

# BROSICRUCIAN BEACON



December 2008



# Hélio de Moraes e Marques

## Grand Master of the Portuguese Grand Lodge

Hélio de Moraes e Marques worked for many years as a director in a large construction company in Brazil. He has a masters degree in Enterprise Administration and Philosophy, specialising in ancient philosophy and education.

In 1973, at the age of 15, he joined the Rosicrucian Order and has served as an officer since 1979, occupying over many years the offices of President of the Joint Depository of the Santos Lodge of AMORC, Lodge Master, Regional Monitor and Grand Councillor. Between 1992 and 1994, he served as Secretary of the Portuguese Grand Lodge and went on to become Vice-President, a position he occupied until his installation as Grand Master on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2008 on the occasion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> National Rosicrucian Convention in Brazil. His hobbies include swimming, surfing and the reading of good literature.



# Claudio Mazzucco

## Grand Master of the Italian Grand Lodge

Claudio Mazzucco, born in Vicenza (Italy) on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1960, moved to and grew up in Brazil from the age of 6. There he trained and qualified as a chemical engineer. Joining the Order in 1977, he served in several roles in affiliated bodies, among other things as a Chapter Master and RCUI lecturer. He returned to settle in Italy in 1988 and has since then served in several other official capacities, including affiliated body Master, Regional Monitor, Grand Councillor and RCUI Lecturer.

He is married and has two daughters. His interests include Tai-Chi-Chuan, philosophy and the sciences. Presently he heads the research and development department of a large Italian company. Elected as Grand Master during the meeting of the Supreme Board in October 2008, he will be ritually installed during the European convention of Barcelona in May 2009.



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## COVER SPREAD

"Winter Silence"





# Don't Short-change the Cosmic

by Walter J Albersheim, FRC

*Many who obey all commandments referring to human relations deal at the same time unfairly with their God. They constantly beg for favours without giving anything in return...*

**I**T IS COMMON NOWADAYS TO HEAR people decrying the lack of moral fibre and integrity in society. Actually I believe most people are honest in their personal dealings if given the chance to express the best in themselves. I've seen inadvertently dropped wallets handed back to their owners, and a waitress turn back a large bill

given to her by mistake instead of the intended modest tip. Goodness is present everywhere in small though surprising ways.

Yet some of these same fair and honest people can be dishonest in other, seemingly small ways. For example, for some people it is an almost noble sport to try and evade paying their fair share of taxes. They don't see it as being dishonest; after



all "everyone does it" they opine, so what's the big deal? It doesn't take much to persuade oneself that taxes are unfair or are used for unjustified military expenditures. But the deeper reasons for trying to slip by this universal obligation is the mistaken belief that an establishment as vast as a government can surely not be hurt by petty fraud. Democratic states amount (in theory at least) to the average will of its citizens. The tax or duty that one person "gets away with" by not paying his or her fair share, undoubtedly increases the burden of all others, even if only by a tiny amount.

The same difference in attitude applies to some people with fiercely held religious beliefs. Many devout believers who obey all commandments referring to human relations, deal at the same time unfairly with their God. They constantly beg for favours without giving anything in return and pray that their enemies be destroyed when those same enemies may be praying to the same God for the same thing. It's illogical isn't it, to expect something as great as the universal Creator of all things to stoop to such petty human selfishness? In primitive minds, God is depicted as an immensely wealthy and powerful personal ruler who answers prayers

*If our personal demands create imbalance and disharmony, they run counter to cosmic (natural) law.*

according to "His" (note he is a male) whim or grace, and in turn demands not just cooperation in furthering His ends, but a cringing chorus of adoration through songs of praise: Hallelujah in excelsis..., forever and ever ad nauseum!

To a mystic however, the Creator is nothing remotely like this. The "God of my heart," the "God of my understanding," or what to some is referred to simply as "the Cosmic," is not an individual superman but the totality of all substance, energy, life force, mind power and whatever else exists in the universe, and yes..., everything that may exist beyond it too! One might think that this universal supply can't be diminished, even if everyone used it forever without giving anything in return. Science however teaches us that in our universe at least, the sum total of matter, energy and even information is limited but constant, and furthermore, that this is a fundamental law of nature. Our universe is like an island bubble within which everything we know or can know,

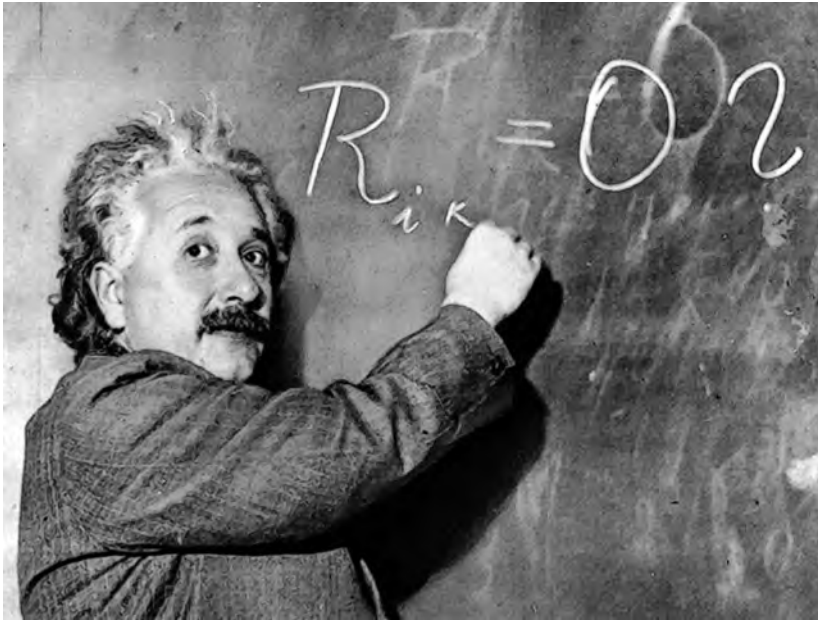
had its genesis and will ultimately have its end. So even when we consider the vastness of our universe, we must acknowledge that a grain of sand taken "here" must be supplemented with a grain of sand replaced "there."

