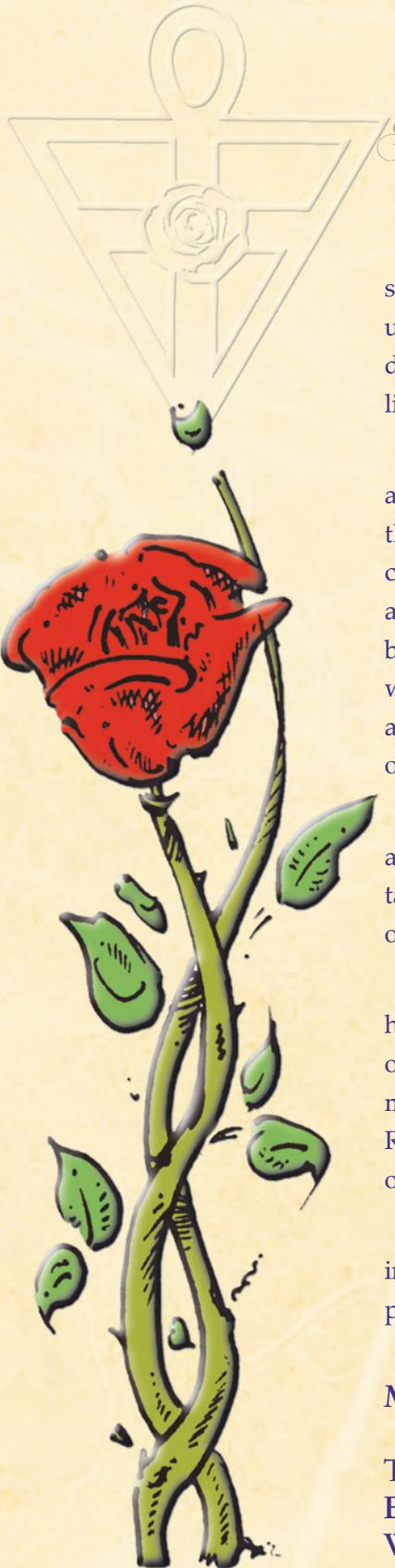


# BROSICRUCIAN BEACON



June 2008





NE CAN'T HELP NOTICE how powerful a clear, personal philosophy of life can be; how everything seems to flow so harmoniously for those who have dared to take control over their lives. Analysing real needs rather than ephemeral wants, such people know that they need more than anything else, to rely upon their own insights rather than those of others, to take their own decisions rather than rely on those taken by others, and above all, to live with the consequences of their own thoughts, words and deeds.

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### COVER SPREAD

“Pythagoras: A Journey Into Light”



# Ancient Egypt and Modern Esotericism

## Part 2

by Jeremy Naydler, Ph.D.

*In this second part, Jeremy Naydler continues to expand upon the ancient Egyptian worldview by introducing the reader to their concept of the Underworld or afterlife which they called the *Dwat* and to which the living, mentally and physically, prepared themselves. In his concluding remarks Naydler highlights the need for the modern world to identify with these ancient conceptions but avoiding the sometimes irresistible nostalgic desire for the past. To this end he outlines three specific tasks which can empower people to recognise themselves as cosmic beings whose existence spans that of life and death within the vehicle of their consciousness.*

**O**N AN INNER LEVEL, THE RITUAL sailing of the king occurs in the heavens. Just as in the coronation text of Thutmose III, the king flies up to the sky in order to worship Ra and be filled with his akh-power, so the context of the ritual sailing is cosmic. The ancient Egyptians understood that to become enlightened one must become aware of that which is cosmic in one's own nature. One must realise that there is something deep within human nature that is essentially not of this earth, but is a cosmic principle.

The cosmic being who presided over Ra's diurnal voyage across the sky was the heavenly goddess Nut. It was she who gave birth to Ra each morning and who received him into herself again in the evening. When Ra entered her interior realm

each evening, he entered the secret and wholly invisible world that the Egyptians called the *Dwat*.

The *Dwat* was conceived as being on the other side of the stars that we see when we look up at the night sky. The stars were imagined as being on the flesh of the goddess Nut, and the *Dwat* was in some sense behind or within the world of which the stars demarcated the outermost boundary.<sup>1</sup>

It was not just the sun god however that entered the *Dwat* at the end of the day. All creatures were believed to return to the *Dwat* at the end of their lives, pass into its dark interior, and were born from it again, just as the sun god was born from the *Dwat* each morning. There was therefore a very important mystical threshold between the outwardly visible cosmos, the stars on Nut's body, and what exists invisibly in her interior. It is a threshold we



all come to when we die, when everything becomes concentrated at a single point, and then disappears from view.

Figure 6 shows the stages of the sun god's night-journey through Nut's body, as he travels from death to rebirth. Knowledge of this interior world of the *Dwat* was considered by the Egyptians to be the most important, most profound knowledge, for people living on earth to acquire. The *Dwat* was not only the realm of the dead, but also the realm of the gods and spirits and furthermore, the realm from which all living things emerge.<sup>2</sup> All life issues from the *Dwat*. To know this mysterious interior world was to become truly wise, for then one knew both sides of existence, the invisible along with the visible.

It is interesting that Thutmose III had the complete text and illustrations of the most comprehensive guide to the *Dwat* (The Book of What is in the Underworld) painted on the inner walls of his tomb in the Valley of the Kings. As his coronation text reminds us, this was a king who was "instructed in the wisdom of the gods." Unlike Napoleon, Thutmose III was initiated into a deep spiritual knowledge. It is not without significance that the name Thutmose means "born of Thoth," the god whom the Greeks identified with Hermes, and from whom one of the most important of the Western esoteric traditions, the Hermetic Tradition, derives its name.

### The Three Tasks

I have tried to show that the Egyptians lived with an awareness of a dimension of reality that is best described by the term "imaginal," a non-physical yet objective reality that we become aware of through the human faculty of imagination. For the Egyptians, the agencies and powers that can be reached through contact with the imaginal world are far more potent than anything merely physical, because through them physical reality can be transformed.

Thus we have seen how Thutmose III called upon Seth and Neith to infuse him with a superhuman martial energy that enabled him to go to war with an irresistible ferocity. In battle after battle, he and his accompanying priests could also magically invoke the imaginal reality of the defeat of the powers opposed to the sun god and *Ma'at*, both of whom the pharaoh represented, indeed embodied, on earth. It was this, according to his own account, that brought Thutmose his victories.<sup>3</sup>

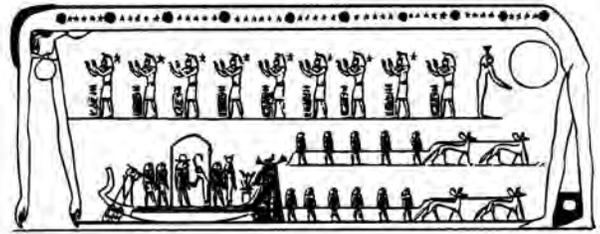


Figure 6: On the left, Nut swallows the sun god Ra at sunset, while on the right she gives birth to the sun at dawn.

I have also tried to show that the Egyptians lived with an understanding that we are not just terrestrial beings; we are also cosmic. As such, our spiritual fulfilment is only possible in a cosmic setting. This understanding is to be found from the earliest sacred literature (the *Pyramid Texts*), to the coronation text of Thutmose III and the *Book of the Dead*, where, for example, such mystical episodes as flying up to the sky, seeing the image of the sun god, boarding the sun-boat and/or becoming inwardly "solarised," are all recorded.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, I have suggested that the Egyptians had an orientation towards the world of the dead (the *Dwat*) that saw it as being the source of the most profound wisdom concerning the nature of reality. There is a remarkably rich metaphysical literature concerning the *Dwat*, knowledge of which was evidently regarded as relevant not only to the dead but also to the living.<sup>5</sup> All of this was "mainstream" ancient Egyptian religious consciousness.

### The Egyptian Consciousness Goes Underground

At the end of the Egyptian era it went "underground," moving from the temple to the private household, and then to the small group meeting in secret, from whence it would pass into various esoteric

*Unlike Napoleon, Thutmose III was initiated into a deep spiritual knowledge.*

traditions.<sup>6</sup> Thus in the *Alchemical* tradition, there is a particular focus on the imaginal realm of archetypes and the path of inner transformation. In the *Hermetic* tradition there is a concentration on the realisation of our cosmic nature, while in *Gnosticism* we find a particular emphasis on the invisible hierarchies of the spirit world. These three Western esoteric streams could be understood as each preserving in their different ways the ancient Egyptian wisdom into the next cultural era.

Meanwhile the emerging mainstream culture



with its Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman basis increasingly rejected the old consciousness. The world became more and more impermeable to the divine, archetypal and imaginal presences. In Judaism the notion of idolatry, which would have been incomprehensible to the ancient Egyptians, came to dominate the religious consciousness; while the Greeks and Romans saw the gods slowly fade away and become less and less easy to communicate with.<sup>7</sup> The *new consciousness* meant that people experienced the world going through a kind of solidification, so that it was no longer able to transmit the radiant energies of the divine.

At the same time there emerged an increasing sense that human beings were simply terrestrial beings and consequently, our happiness was conceived less in cosmic terms and more in terms of satisfying our physical needs, desires and comforts. The material world had to be mastered to this end and this, in time, became the great project of science and technology, which involved an almost complete forgetfulness of our cosmic origins.

It also involved a forgetfulness of that part of human existence that belongs between death and rebirth. There was a growing identification of the human being solely with the life that we lead between birth and death. Already, both the Greek and Judaic conceptions of life after death expressed the conviction that the soul survived as a pale and ghostly reflection of its former self. As the ghost of Achilles says in Homer's *Odyssey*, "*the senseless dead [are] mere shadows of men outworn.*"<sup>8</sup> This view, so very different from that of the Egyptians, culminated in the modern idea that there is simply no existence at all after death. Modern scientific



Statue of Thutmose III.

materialism is founded upon a total ignorance of the spirit world.

At the beginning of this essay [*Rosicrucian Beacon March 2008*], I proposed that ancient Egypt exposes a tension in our own culture and that in so doing we can see its karmic role today. The reason why it may be helpful to see Egypt in these terms is because we are now coming to the end of the Greco-Roman/Judeo-

Christian era. It has achieved its purpose, which was to make us more individuated, more self (rather than god) centred in our soul-life, and thus more free.

### Becoming Aware again of Inner Spiritual Realities

Now there is a need to become aware again of inner, spiritual realities but to become aware of them grounded in our own sense of self, and with a clear and discriminating intelligence with which we can once more turn toward them. So I would suggest that it is here that the profound karmic relationship is working between ancient Egypt and the new era that is beginning to unfold before us.

*We are driven to find our own new relationship to the spiritual dimension.*

While our relationship to ancient Egypt is certainly based upon our acquiring a deeper and more accurate knowledge of its culture and religion, the relationship is by no means simply in the direction of the present to the past. It is also about how the past can support us in forging our own future by helping us to re-engage with the spiritual dimensions which were so intrinsic to people's experience in times of old.<sup>9</sup>

What ancient Egypt can do today is to provide both the impetus and the anchorage for a modern esotericism. By esotericism I mean knowledge of inner realities. There is no question of "going back" to ancient Egypt. It is rather the case that by wrestling with ancient Egyptian sacred texts, we are drawn down to a deeper level of awareness that we need to make more conscious. And feeling this need, we are driven to find our own new relationship to the spiritual dimension.

As I see it, there are three tasks ahead for contemporary esotericism. The first is to grow into a fully felt and participative relationship with the



A portion of the earliest sacred literature, the Pyramid texts.



imaginal worlds that stand behind the physical. We need constantly to work at dissolving the density of the physical and literal world. We need to loosen its solidity in order to see through to the luminous world of spirits, gods and archetypes that are its invisible matrix. They are, in a sense, the “dream” of the world that our modern, all too wide-awake consciousness, has destroyed. There is a need today to return our waking consciousness to this dream, by bringing it once more into a living relationship with the imaginal dimensions of the world.

Along with this comes the second task, which is to expand our conception of ourselves beyond the confines of the earth by developing a sense that the cosmos that surrounds us is not just dead matter, but full of soul. To do this we need not so much to work against as to work through the materialistic conceptions that permeate modern cosmological thinking. We can develop once again a feeling for the soul-qualities of the planets and constellations, for the whole world of the stars. And the more we are able to do this, the more we are able to connect with the “world soul” or anima mundi as it used to be called, the more will we be able to reconnect again with our own cosmic nature.

I see the third task as being once more to become aware of the realm of death as the other half of life, as much a part of our existence as sleep is a part of our life between birth and death. It requires that we see this realm of death not so much as a place that we go to after we die, as a realm that we inhabit, or one might say inhabits us, alongside the world of the living. The world of death can be understood as a completely interior world, and yet despite the fact that it has no dimensions, it is not necessarily inaccessible to consciousness. For its interiority ultimately coincides with our own. The more we become aware of the source of what arises in our own consciousness, the more do we extend our consciousness towards this deeply interior realm of death. And in extending our consciousness towards it, we extend our consciousness towards that other half of existence without which we cannot fully participate in life.<sup>10</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Naydler, *Temple of the Cosmos*, 26 and 215-217.
2. W. Brede Kristensen, *Life Out of Death: Studies in the Religions of Egypt and of Ancient Greece*, trans. H. J. Franken and G. R. H. Wright (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1992), 28, comments: “The world of death secreted greater powers and contained richer possibilities than the world of finite experience. It was the basis for the whole existence which we are apt to call worldly life.”

3. The “Annals” at Karnak, recording Thutmose III’s campaigns, are couched in mythical and theistic language. The king is described as acting in consort with Amun-Ra against the “wretched enemy”—implicitly identified with the forces of cosmic chaos. The mystical fusion of king and sun god is even more explicit in the so-called “poetical stela” of Thutmose III found at Karnak. Both texts are translated in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 2:30-39.
4. *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, trans. R. O. Faulkner (London: British Museum Publications, 1972), ch.130.
5. Alison Roberts, *My Heart, My Mother* (Roaingdean: Northgate, 2000), 174-178. It is explicitly stated in *The Book of What is in the Underworld* (Amdwat), div.I, that the text is “useful for those who are on earth” and similar indications can be found in *The Book of the Dead*, which has been compared by Terence DuQuesne, *A Coptic Initiatory Invocation* (Thame: Darengo, 1991), 52nll2, with the *Tibetan Bardo Thodol*, a text clearly intended for spiritual practice.
6. Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), ch.7; and David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), chaps. 5 and 6.
7. See, for example, Plutarch’s essay, “The Decline of the Oracles,” in Plutarch, *Moral Essays*, trans. Rex Warner (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 31-96.
8. Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Ennis Rees (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), 188.
9. In a series of lectures on the relationship of Egyptian mythology to modern civilisation, Rudolf Steiner, *Universe, Earth and Man*, trans. Harry Collison (London: Rudolf Steiner Publishing Co., 1941), 250ff., makes the following statement: “What we call ‘future’ must always be rooted in the past; knowledge has no value if not changed into motive power for the future. The purpose for the future must be in accordance with the knowledge of the past, but this knowledge is of little value unless changed into propelling force for the future.”
10. This text, “Ancient Egypt and Modern Esotericism” © Jeremy Naydler, 2006 is reprinted with permission of the author. All Rights Reserved.

### Illustration Sources

- *Figure 6 The sky-goddess Nut conceals within her body the mysterious inner region.* From the abbreviated version of the *Book of Night* on the ceiling of the sarcophagus chamber of the tomb of Harnesses IX, Valley of the Kings, from Erik Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings*, trans. David Warburton (New York: Timken, 1990), 79. Every effort has been made to find the copyright owner.





# The Symbolism of the Rose

by Claire Lewis, SRC

*One of the most perfect, exquisite thoughts that Nature has given us is the rose. By universal assent the rose has been voted the loveliest of all flowers on Earth.*

**T**HE ROSE IS LINKED BY A CHAIN of association with a thousand chapters in the history of humanity. A native of the East, the rose is now universal, opening its petals to the sun of every climate.

The ancients regarded the rose as the emblem of silence, love, joy and secrecy. The sanctity of the rose has been felt and recognised in all ages, from the crude drawings on rocks and in caves of our earliest ancestors, to the immortal inspirations of Dante and Raphael. The rose is the crystallisation of all growth, unfoldment and evolution in the vegetable kingdom; the evolution of plant life through eons and eons of time, struggling, suffering and aspiring towards the perfection of grace, beauty and fragrance of the flower kingdom. What does this inspiration and attainment of heavenliness symbolise?

The rose is a worthy symbol the soul of mankind in the process of its growth, unfoldment and evolution towards its Creator. Each delicately tinted petal, in the layers of mystic perfume is like the desires, longings, sufferings and aspirations of the human soul, through eons and eons of time, unfolding, grouping, growing towards the perfection of the Cosmic ideal for humankind.

Each of us, like the rose, has a sacred power which permits us to discover the inner significances, the reality of invisible things. As the rose turns its heart to the physical sun, so we turn our Soul to the spiritual light of truth, which may suddenly come upon us in the midst of darkness and ignorance. All physical perfections may come to an end, while the divine virtues are infinite. Those who are servants of spiritual beauty are everlasting.

