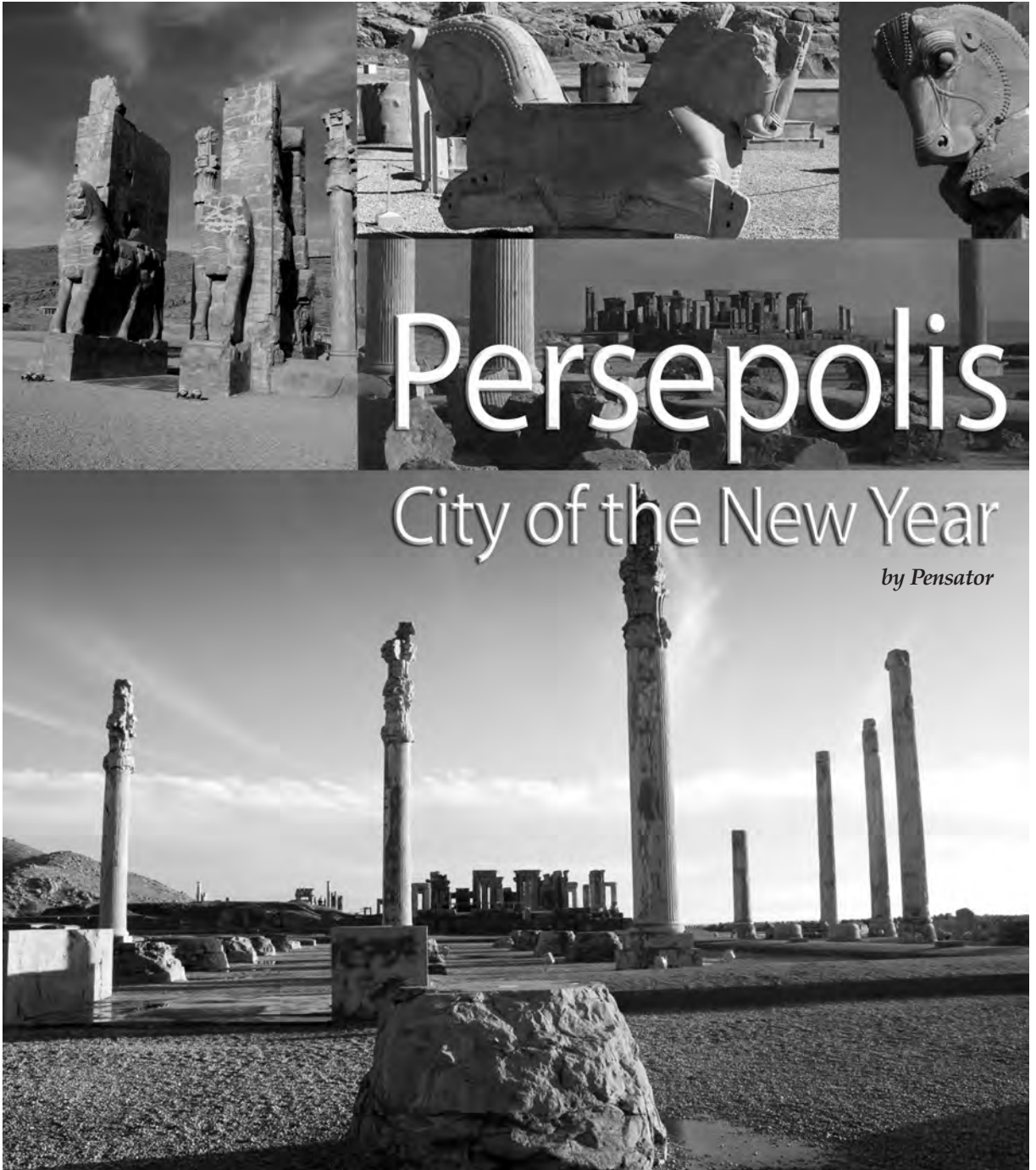
Some people achieve this understanding along the life path, and as a result are neither happy nor unhappy. They understand that life, as the average person perceives it, is an illusion: It neither changes nor causes change to happen; it merely unfolds. It is forever renewable.

Family connections have little or no bearing on the actual pattern that life takes. Rather, the pattern chooses the family into which it is placed for better development. Those who can overcome great odds, have that seed within them early in life.