The word "cosmic" suggests not just the immensity of the universe, but the universality of the law, order and harmony that comes with it. If our personal demands create imbalance and disharmony, they run counter to cosmic (natural) law, and we will eventually have to compensate (karmically) in order to restore the balance at our own expense. Personal favours from God do not feature as a goal in any way for any true mystic. Her or his highest aspiration is simple..., oneness with the Cosmic..., no exceptions! Approaching the Cosmic like a beggar pleading for favours, sets up the "prince-and-pauper" relationship between an exalted "Lord" and a lowly "subject," and that surely isn't the highest and most noble we are capable of?

We become "godlike" only by exercising compassion in striving to give and create at least as much as we receive. We may rightly aspire to wealth, beauty and health, but they aren't our primary motivations. If we accumulate wealth, we must pay our helpers a fair wage that enables them as well to enjoy comfort and dignity. If we live in beautiful homes, we must be careful to protect and nurture our environment. This principle of give-and-take, fair play, or in mystical language, upholding the law of AMRA, is less obvious when we seek physical and mental health. Life force is not a material thing, although our health may need physical assistance through medication or surgery. But, if we receive cosmic help in health matters, we incur obligations both to ourselves and others. We really must try and live sensibly and not waste away the divine gift of vitality.

We must also try to make available to others the same kind of help we've received. What we received was in response to a need and we know intimately what that unsatisfied need was like. We are therefore eminently qualified to help others to have similar needs satisfied..., over and over again. One may argue that health is on the borderline between material and mental conditions, but the principle of give-and-take applies equally to purely mental pursuits. In the field of science, this is illustrated by the well known cases of Newton and Einstein. Newton discovered the





*By arduous work before and after illumination, the creative scientist makes him or herself a partner of the Cosmic and helps to bring new light to mankind.*

principle of universal gravitation; Einstein, that of universal relativity. In both men, the discoveries were preceded by recognising inner contradictions that existed in assumptions and theories. In each case there followed a prolonged period of inner search for a unifying principle. This long labour was their personal contribution. As true seekers, they did not leave to the Cosmic alone what they might achieve by their own efforts. Both sought inspiration but did so as workers, not parasites. And both were finally rewarded by a sudden flash of genius or illumination. The inner eye of each one saw a new approach and immediately recognised it as valid. The new vision however, did not end their labours and they both went on to leave priceless legacies for the world to benefit from.

To outwardly express an inner vision in earthly, comprehensible terms may bring severe trials and ridicule. The first attempts at logical proof may be complex and seemingly abstruse, and it may take considerable time before the new mode of thought becomes so clear to the discoverer and her co-workers that they can make it intelligible to the majority of fellow scientists and even laypersons.

Finally, the new theory must be verified by application to specific practical cases. Thus Newton showed that the same force that made an apple fall to the Earth and a pendulum swing,

also pulled the Moon through its orbit. Einstein proved that his refinement of Newton's law accounted for a slow rotation of the planet Mercury's orbital axis. Through such arduous work before and after illumination, the creative scientist makes him or herself a partner of the Cosmic and helps to bring new light to mankind. The same interplay of human endeavour with cosmic inspiration applies in philosophy, statecraft and in the arts. In all these fields, even the greatest achievements are directed toward specific objectives.

Mysticism however, knows of an even higher level, where illumination is sought for its own sake, not merely the utility it provides. At this

level the mystic meditates, not to seek gifts or revelations but to find within a profound sense of oneness with the Cosmic. This goal is so exalted and its attainment so overwhelming that we may seem as though we can't give anything of equal value in return. But this is not true. In reaching oneness, the mystic transcends mere partnership, for the bliss of such a union is not a relation between distinguishable persons. In the language of Eastern wisdom: Knower, Known and Knowledge are One.

*The mystic meditates, not to seek gifts or revelations but to find within a profound sense of oneness with the Cosmic.*

This fusion with the Cosmic takes place against the backdrop of eternity..., beyond time, space and individuality. Only after our descent to earthly life can we again feel a debt to the Cosmic and an urge to repay it through a life of service. We may become saints, lawgivers, philosophers, artists or scientists; or we may remain simple loving members of our family and community. We may experience deep longing for a renewal of the supreme moment, or our experience may be just an abiding feeling of joy. Being transmuted, we will radiate light and inspiration by our mere existence. We cannot short-change the Cosmic, for our entire life is one continuous repayment.