In a poetic sense the petals of the Rosicrucian rose have lengthened life, mitigated pain, extinguished diseases, increased the fertility of the soil, given new securities to the sailor, spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges, guided the thunderbolt innocuously from sky to earth, lit up the night with the splendour of the day, extended the range of human vision, enhanced the powers of human muscles, accelerated motion, annihilated distances, enabled men and women to descend to the depths of the sea, to soar into the air, to penetrate into the recesses of the earth, to cross continents in planes,

cars and trains. These are but a part of the rose, for the Rosicrucian philosophy never rests,

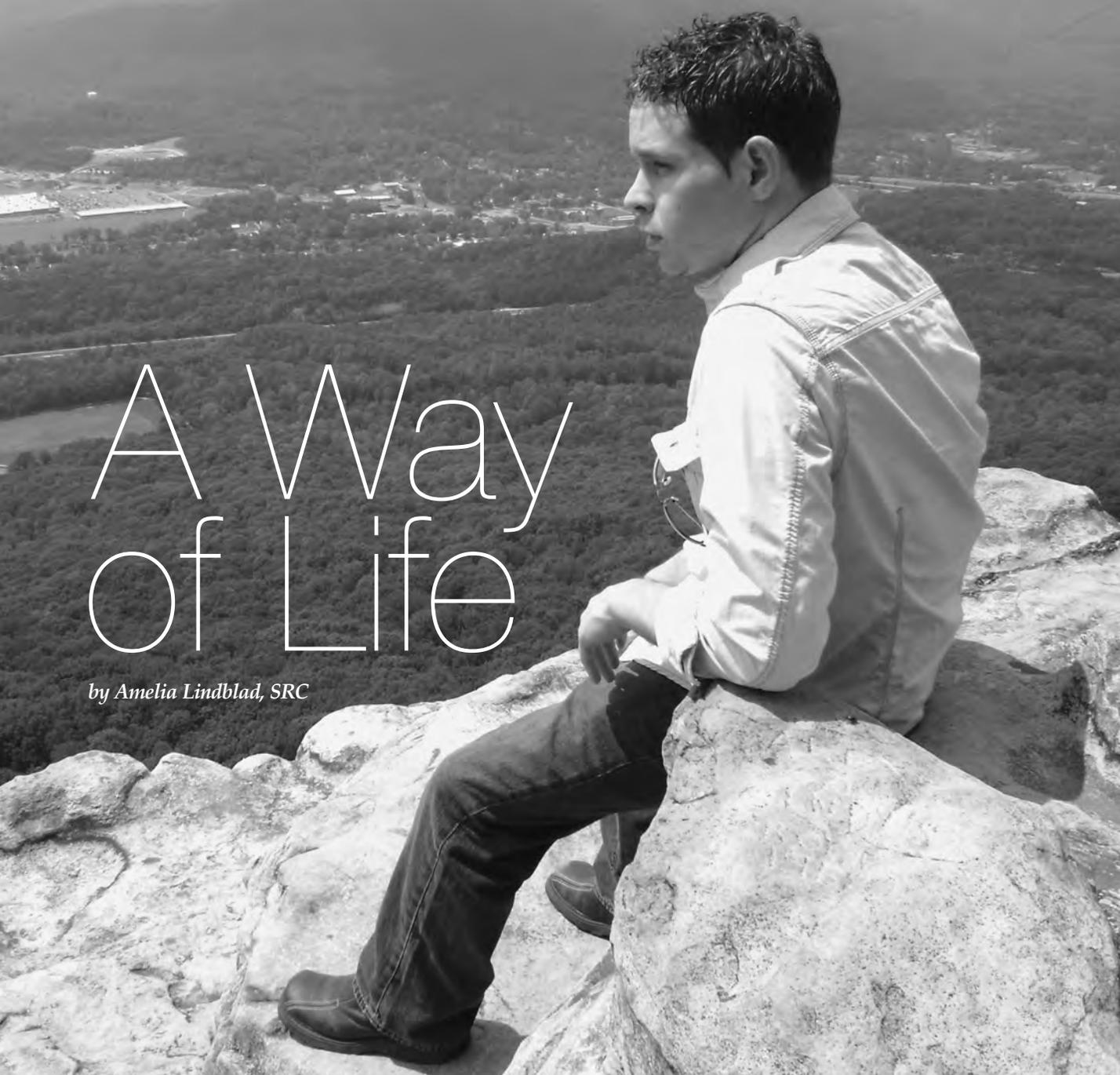
never attains, is never perfect: its law is progress.

Each petal of the rose on the cross is therefore symbolic of the oneness of the world of humanity, universal peace, universal tolerance, international consanguinity and solidarity, the establishment of this utopia, first in the hearts of man, then upon the Earth. The world of humanity is like a Cosmic rose garden, and the various peoples and languages are like its various flowers. The diversity of colours in a rose garden adds to the charm and beauty of the scene, just as the variety of nations enhances unity and charm.

Into each human heart the Cosmic planted the seed of a spiritual rose. If we plant its roots deep in the soil of unselfishness, water it with the dew of purity, protect it from the blasts of prejudice and bigotry, give it the sunshine of universal love, it will flourish and unfold into blossoms of heavenly beauty for all people, with the perfume of a divine civilisation.

*The rose is a worthy symbol of the soul of mankind in the process of its growth.*





# A Way of Life

by Amelia Lindblad, SRC

*All too often in this fast moving day and age, we fail to take the time or do not succeed in finding a way of really being in touch with young people. We don't seem able to penetrate their protective shell of seeming complacency, their contentedness to be like all the others. Can we pierce that shell with a truth so evident and usable that it will produce a reaction from deep within the young mind? Here are two parents' attempt to reach that in-born goodness in a young adult so deeply precious to them.*

**I**F WE HAD KNOWN YOU THROUGH all of your 16 years of growth and maturing, perhaps we would now know better what right words to use. However, those who are nearest and dearest to us are often those we cannot reach, perhaps because we try too hard. Many times with our own children we are the last to see their

deep needs because we are so busy looking after their everyday requirements and planning for a good future for them.

You are now at a crucial place in your advancement into manhood. The habits you form now will be those you carry with you into your adulthood. You are so lucky in having good health, for the possession of that one thing gives



you a firm working foundation upon which to build. You have a wonderful sense of humour, for we have often seen a tolerant amusement shining in your eyes. To be able to laugh at your own mistakes without self-condemnation and to be able to find some tolerant amusement in the mistakes of others without criticism or bitterness is truly a great gift. It makes the Road of Life so much smoother.

Your physical habits are excellent. You are clean, you get plenty of rest and you neither smoke nor drink. All of these things may seem trivial, an unimportant part of everyday life, but that is not entirely true. They are very much a part of life, a part of the good way you were raised, in short, fine habits that you will carry with you always. These things your parents have instilled in you because they love you and want you to be happy and successful.

### Dealing with Life's Problems

Up to this time, you have been pliable, taking their word more or less as law. You haven't done too much thinking along any lines that were going to conflict with what they wanted for you from life. But you are beginning to have stirrings deep inside which insist that you have a right to make your own decisions. No one is going to deny that you do have this right!

You have not had any experience, no chance as yet to form a pattern, good or bad, in the making of these decisions. So when the question arises as to how you should handle a situation or deal with a problem, you are inclined to watch out of the corner of your eye and see how the majority of the other young people around you are dealing with a comparable problem.

*You have not had any experience, no chance as yet to form a pattern, good or bad...*

You are doing this because you have been in the habit of looking to your parents for solutions. Now you have half-consciously decided that that is baby-stuff. Instead of depending on your own very reliable inner self, you are tempted to do as the gang does. This is very natural, but that doesn't make it right. Not for you! You have all the makings of a good, strong, reliable man and right now you must start forming the habits that will result in that reliability.

Nothing great has ever been accomplished in this world by anyone who lets others make decisions for him or who drifts along, depending upon someone near to push or urge him to accomplish something. No, that drive must always come from inside of our own being. We are well aware that it would be considered quite "uncool" by the gang to mention anything so profound as the Soul or God. Nevertheless, when we say that the part of you that is also a part of God is where you should look for your decisions, we are not talking about religion or piousness, but just a way of life.

There are minds in the Cosmic that have an unlimited supply of knowledge and each of us has an equal right to tap that supply if we will only use it. It is really very simple. Never make a snap decision; learn to "sleep on it." Never look to someone else to make that decision for you. Learn to depend on your own intuitive intelligence. You may make mistakes at first, but we all fall down when we first put on skates. Practice makes perfect though, and after a while the going gets smoother. It is all a matter of habit.

Don't be afraid to decide for yourself, and above all don't be afraid of the consequences of your decisions, even if they turn out to be unpleasant. Pleasant or unpleasant, the consequences of the choices you make will determine what you learn in life. Try to learn a lot..., and so it yourself by making your own choices, coming to your own decisions. Leave the weak willed and hangers-on behind; move on.

### Meeting Life's Assignments

Speaking of habit, reminds us that we had one more thought in mind. The work and study habits you make now will also help or hinder your adult life. It is easy to remember how silly and useless some of the subjects seemed in our school days. They didn't seem to have much point when we tried to find a connection between them and what we wanted from the future.

As the years have progressed, we have discovered however, that the way we met the problems of school assignments carried over very strongly into our adult life and influenced the way in which we met life's assignments. If you find it easier now to "let slide," easier to be like the gang, than to have the resourcefulness and pride to meet these day-to-day challenges and



conquer them, then that is the way everyday problems in adulthood will be met.

This is not the way for you, though. We have known for a long time that you have the born ability to meet anything squarely and make good use of it. You will soon find, with your fine talent for discriminating between the worthwhile and the useless, that anyone who is going anywhere mentally, physically or materially will respect you for being an individual. They will come to depend on your good judgment and acclaim you for your strength.

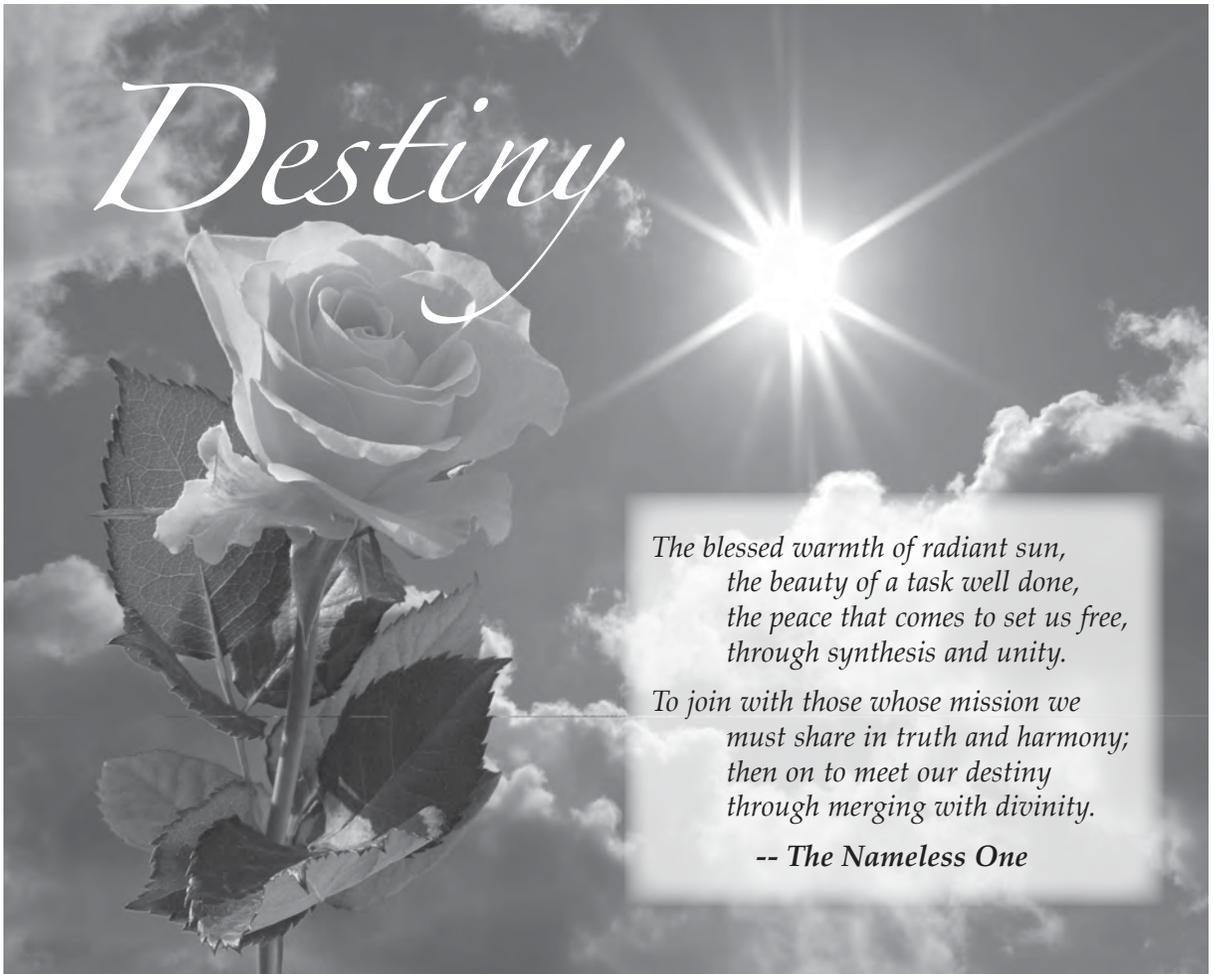
This is a big step for you to take now and a tremendous effort will have to be made on your part. No one can make you do it; no one can make you do anything. They can only threaten, punish and beg. However, unless you have a deep, driving desire for accomplishment, you will be one of those who have to be eternally pushed. Later, the time comes when no one cares enough

about us to push.

You have great promise. It shines in your eyes; it is evident in how you deal with things that are desirable to you and in your good way of life. Live up to your promise. Start now, by making your own decisions, by meeting the challenges of unpleasant tasks and becoming the victor. Don't be one of those who just go along for the ride.

*Tremendous effort will have to be made on your part.*

Know too that there are those who care enough to petition the great Cosmic Consciousness on your behalf and they are but a phone call away. The work must be yours and it won't be easy, but the God of your greatest understanding with infinite loving care, can at least awaken the spark within you that will make all your work bear fruit.



# Destiny

*The blessed warmth of radiant sun,  
the beauty of a task well done,  
the peace that comes to set us free,  
through synthesis and unity.*

*To join with those whose mission we  
must share in truth and harmony;  
then on to meet our destiny  
through merging with divinity.*

*-- The Nameless One*



# The Secret Fire

by Marcus Aurelius  
(Roman Emperor 121 – 180 CE)

**R**EPRESENT INCESSANTLY THE universe to yourself as a single living being composed of one sort of matter, and of one soul. This is how all that passes in it is referred to one principle of feeling. This is how one single impulse makes the whole move, and this is why all its products are an effect of a number of causes. O Universe! O Nature! You are the source of all, the ultimate terms of all. The same species of soul has been assigned to all animals, and the same intellectual soul to all reasoning beings, just as all terrestrial bodies are made of the same terrestrial matter, are as all that sees and breathes, sees but one and the same light, and breathes but one and the same air.

The light of the sun is one, though we see it dispersed on walls, on mountains, and on a thousand different objects. Although divided into thousands of separate bodies, this is but one sort of matter. There is but one intelligent Soul, though it seems to divide itself. We are all united by a common participation in the same intelligence. You have forgotten that the soul of each of us is a god who has emanated from the Supreme Being.

Just as bodies after a brief sojourn on earth become changed and at last dissolved so they may make way for others, so do souls after their sojourn in the air become changed as they return to the fertile bosom of Universal Reason. All souls form a portion of the same spiritual element, just as all seas belong to the element of water. One and the same Reason gives light to them all, just as the sun gives light to the earth and ocean.



# The Cathars

by Bill Anderson, FRC

## -- PART 1

*"Al cap dels set cent ans, verdejara lo laurèl."  
The laurel will flourish again in 700 years  
(Belibaste)*

In Christianity, the laurel, once sacred to Apollo, is said to symbolise the Resurrection of Christ and the triumph of Humanity.

*PART 1 of this trilogy about the Cathars, a mystical and gnostic form of Christianity, deals with the better-known aspects of Cathar history in the south of France.*

*PART 2 will deal with their faith and life, widening its scope to include Italy and Spain, and we will discover why the church perceived them as such a great threat.*

*PART 3 will be the story of one of the most famous Cathars: Esclarmonde de Foix.*

## Trials and Tribulations in the Languedoc

**T**HE WORD CATHAR DERIVES FROM the Greek word *καθαρός* (*katharos* meaning "pure.") Catharism itself was a gnostic and dualist Christian religious movement that appeared in the Languedoc region of France, called Occitània at the time, around the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The movement was branded by the Catholic Church as heretical, with

some authorities denouncing them as not being Christian at all. It existed throughout much of Western Europe, including Aragon and Catalonia in Spain, the Rhineland and Flanders, and Lombardy and Tuscany in Italy.

In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, the area of the Midi or southern France known as the Lengadòc (Languedoc) stretched from the Rhone valley in





*The Languedoc region*

the east to the Garonne river in the west, and from the Auvergne in the north to the Roussillon in the south. This area had a cultural unity quite different from the north of France. It had different forms of land ownership and inheritance, and even a different language *Occitan* (the *langue d'oc*). And it was not part of the kingdom of France at the time.

The independent lords of the south strove to ensure that no single power could dominate

***Cathar traditions can be traced back to the prophet Mani.***

the region. Nevertheless, one of them, the Count of Toulouse, who belonged to the St. Gilles family, was indisputably the most influential and powerful of them all. The domains and power of this family had grown through the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries so that by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, Count Raimon (Raymond) IV had the resources to become one of the leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Crusade to the Holy Land. As the armies of the First Crusade passed through Constantinople, in her book *The Alexiad*, Princess Anna Komnene describes Raymond's superior intellect, the purity of his life and how greatly he valued the truth. For these reasons her father the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I held him in great esteem.