If we were given too many advantages, we might never learn to try our own wings; advice that is particularly difficult for the person for whom life presents a challenge to come to grips with. Given all the advantages from the beginning, we might become restless within the confines of this narrow existence and not develop the potentialities of our own nature.

Whatever we think, do or feel, our life is in our own hands; for contained within each of us is the secret of all life.



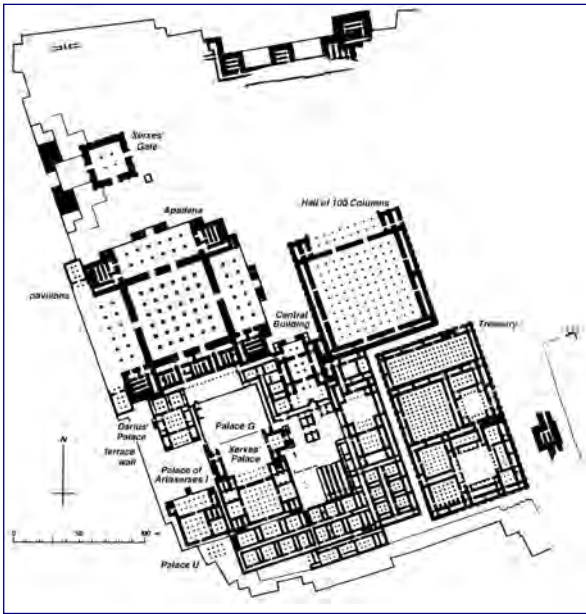


IN SOUTH-WESTERN IRAN LIES THE ancient province of Fars. This is the original homeland of the ancient Persian Empire. Some 57 kilometres northeast of Shiraz, the provincial capital, also known as the “City of Roses and Poets,” are the ruins of the mysterious city of *Parsa*, better known as Persepolis. This monumental complex

of structures is assumed to be the spiritual sanctuary of the vast Persian Empire. It certainly was the sacred site where their kings were buried.

Persepolis was *the* sacred site for the Achaemenids (550-330 BCE), the first of the great Persian dynasties. Darius I (the Great) is known to be the founder of Persepolis, having ordered its





Overhead layout of Persepolis.

construction in 518 BCE, although it took another 50 years to finish it. The *Mellal* (Nations) gate, commonly known as the Gate of All Nations, the Apadana palace, the *Sad Sotoun* (One Hundred-Column) palace, and the *Seh Darvazeh* (Three-Gate) palace are the most important structures to be found in this great royal complex.

Listed as a World Heritage Site, it stands at the edge of the Marvdasht plain, under the *Kuh-e Rahmat* or Mount of Mercy. The citadel had a lower town beneath it, and was surrounded by gardens or *pairidaeza* (walled enclosures) spread over the plain. It would have looked like paradise (from *pairidaeza*) under the sun framed against the blue sky.

Terrace Floating Above the Plain

Building work was mainly undertaken by Darius I, his son Xerxes I (pronounced *zerk-sees*) and his son Artaxerxes I. Thereafter other kings of the dynasty made additions to this ceremonial city, but it was still unfinished by the time Alexander the Great arrived. The elegant and refined buildings appear to float some 65 feet above the

plain. From the ground one can barely see the artificial terrace, 1,476 feet long and 984 feet wide. The only access is from a monumental staircase leading to the Gate of All Nations. It is only while climbing the staircase that the rest of the site is progressively revealed in all its splendour.

Persepolis combines many influences from Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt and Greece. It is known from the many receipts and notices found, that many Ionic Greek architects and craftsmen went to help build the city. The whole complex has decorations of winged sun disks and rosettes, and people carrying lotus flowers.

There are two large Lebanon cedar-roofed halls (calling to mind the great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak). The first is the vast Apadana audience or reception hall, 200 feet long on each side, with its six rows of six columns. On three of its sides are large porticoes, each with two rows of six columns more than 60 feet high. The second was the Hall of a Hundred Columns (also called the

Persepolis combines many influences from Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt and Greece.

Throne Hall), its walls adorned with the king shown fighting monstrous creatures. This hall in particular recalls the *telesterion* architectural style we know from ancient Greece. It was square,



Artist's impression of the city.





The "Mellal" (Nations) gate, commonly known as the Gate of All Nations.