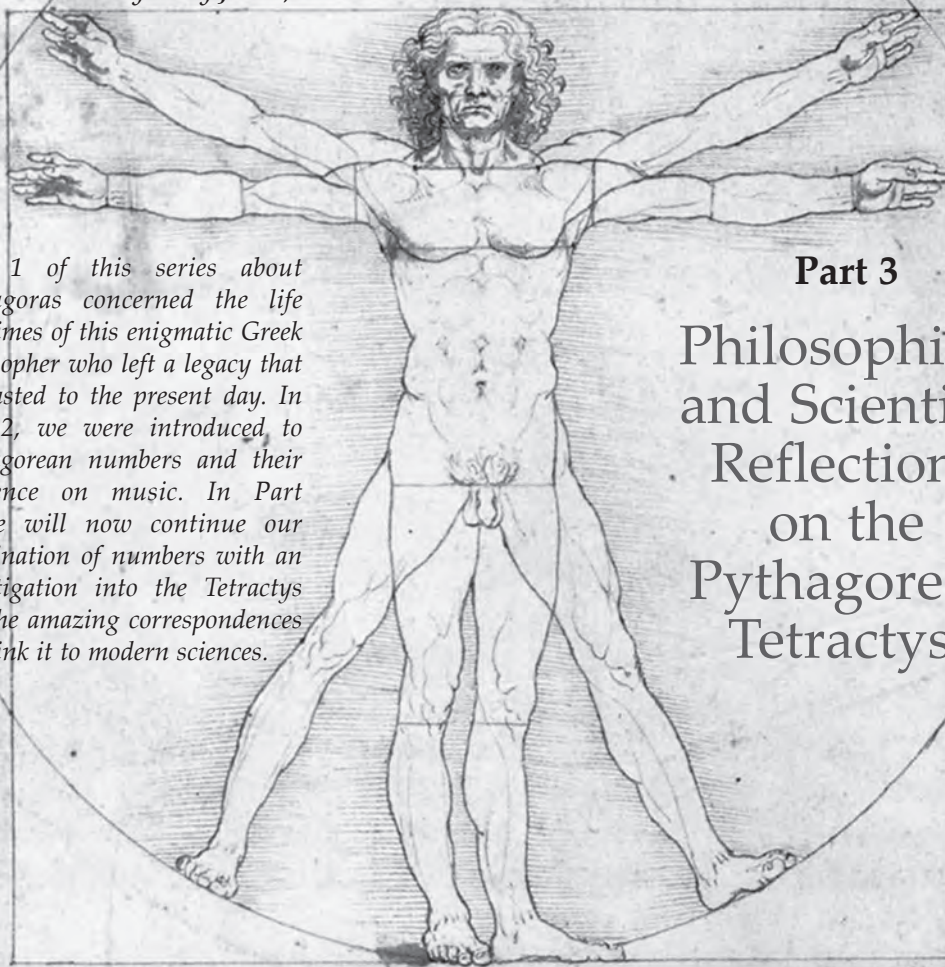


# PYTHAGORAS THE TEACHER

by Mary Jones, SRC

Part 1 of this series about Pythagoras concerned the life and times of this enigmatic Greek philosopher who left a legacy that has lasted to the present day. In Part 2, we were introduced to Pythagorean numbers and their influence on music. In Part 3, we will now continue our examination of numbers with an investigation into the Tetractys and the amazing correspondences that link it to modern sciences.

Part 3  
Philosophical  
and Scientific  
Reflections  
on the  
Pythagorean  
Tetractys.



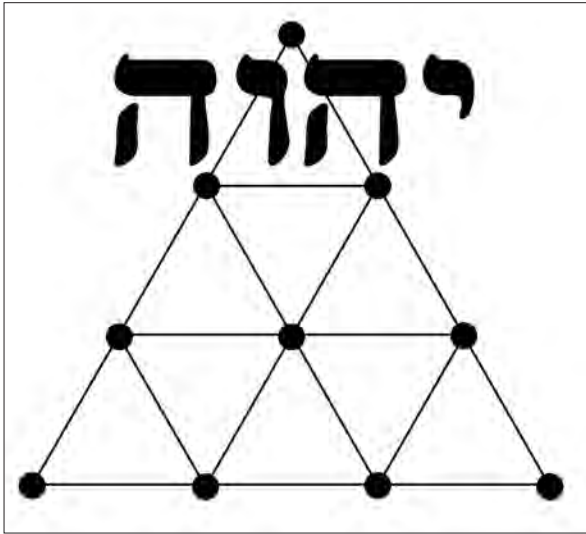
Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.

**T**OTHE PYTHAGOREANS, THE ARCHÉ (ἀρχή) was the *First Principle* in the world and manifested as numbers and the laws underlying them. Pythagoras believed that the ultimate “substance” of all things, material and immaterial, was to be found in numbers. On the one hand, numbers had a special physical existence in the form of counting chips or numeric

symbols and words for numbers that could be written down. On the other hand, numbers were also purely abstract formulating principles.