The greatest rival in Occitania to the Counts of Toulouse were the

Counts of Barcelona. They acquired the kingship of Aragon in 1137, the kingship of Mallorca in 1228 and the kingship of Valencia in 1238. The lesser nobles of the region, like the Counts of Foix and the Viscounts of Béziers, Carcassonne, Narbonne and Montpellier exploited the conflict between these great noble houses by transferring their allegiance from one lord to another to maximize their independence.

### **Origins of Catharism**

Much has been written about these remarkable mystics, their probable origin, their history and connections with other so-called "heretical" sects of the Middle Ages. Reliable information however, can be obtained from various historical reports and also from an intelligent interpretation of the reports compiled by the Inquisition. Naturally, discrimination must be used in analysing those latter reports, as they are bound to bear the mark of that institution, its partiality and fanatical spirit.

Cathar traditions can be traced back to the prophet Mani, who lived in the Persian Empire in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. He was a student of Buddhism and Chaldean philosophy, and delved into the mysterious knowledge of the Egyptians. Later on he became a devout Christian, and from the vast knowledge he acquired from those diverse spiritual sources, he drew up a synthesis on which he based

his teachings, trying through different paths to reach the Great Universal Truth. His disciples, who were called Manichaeans, spread his doctrine, which was based at one and the same time upon the spirit of renunciation of the eastern religions and upon the great law of love and compassion of Christian inspiration.

Interesting documents, writings of Mani and his disciples, were discovered shortly before World War I in Turkestan and China, and also in the Fayum in Egypt. Some of those documents escaped burning when the followers of Mani were persecuted. From the East, Mani's followers migrated to Europe through the Byzantine Empire, initially to Bulgaria. According to some authors it was from there that their teachings penetrated into Italy via Bosnia, and later, in a movement westwards, to Spain and France, where we find them towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century where they were called the "Cathars."



*Cathar traditions can be traced back to the prophet Mani, who lived in the Persian Empire in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE.*





*The symbol of the Cathar dove hewn through a rock*

### **Monotheists**

They believed in a sole one unique God but admitted to the existence of two opposing principles which manifested as spirit and matter. As dualist Christians they believed in Light and Darkness or good and evil. Light, or the positive constructive principle, was opposed to the negative, destructive principle which the Cathars believed to be with the demon Roman Catholic doctrine.

Through matter, the divine principle in Man, the Soul, is plunged into Darkness, from which it has to work out its salvation, through successive reincarnations, in a series of lives upon this Earth. Through suffering and the practice of love and charity, it slowly emerges from Darkness, from the delusion of matter, to eventually reunite with the Divine Light, the First Principle, the Creator or God.

### **Initiations**

In order to help their disciples in the slow and progressive unfoldment of their souls, Cathars performed initiations. But to be worthy of those initiations, the followers had to purify themselves through gradual asceticism, through fasting, abstinence and a great and sincere desire for perfection. Poverty was also considered as a means of liberating the self from worldly fetters.

Hell did not exist for them, believing that hell was a state of existence on this very Earth. The fire of the lower regions of the Powers of Darkness

was the actual suffering of human beings, here and now, and not in some afterlife. The souls of men, they believed, could therefore be saved and redeemed through the trials and tribulations of this terrestrial life.

Although specific, the Cathar teachings were not dogmatic. The work of Cathar ministers, usually referred to as Perfects by the Inquisition, was not to impose a blind faith but to convince their followers through persuasion and living openly as shining examples of purity and probity. They were truly practising the highest possible spirituality, and deserved the appellation "Perfect" or the "Pure."

To the Cathars themselves they were simply called the *Bons Ômes* (Good Men), *Bonas Femmas* (Good Women) or simply as *Bons Crestians* (Good Christians). Such were the ministers, but there were of course more humble followers, the great multitude of simple Believers who worked and prayed under the guidance of the Perfects, who instructed and tended them on the path of spiritual knowledge. The liberation of the soul from the bonds of matter and the love of others were the fundamental tenets of their doctrine.

Their leaders were well read students of

*The only valuable sacrament in marriage was the true union of two souls.*

philosophy and took an active part in all discussions and controversies that might enlighten them. But academic teachings were not their only source of knowledge: through concentration and meditation they tried to attune directly with the Cosmic Spirit, the Consciousness of Christ. To this end, they practised fasting before initiation as well as sometimes even after; and also before great religious celebrations.

### **The Consolamentum**

One peculiarity of their rites was the laying-on of hands, called the "Consolamentum" or "Consolation." It was considered as a baptism. The Cathars did not recognise the church's baptism by water as established by John the Baptist; for them there was only one true baptism..., that of the Holy Spirit and as practised by Jesus. Thus only could the Divine Spirit of Life penetrate the soul of man, permeating and transmuting the grosser vibrations of matter.

The Consolamentum was considered a



means of redemption and at the same time as a consecration of the condition of purity attained by the disciple after a long period of fasting and meditation. This rite was also practised upon the dying, to help the passing of the soul to the Great Beyond. In such a case, the Consolamentum could also be given by a member of the family, or by a woman, provided he or she had already received the sacrament; that is, that the mediator be fully and spiritually qualified to bestow it upon the dying.



*A stone dove representing the Holy Spirit: One of the few known surviving artefacts recovered from the site of Montségur.*

The ordination as a Perfect was also conferred by the Consolamentum, and even to woman, who were then consecrated deaconesses. Each community of Christian Cathars had at least one deaconess. In Western Europe, women were second or even third class citizens, but in Cathar society, women and men were equal.

They were individualists and believed that there was no road to evolution except through personal work and personal effort. Whatever your standing in society might be, noble or peasant, the same consideration was granted to all. The

*The first great centres of Catharism in the South of France were at Montpellier and Narbonne.*

most humble of workers had as much right as their bishops to attunement with the Cosmic Spirit and the only things that mattered were purity and perfection. The humblest neophyte therefore, could aspire to the highest spiritual development and attainment.

### Cathar Beliefs

Their beliefs about marriage in particular were distorted by false reports and misunderstandings of their adversaries in the Inquisition. Some authors claim that they were against marriage and preached abstinence and celibacy for all. But that is inconsistent with their faith in reincarnation, for how could man be reborn upon this Earth if marriage and the family were condemnable institutions?

Certainly they held the state of celibacy in high regard, but that was only for the Perfects, those who had already attained the required condition of purity as a means of liberation of the senses and of

a lessening of his or her karma and reincarnations. For the men and women who had to live “normal” lives however, they acknowledged the necessity of marriage, though the only valuable sacrament in such case was the true union of two souls.

Among married people, those who received the Consolamentum were at times authorised by husband, or wife as the case may be, to break the bond of marriage so

they could devote the rest of their lives to greater purification and more absolute asceticism.

Such was their probity that the giving of their word was sufficient bond and they refused to take oaths. In this regard they adhered strictly to the spirit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> commandments. This in particular was regarded as seditious, as oaths were what bound medieval society together: man to his feudal superior and man to church.

### Occitània

The Occitanian civilisation of the south of France has all but faded into the mists of time. So successful were the papal crusades against the Cathars of the Languedoc that nowadays we find but faint echoes of a land of peace, love and civilisation that once existed where France and Spain now meet.

Here was a land where the blending of several races produced a strong, independent individuals, and where the Cathar teachers found propitious soil for the spreading of their religious ideas. The sum of their knowledge was translated into Occitanian. At this time Occitània had more



*Cathar Cross etched in stone.*



in common with Aragon and Catalonia than it did with the north of France. Their language was very similar to the Catalan language. From now on, in this article I choose to use the names that they called themselves, rather than the French names you will find in most of the books about the Cathars.

This whole region had remained impregnated with ancient Roman civilisation and refinement. The nobles and knights, the Counts of Toulouse, the Counts of Foix and the Viscounts of Béziers, were learned scholars; and the burgesses were distinguished and emancipated minds. Esclarmonda de Foix, a romantic figure of medieval legend, and sister of Raimon-Rogièr, Count of Foix was initiated into the Cathar faith, as was Raimon-Rogièr's wife Philippa. Count Raimon VI of Toulouse, though not adopting their religion, openly favoured them, even taking sides with them at times against the Roman Catholic clergy.

The first great centres of Catharism in the South of France were at Montpellier and Narbonne; from there they spread across the Pyrenees into Spain. Later on, Toulouse was their headquarters, and they had several bishops in Albi. In fact, it is from the name of that town that they were called "Albigenses" as well as Cathars, and the name Albigensian has remained attached to the persecutions they suffered at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church in many places such as Béziers, Carcassonne, Agen and Razès.

The unusual purity of life of the Cathars was a great contrast to the appalling licentiousness and simony of the Catholic clergy of that epoch. While the Cathars were solely devoted to the welfare of the people, nursing and healing them, the Catholic clergy extorted tithes from the people, kept mistresses and sold all sacraments. Indeed, they were like the merchants in the Temple that Jesus drove out.

We have therefore on the one hand Cathar men and women, renowned as weavers, agricultural workers, doctors and educators, who conformed as closely as possible to the accepted Christian code of life, and on the other hand, we have a Catholic clergy of immense corruption and materialism. Moreover the prelates of Rome were often temporal lords with considerable estates and wealth, caring more for power and for the good of their own dynasties than for the welfare and spiritual health



*Occitan Cross*

of the people. The popes occupied the position of "vicar of God" much more for political reasons than for any defence of Christian principles, and it is not surprising therefore that so many ordinary people sympathised with the Cathars, whilst the corruption of the clergy kept the mass of followers away from the Roman Catholic Church.

There was also a deep seated antagonism between the clergy and nobility of Occitània, for the nobility extended help to those whose extreme purity of life and disinterest in material wealth had won their respect. Furthermore, whereas the Cathars were no threat to the nobility's temporal power, the Roman Catholic clergy most definitely was. The Cathars were, we may say, socially and spiritually, several centuries in advance of their time. One of the most renowned of their ministers was Guilabert de Castres, who was Bishop of Toulouse and whose preaching and popularity gave much trouble to the Catholic Church at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He openly censured the corruption of the Catholic clergy and it was only a matter of time before things came to a head.

The Cathars believed that an unworthy person, i.e., one who did not live the teachings of Christ, had no right to minister to others. Title was nothing for them, and they looked only to the intrinsic value of the individual. The

*Title was nothing for them, and they looked only to the intrinsic value of the individual.*

poorest labourer, if his mode of living and spiritual standards were high, was more qualified to become a minister than a man who had been ordained a priest merely by fiat from Rome. Ordination meant nothing to them.

This type of preaching was therefore a direct attack against the mandates of Rome. The simplicity of the lives of those mystics and their disinterestedness in temporal power were considered revolutionary. Their teachings were a most dangerous heresy, and a transgression against the established dogma of Roman Catholicism.

### **Condemned by the Pope**

Condemned as Manichaeans, this was sufficient pretext for Rome to order a crusade against the





Pope Innocent III (1198-1216)

Cathars. Pope Innocent III (reigned 1198–1216), in addition to organising the Fourth Crusade, which was supposed to go to the Holy Land, but instead attacked and conquered the Orthodox Christian Byzantine capital of Constantinople, was the driving force behind this.

While using coercive methods against the Cathars, the Pope also tried to convert them by sending in the Cistercians, who were famous dialecticians, to preach to them. According to the extremely rigid rules of their Cistercian Order, their monks had to live in absolute poverty. As ascetics

*They were, in the eyes of the church, no better than the infidel of the East and had to be killed en masse.*

they compared favourably with the Cathars, for they practiced many of the same virtues. However, the Cathars were deeply devoted to their beliefs and found little reason in the Cistercian's appeals to change their ways, even with the persuasion of such worthy adversaries.

Numerous books have been written about the barbaric persecutions that the Cathars subsequently had to endure, so this aspect will not be delved into here. However, some of the most salient points of the fight will help to throw some further light upon their history. From the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century various church councils condemned the Cathars. These seem to have been a series of pre-meditated and well orchestrated events and eventually the Pope formally requested the assistance of the lords of the South of France. They were in effect asked to take up arms against the Cathars, and in return the Vicar of Christ

promised plenary indulgences as a reward. The Cathars were anathematised as heretics, and in accordance with the established norms of the day they were, in the eyes of the church, no better than the infidel of the East and had to be killed en masse. At the same time as Innocent III was asking for the help of the Occitanian nobles and lords, he was also writing to the Archbishops of the South, trying to stimulate their zeal against the Cathars.

The papal legate, Pierre de Castelnau had been unable to convince Count Raimon VI of Toulouse and to bring him into the fight for the Church against the heretics. Raimon's fourth wife was Joan of England, the favourite sister of Richard the Lionheart. Interestingly, Richard's wife was a princess of neighbouring Navarre, whose last king became King Henry IV of France who later figures in the naissance of Rosicrucianism. The son of Joan and Raimon VI was Raimon VII.

Castelnau excommunicated Raimon VI, but when the Pope confirmed the sentence in brutally forceful and violent terms, Raimon VI quickly submitted to his authority. But his submission was not sincere, and after a stormy controversy in Saint-Gilles, Castelnau again excommunicated him. Some time thereafter, in January 1208, Castelnau was murdered, run through by a lance, and according to some, killed by one of Raimon's knights. Innocent III then appealed to the King of France, Philippe Auguste, who was the suzerain of the County of Toulouse, and to the "barons from the North to come and fight against the barons of the South."

Philippe Auguste refused, and Innocent III had to take upon himself the whole responsibility of the crusade with only the help of the northern lords, to whom he again promised plenary indulgences in addition to the hope he gave them of winning new lands and booty. Under the threat of invasion to his domains, Raimon VI was again forced to pay homage to the Church and to separate himself from the other lords of the South.

### The "Holy" War

According to historical reports, the crusader army, led by Simon de Montfort, was composed of 20,000 knights and some 200,000 *vilains* (soldiers or free peasants, whence comes the English word "villain.") Though the lords of the South were fighting for the Cathars on home territory, the odds were clearly stacked against them. It is not surprising therefore that Raimon VI, who





*The crusader army was led by Simon de Montfort.*

was of irresolute character, once more submitted himself to the power of Rome. The Pope, although unconvinced of his sincerity, was only too glad to weaken his adversaries, and for the time being, contented himself in separating Raimon from the other Lords.

The powerful crusaders army pursued the "heretics" who, under the leadership of Raimon-Rogièr Trencavel, Viscount of Béziers and nephew of Raimon VI, took refuge in Béziers. Despite their courageous efforts, this town, and later on Carcassonne, was taken and sacked. Before the carnage at Béziers, a knight asked Arnaud-Amaury the Abbot of Citeaux, the crusade's "spiritual" leader, how they were to know the Cathars from the other inhabitants. "Kill them all," replied the holy Abbot, "God will know his own!"

"There was seen," an anonymous author wrote, "the greatest slaughter of all ages; neither old nor young people were spared, not even children at the breast; all were exterminated. When seeing such butchery, the inhabitants took refuge in the big Church of Saint-Nazaire. The priests of the church were to ring the bells when all the heretics were dead. But the bells were never heard for neither robed priest nor clerk was left alive; all were put to the sword; none escaped. The town was sacked, then burnt to the ground, and no

*living creature was left in it."*

The crusaders believed that they were helping the cause of Christianity by killing the heretics, but being allowed to loot the towns they took, may have been a more compelling reason for their enthusiasm. And, of course, not to be scoffed at, all their sins would be forgiven them for having taking part in this crusade. Rape, murder, torture and theft, all sanctioned by the church and all sins forgiven in advance..., what more could medieval knights and knaves want?

Such was the spirit that animated the leaders of the crusade. The many crimes perpetrated in the name of God were quite literally done for God, or at least for his Vicar in Rome. Participation in the crusade against the Cathars was therefore a blessed path to salvation, just as killing the infidel in the East, no matter what the brutality, was a road to heaven.

But there were some who, despite their persecutions of the Cathars, genuinely believed in their mission to stamp the Roman Catholic version of Christianity on all people, regardless of the brutality of the process. To them it was like taking a bitter pill..., swallow it quick, endure the bad taste and be done with it as quickly as possible. They were the monks of Citeaux, the Cistercians who were such devoted followers of their cult. Another was Saint Dominic, whose asceticism could only be compared to that of his enemies themselves.

*It is one of the ways of intolerance, when the Powers of Darkness, with their subtle artifices, ensnare those who believe in their own righteousness, and blind them with false reasoning and misunderstanding.*

## Montségur

During the crusades, there were many changes of fortune in both camps. Some of the defeated Cathars succeeded in escaping. Through the help of the people and the lords who had revolted against the cruel fanaticism of the church, the

***Participation in the crusade against the Cathars was considered a blessed path to salvation.***

vanquished Cathars would sometimes be hidden for considerable periods of time, and continued converting people to their cause.

This state of affairs continued up to their final stand in the formidable *castèl de Montsegur*, the citadel better known as Montségur (Mountain





*The crimes committed in the name of God were many...*

of Safety), an ancient place of worship. A temple dedicated to a form of solar worship was said to have existed there several centuries before the Christian era, and in the Middle Ages the castle became the stronghold where the Cathars fought their last battle.