230 feet on each side, and had ten rows of ten columns. This strange hall must have been quite dark, possibly lit by torches, as there would have been little natural light except through the open front doors which led through a porch or *pronaos* to a courtyard beyond. The assembly halls were the setting for grand courtly rituals; in one sense Persian architecture represented a revolution in the spatial concepts of antiquity.

At Persepolis itself are the rock cut tombs of Artaxerxes II (405-361 BCE), Artaxerxes III (361-336 BCE) and Darius III (336-330 BCE). Some two and a half miles away at Naqsh-e Rostam are the tombs of Darius I, Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I and Darius II (425-405 BCE). The outer face of each of the above-named tombs is in the shape of a cross, with the opening in the centre leading to the inner chambers.

Good Thought, Good Words, Good Deeds

Many questions have been asked as to why Darius chose to build his "citadel" here. And also, why did his successors continue with it? There have been many different answers. Some have seen it as a ritual city or a royal summer residence while others have suggested that it was built in connection with *Noruz*, the New Year celebrations at the Vernal Equinox in March, or even the Summer Solstice in June.

However, the latest Iranian excavator at

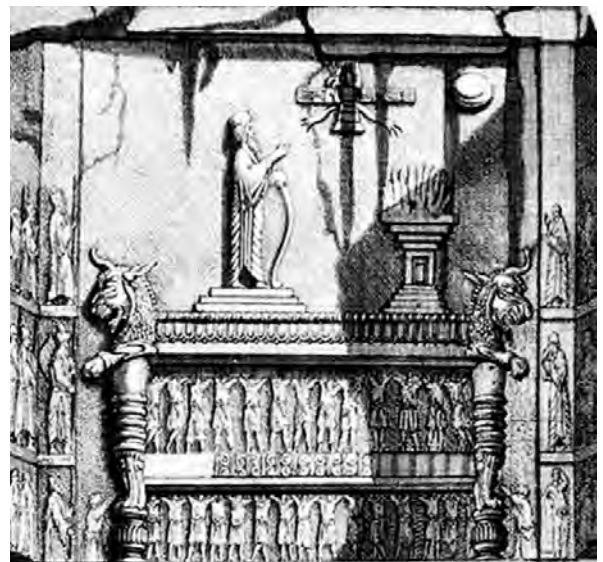
Persepolis has suggested that "these sumptuous buildings, this sacred and symbolic place for the Persians, in the heart of their homeland, was an earthly manifestation of a heavenly world, which was kept hidden from foreign eyes." This may well be true, as it would explain why Alexander the Great chose this particular site of all the Persian capitals to destroy by fire in 330 BCE, an act of flagrant vandalism for which no adequate excuse has ever been found.

Many of the reliefs on the walls display ceremonial occasions where subjects of the empire bring presents or tributes to the Great King of the Medes and Persians, presumably at the occasion of the New Year at the spring equinox (21st March). Each group is depicted being led in by a chamberlain in either Median or Persian court dress. The tradition has continued down the ages and to this day Iranian families still come at the New Year in March to picnic among the ruins of Persepolis.

Those bitter foes, the Greeks and Persians, both Indo-

European peoples with distantly related languages, drew their inspiration from a shared aesthetic source. The whole complex is an expression of *arta* or *asha* which is the same concept as the ancient Egyptian *Maat*: cosmic order. Zoroastrianism, or

Persepolis was the spiritual heart of the empire.



An 18th century drawing of the Tomb of Artaxerxes II (405-361 BCE) by the artist Cornelis de Bruijn.





The elegant and refined buildings appear to float some 65 feet above the plain.

Mazdaism as it is also called, stood for lofty ethical values.

Spiritual Heart of the Empire

This magnificent walled citadel on its lofty pedestal symbolised the power and stability of the Persian king. Persepolis was associated with *Ahura Mazda*, the chief god of the Zoroastrians, which religion Darius the Great appears to have followed. Everywhere you can see the *Farvahar* or winged disk of *Ahura Mazda*, and lots of ancient Egyptian

influence: angels with Egyptian crowns, the decoration of columns and their capitals, and some of the doorways also show obvious Egyptian architectural leaning. The cultures of Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and even Greece, saw the afterlife as some dreadful land of no return. It was only the Egyptians and Persians who taught otherwise, though the rising of the soul to heaven is more of a Persian concept than an Egyptian one. Perhaps here was the earthly equivalent of the abode of blessedness, filled with light before ending at the "lights without beginning."