This was understood by the builders of medieval cathedrals who, when producing their grandiose architectural works, were influenced by the tenets and beauty of Pythagorean geometry. They attempted to encode the secret symbolism





To the Jews, the Tetragrammaton represented the ineffable name of God (YHWH) in four letters, and according to the Pythagoreans, the Tetractys similarly formed the basis of their entire belief system.

of their “high knowledge” in their constructions in such a way that their knowledge would be understood only by those who had “eyes to see and ears to hear,” following the Pythagorean principle that “truth is divulged only to those who seek.” If numbers were associated with order they reasoned, and everything was determined by number, it followed that everything in the universe must be ordered. For the ancient Greeks the word *kósmos* (κόσμος) meant first and foremost

“order.” By virtue of the harmony, system and order to be found in the universe, Pythagoreans called the universe itself the *kósmos*. To the Greeks, this word also carried the suggestion of “beauty” as well as “order.”

Pythagoreans saw a deep and mysterious patterned structure in nature. They were convinced that a great power lay in numbers..., maybe even the power that had created the universe. They therefore believed that all Nature and all beings manifested in it did so in accordance with numbers, so that the entire universe, through these numbers, became the manifestation of perfect harmony. To disseminate and conceal their teachings about this, the Pythagoreans synthesised their ideas into one symbol: the sacred Tetractys (*tetraktys* in Greek means “fourness”). For them it was the very expression of Divinity, the image of the created and eternal realms. When the Pythagoreans took an oath, they used the following ritual formula: “I swear by the one who gave my soul the Tetractys, the source and root of everflowing nature, that...”

In this article, we will reflect on the profound symbolism of the number *Four* and examine how frequently it is found in nature. It will explain that the Pythagorean teachings about this number, which they regarded as the root or source of everflowing nature, continue to be valid vis-à-vis the teachings of modern science.

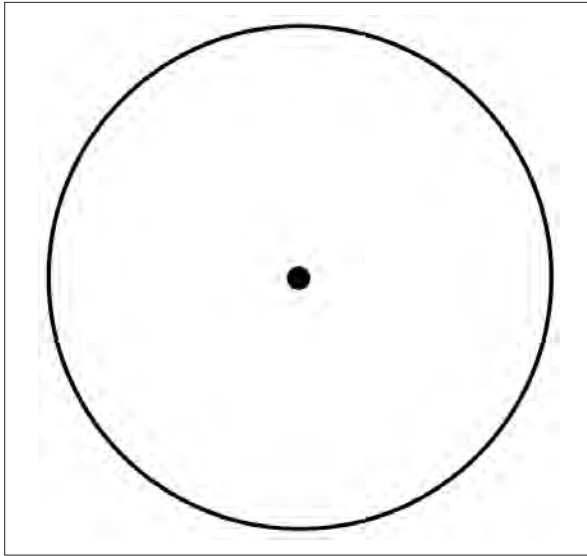
However, before addressing the scientific aspects, we will make some brief comments on



*The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci.*







*The Monad*

the esoteric ones. To the Jews, the *Tetragrammaton* represented the ineffable name of God in the four Hebrew letters *Yod, He, Vav, He*. According to the Pythagoreans, the Tetractys similarly formed the basis of their entire belief system. They regarded

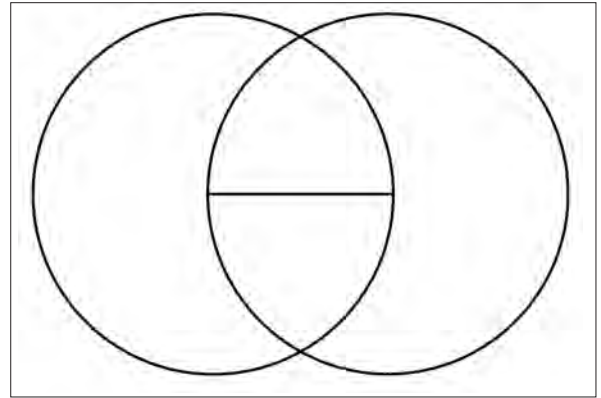
*Pythagoreans saw a deep and mysterious patterned structure to nature.*

four, the square, as the number of “universal manifestation.” In our own times we talk about the concept of the “perfect square,” and to ancient Egyptians it was the basis of eternal stability.

### Geometry and the Tetractys

Pythagoras made a particular study of geometry, which he apparently learned whilst in Egypt, where there were many geometrical problems that the Egyptians were adept at solving. Every year after the annual flood in the Nile valley had obliterated property lines, the Egyptians were forced to re-measure the land for cultivation. There was therefore a need to perfect the science of geometry, the original meaning of which was “earth measure.” Who doesn’t marvel at the perfection of geometry made manifest in the Pyramids of Giza? What monumental accuracy!

Look at the painting illustrated on page 6; it is *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci (1498), in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan. This master artist and scientist is known to have had links with the Rosicrucian initiatory tradition,



*The Dyad*

and if you look carefully, the symbolically loaded numbers three and four can be seen in the famous fresco. Looking at the painting, we see that the two side walls converge forming the sides of a triangle whose apex is high above the figure of Christ, who himself appears shaped like a triangle. On each side wall are four large panels in front of which are placed groups of apostles, six on each side of Christ, each side divided into two groups of three, with the Messiah at the centre. The whole painting strongly suggests that Leonardo took deliberate inspiration from the sacred Pythagorean symbolism of the Tetractys.