Raimon de Perelha, Lord of Montségur, already as far back as 1209, sheltered refugees in his castle even before the worst phases of the crusade reached his doors. In 1232 he received there Guilabert de Castres, Cathar Bishop of Toulouse and one of the greatest Cathar minds, together with several other Cathar leaders. From then on, Montségur became the centre of the Cathar Church, and towards the end of the crusade, was their last stronghold when Raimon VII who had succeeded his father as Count of Toulouse, under duress from the French king in 1243, was forced to help fight the last of the Cathars and to destroy their final refuge.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1244, Montségur surrendered. There was a two week truce. The

terms seemed lenient: everyone could go free if they allowed themselves to be questioned by and swore loyalty to the Church of Rome. For the Perfects, the choice was simpler, renounce Catharism or burn at the stake. The Perfects would however not lie or take an oath, so their fate was sealed. They spent the fortnight caring for their charges and arranging their affairs. Then something extraordinary happened. Twenty-one ordinary Believers asked to be given the Consolamentum during the final two weeks, some on the very day before the final battle, thereby becoming Perfects, and knowing full well what the result would be. This act was a great testament to the appeal and power of Catharism and its powerful message.

Following the truce to think the terms over, the knights and their families went free while 205 Cathars were burned alive on the morning of 16<sup>th</sup> March 1244. There were too many to tie to individual stakes, so a palisade was built around a pyre. The Cathars were shut inside and the fires were lit. A stele commemorates the spot where 205 beautiful souls passed into transition.

### **The Aftermath**

After Montségur fell, a number of Cathar outposts managed to survive, at least until 1258. Pope Innocent IV promulgated the bull *Ad Extirpanda*, which allowed the torture of suspects, ordering the civil magistrates to extort from all heretics by torture a confession of their own guilt and a betrayal of all their accomplices. This gave the church another weapon. Throughout the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Cathars became increasingly isolated, and by the early years of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there were very few Perfects left who could administer the Consolamentum.

The horrors of the Inquisition however, which had become a recognised institution of Rome under the name of the "Holy Office" in about the year 1223, were such that in many places the people of the South rebelled against the fanatical domination of the Roman Catholic Church. The Inquisitors confiscated houses and land from Cathars and encouraged others to pretend to be Believers while betraying their friends and family. Such were the tactics of the Gestapo in other parts of France many centuries later.

For a few years towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, some Cathars, under the leadership of the Autier brothers, continued worshipping and



practicing their faith..., until in 1309, when Pèire Autier was arrested and burned at the stake. Their last known Perfect, Guilhèm Belibaste, was also betrayed and burnt at the stake in 1321, after which the Believers fled, hiding in the wild region of Sabarthez until they all seemed to have disappeared, either because they had been killed, or because they had fled abroad to Spain and Lombardy.

As for the County of Toulouse, after Count Raimon VII died in 1250, his daughter was married to the brother of the king of France, and after their deaths in 1271, the county was absorbed into the French royal possessions and the entire Languedoc finally came under royal control.

### Martyrs

We can honestly say that the faith of the Cathars was of such a high quality that it can only be compared to that of the early martyrs of Christianity. Their doctrine was truly inspired by the pure spirit of the pristine Christian ideal, before misrepresentation and deformation through the sectarianism of the clergy of later times.

Many suffered dreadful deaths through fire with the high courage of the early martyrs during the Roman persecutions. And yet, their doctrine was so deformed by the Inquisitors that they were accused of holding the belief that suicide was a lawful act. In some cases, they submitted themselves to what they called the *Endura*, either before the sacrament of Consolamentum or after they had been imprisoned. In the former case, the

*The sincere efforts of Cathars strove for inner liberation and shone with the light of pure spirituality.*

Endura was only a very severe fast, not practised with the idea of committing suicide, but as a means of liberating themselves from the sway of the senses. In the latter case, when they were imprisoned, it was undertaken to try to escape the tortures of the Inquisition or death by fire, and they would therefore allow themselves to starve to death.

All epochs have had their contrast of Light and Darkness. In the darkness of the medieval ages, in a deeply humble manner, the sincere efforts of Cathars strove for inner liberation and shone with the light of pure spirituality. This affirmed that however insurmountable the obstacles may

appear, the process of evolution continues its irrevocable motion throughout eternity. Evil may triumph temporarily, but for goodness and sanctity, final victory is always assured, even if that takes centuries to come.

Every action has its reaction, and the power of the Popes was thereafter greatly weakened. The massacres and acts of savagery that the pope had unleashed greatly diminished the authority of the church. For a long time the "Vicars of Christ" (the popes) had lost their spiritual authority over the countries of Europe. Their violent and fanatical suppression of all forms of dissent and difference of opinion through the actions of the Inquisition left a permanent scar from which the Roman Catholic Church has taken centuries to recover.

In conclusion it may be said that although Catharism seems to have entirely disappeared, some traces of their descendants still remain, and their doctrine and teachings were preserved and in fact may have been precursors of the teachings of the Rosicrucians of later centuries. If we compare their traditions and teachings with those of modern Rosicrucians, one can't help but see that they are based upon the same ancient fundamental truths deriving from the innate human sense of universal justice and the ardent aspiration for spiritual enfoldment.

### Epilogue

One of the greatest achievements of mankind is religion; yet paradoxically, it is also one of mankind's greatest enemies. When organised religion becomes the bedfellow of secular power, it is a recipe for disaster. Each religion thinks it is better than all others ..., it is human nature!

I often wonder if the great avatars and teachers of the past would be horrified to see what had become of their teachings. The Catholic Church eventually reformed itself, so the Church in this story no longer reflects the Church of today. At the end of the crusades, a whole way of life had been destroyed, along with the prosperity of one of the richest regions of France. But you can't entirely destroy an idea, and the story of the Cathars has survived despite all attempts to erase it from living memory. In the next article we shall see what it meant to be a Cathar and how their example still influences us today.

*Al cap dels sèt cent ans, verdejara lo laurel.  
The laurel will flourish again in 700 years*



# The Master Within

by Edgar Wirt, FRC



**T**HE “MASTER WITHIN” IS A VERY useful and potent concept. Familiarity with it does not guarantee any useful working relationship with our “inner master,” but thinking in terms of this image and continually expanding its potential, is a way of opening up such a relationship.

Some people refer to the Master Within as “the still, small voice within.” Although vaguely correct, technically it is not the same as the inner master, but is what has been termed the “voice of conscience.” Conscience is partially the voice of the inner master but crucially, it is filtered by our cultural milieu and relates as well to things



we have learnt from others in society, not all of them being universal in their scope or even that beneficial to us. We can see this by the fact that in different cultures, where morals and mores are different; conscience relates to the particular moral setting in which it grew.

We are taught a pattern of right and wrong, not only in moral issues but also in lesser matters. In its basest state, conscience is a reminder of what we have been taught whenever we are on the verge of disregarding or violating the precepts we have been taught to respect. Conscience then, tells us usually only what we already know and it is only as we allow the voice of the inner master, the true voice of intuition, to take charge in our lives, that conscience merges with and becomes subsumed by the universal, spiritual values of our deepest selves. It is important therefore to always try and distinguish between conscience that has been drummed into us and conscience which comes from the Master Within.

The Master Within can reveal to us what we do not already know; the solution to a difficult situation, a new discovery, the meaning of a new experience or a new way of looking at ourselves. At times this insight may be received in words or as an idea without words; at other times, it comes as a visual image. Often it is disguised in imagery or symbols that we have to interpret.

The Master Within does not have to be trained or developed, for it is already there. We do not have to train and develop ourselves to make use of it or to cultivate a working relationship with it, but we do need to subsume our concept of what is right and wrong, namely our conscience, to the will of this inner master. This is an important part of Rosicrucian study.

The “Master Within” is part of the human psyche, related to the unconscious, subconscious or subliminal consciousness. This deep area of the psyche is independent of ordinary objective consciousness as it is the conscious manifestation of personality of the soul itself during the brief period of time that it is incarnated in a human body. This Inner Master operates by different rules from our everyday lives, and is unaffected by the social norms of the day. We do not manage any part whatsoever of its consciousness, but

we do have a direct line of communication with it. And of greatest importance to us as aspiring mystics is that

the Master Within is in close communication with both our individual soul and with the soul force, i.e. the force of life which animates all living things.

What we can get in objective consciousness is a sort of echo from the inner master. If our “echo chamber” is warped or cluttered, the echo will be distorted and maybe even silent. If the door is shut, we will not hear the echo at all. Often it is lost in the continual buzz and clatter that comes through the objective senses.

This traditional concept of the “Master Within” is particularly suited for personal development. The Rosicrucian Order has evolved quite a wide array of experiments for learning how to amplify and clarify those subtle signals and for directing them to our specific needs. One skill to be learned is how to focus on a particular question. Another is to disconnect: to stop, look and listen for an answer. There is much, much more of course, and it is all available through carefully graded instruction available from the Rosicrucian Order.

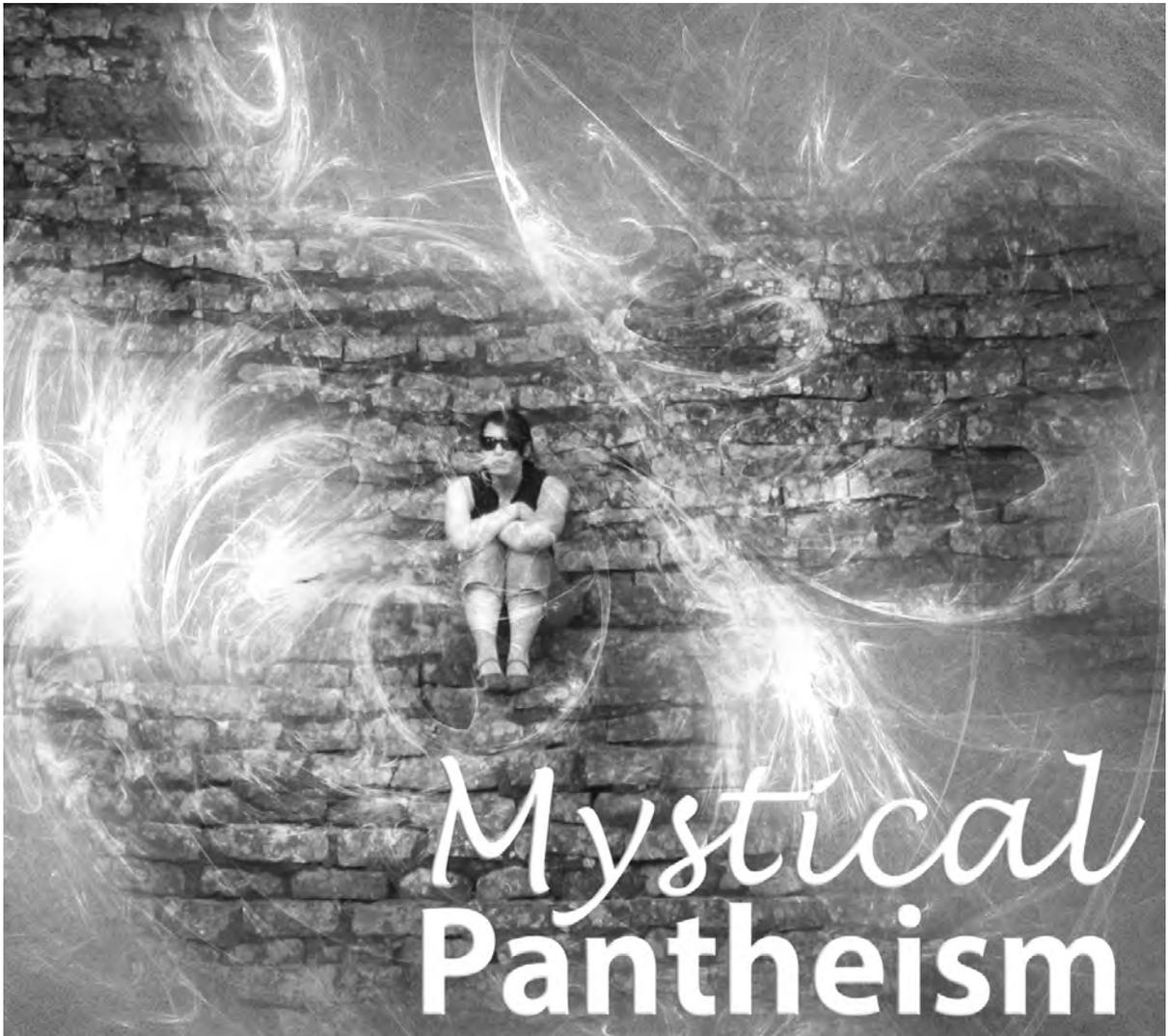
*The Master Within does not have to be trained or developed, for it is already there.*

## *Grateful Thought...*

*One single grateful thought  
raised to heaven  
is the most perfect prayer.*

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81)  
(German writer and philosopher)





*by Ralph M Lewis, FRC*

**I**T IS REALLY AMAZING HOW MANY misconceptions are associated with the word mysticism. This is partly due to the popular press and as a result, the average person who is not familiar with the subject will think of mysticism as being weird, occult and mysterious. These erroneous ideas are mainly caused by words that are similar in form such as *mystify* which, as defined in the dictionary, is quite contrary to *mysticism* in meaning. It is the resemblance in spelling of the two words that is the cause of the problem.

*Mysticism* is the doctrine and practice where we attempt a *personal union in consciousness with our concept of God*, or the Absolute, the Cosmic, the One or the Supreme Mind. The important element of mysticism is that it maintains that mankind does not

require an intermediary to have the awareness of a transcendental power. A mystic does not necessarily need to belong to any particular religion. The doctrine of mysticism postulates that we possess an innate link with the Divine from which all things emanate and upon which they are dependent. No one human has this attribute to a greater extent than any other. If one person is more successful than another it is due more to the technique applied than because of any innate difference in their faculties.

Many sects attack any organisation or group teaching mysticism. These attacks in themselves reveal an ignorance of mysticism or a prejudice against any group whose thoughts do not conform to the sect's own doctrines. It is obvious to any student of mysticism that most of the great mystics, e.g. Meister Eckhart, Jan van Ruysbroeck, Jacob



Boehme and Abu Hamid Muhammad al Ghazzali, were devout advocates of one of the great world religions. Not all mystics were Christian; there were prominent Jewish and Islamic mystics as well. For

*Mysticism is the doctrine and practice where we attempt a personal union in consciousness with our concept of God.*

instance, the Sufis are Islamic mystics whose writings are very illuminating.

### The Supreme Being

These renowned mystics and many others like them knew through personal experience that the enlightenment and ecstasy provided by mysticism are an individual attainment. There is no need for any religious creed. However, if a mystic is also a member of a religious sect he will then be inclined to define the transcendental power with which he personally seeks union in the terminology and images of that particular sect.

However, there are mystics who are non-sectarian. They do not consider the Supreme Being to be some divine person. To these mystics a metaphysical and abstract term represents the power they consider universal and which they believe infuses their being. To them such terms as Cosmic Mind and Universal Consciousness have a significant meaning. The term Supreme Being, is not construed by mystics to mean a single entity; rather, it refers to the *Whole*, the *Absolute*, the *One* of which all is an integral part.

Mystics have often been contemptuously called atheists by illiberal clergy. In effect, they imply that we can have no personal experience of reality through the medium of our own senses and mind, and that it must be experienced through the specific channels determined by their religion. This attitude denies the possibility of a so-called "Afflatus of the Soul" or spiritual attainment outside the bounds of a religious creed.

There have long been men and women, termed pagans, who do not belong to any of the established religions yet have shown reverence for the magnitude and grandeur of nature. They too are awed by the finite nature of man in comparison with that mysterious infinity of phenomena existing in, around and beyond humankind. They also have the

desire to know and understand this phenomenon. Out of these feelings of intermingled awe and reverence there emerged magic and thereafter religion.

Those more liberated mystics, who want to know, to become aware of the great infinity through personal experience, are often also *pantheists*. To pantheists such as Spinoza there is an indwelling divine power, an intelligence or order that permeates all nature. Everything is conceived to be of this reality. Pantheist may say that all things are infused with God or some intelligence. Yet, like Spinoza, the pantheist will say that the totality of all things is not God. The real pantheist will say instead that all manifestations of nature are impregnated with this infinite or divine quality, yet no total of such can ever equal it. The reason given is that this Cosmic Cause, or whatever term you may use, is not limited by any number. It is *infinite* and therefore, no finite number can represent its entirety.

As *mystical pantheists*, we as Rosicrucians do not worship any particular object or phenomenon of nature. We seek a *union* with that of which all nature consists, and of which we are *one* of its creations. Through our observation of nature we experience a mystical attunement which causes us to feel that we are embracing the infinite even if but momentarily.

Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake in Rome in 1600 for his views, is an example of a pantheistic mystic. Bruno extolled the idea of the

*The term Supreme Being refers to the Whole, the Absolute, the One of which all is an integral part.*

unity of all expressions of reality: "It is not reasonable to believe that any part of the world is without a soul life, sensation and organic structures. From this infinite all, full of beauty and splendour, from the vast worlds which circle above us to the sparkling dust of the stars beyond, the conclusion is drawn that there are an infinity of creatures, a vast multitude which, in its degree, mirrors forth the splendid wisdom and excellence of the Divine Beauty."

Who can truly separate the finite from the infinite? Where does one begin and the other leave off? If this separateness is not evident, then is not oneness their nature?

*The world is as good as we see it and goodness is only as we value it.*

—Validivar





# The Guest

*The guest residing in each of us is a part of the great Cosmic Soul.*

by Samuel Avital, FRC

**W**E HAVE ALL EXPERIENCED THE wonderful warmth of being a guest in someone's home. Equally, we know the deep satisfaction of having been a host or hostess offering our hospitality to another person. There is a genuine give and take when a visitor is welcomed into the home, an exchange replete with great meaning and significance in all cultures down through the ages.

Consider for a moment your own house, with you as a guest residing within. The house provides you with shelter and warmth and a place from which to operate. In return, you maintain it, keeping it clean and orderly. You, the guest, are actively contributing to the life of the host. In fact, you are the very life within that house.