Persepolis was the spiritual heart of the empire. It represents a masterpiece of human creative genius and is associated with traditions, ideas and beliefs of outstanding universal significance. The beauty of the buildings and the columns that suggest a purely Ionic style, together with the reliefs, is exceptional. In its heyday it must have looked like some ethereal citadel floating on a platform above the plain with its eastern end abutting the Mount of Mercy itself. Today, nothing but the wind blows amongst what little remains of this once magnificent city, a poignant reminder to us that all things eventually end.



The ruins of a once sacred and symbolic place.



Progress

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, SRC

*Let there be many windows to your soul,
That all the glory of the universe
May beautify it. Not the narrow pane
Of one poor creed can catch the radiant rays
That shine from countless sources. Tear away
The blinds of superstition; let the light
Pour through fair windows broad as truth itself
And high as God.*

*Why should the spirit peer
Through some priest-curtained orifice, and grope
Along dim corridors of doubt, when all
The splendour from unfathomed seas of space
Might bathe it with the golden waves of Love?
Sweep up the debris of decaying faiths;
Sweep down the cobwebs of worn-out beliefs,
And throw your soul wide open to the light
Of Reason and of knowledge. Tune your ear
To all the wordless music of the stars,
And to the voice of Nature; and your heart
Shall turn to truth and goodness as the plant
Turns to the sun. A thousand unseen hands
Reach down to help you to their peace-crowned heights,
And all the forces of the firmament
Shall fortify your strength. Be not afraid
To thrust aside half-truths and grasp the whole.*



The Shield of David

by Eltore Da Fano, FRC



The Star of David in the oldest surviving complete copy of the Masoretic text, the Leningrad Codex, dated 1008.

THE ORIGIN, HISTORY AND meaning of the *Magen David* or *Shield of David*, can't be clearly delineated. This symbol, essentially a hexagram consisting of two intersecting equilateral triangles, is certainly of ancient origin. While generally associated with Jewish identity

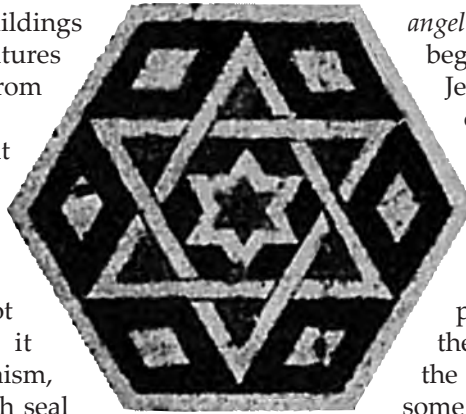
and beliefs, it seems that it was also known to the Egyptians, Hindus, Chinese and Peruvians.

It has a certain ubiquity, being found for example in Arabic amulets of the 9th century, Byzantine magical texts, German folklore, among the relics of the Templars, in alchemy as the "stone of the wise," in the coat of arms of the



Freemasons, and on many buildings throughout Europe. It also features in cosmological diagrams from Hinduism.

From Jewish sources it is popularly known as the *Shield of David*, though it is also referred to as the *Seal of Solomon* and *Star of David*. Although it is not definitely known when it became associated with Judaism, it has been found on a Jewish seal attributed to Joshua ben Asayahu of Sidon, dating from approximately the 7th century BCE. Later it featured upon the tombstone of a certain Leon Ben David from the 3rd century CE and on the synagogue at Tell Hum (Capernaum) in Galilee from the same century. It also appears in the



The Magen David or Shield of David: A tile formerly in the synagogue at Toledo, Spain. Reproduced by courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.

angel." It was from this time that it began to be used to represent the Jewish community alongside that of the Menorah.

Astrology and Numbers

The six points of the hexagram represent the four elements of fire, water, air and earth (the planets are also designated) with the top one symbolising Spirit and the lower, Man. It is also seen by some as representing the astrological chart at the time of David's birth or anointment as king, explaining why it is also known as the "King's Star" in astrological circles.

The geometry of the hexagram lends itself to the significance of the number *three*. This has been called the perfect number and somehow it suggests perfection, completion and fulfilment. The *Pirke Avoth*, a tractate of the *Mishna* (a Jewish religious text), says that the world rests on three things: *Torah, service, and acts of mercy*. Consider also the three patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Christianity it is three Kings who pay homage to the infant Jesus and, of course, there

The geometry of the hexagram lends itself to numerological interpretation.