Leonardo also used the Tetractys as inspiration for his drawing of the *Vitruvian Man* (page 5). If you look at the image carefully, you will see the visible similarities between this and the sacred Tetractys, expressing the pure perfection and complete harmony of the idealised human body. The symbol of the Tetractys is therefore manifestly inherent in the universe and can be shown in the sequence of geometric dimensions that characterises the physical world:

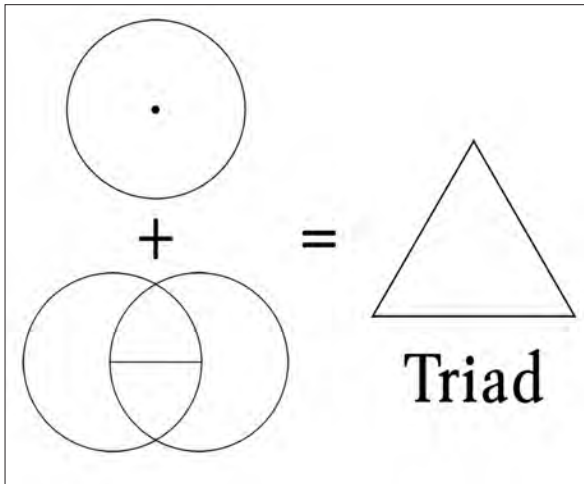
- 1 is a *point*, the zero dimension.
- 2 represents a *line*, the first dimension.
- 3 represents a *surface*, the second dimension.
- 4 represents a *solid*, the third dimension.

The sum of the numbers 1+2+3+4 gives the number 10, the symbol of perfection.

### Monad

In answer to the question “How did One begin?” the Pythagoreans looked at the world around them, suspecting that there was something special about the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4. They were alert to hidden connections. The One, i.e., the *Monad* or fundamental *Arché*, is unique; it represents unity and indivisibility; the “uncuttable” atom of





*The Triad*

creation. The One is represented by the numeric symbol 1 which in turn embodies the original unity, the source of all creation.

The Monad is the primordial unity at the base of all creation. It is the origin of all things and the source of permanence in the universe. It is both male and female, odd and even; not a number in itself, but the source of all other numbers. The One is however incomplete. It needs an opposite in order to manifest and this gives rise to the even number 2. As the number 1 represents at the same time the principle of unity and the principle of the separation of opposites

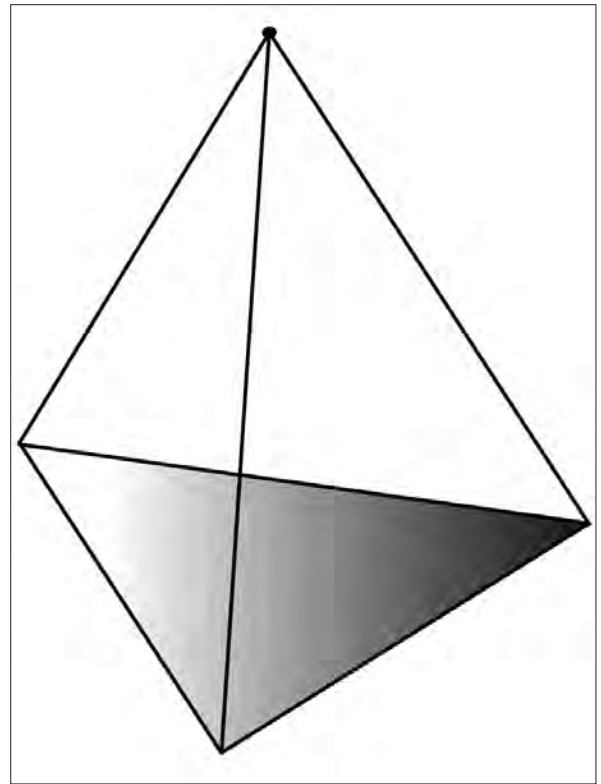
***Pythagoreans suspected that there was something special about the first four numbers.***

contained within it (odd and even), this *separation* is represented by the number 2.

- The principle of *unity* is 1, the One.
- The principle of *duality* is 2, the Dyad.

The Monad became the first principle of the original Dyad, odd and even, in which are rooted all other polarities of the Universe. All things are defined by number, and the original Monad *includes within itself* the plurality that flows from it.

But, what of the transition between the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4? Having considered 1 and 2, it became evident that the Monad was capable of becoming an *emerging multiplicity*. The symbolism of 1 in the *macrocosm* is Unity, the First Cause, the original light emanating from the primordial darkness, the Hebrew Yod, the Greek Logos,



*The Tetrad*

the Cabalistic En-Soph, the Vedic Brahman, the Islamic Allah. But in the biological *microcosm*, it is the "stem cell" from which all manner of cells can emerge through division: 1 becomes 2.

## Dyad

The *Dyad* or 2, exists in everything where there are two opposing polarities. The transition from Monad to Dyad represents the first step in the process of creation: unity polarises within itself to become a duality. The Dyad *is* the polarisation, the opposition, the divergence, the divisibility, the change. It is the source of opposites, but sometimes appears as nothing more than the two extreme points of the same thing.

We read in the *Kybalion*, a well-known hermetic text, that "*Everything is dual; everything has two poles; every [thing] has its opposite. The similar and dissimilar are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but of different grades.*" Two therefore, represents the cosmic opposites: light-dark, male-female, good-evil, active-passive, sun-moon, Yin-Yang, all of which are references to the two active ingredients of the Universe. In mathematical terms, 2 is the beginning of all other natural numbers.