What about your own body, the "Temple of the Soul?" Is it not also a house, a dwelling place for a very important guest? The house that shelters us, made of stone, brick or wood, is obviously not conscious or aware of our presence within its walls. But we are endowed with the gift of consciousness and self-awareness on both the mundane and spiritual levels, and should be aware of the guest residing within us.

We may sense the presence of a "still small voice" (inner quiet), in Hebrew *kol dernama daka* sometimes referred to as the Inner Self or the Master Within. We may even have begun to develop a relationship with this presence. But are we using the

consciousness we have been given to truly know the Inner Guest?

In Hebrew, the word for guest is *ore'ach*, which also means "visitor, path, the way, the traveller on the path." In Aramaic, the word is *oushpiz* means "visitor" or the "holy or honoured guest."

## Honoured Guest

The idea of the honoured guest has been carried with us since ancient times as part of our human heritage. In the Hebrew tradition there is a saying, "*He who has fed a stranger may have fed an angel.*"

We see an example of this in the Bible, when three guests appear to Abraham and receive from him unquestioning service and assistance. Abraham learns from these "messengers" that he and his wife will have a son, even though they are both old and Sarah had been barren for many years. The story of Abraham symbolises the high stature of the guest as a divine messenger. Surely every guest brings a "message" and should be received with the same reverence that Abraham had for his visitors.

Let us now consider the less obvious meanings of the Hebrew and Aramaic words for "guest," such as "the path," "the way," "the traveller on the path." In the bible, Jesus is quoted as saying, "*I am the Way and the Truth and the Life*" (John 14:6). We know that Jesus and many other great teachers like Moses, Buddha and the prophet Mohammed lived their lives as examples, pointing the way for others to follow. They were also wanderers themselves and



“travellers on the path,” like moving, focal points; spiritual reference points of living paradox.

What then about the Master Within, the “I Am” that dwells in our bodily temple, formed by cellular bricks of light? It too is a guest, a messenger from the Cosmic and deserving of our highest respect. The guest residing in each of us is a part of the great Cosmic Soul and therefore also represents the path or the way. It is by keeping our inner ear tuned to the silent self, our inner eye focused on the invisible guide, that we are directed on our proper course.

### The Master Within

And, like the great avatars whose lives have inspired us, the Master Within is also a traveller. This traveller comes to us from afar, entering the body with the first breath. It carries nothing in the way of material gifts, but brings to us the richness of a knowledge more vast than we can imagine, a knowledge drawn from every corner of the universe.

Now that we begin to recognise our guest, how do we attune with the holy presence within? First, we must learn to be like nature..., ready, grounded, still and silent; for it is in the stillness and silence that the Master Within is revealed, and only to the one who is waiting and ready to receive with an open heart. It may take some time for us to reach this state of receptivity. In preparation, we must keep a watchful eye on all that enters our “house” and all that radiates out from it, so that ours will be a temple worthy of the presence of the Inner Guest.

Each thought that knocks at the door of the mind should be examined and only the purest allowed to enter. Similarly each word we utter should pass through three holy gates: truth, necessity and kindness. Our actions too must be constructive and harmonious so that we may prove ourselves, to ourselves, as deserving of the Master Within. In preparing ourselves for attunement with the Inner Self, we are reminded that the personal guest resides in all other beings as well. There may be many “houses” but only one guest: many bodies, but the same one Soul expressing itself in a myriad of special ways, like the many petals of our beloved rose, or the many rays of the one Sun, the source of light of our solar system.

When two houses, two beings, face one another, they may recognise the same guest looking out through the “windows of the soul.” In this constant reflection, the Inner Self is ever manifesting.

That is why we are instructed in the ancient texts to “welcome everyone with joy;” for “to welcome a fellow man is to welcome the *Shekina* (Divine presence)” says the *Midrash*. In the Jewish tradition, this is called “The Holy Meeting.”

What better encouragement could we hope for, what greater security than to know that the all-embracing Consciousness of the Cosmic is everywhere and in everything? We need only direct the questioning mind to this great fount of wisdom in order to draw from its infinite consciousness the message that we need at any given time.

### Expanding Consciousness

To do this requires that we expand our personal “little self” view to include the Guest residing in all beings and in all things. With a heart that knows how to wait, we gradually extend our boundaries far beyond the physical, mental and emotional definitions of self. Only in this way can we partake of the whole.

But a word of caution from our brethren, the Sufis! “*Don’t make friends with an elephant trainer unless there is space in your living room for an elephant!*” or “*Trust in God, but tie your camel first.*” Fortunately, the Rosicrucian teachings guide us step-by-step through our unfoldment; each phase perfectly designed so we are able to gradually embrace a larger universal view, our consciousness expanding in its own time.

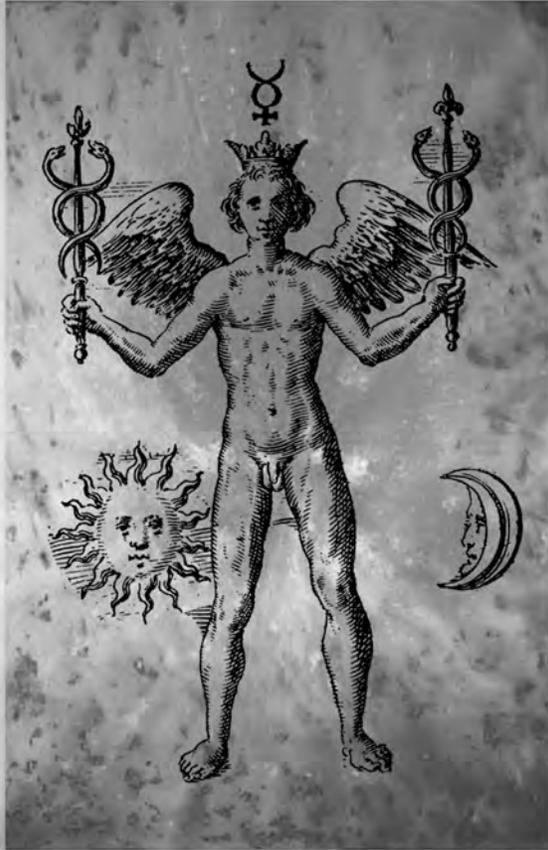
We experience disharmony only when we cut ourselves off from the perfect connectedness of all creation, and this is obvious to the true student. The Guest residing within us and around us is our constant reminder of our rightful place in the cosmic scheme, ever affirming our true sense of belonging and purpose. It is by attuning with our Greater Self, through a proper word and proper act, that all health and harmony are restored.

When we stop to reflect, we see that the Guest is the very life within us, just as we are the life within our material homes of brick, stone and wood. The Guest keeps the eternal flame of Life burning in our house, radiant and resplendent. We behold the same Light shining within every other house. It is the fire of Love, a jewelled lamp in the window of every dwelling to welcome the weary traveller. There is a profound saying: “*If it is dark enough, one candle is plenty.*” May the Light, Life and Love of the Guest guide us on our journey and remind us that our real home is the whole universe, our destination, the infinite.



# THE FIRE WITHIN

by Paul Goodall, FRC



## The alchemical Mercurius.

*The movement of the spirit is  
like that of the flame..., it rises.*

[Louis Claude de Saint Martin (1743-1803)]

**T**HERE IS A HIDDEN AND SYMBOLIC fire within each of us that burns inexorably throughout the process of the evolution of the soul. This fire can never be extinguished because it is a divine and philosophic fire, creative and dynamic, assisting and directing our spiritual progress, our inner alchemy, toward harmonious unity and ultimate assimilation with God.

On the physical plane alchemists of old contained their material fire within an apparatus

known as an *athanor*, a slow burning furnace where metals were incinerated back to their base nature and transmuted to evolve into a purer substance, gold: a metal, by its very nature, considered perfect and able to withstand the test of the fire. In the mundane world it was and still is prized above all others and symbolises power and wealth. And to those that owned it, changes on the physical plane were effected in differing degrees, wryly aping the alchemical process itself.

But this drive toward physical perfection



and its more immediate benefits in life can't simply be equated with its counterpart in the spiritual dimension. While much may be made to align the various stages of alchemical work with spiritual progress, if there is not a sincere and genuine purpose on the part of the operator to correspond and integrate these physical processes with their inner life, then the whole merely amounts to curiosity and a pandering to the outer self. In short, the alchemist must work in parallel with his inner convictions and spiritual tendencies to make his alchemy worth the effort.

This article seeks, albeit briefly, to explore the allegorical nature of fire in its role as a catalyst in the work of inner alchemy and the spiritual development of the soul and how one can embody in ordinary life an awareness of this process.

### An Element of Extremes

Fire is, of course, only one of the four so called *elements* identified by the Greeks; the philosopher, Empedocles (490-430 BCE), to be precise. These archetypal qualities, if you like, are used to describe the world and the universe in a rather different way to the modern chemical elements. The classical elements of earth, water, air and fire are employed to distinguish states or phases of matter and generally are as such, intangible properties existing in and through space and matter.

But by the very fact of our close involvement with it, fire appears to be set apart from the rest. We understand that it is an element of extremes: on the one hand it can be most destructive and

end life prematurely, while on the other, it brings us warmth and comfort, gives us protection and allows us to heat our food, thereby preventing disease and, most importantly, it brings illumination; not just by expelling darkness, but also in the epistemological sense of the word and by stimulating our imagination.

In its esoteric aspect fire is the purifier, the

*In its esoteric aspect fire is the purifier, the cleanser.*

cleanser. It is used in ritual and sacrificial roles and remains as a central symbol on the altar where it represents illumination and knowledge, and the pureness of the soul, ever alight and burning brightly. In this way, for some cultures, cremation is often the preferred manner, over that of physical burial, to ceremonially dispatch the remains of the dead.

### Mercurius

The idea that each stage in the alchemical process is identified with a corresponding level in the individual's spiritual path has, over the centuries, developed into a *spiritual alchemy* existing alongside that of physical alchemy. Fire is a key element in this schema because of its role as the initiator of change, along with its purifying properties.

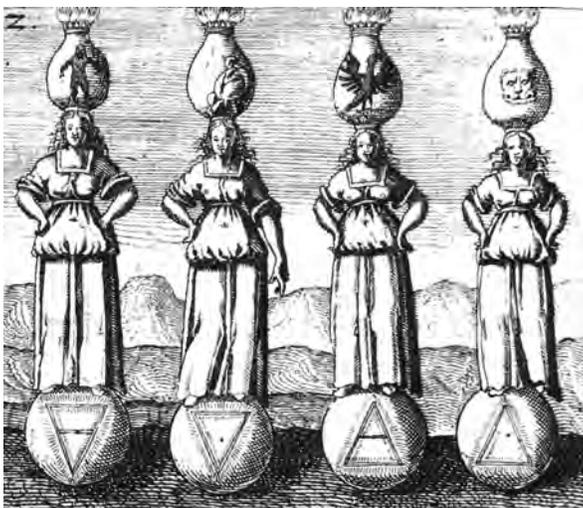
Closely associated with fire, and being the active component of its work, is the alchemical Mercury or Mercurius. This central symbol in alchemy, also known by the equivalent Greek name Hermes, also represents the agent of transmutation. It was often pictured as *aerial spirit* or *soul*, symbolised by clouds or fumes, redolent of fire, although it adopts many guises throughout the different stages of the alchemical process. Mercurius therefore, stands for the whole process of purification where spirit is sublimated or raised to perfection and essentially, among the many diverse descriptions of its role, represents the divine essence at work. As with fire, the volatile Mercurius is dual-natured and ambivalent, and can be both destructive and creative.

### Toward the Fifth Element

*When you have made the quadrangle round, then is all the secret found.*

[George Ripley (d. 1490)]

When working with inner spiritual alchemy, a reconciling of the four elements is put into



The elements represented by Mylius in his *Philosophia Reformata* (1622).



effect which culminates in a harmonious and perfect unity. The result of this combination of the elements leads to the manifestation of a fifth element, commonly known as the *quintessence* or sometimes *aether*. The alchemical writer Johann Mylius (c.1583-1642) in his *Philosophia Reformata* (1622) described this element as “a mixture of all the elements and a reduction of them to one pure

***The combination of the elements leads to the manifestation of a fifth, commonly known as the quintessence.***

*substance.*” The work itself is a hidden one and complementary to the spiritual development of the individual. The process involved is known as the *opus circulatorium* or “rotation of the elements.”

Heat is the primary agent of this circulation, combining the elements in a special way according to their qualities of coldness and dryness, heat and moisture. Since matter can't have contradictory qualities so the quintessence must be an immaterial pure spirit, and is diagrammatically placed at the centre. This is the goal of the process.

A symbol that conveys this idea is that of the monad, typically seen as a point in the centre of a circle. Another popular representation is the *ouroborus*, where we see a dragon or serpent swallowing its own tail before collapsing into a single monadic point. But perhaps the best example of the rotation of the elements, conveyed by a turning wheel, known as the “philosophical wheel.” In another alchemical metaphor the process is described as the transformation of the square (the four elements) into the circle (the quintessence).

### Toward the Philosopher's Stone

*Transmute yourselves from dead stones into living philosophical stones.*  
[Gerhardt Dorn (1530-1584)]

To reiterate, the metaphysical fire burning within us is the principal agent by which the rotation of the elements is driven. The work is a continuous one that is repeated many times to ensure that we rid ourselves of the dross that has accumulated within. In alchemical terms this is known as *solve et coagula* (dissolve and coagulate) or separation and union.

A better explanation is found in yet another term for the quintessence, the *azoth*, the mercurial water or solvent that purges the unclean matter or dross mentioned above. Paracelsus calls it the

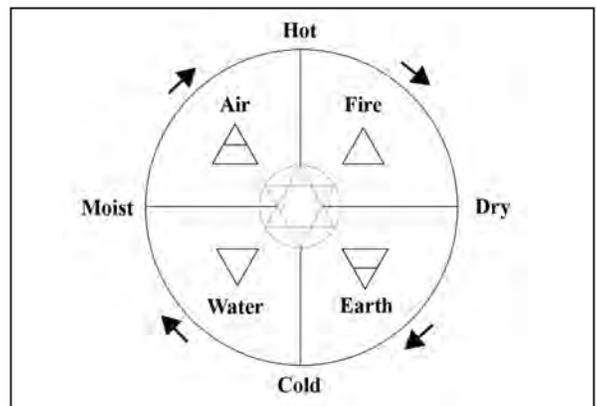
“universal medicine” that can cure the disease of man. Essentially, we recognise our faults and errors and transmute them into acts of goodwill which dissolve the spots and stains (in alchemical terminology) of self-will. This is achieved through the increasing manifestation of pure love that is the result of our spiritual progress in this manner.

An alternative name for the quintessence and popularised over recent centuries, is that of the *philosopher's stone*. Much has been said or written concerning its nature but essentially it possesses the power to perfect imperfection. Just as at the physical level the quintessence or philosopher's stone can transmute base metals into pure gold through the action of fire, so too can it transform the individual into an illumined philosopher. In the Rosicrucian Order this is referred to as the *Mastery of Self*.

### A Chemical Wedding

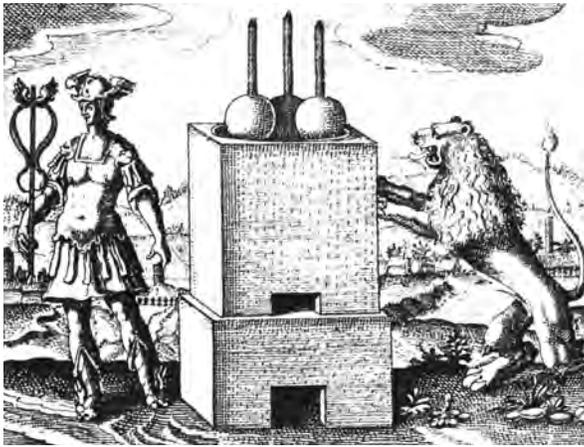
A further aspect of our inner work, and an important one in alchemy, concerns the reconciliation of the active and passive components of our nature. These are the *male* (sulphur) and *female* (mercury) expressions that have to be unified in the production of the philosopher's stone. This is easier to understand when we consider how these two aspects of our being correspond to the four elements: fire and air relate to the male component and water and earth align themselves with that of the female.

Keeping the rotation of the elements in mind then, we can see how this “chemical wedding” of opposites operates, namely, sun and moon, and king and queen. Parallel to the work of bringing together the elements, there is a complementary process going on that unites the male and female energies



*Diagram of the rotation of the elements with the quintessence portrayed at the centre.*





*Mercurius and the creative fire represented by the lion, flank the athanor within which the alchemical work is undertaken.*

into a perfect integration. In alchemical terminology this is the *rebis* or *hermaphrodite*.

### The Prima Materia

We can see more clearly the internal heat at work if we consider the human body metaphorically as the alchemical furnace or *athanor* (Arabic: *at-tannûr* meaning "oven") that houses the *prima materia*: the soul. In alchemy this last term means "first matter" for it describes the pure substance from which the universe was created before the imprinting of the "forms of all things" in the process of creation.

The soul is acted upon by the quintessence that is the result of the circulation of the elements and the unification of the sexual polarities, mirroring the way that the physical alchemist brings about the creation of gold by using the philosopher's stone, in the form of powder or tincture, upon the base metal (*prima materia*). In physical alchemy this final operation is known as *projection*.

### Toward Practical Work

The foregoing has dwelt lightly on alchemical theory, presenting a simplified overview of the *opus alchymicum*; so what about bringing this work to fruition within oneself?