Jewish catacombs at the Villa Torlonia near Rome and on the city wall at Jerusalem.

When it first appeared on Jewish buildings and objects, this was often in connection with other symbols, so it may have been used purely for conventional decoration. However, so few synagogues have survived from earlier periods that the absence of the symbol is no proof that it may not have an older history than is yet known. It is seen more frequently on synagogues from the 16th century where it appears side by side with the Menorah, a candelabrum with seven branches and representing (according to some) the burning bush encountered by Moses as related in the Old Testament Bible.

Despite the age of this symbol, the name *Magen David* makes its earliest appearance during the 12th century CE in the Jewish text, the *Eshkol Ha-Kofer* of Judah Hadassi, where it accompanies the names of seven angels: "*Seven names of angels precede the mezuzah*¹: Michael, Gabriel, etc... *Tetragrammaton protect you! And likewise the sign, called the 'Shield of David,' is placed beside the name of each*



A description of the hexagram in Hebrew lettering. (©JewishEncyclopedia.com)



are also the three aspects of the holy Trinity. Practically all other religious philosophies and mythologies have trinities of some sort that represents creative principles or creation itself.

According to some Judaic sources, the Shield of David also signifies the number *seven*: that is, the six points plus the centre. This number has a certain religious significance in Judaism, e.g., the six days of Creation plus the seventh day of rest, the Seven Spirits of God, as well as the Menorah, whose seven oil lamps rest on three stems branching from each side of a central pole. Perhaps here we have a clue as to why the Star of David came to be used as a standard symbol in synagogues; the numerical arrangement of 3+3+1 could be seen as corresponding to the Menorah, the more traditional symbol for Judaism as mentioned above. It further denoted the seven days of the week, with their planetary overlords. The hexagon in the centre, the most complete figure, was the Sabbath; the six outer triangles, the six weekdays.

Geometric Aspects and Kabala

Man seems to dwell between two worlds as represented by the two triangles, yet have a part in both. The triangle with the point facing upward is the world of material realities; finite, limited, transient and mortal. It is the world of the many disconnected things. The base line

In these two triangles is represented the duality of existence, the above and the below, the spiritual and the material.

represents the material foundation and the point upward, man's aspiration, ideals and evolution.

The triangle with the point facing downward represents the spiritual world, the world of higher realities, of which man's soul is a part. It is infinite, above time and space and any dimension. Not limited, it is undivided and is the innermost connection, the deeper sense of everything. From this world, man receives the life impulse and his inspiration. The point represents the Shekinah or God's immanence.

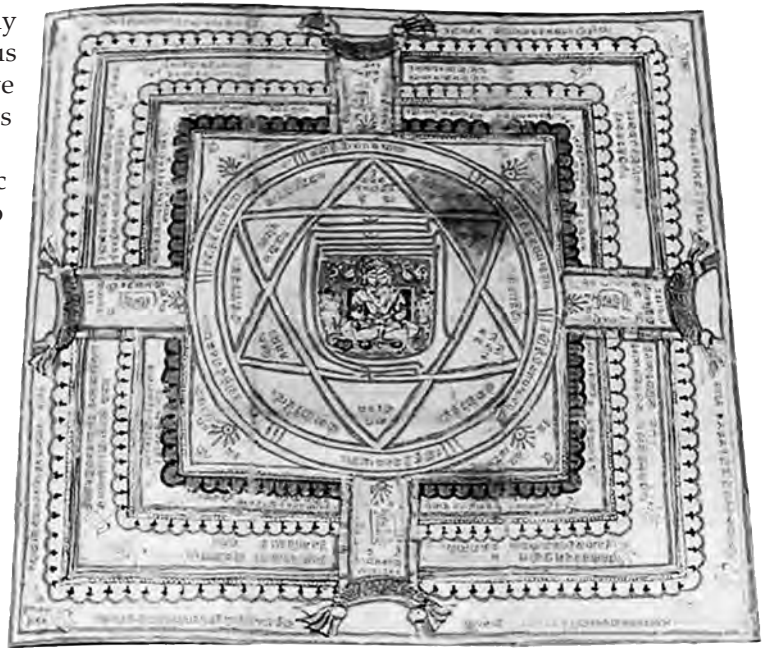


Diagram showing the two mystic syllables Om and Hrim.