## Tetrad

Four, the *Tetrad*, derives from the Triad with the addition of another unit. It is the first of equal numbers, since the numeral 2 for Pythagoreans is not a true number but a principle. Four is 2 to the power of 2 ( $2 \times 2$ ). Geometrically, with 4 we have the third dimension, since adding a point outside the triad, makes a pyramid or tetrahedron, which is the first solid figure, representing *volume*. Four, then, is the final manifestation of the Divine, the end point of the path of unity which distinguishes itself in duality, recomposes in the triad, and manifests itself in multiplicity in Nature.

The four sets: the Monad, the Dyad, the Triad and the Tetrad complete the Whole. The number one is a single geometrical point. When linked to another point, it becomes a line. If we add a third point and link it to the other two we get a triangle, making three points connected by three lines, which is the first plane figure. If we connect point number 4 to this triangle, we have a pyramid, the first solid figure, a three-dimensional body. Point, line, surface and volume is the totality of the material world of the senses. Four represents completion. Everything in nature is completed in the progression from 1 to 4. Because it completes the progression  $1+2+3+4=10$ , it was the symbol of the human soul and also the numerical model for the cosmos.

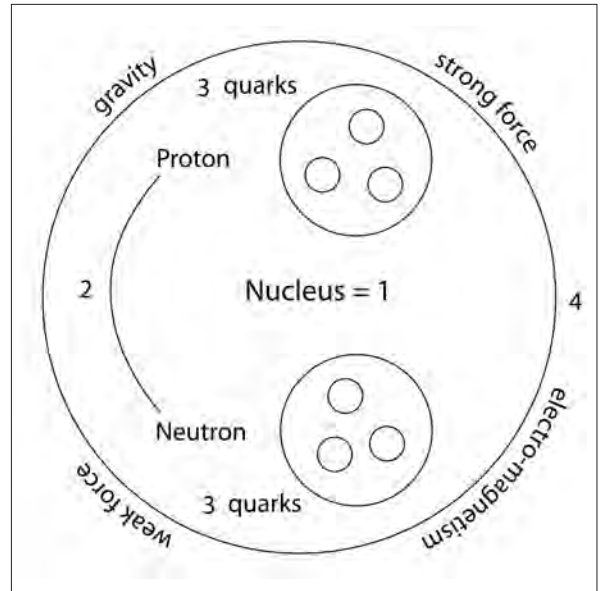
### Tetractys and Physics

In the previous paragraphs we looked at the Tetractys on a philosophical level; now we will look at it on a more cosmological scale. Let us therefore examine the concordances from the microcosm to the macrocosm.

Atomic nuclei are made up of elementary particles that form the basic constituents of matter. They are divided into three families:

- *Leptons*: 6 in number: electrons, muons, taus and their three neutrinos.
- *Quarks*: 6 "flavours" which combine to form protons and neutrons.
- Their corresponding *antiparticles*: antiprotons, antineutrons, anti-electrons or positrons, produced by particle accelerators in atomic physics laboratories.

All matter in the universe is subject to 4 fundamental interactions or *forces* acting on it: *gravity*, *electro-magnetism*, and the *strong* and *weak* nuclear forces. All matter has its own gravitational field whose energy is transmitted by "gravitons,"



The Tetractys is inferred in the sub-atomic structure illustrated here.

a hypothetical elementary particle. Gravity is a natural phenomenon where objects with mass attract one another. It is this that accounts for the orbit of the moon around the Earth, the maintenance of the orbits of the planets of our solar system around the sun, and on a macrocosmic scale, the clustering of galaxies.

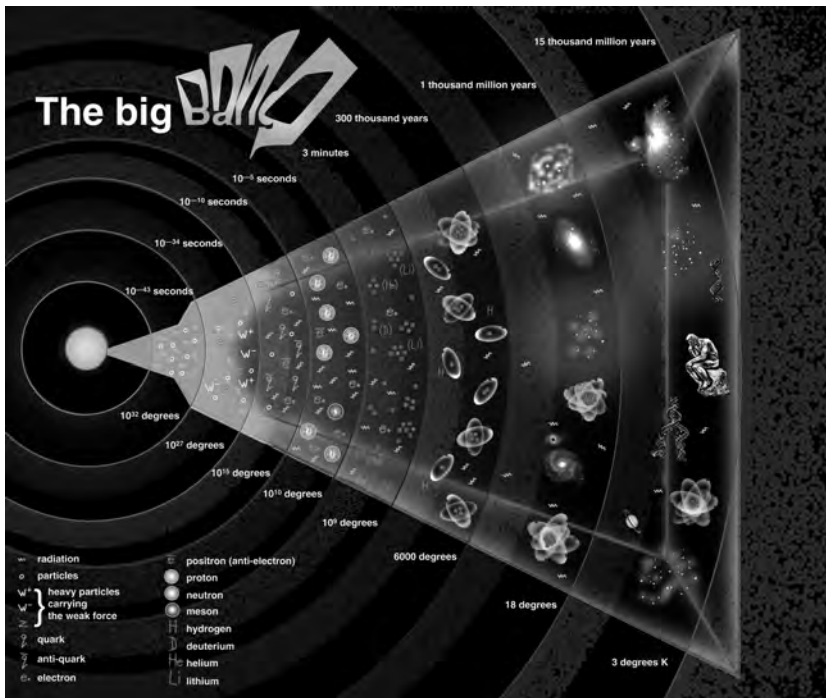
The electromagnetic force arises from the exchange of photons, which produces things such