Firstly, it should be understood that the work of inner alchemy is long and arduous, and one that is principally accomplished on the plane of the imagination (when used effectively). The medieval physician and alchemist Arnold de Villa Nova (c.1240-1310) recommends the imagination as a tool: "Follow it with the Instance of Labour, but first exercise yourself in a diuturnity [sic] of Intense Imagination: for

so you may find the complete Elixir; but without that never at all." It is, of course, a prerequisite to have a grasp of the theory in order to devise ways of directing the imagination with which to impress the subconscious.

In everyday life, one could try being consciously aware of the active and passive qualities of the elements in the fiery work of the *opus circulatorium* discussed above and use this scenario as a basis for one's meditations where the imagination can come into full play. Zosimos of Panopolis (3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century CE Greek alchemist) wrote that in order to "obtain the proper, authentic, and natural tinctures" one must accomplish this by "plunging into meditation." The combination of a cycle of four-fold breathing and simultaneous attribution of the elements to its four phases, is a good exercise for the imagination to integrate these intangible qualities whilst maintaining our awareness of the rotation of the elements within; the goal being to internally synthesise the elements into a fifth one, the quintessence.

### Conclusion

It is said that the mastery of the element of fire gives one the ability to express divine love and if we understand alchemy as being the art of fire, then the *raison d'être* of our inner alchemy becomes clear. The Italian humanist John Pontanus (1426-1503) states that the inner fire is "found by deepe and profound Meditation only, and then it may be gathered out of Bookes and not before." He is instructing the reader to rely on his inner awareness to uncover the secrets of self-mastery before resorting to books written by, and housing the opinions and thoughts of, others.

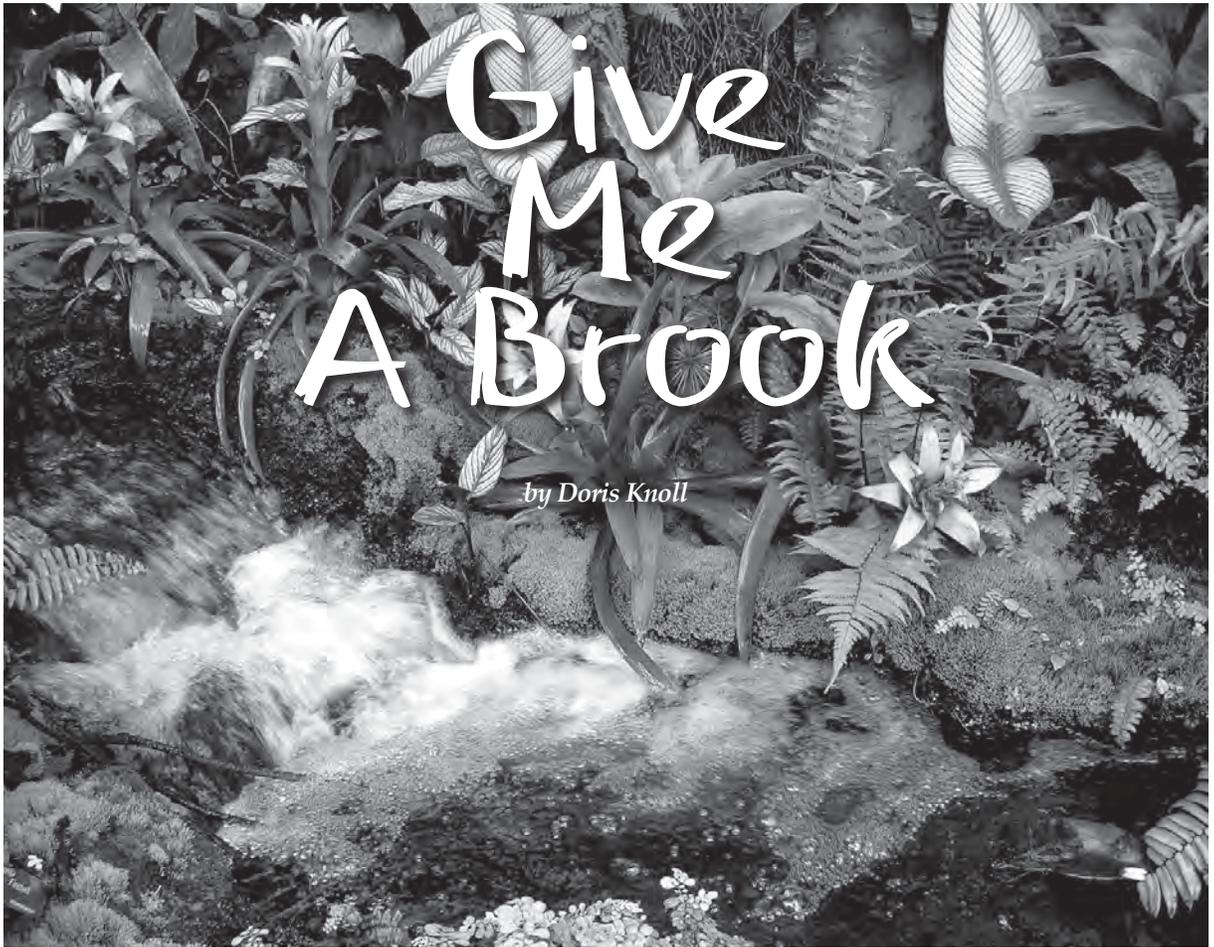
Members of the Rosicrucian Order are at once placed at an advantage in this work, for much emphasis is placed on seeking and developing the self in this way and coming to an understanding of one's relationship to the universe and the divine source from which we originated.

In closing, it seems almost unnecessary to state that with sincere and disciplined effort there will be evident signs in one's outward nature and behaviour that will become ever more noticeable as it reflects the inner changes being developed and experienced through working with the fire within.

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# Give Me A Brook

*by Doris Knoll*



**BROOK SPARKS THE IMAGINATION.**

When looking at its waters, I often wonder where it comes from and where it ends up. I'd like to be a drifting leaf and set sail for the sights and experiences that must be ahead as the brook runs on its way.

How old are you, brook? How did you come to be the way you are? Two hundred years from now, who will be standing here where I now stand? How much will you have changed? Will you still be rushing merrily along as you do now? The brook is a marvellous accompaniment to meditating, thinking through a problem or resolving a conflict. My mind clears of trivia and reaches back to re-examine life's fundamentals.

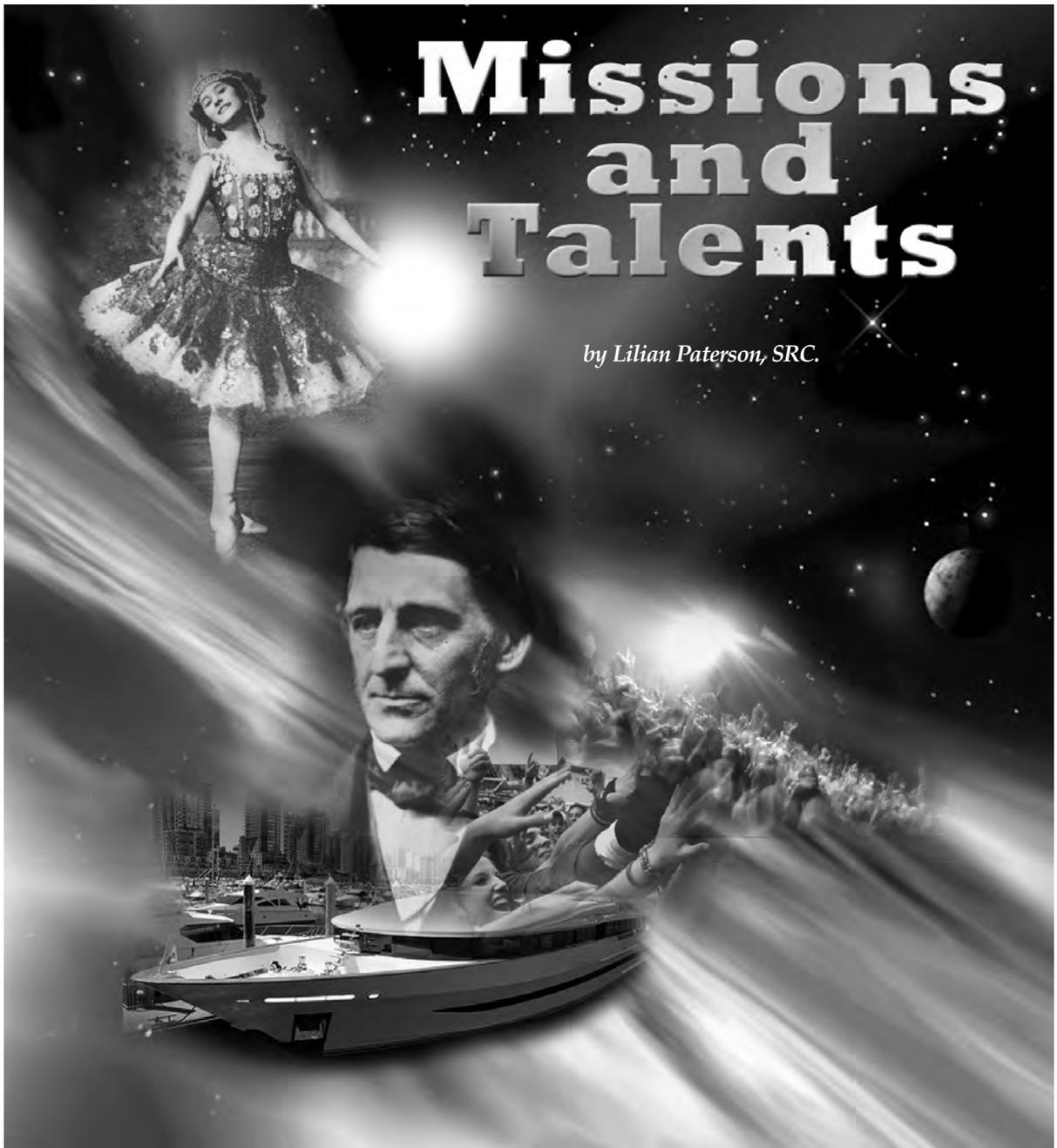
Staring into the brook heightens my awareness of how we separate ourselves so deliberately from the natural bent of our bodies and spirit. How complicated our lives are, how hectic our comings and goings, how cluttered our homes become as we accumulate things and leave them to dust and repair as we move from here to there. Why do we shove the important things

that make life meaningful to the fringes of concern? Why do we waste precious time so compulsively? Why do we make ourselves so busy?

The obvious solution is nurturing a closer relationship with nature. The older I grow, the more intense is my desire to understand nature. I want to know nature's language, read its messages, learn how to live as an integral part of it. And then, isn't it just possible that I shall learn more about myself and what God wants of me in this world? Is it too ambitious an undertaking? Have I travelled the concrete paths too long? Surely my interest is at least a small encouragement to try? My brook is the perfect place to begin.

For all the reading I do, for all my predilection for how-to books on everything from saving time to solving problems, this learning must be done by solving problems, by watching and paying close attention. So, maybe if I listen quietly on the brook's bank and observe with all the concentration I can muster, a beginning will have been made. And then, who knows what wonders may reveal themselves?





# Missions and Talents

*by Lilian Paterson, SRC.*

**W**E ENTER THE WORLD THROUGH the miracle of birth, live a short while here on Earth, and then experience the mystery of transition. Many of us waste our allotted time in self-indulgence, in seeking praise and in striving for power and riches. The thoughtful, spiritually aspiring ones among us ask: "Why am I here? What can I do to justify my existence? What talents can I put to use? What is my mission in life?"

- What is talent? It is a special natural aptitude or ability.
- What is a mission? It is a divinely ordained work.

We can fill all the waking hours with activities and feel exhausted but unfulfilled at the end of the day. Such a day can be considered as lost, never to be regained, if we have not devoted at least a part of it to our abilities or to our purpose in life. The time arrives in the life of every one



of us when we must take stock, and then devote ourselves to the attainment of spiritual growth on higher levels. And as long as we work in harmony with the Cosmic and obey the laws of the universe, we will be helped.

There are as many missions as there are fields of endeavour. The Rosicrucian teachings touch upon all knowledge: the arts, sciences, comparative religions, various philosophies and healing. Rosicrucians can study and specialise in the fields to which they are attracted according to their talents, and can apply their knowledge and experience in the service to the Order and mankind.

Rosicrucians come from all walks of life and are of different ages and temperaments. From many experiences in the past we have learned numerous lessons, and there are still many more lessons to be learned. Yet, what Rosicrucians have in common forges a mighty bond: the desire to grow spiritually and to reach ultimate mastership, however distant it may be. The Path stretches out ahead. At times it is a steep path, but we press onward and upward, setting our gaze on the heights above us.

Many of us were guided to the Order because we were hungry for enlightenment and eager to find real meaning in life. We progress through study, meditation and the conscientious performance of experiments. By learning to listen, the wisdom of the divine inner self is imparted and we become aware of our talents and life's work.

What are our talents and our missions? We have all heard the adage: "Seek and you will find!" Where there is desire, there exists corresponding ability, though it may be latent. The human mind is part of the system and processes of the Cosmic. When we turn inward in meditation, the answer will come. In meditation we find our lost connection with the Creator. The plan for humanity is more beautiful than our loftiest dreams.

### **True Expression**

Fortunate is the one who can earn his daily bread doing what he loves. When the outer pattern of our objective self is in harmony with the Master Within, "miracles" can take place. True expression of the self within is necessary for mental and physical health. Constant anxiety eliminates any chance of happiness. If joy has left you, how can you be aware of the beauty of the moon and the stars? If you keep your eyes fixed on the dust at your feet, how can you see the glory overhead?

Sometimes we incur opposition and criticism from the outer world. In that case we are strengthened by keeping to our principles and not compromising ourselves. By allowing others to choose for us and dictate to us, we may consent with a degree of unwillingness and resentment,

*True expression of the self within is necessary for mental and physical health.*

and then no one profits, for whatever is done grudgingly cannot bear fruit.

The basis of the mystical approach to life, the foundation of everyday practice of someone who lives the life of obedience to esoteric law is the reversal of most usual ways of thinking, speaking and doing. We must dare to be different and true to our inner self, yet we must also feel perfect tolerance of other's ways. Each stage of our inner growth has given us a higher concept of what is right, resulting in a higher ideal. The light of awakened consciousness illuminates the road and makes the ideal a point to be worked toward and ultimately attained.

The way will open up before us, obstacles will be pushed aside. Every sound we hear, every person we meet, every book we read, every mission we accomplish will be revealed to us in some way, and the inner urge will be ever-present until the work is completed and valuable lessons learned.

### **The Role of Genius**

Genius always heeds the voice of the inner self and offers itself as a willing channel for divine manifestation. Ralph Waldo Emerson startled New England when he resigned his pastorate and devoted the rest of his life to travel, lecturing and writing, stressing always strong reliance on the inner spirit and its freedom. Had he not found his own niche and talents, the world would have lost a literary genius.

The Serbian-American scientist Nikola Tesla forsook the joys of love and family and lived for his experiments and inventions. He conceived the alternating current method that brought about new uses for electricity. The idea came to him in a flash one day during his youth while he was admiring a sunset. His greatest achievement was the discovery of the rotating magnetic field: the fundamental elements of the alternating



current which could effectively produce and send electricity over miles of wire.

Anna Pavlova, the Russian ballerina, knew at the age of eight what her mission in life would be when she attended a performance of the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* set to Tchaikovsky's music. She was frail but headstrong. She knew that God meant her to express beauty through dance, and thus she instilled a love of ballet in those who came to see her, and contributed greatly to the beauty in the lives of all of them.

Michelangelo, the famous artist of the Italian Renaissance, followed no school; his art was original. He attuned directly with the Cosmic, from which he drew his creativity and masterpieces. Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1499) raised him to the rank of Italy's greatest sculptor. He decorated the Sistine Chapel in Rome, and the Medici Chapel ranks as his architectural and sculptural masterpiece. Michelangelo was a willing channel for the overpowering urge of work and creation all of his life.

These are just a few examples of great minds who were cosmically inspired, who used and developed their talents, and who fulfilled their missions in life.

### Humility and a Life of Caring

Not everyone, however, can occupy centre stage. Not everyone can attain fame, power and glory. There are other tasks and missions more humble, yet just as important in the cosmic scheme of things. Worthwhile, purposeful living is the key to the life of the mystic. Humble service performed with love and dedication is always blessed. In the eyes of the Cosmic, there is no difference between the street-cleaner, the dishwasher, the scientist or the doctor. Knowing this, we must all find our own place in

*The all-important thing is to care; this means loving and helping one another.*

life. We must use our time in such a way that at the end of life, we will have something constructive to show for the time spent on Earth.

Just as the different instruments of an orchestra combine to produce perfect harmony,

so do we who wish to make life meaningful play our own parts to the best of our ability to create a harmonious whole.

The all-important thing is to care; this means loving and helping one another. When we choose a life of caring, we become a part of the flow of life and energy that has no beginning and no end. We are no longer separate but become an involved, integrated member of the human race.

### Service

We cannot become great until we give ourselves to something greater than ourselves. The inner urge to serve is sacred and must not be disregarded or suppressed. We must spread light and love where there is ignorance, hatred or darkness. We must all become involved

in some way, whether at home, at work or in a Rosicrucian group. By serving others, we help ourselves. What we are and what we do flows out and helps to determine what others shall be.

We must extend a friendly hand to those on the Path, and open doors to new understanding for them. We can never know how far-reaching our words or actions can be to those striving to better themselves. At times, all we have to do is to listen with a loving heart. Then we can look with compassion upon our troubled friend and say: "I know, I understand, I was there."

Our journey on the path of spiritual evolution will be smoother and present fewer obstacles if we keep our hearts and minds free from resentment, intolerance and impatience. We must open our beings to the divine inflow so that it can work freely through us. We reach out to others as they reach out to us, and in the give and take, there is enrichment for both sides.