In the *Sepher Yetzirah* the hexagram also symbolises the six directions of space plus the centre: Up, Down, East, West, South, North and Centre. And the *Zohar* represents it as the Six Sephiroth (or spheres of emanation) of the Male (*Zeir Anpin*) united with the Seventh Sephira (sphere) of the Female (*Nekuva*).

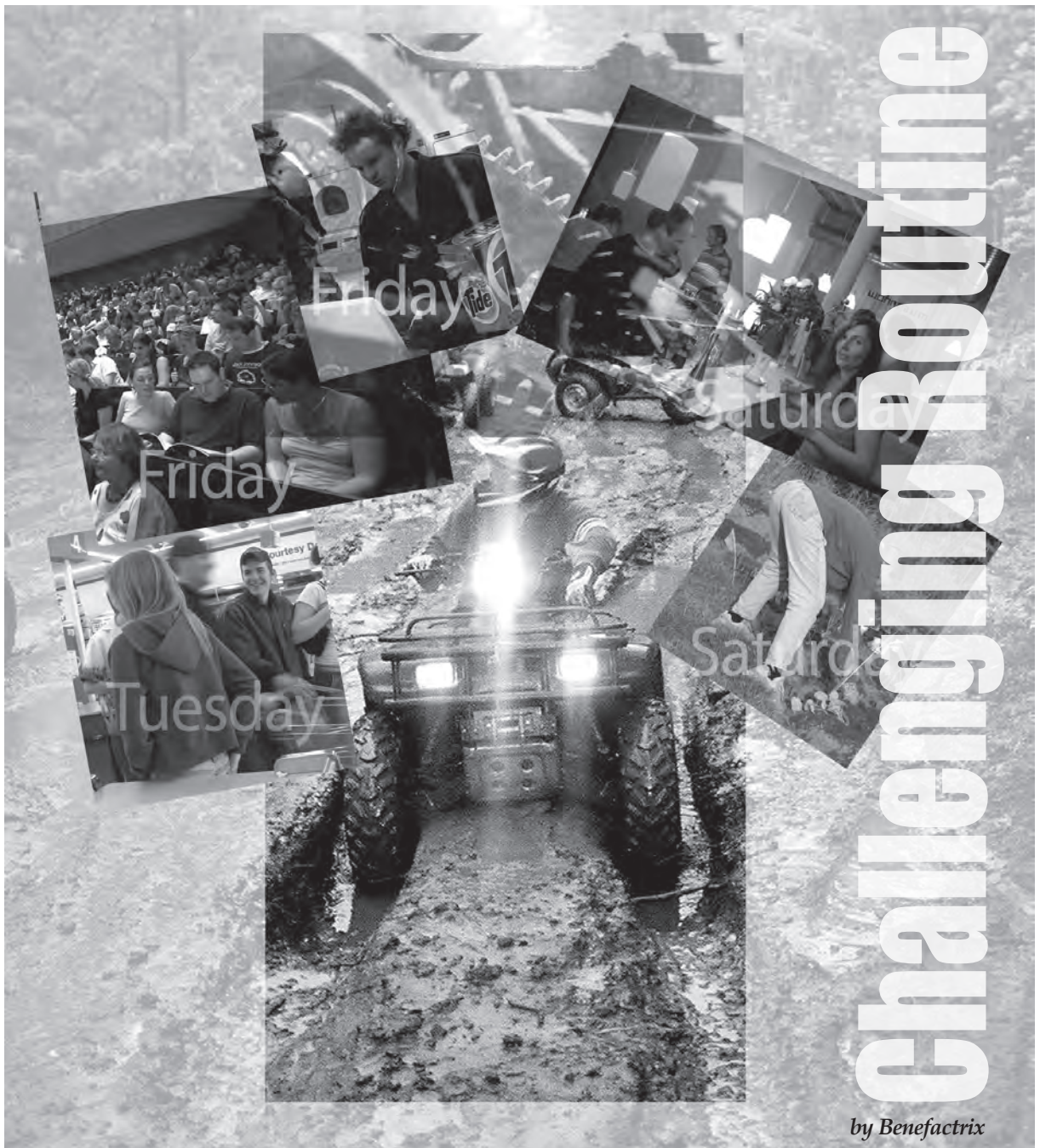
According to the Kabalistic view, the two worlds, upper and lower, represented by the two triangles, symbolise the *involution* and *evolution* of the Self or Soul, linking the visible and invisible worlds. In these two triangles is represented the duality of existence, the above and the below, the spiritual and the material, the divine and the mundane. This duality does not imply a real separation between these two worlds, however. The separation exists because we, in our limitation and confusion, fail to see the underlying unity.