***The four sets: the Monad, the Dyad, the Triad and the Tetrad complete the Whole.***

as light, x-rays and radio waves. The *strong nuclear force* is the force that holds quarks and gluons together to form protons and neutrons in the nucleus of the atom. It is this force that transmits gluons that form the *pi* and *rho* mesons, which in turn transmit the nuclear force. The *weak nuclear force* affects all left-handed leptons and quarks as well as neutrinos. It is responsible for the reaction of nuclear fusion in the sun and stars.

Where does the Tetractys come into this? The nucleus represents the number 1. The proton and the neutron represents 2, the duality. Each proton and neutron, consists of 3 quarks, the triad. Four or the Tetrad is inferred in the 4 universal forces. We also find the number 6 in the number of types of the subatomic leptons and quarks. Here we can see the symbolic link to the Pythagorean





The Universe is believed to have been created about 13.7 billion years ago. At the point of this event all of the matter and energy of space was contained at one point (monad). This occurrence was not a conventional explosion but rather an event filling all of space with all of the particles of the embryonic universe rushing away from each other.

tradition, since the above are the result of the sum or multiplication of 1, 2 and 3, which along with 4 reproduce the pyramidal structure of the Tetractys. Science and the Hermetic Tradition have therefore found an element of commonality many centuries after Pythagoras.

### Creation of the Universe

Modern physicists suspect that the four fundamental forces of nature are in fact merely different projections of a single force and that we and the surrounding universe exist only thanks to the particles and antiparticles that came into being following the primordial space-time

*Science and the Hermetic Tradition have found an element of commonality many centuries after Pythagoras.*

expansion of the universe in the so-called "Big-Bang." At the time of that initial explosion, the universe had an identical number of particles and antiparticles which, compared to those of the present, possessed a much heavier mass.

Following the initial extremely high temperatures after the Big Bang, temperatures decreased and heavy particles underwent a process of annihilation with their antiparticles, giving rise to a plethora of smaller particles and releasing energy in the form of the cosmic microwave radiation...; perhaps the *cosmic light* or *Fiat Lux* of Biblical tradition? Temperatures were so high that the random motions of particles were at relativistic speeds, and particle-antiparticle pairs of all kinds were being continuously created and destroyed in collisions. At some point an unknown reaction called *baryogenesis* led to a very small excess of quarks and leptons over anti-quarks and anti-leptons, in the order of 1 part in 30 million. This resulted in the predominance

of matter over antimatter in the present universe, though where the "missing" anti-matter is today, is one of the remaining vexing questions of science. We and the universe are therefore the product of that 1 part in 30 million.

### Tetractys and Chemistry

In 1869 the Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev invented the periodic table of the elements, and classified all known atoms according to their atomic weight and chemical properties. Then in 1914 it was discovered that the key index of these elements was their atomic number. This is the number of protons (positively charged) found in the nucleus of an electrically neutral atom, and is equal to the number of electrons which carry a negative charge.

Interestingly, if we consider the atomic electron configuration table, and look at the increase of protons and electrons from one element to the next, we find the following sequence of values: 2, 8, 8, 18, 18, 32. These numbers can be expressed as  $2 \times 1^2$ ,  $2 \times 2^2$ ,  $2 \times 2^2$ ,  $2 \times 3^2$ ,  $2 \times 3^2$ ,  $2 \times 4^2$ , being squares of the numbers of the Tetractys.

Without entering into a numerical analysis of the entire periodic table of chemical elements,



in Group I (the alkali metals), Lithium (Li), Sodium (Na), Potassium (K), Rubidium (Rb), Caesium (Cs), and Francium (Fr), are the chemical elements with atomic numbers equal to 3, 11, 19, 37, 55, 87. Taking into account the sequences mentioned above and the fact that Lithium (Li) possesses one proton more than Helium (He), (with the atomic number 2), gives us the formula  $(1)+2, 8, 8, 18, 18, 32$ . This can be reduced to the square numbers of Tetractys as follows:  $1+2 \times 1^2, 2 \times 2^2, 2 \times 2^2, 2 \times 3^2, 2 \times 4^2$ . This shows that atoms, of which matter is composed, obey the specific law of numbers that the Pythagoreans had encoded in the Tetractys.

### The Water Molecule

Another model in nature corresponding to the Tetractys is apparent in the threefold structure of a water molecule. A water molecule has a non-linear shape because it has two pairs of bonded electrons and two unshared pairs. When water solidifies, it becomes *macroreticular* and consists of molecules joined by hydrogen bonds. Each molecule then binds to four other water molecules geometrically in a pyramid when it turns to ice, where all the water molecules are linked by

hydrogen bonds.