It is our duty and privilege as Rosicrucians to lift up the vibrations of our environment with positive thoughts and emotions. We experience the joy of fellowship as we love and serve wherever we are needed. Then, with the mission accomplished, and with the utmost joy, gratitude and Peace Profound, we can say: "This is why I was born. This is why I came into the world."



*Michelangelo's Pietà*



# Communicating From Your Higher Self

by Valerie Peters



**I**T IS IMPORTANT TO BE WARY OF THE tendency to feel that you're better than anyone else, just because you belong to a particular social or economic group, or for that matter to a particular esoteric organisation. Unchecked, this can lead to fanaticism, and isolate you from learning from the rest of humanity.

I have some friends who live good lives but do not belong to any religions, formal groups or special mystical organisations. If I was to compare them, I would say they are more evolved than I am. They don't follow any particular doctrine, but they live in a manner which, in time, I hope to master through the teachings I follow.

Everyone is a traveller on the path, whether



they realise it or not. God speaks through every mouth, even if we personally don't care for the tone of the speaker's voice! Realising this, we must take care to humble ourselves before some external event forces humility upon us.

### Learn to be Loving

If you want to learn to be loving, you might ask yourself, "What can I do to make it easier for another person to relate to me?" Trying to relate within someone else's framework is not manipulation, but rather, consideration and common sense. If someone acts extremely formally and you ignore his sense of etiquette, whose fault is it if you weren't understood?

Try to give a little of yourself every day, not to score points for some future day of reckoning, but just to be a better, more loving person. If you do it

*Everyone is a traveller on the path, whether they realise it or not.*

for any other reason, you may still have something to learn, or as some might put it, you will have some karma to work out.

If you find it difficult to reach out and be with others, it may help to remember that they are probably just as nervous as you are when it comes to making the first move in getting to know someone new. We're all self-conscious at times. But to be conscious of only ourselves can lead to a selfish attitude. It's not wrong to be concerned with yourself, but by thinking only of yourself, how can someone else feel comfortable with you? How can they feel that you mean them no harm and have

their best interests at heart, if all they can see is your preoccupation with your own needs and fears?

If you reach out to someone else in a friendly manner and are met with negativity, perhaps you can take comfort in knowing that you were communicating from the highest part of yourself. Maybe your kindness or smile won't be returned, but perhaps it will be passed on to someone else who has a greater need of it than you. If someone is kind to you but because you are in a bad mood, you rebuff them, don't be too hard on yourself. Just try to do better next time.

### Soul Mate

At times we look for the perfect mate or the perfect friend. However, as we aren't perfect ourselves, there is a good chance we won't find this perfect person. Acceptance of who we are, even though the tendency to deny it is compelling, is the first step to perfection.

Hard work to change these painful flaws is the next step. Perhaps, changing what we can, but also accepting ourselves as we are, will help us to help someone else to become that perfect someone for whom we are searching. These efforts are difficult and seem so small in comparison to the great work others have accomplished. Yet we may eventually realise that our efforts toward this goal are the greatest work we can do.

Perhaps, because of these efforts, we will one day find there is less need for formal teachings. Each person will be in touch with the God Within, and teachings will be heard whenever humanity converses. There will be no comparing, no judging, just ecstatic joy in being.

## The Moment

*The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him - that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.*

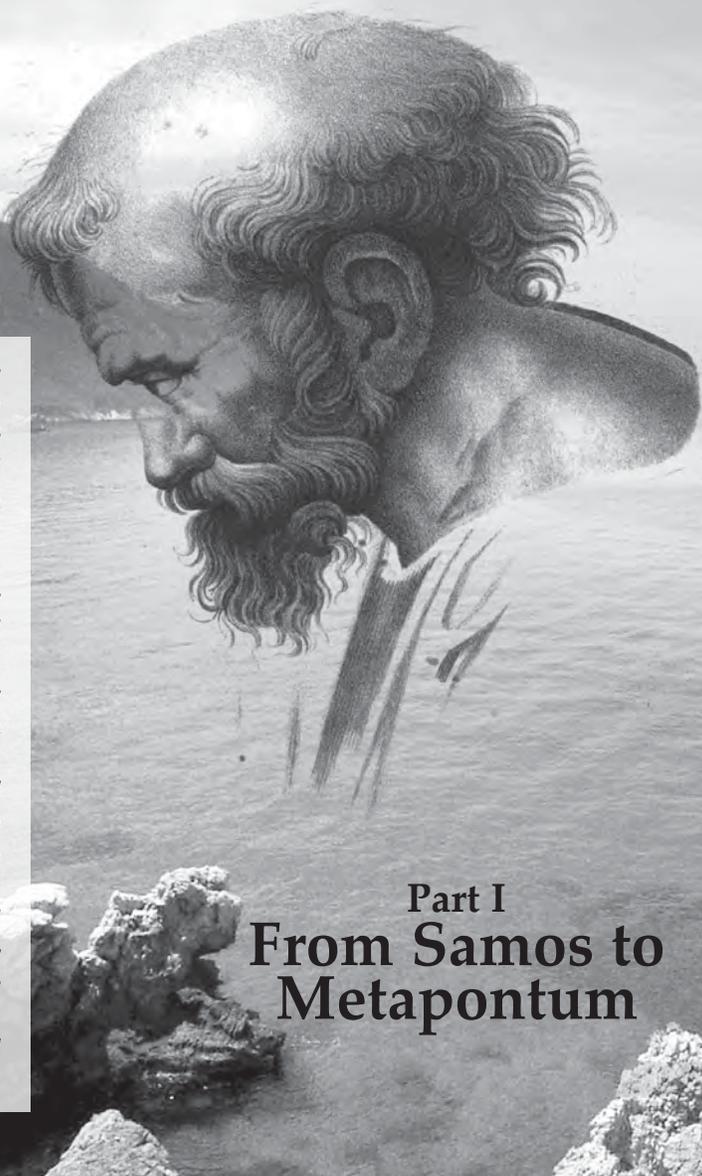
Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)



# PYTHAGORAS THE TEACHER

by Mary Jones, SRC

*The philosophers of ancient Greece were the first documented enquirers into the workings of the world and how things worked. They were sceptical about religious explanations for natural phenomena and sought explanations through personal experience and deep reflection. Of course, after some two and a half thousand years, it can be difficult to understand the terminology they used in its original meaning. For that, you need to get into the minds of those distant philosophers and also understand the times in which they lived. This fascinating though academic approach is sadly beyond the scope of this series of articles about Pythagoras, one of the most renowned philosophers of the ancient world. More famous nowadays for his mathematical theorem, this series of five articles will, I hope, give you an insight into a philosophy that shaped the world as we know it today. Pythagoras was one of the shining lights of ancient Greek thought, whose teachings became the foundation of modern philosophical thought and who has influenced Rosicrucian teachings to this day.*



## Part I From Samos to Metapontum

**I**N THE AEGEAN SEA, A SHORT distance from the Ionian coast of Asia Minor, what is today Anatolia or Asiatic Turkey, there is a remarkably fertile island called Samos. In classical antiquity the island was a centre of Ionian culture and luxury, renowned for its Samian wines and red pottery, called "Samian ware" by the Romans.

At the time of the great Hellenic migrations,

it received an Ionian population which traced its origin to Epidaurus in the Argolis, not far from ancient Mycenae, the capital of the Mycenaean civilisation and home to Agamemnon of Homer's *Iliad*. Samos became one of the 12 members of the Ionian League. By the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE it had become one of the leading commercial centres of the Greek world. The early prosperity of the Samians seems largely due to the island's position





*Ancient Greece and Ionia*

near trade-routes which facilitated the importation of textiles from the interior of Asia Minor and the north-south shipping routes. It boasted a flourishing economy based on wool and metalworking. But the Samians also developed an extensive overseas commerce. They helped to open up trade with the Black Sea cities and with Pharaonic Egypt, and were credited with having been the first Greeks to reach the Straits of Gibraltar.

About 535 BCE, when the existing oligarchy was overturned by the tyrant Polykrates, Samos reached the height of its prosperity. Its navy not only protected it from invasion, but ruled supreme in Aegean waters. The city was beautified with public works, and its schools of sculptors, metal-workers and engineers achieved high repute. It had a famous sanctuary of Hera called the *Heraion*, which today is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Early Life

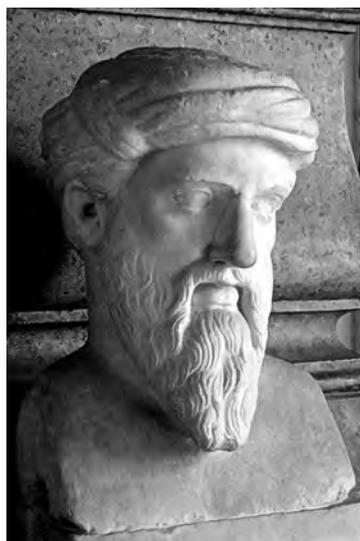
Pythagoras was born in 580 or 572 BCE into a wealthy family. His father was Mnesarchos, a gem engraver and merchant of precious goods from Tyre and his mother was Pythais of a high born Samian family. The story is told how Mnesarchos, on a business trip to Delphi, with his wife who was pregnant but didn't know it, consulted the Pythian oracle about

his forthcoming voyage to Syria. The oracle replied that his voyage would be profitable and that his wife was already pregnant and would give birth to a child who would "surpass all others in beauty and wisdom." This child would be of the greatest benefit to the human race in all aspects of life. When the child was born, they named him Pythagoras, meaning "speaking like the Pythia."

Pythagoras came to maturity just as the earliest Greek science or natural philosophy was developing in the nearby city of Miletus, and so naturally he was influenced by Milesian cosmology. During his lifetime, education was considered to be a form of spiritual initiation and therefore, from the age of five, he was introduced to all the fields of knowledge. Coming from a wealthy family, he was sent to study under some great Masters such as: the poet and musician Hermodamas of Samos; the philosophers Anaximander of Miletus and Bias of Priene; Pherekydes of Syros, one of the Seven Sages of Greece who taught the immortality of the soul; and Thales of Miletus, that great depository of ancient wisdom who recommended

*Education was considered to be a form of spiritual initiation.*

that Pythagoras travel to Egypt, the cradle of secret knowledge. At that time Egypt was ruled by Pharaoh Amasis of the Saite or 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the last great ruler of Egypt before the Persian conquest. Amasis encouraged many Greeks to come to his land and be instructed in its ancient wisdom.



*Pythagoras of Samos (c.580-500BCE).*

### World Traveller

Taking Thales' advice, Pythagoras travelled to Egypt, learning ancient Egyptian and spending 22 years as a neophyte and initiate in the great temples at Heliopolis, Memphis and Thebes, the main centres of learning, where he was initiated into the secrets of mathematics, geometry, astronomy and astrology. He was also initiated into the knowledge of correspondences and symbolism as well as the rituals of those institutions, which were designed to expand the consciousness.

In Egypt Pythagoras was captured and taken to Babylon by the soldiers of Cambyses II, the King





*Pythagoras learned much on his many travels including the doctrine of reincarnation in which he came to firmly believe.*

of Persia. Once in Babylon, he was mysteriously freed and this gave him the opportunity to learn the secrets of the Magi, which in turn opened the gates of Chaldean science to him. From there, he travelled to Asia Minor where the mysteries of various temples were revealed to him. It is said that he travelled to Sidon in Phoenicia, as well as Mesopotamia and even as far as India, where he learned the secret Vedic teachings and about the doctrine of reincarnation, in which he came to believe firmly. In this way he learned that there are many paths, but only one leads to the Truth. Finally, he possessed the key to knowledge.

After half a lifetime of travels to sacred sites, he then decided to return to Samos, intending to continue what he now considered as his mission. Samos however was ruled by the autocrat

*On his travels he learned the secret Vedic teachings and about the doctrine of reincarnation.*

Polykrates (530-538 BCE), an ally of the Persians who had brutally suppressed the people's rights. Pythagoras, not able to stomach the tyranny, and unable to find students to instruct, went to consult the Pythian oracle of Delphi. He left under the protection of Apollo, and in accordance with the response of the Pythia, about 530 BCE he landed in Kroton (Κρότων) in Magna Graecia.

### **Magna Graecia**

Magna Graecia (or Greater Greece in Latin) was the name the Romans gave to the Greek settlements

along the coast of southern Italy and Sicily because of the dense numbers of Greeks living there. These cities left a lasting imprint of Greek culture that influenced the Etruscan and later the Roman civilisations.

According to Strabo, Heraclides Ponticus, Antiochus of Syracuse, the sophist Zenobius and Diodorus Siculus, the Greek colony of Kroton was six miles from the Lakinian promontory (the current Capo Colonna). Like Samos it had a temple of Hera. It lies in the modern Italian province of Crotona in the region of Calabria. This was the ancient territory of the Iapyges, an Illyrian-speaking tribe whose language is tentatively distantly related to Albanian.

Kroton was a large city founded in 708 BCE after the Delphic oracle instructed some Achaean colonists led by Myskellos to settle there. The story was told that the founders of Kroton and Sybaris both consulted the oracle at Delphi at the same time and were given the choice of wealth or health; Archias the founder of Sybaris chose wealth, while Myskellos chose health.

Kroton had a small harbour, but it was only a port of call and not a centre of commerce. Behind the city were the Sila mountains, cutting it off from the interior. The slopes and foothills were extensive and fertile. The city was famous for its doctors and athletes. The school of philosophy that Pythagoras founded there played an important role in the political affairs of southern Italy for the next two or three generations.

About the time Pythagoras arrived, Kroton was defeated by the city of Locri at the River Sagras. But its fortunes changed and in 510 BCE, Kroton defeated and destroyed its rich and luxurious neighbour to the north, Sybaris. From then until about 450 BCE, Kroton seems to have been the dominant city in the region and historians credited Pythagoras and his moral training for the military revival of Kroton.

### **Pythagorean Community**

After his arrival, Pythagoras introduced himself to the people of the city by delivering several discourses containing some basic concepts of his philosophy. His presence was that of a free man; tall and graceful in speech and gesture. He made a great impression on the Krotonians and showed





Map of Magna Graecia in southern Italy

himself to be not merely a moral reformer but a mystical philosopher whose insights into human relations could bring about a society harmonious in itself and with the gods.

With Pythagoras and his community directing affairs, Kroton became the most important power in southern Italy. It had brilliant athletic successes at the Olympic Games and a flourishing medical school. At this period, the south Italian Greek cities were renowned as leaders of Greek thought and culture. In material culture they rivalled other Greek cities like Athens and Corinth. This was no provincial backwater but a fully developed part of the ancient Greek world.

Pythagoras especially stressed how the gods were to be propitiated with sacred ritual. Among other things, he emphasised that you should wear white in a temple, that you should use wood and sea water rather than animals in sacrifice, and that you should pour libations to Zeus before eating. In

order to create a harmonious society the philosopher also defined what should be considered proper or ethical behaviour between the sexes, and between children and their elders.

He stated that the young should respect their parents and have a love of knowledge. He believed that the Universe as a whole was a living creature, being a single, living, eternal and divine entity. He taught that human beings were mortal, but that the soul was not: it was a fragment or spark of the divine soul, cut off and imprisoned in a mortal body. Man's aim in life he said was to become pure spirit, and thus rejoin the universal spirit to which he essentially belonged. Until the soul could purify itself completely, it must undergo a series of transmigrations, exchanging one body for another. Interestingly, these were also the views of the Cathars of southern France some 1500 years later.

His religion was a kind of pantheism. He was also the first to coin the term *Kosmos* (Κοσμος) a word that combines the notions of order, fitness and beauty, an ordered whole. Each one of us is a *Kosmos* in miniature. The philosopher who studies the *Kosmos* becomes *kosmios*, orderly, in his or her own soul.

### The Pythagorean Tradition

The people of Kroton were inspired by Pythagoras' lofty, beautiful sentiments, and impressed by his noble bearing, helped him to build a school on the outskirts of town. Pythagoras was the first to use the term "philosopher" (lover of wisdom) and gained many followers. But his school was more than just a place of learning; it was a community, a fraternity, a way of life and a sort of scientific

*He showed himself to be a mystical philosopher whose insights into human relations could incite social harmony.*

research establishment. It was open to both men and women at a time when women were very much regarded as second class citizens. He also taught the doctrine of rebirth or transmigration.

One group of students, approximately 600 in number, lived in a communal fashion in the school. This inner circle of followers or initiates was called *mathematikoi* (Students). They lived in the community, had no possessions and were vegetarians. A second group of 2,000, the *akousmatikoi* (Hearers), were family members who lived in their



own homes, and came to the school during the day. Both groups took lessons in the *Homakoeion*, a large common auditorium, where Pythagoras conducted his teaching while seated behind a curtain or *vela* (whence the English “veil”).

The Hearers were not allowed to see him. It was thought that the sight of the master would distract too much from his words. The Students however, sat on the same side of the curtain as Pythagoras, and were initiated further into the mysteries that their master had learned from the priests of the East. The Students were not given these truths freely and had to prove to Pythagoras that they had an uprightness and beauty of character, and that they could keep secret the truths revealed to them. Thus they were obliged to take vows of silence, usually lasting five years, before they would even be considered for further entry into the mysteries. As his teachings spread, Pythagorean Synedria or meeting places were built in most cities of Magna Graecia.

### The Later Years

Pythagoras’s community at Kroton was not unaffected by political events despite his desire to stay out of politics. Pythagoras went to Delos, also sacred to Apollo, in 513 BCE to nurse his old teacher Pherekydes who was dying. He remained there for a few months until the death of his friend and teacher and then returned to Kroton which in 510 BCE attacked and defeated its neighbour the elegant and sophisticated Sybaris and there are suggestions that the Pythagoreans became involved in the dispute.