Today, the *Magen David* is a universally recognised symbol of Judaism. It appears on the flag of the state of Israel, and the Israeli equivalent of the Red Cross is known as the *Magen David Adom*.

Footnotes

1. A small parchment inscribed with two sections from the Torah's Book of Deuteronomy (6:4-9 and 11:13-21) that is affixed to each doorpost and gate in a Jewish home or synagogue.





by Benefactrix

USED TO BE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE who almost unconsciously got locked into routines. I would do my shopping on Tuesday afternoon, my laundry on Friday morning, and gardening only on Saturdays. I would go to a cinema or restaurant on Friday or Saturday night and I would stay home every other night of the week. These were just a few of my “institutions.”

Not recognising the power they held over me, my many routines were cloaked under the guise of efficiency and expediency. For years they lurked insidiously, a pre-programmed and immutable network, representing a kind of absent-minded thinking that produced predictability, inflexibility and stagnancy. Without even realising it, I was “stuck in a rut.”

Thankfully I’m now no longer mired in



routine; I've managed to rid myself of their power over me. How did I do it? The answer is simple really, though the execution of it is anything but simple. In a very practical sense, you have to look directly at your habits and routines, and catch them red-handed in the act of enslaving you. In other words, you have to examine your actions and the thoughts behind them meticulously. Your mind will put up a considerable fuss over your desire to do away with such familiar patterns and for some time you may have to play a little game with your mind, gently coaxing it to agree with you. Eventually, with some patience and discipline you will get your way.

Toward a Spiritual Path

Exchanging, rearranging and upsetting the routines you have created is a healthy thing to do in itself. But there is a more important and meaningful reason for going through this process. Letting go of long-held patterns and exchanging them for new, vibrant ways of doing things is a major part of the spiritual path. The beginning of the end of enslaving routines is when you let go, opening yourself up to the influx of cosmic impressions. By doing so, you will soon find that the unwavering routines that once filled up your days will be transformed into a daily adventure, replete with a sequence of lessons from the Cosmic.

Once you have opened yourself up to this process, you will find that each day has its own different sequence of events; a sequence that may

Letting go of some of your dearly held traditions is not something to fear.

be similar, but never identical, to any other day. Often, in little ways, the sequence is quite unique. Indeed, each day becomes a puzzle in which you try to figure out which piece follows the last and flows into the next. Like any puzzle, it's not always easy to assemble, and sometimes the pieces don't fit or are missing. But somehow, when the puzzle is completed, you have had fun doing it.

A comforting idea to keep in mind is that this routine-to-riches process is not out of your

own control. You decide everything that you want to change. In order to make the right decisions, you must rely on your *intuition*. This is easier said than done of course, as it is not always easy to get in touch with your deeper self. But it gets simpler as you go along. It also helps bring into focus the idea that letting go of some of your dearly held traditions is not something to fear, allowing you to explore new possibilities to nurture and develop your own spirituality.

Preferences

One more thing should be mentioned about intuition. In the process of breaking up old routines, there are no hard and fast rules. A certain routine may seem ripe for change, yet something inside, your intuition, tells you to leave it alone, so that's what you must do. Also, some of your habits may appear to be like routines, when they are in fact just preferences.

For example, I *prefer* to listen to music at night; at no other time during the day would I even consider it. Remember, you are not being *instructed* to change your old patterns; you are changing them voluntarily. Some you may elect not to change. Once you have examined your familiar patterns, the decision about what to do with them is yours.

Since letting this process work through me, a new melange of possibilities has opened up before my eyes. I have discovered variety, flexibility and spontaneity. To cite just a few examples: On my many long walks, I no longer plot out my course beforehand; I make it up as I go along. I do my shopping and laundry on a rotating schedule so that they always come up on different days of the week. I sometimes go to a cinema or restaurant during the middle of the week, sometimes not for months. I'm open-minded about doing things that I have never attempted before.

If there is a plan for your life, there a plan for each day; you will find that by allowing your intuition some authority, it will bring you naturally to the right choices and then you will know that you have challenged your routine successfully.