Then around 508 BCE the Pythagorean community at Kroton was attacked by Kylon, a noble from Kroton itself, who seems to have been the Krotoniate governor of Sybaris and who had applied to join the Pythagoreans, but had been refused admittance because of his character defects. He gathered around himself some disaffected democrats and others who resented the power and influence of the Pythagorean community.

The members of the Pythagorean community were temporarily expelled and Pythagoras, his wife and children escaped to the city of Metapontum, where most authors say he died, some claiming

that, in sorrow, he committed suicide by starvation because of the attack on his community. Some years after his death, the Pythagoreans were allowed to return to Kroton and rebuild their school.

*Amongst these was one in things sublimest skilled,  
His mind with all the wealth of learning filled.  
Whatever sages did invent, he sought;  
And whilst his thoughts were on this work intent,  
All things existent, easily he viewed,  
Through ten or twenty ages making search.  
-- Empedocles.*

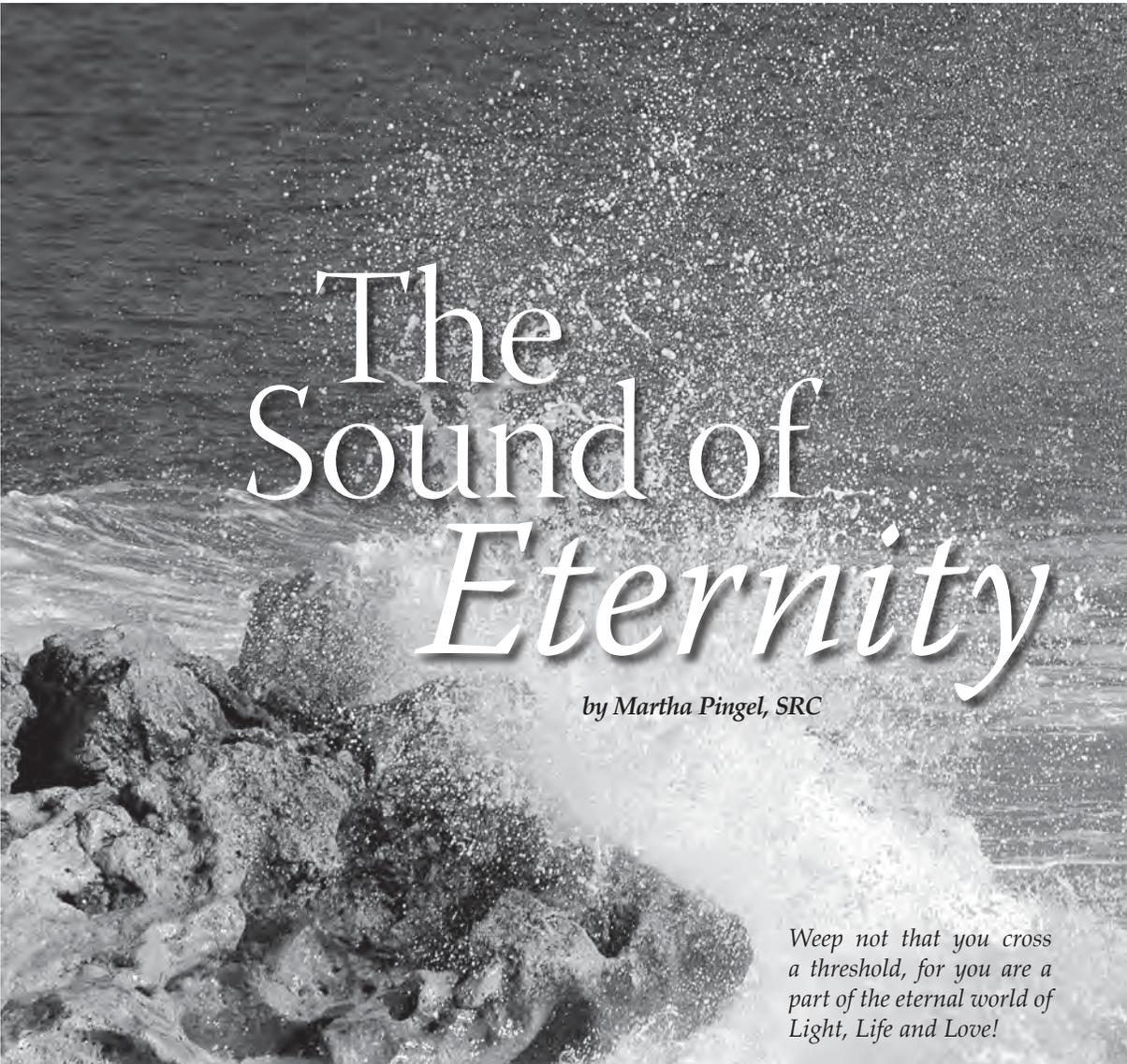
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*Pythagoras conducted his teaching while seated behind a curtain or vela (whence the English “veil”). The Hearers were not allowed to see him. It was thought that the sight of the master would distract too much from his words. (Detail from the School of Athens by Sanzio Raffaello 1483-1520)*





# The Sound of *Eternity*

by Martha Pingel, SRC

*Weep not that you cross  
a threshold, for you are a  
part of the eternal world of  
Light, Life and Love!*

**O**NCE, 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 quiet of the mountains, I hear the same soft message in the whispering of the wind in the pines. Now it is the ebb and flow of the mists, which arrive gently and slowly over the snow-capped peaks and down into the valleys. Or in the hot desert wind that moves steadily toward the plains, never ceasing its faint humming as it travels over the land.

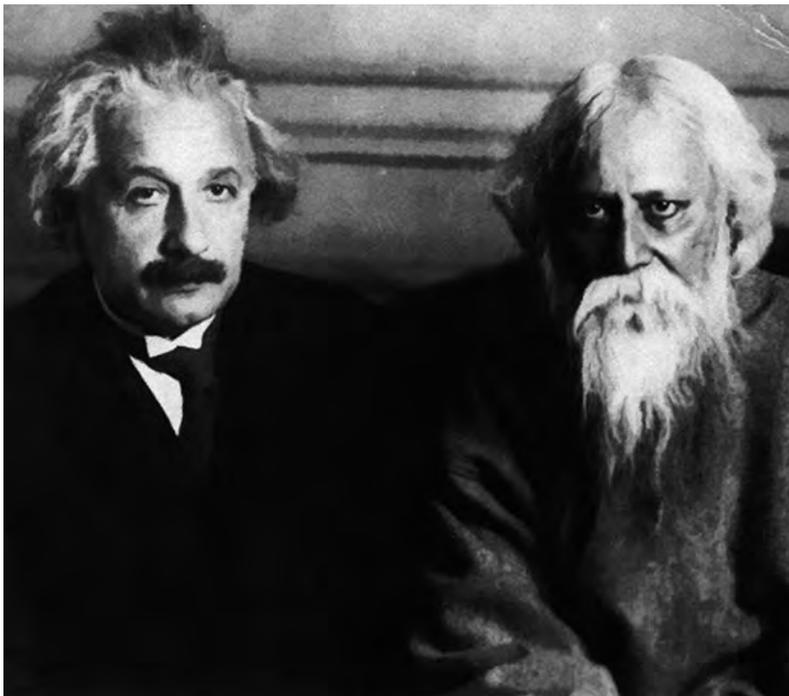
Trees in the forest may fall, summer birds may come and go, friends may vanish and all things change before our eyes. But always there is the steady sound of eternity, whether whispered in the wind or shouted in the waves, or seen in the message of flowers, birds, trees, rocks and rivers. Life and death 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.

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 Light, Life and Love everlasting.



# Causality

## A Discussion



*The Nobel Laureates Professor Albert Einstein (1921) and Sir Rabindranath Tagore (1913) met at Einstein's Berlin residence on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1930, as photographed. The following conversation elegantly demonstrates how these two great men used the language of music, as a metaphor, to forge common ground between science & spirituality.*

TAGORE: I was discussing with Dr Mendel (mutual friend) today the new mathematical discoveries which tell us that in the realm of infinitesimal atoms, chance has its play; the drama of existence is not absolutely predestined in character.

EINSTEIN: Yes, I am well acquainted with this, but the facts that make science tend toward this view do not say good-bye to causality.

TAGORE: Maybe not, yet it appears that the idea of causality is not in the elements, but that some other force builds up with them an organised universe.

EINSTEIN: One tries to understand in the higher plane how the order is. The order is undoubtedly there where the big elements combine and guide existence, but in the minute elements, this order is not perceptible.



TAGORE: Thus duality is in the depths of existence, the contradiction of free impulse and the directive will which works upon it and evolves an orderly scheme of things.

EINSTEIN: Modern physics would not say they are contradictory. Clouds look as one from a distance, but if you see them nearby, they show themselves as disorderly drops of water.

TAGORE: I find a parallel in human psychology. Our passions and desires are unruly, but our character subdues these elements into a harmonious whole. Does something similar to this happen in the physical world? Are the elements rebellious, dynamic with individual impulse? And is there a principle in the physical world which dominates them and puts them into an orderly organisation?

EINSTEIN: Even the elements are not without statistical order; elements of radium will always maintain their specific order, now and ever onward, just as they have done all along. There is then a statistical order in the elements.

TAGORE: Otherwise, the drama of existence would be too desultory. It is the constant harmony of chance and determination which makes it eternally new and living.

EINSTEIN: I believe that whatever we do or live for has its causality; it is good however that we cannot see through to it.

TAGORE: There is in human affairs an element of elasticity also, some freedom within a small range which is for the expression of our personality. It is like the musical system in India, which is not so rigidly fixed as western music. Our composers give a certain definite outline, a system of melody and rhythmic arrangement, and within a certain limit the player can improvise upon it. He must be one with the law of that particular melody; and then he can give spontaneous expression to his musical feeling within the prescribed regulation.

We praise the composer for his genius in creating a foundation along with a superstructure of melodies, but we expect from the player his own skill in the creation of variations of melodic flourish and ornamentation. In creation we follow the central law of existence, but if we do not cut ourselves adrift from it, we can have sufficient freedom within the limits of our personality for the fullest self-expression.

EINSTEIN: That is possible only when there is a strong artistic tradition in music to guide the people's mind. In Europe, music has strayed too far from popular art and popular feeling and has become something like a secret art with conventions and traditions of its own.

TAGORE: You have to be absolutely obedient to this too complicated music. In India, the measure of a singer's freedom is in his own creative personality. He can sing the composer's song as his own if he has the power creatively to assert himself in his interpretation of the general law of the melody which he is given to interpret.

EINSTEIN: It requires a very high standard of art to realise fully the great idea in the original music, so that one can make variations upon it. In our country, the variations are often prescribed.

TAGORE: If in our conduct we can follow the law of goodness, we can have real liberty of self-expression. The principle of conduct is there, but the character which makes it true and individual is our own creation. In our music there is a duality of freedom and prescribed order.

EINSTEIN: Are the words of a song also free? I mean to say, is the singer at liberty to add his own words to the song which he is singing?

TAGORE: Yes. In Bengal we have a kind of song, we call it *kirtan*, which gives freedom to the singer to introduce parenthetical comments, phrases not in the original song. This occasions great enthusiasm, since the audience is constantly thrilled by some beautiful, spontaneous sentiment added by the singer.

EINSTEIN: Is the metrical form quite severe?

TAGORE: Yes, quite. You cannot exceed the limits of versification; the singer in all his variations must keep the rhythm and the time, which is fixed. In European music you have a comparative liberty with time, but not with melody.

EINSTEIN: Can the Indian music be sung without words? Can one understand a song without words?

TAGORE: Yes, we have songs with unmeaning words, sounds which just help to act as carriers of the notes. In North India, music is an independent art, not the interpretation of words and thoughts, as in Bengal. The music is very intricate and subtle and is a complete world of melody by itself.



EINSTEIN: Is it not polyphonic?

TAGORE: Instruments are used, not for harmony, but for keeping time and adding to the volume and depth. Has melody suffered in your music by the imposition of harmony?

EINSTEIN: Sometimes it does suffer very much. Sometimes the harmony swallows up the melody altogether.

TAGORE: Melody and harmony are like lines and colours in pictures. A simple linear picture may be completely beautiful; the introduction of colour may make it vague and insignificant. Yet colour may, by combination with lines, create great pictures, so long as it does not smother and destroy their value.

EINSTEIN: It is a beautiful comparison; line is also much older than colour. It seems that your melody is much richer in structure than ours. Japanese music also seems to be so.

TAGORE: It is difficult to analyse the effect of eastern and western music on our minds. I am deeply moved by the western music; I feel that it is great, that it is vast in its structure and grand in its composition. But our own music touches me more deeply by its fundamental lyrical appeal. European music is epic in character; it has a broad background and is Gothic in its structure.

EINSTEIN: This is a question we Europeans cannot properly answer; we are so used to our own

music. We want to know whether our own music is a conventional or a fundamental human feeling, whether to feel consonance and dissonance is natural, or a convention which we accept.

TAGORE: Somehow the piano confounds me. The violin pleases me much more.

EINSTEIN: It would be interesting to study the effects of European music on an Indian who had never heard it when he was young.

TAGORE: Once I asked an English musician to analyse for me some classical music, and explain to me what elements make for the beauty of the piece.

EINSTEIN: The difficulty is that the really good music, whether of the East or of the West, cannot be analysed.

TAGORE: Yes and what deeply affects the hearer is beyond himself.

EINSTEIN: The same uncertainty will always be there about everything fundamental in our experience, in our reaction to art, whether in Europe or in Asia. Even the red flower I see before me on your table may not be the same to you and me.

TAGORE: And yet there is always going on the process of reconciliation between them, the individual taste conforming to the universal standard.

# Immortality in Essence

*We are immortal in essence...  
our goal is to become aware of this  
and to act accordingly.*

*To do so we have no other choice  
than to go deep within  
our innermost self,  
within our Inner Temple;*

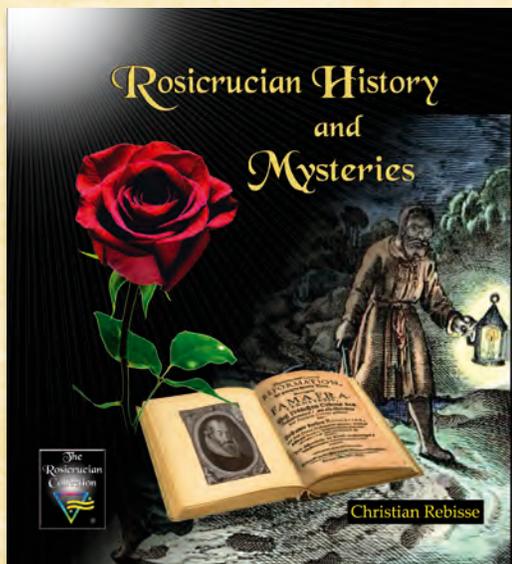
*to contemplate Beauty  
and to receive eternal Knowledge.*



# Rosicrucian History and Mysteries

by Christian Rebisse

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HAVING BEEN BRANDED for centuries as a secret society of occultists, witches and wizards by uninformed and jealous people, the Rosicrucian Order is one of the most enigmatic and yet most open of the handful of true initiatic Orders still in existence. By retracing its mysterious origins, this book attempts to place the Rosicrucian stream of intellectual and spiritual philosophy in an historical context by outlining the most important people and events that led to the genesis of the Western branch of esoteric spirituality and ultimately led to the establishment of the Rosicrucian Order itself.

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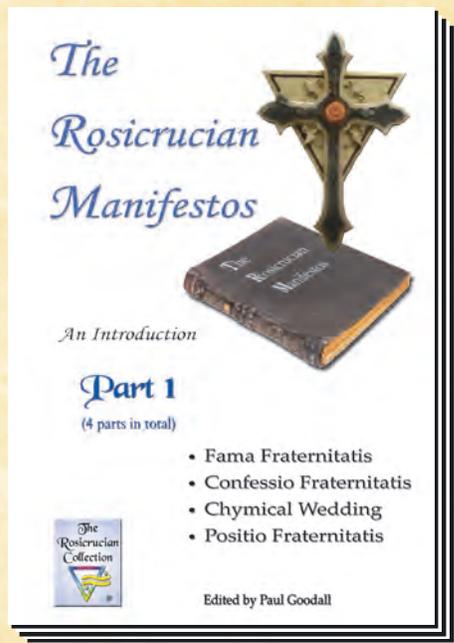
## The Rosicrucian Manifestos

Edited by Paul Goodall

AT THE START of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the leading lights of literature, science and the arts were making their marks on society and hopes for a new age of enlightenment were high. Into this milieu of hope and expectation arose three unique manifestos, the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614), the *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615) and the *Chymical Wedding* (1616), causing great interest in academic and literary circles and deep consternation amongst the clergy. These short treatises espoused an urgent need for a universal reformation of ideas and outlook embracing the arts and sciences, but particularly religion.

Unfortunately, the hoped for universal reformation that was to bring about a utopian society did not materialise, despite the attention that the Manifestos received. But the spirit of the early Rosicrucians lived on, simmering as an undercurrent while the forces of the later Enlightenment and religious authority battled it out.

In 2001, the Rosicrucian Order, concerned about world events, produced a fourth manifesto, the *Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis* which addresses the critical issues of the modern world. At its heart is a cry for a spiritual re-awakening of mankind and world peace.



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Knowledge of the Soul  
is the only universal truth,  
and the only wisdom.

All other knowledge  
is transient...

-- Plato