Raising the temperature results in the intermolecular bonds changing from four to three, then to two with the transformation of ice into liquid water. Raising the temperature further, decreases the intermolecular links steadily, until at 100°C there is no longer any intermolecular connection and the water molecules become detached from each other in the process of evaporation. This is another example of the numbers of the Tetractys

*Atoms, of which matter is composed, obey the specific law of numbers that the Pythagoreans had encoded in the Tetractys.*

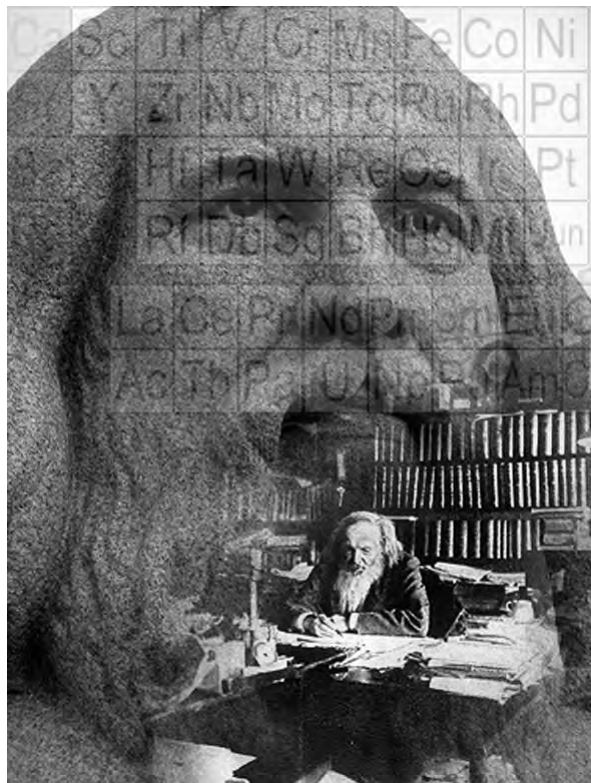
replicated in Nature; the numbers 4, 3, 2 and 1 express the sequence of links in the process of the formation of ice. In nature, the tetrahedron is an example of great stability, which can be found even in the geometric form of a diamond crystal which in the Mohs scale of mineral hardness is at the very top of the scale.

### Tetractys and Biology

In the microcosm, the Tetractys is well represented at the biological level of the molecules of amino acids, the basic building blocks of proteins, whose structural formula shows that Carbon (C), the building block of life, has *four* chains, Nitrogen (N) has *three*, Oxygen (O) has *two* and Hydrogen (H) has *one*, the sum of which is *ten*, corresponding to the numbers of the Tetractys.

Even in the DNA molecule, it is possible to find traces of the numbers of the Tetractys: a chromosome contains a double strand of DNA, each strand being made up of 3 molecules (a base of nitrogen, a molecule of phosphate and a molecule of deoxyribose), the first of which (nitrogenous base) consists of 4 chemical varieties: Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine and Guanine (A, T, C, G). Each nucleotide binds to its complementary nucleotide with 2 or 3 hydrogen bonds and the double helix encloses 10 pairs of nucleotides.

In nature we find that the sperm or male reproductive cells, contain the male Y chromosome or the female X chromosome, thereby demonstrating the dual polarity of our species. Each cell has two chromosomes, either XY for a male or XX for a female. When the sperm (X or Y chromosome) combines with the female



Dmitri Mendeleev (1834-1907)



egg, which always has the X chromosome, a new life form begins. This is a clear demonstration of the Tetractys whose numbers act even on the most important biochemical structures of the human body.

Remaining in biology, but on a higher level, let us take a look at the cardiac system where the sacred numbers of the Pythagorean Tetractys are related to the morphology of the

*The numbers within the Tetractys act even on the most important biochemical structures of the human body.*

heart that, as a unit, represents the number 1: it has 2 veins and 3 arteries (brachiocephalic or innominate artery, left common carotid artery and left subclavian, that arise from the arch of the aorta) and finally the 4 pulmonary veins, as well as 4 atria/ventricles. Among further examples of the Tetractys in nature, may be the pyramidal neurons of the cerebral cortex and the Purkinje cell in the cerebellar cortex. These cells that preside over the coordination and harmonisation of movement, seem to offer a clear sign of the relevance of the teachings of Pythagoras.

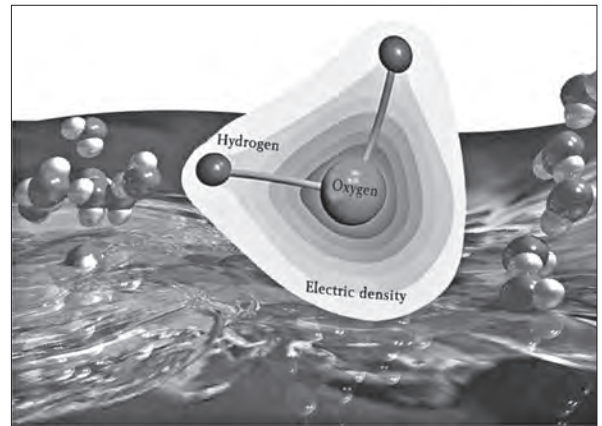
### Conclusion

In this article we have looked at the numbers of the Tetractys and their correspondences in the fields of chemistry, atomic physics, molecular and cellular biology, and how they relate to the development of living organisms. We have highlighted how systems in the physical universe seem to be

governed by wonderful relationships of numbers, something that the Pythagoreans taught over two millennia ago. It should be no surprise that this number system taught in the ancient mystery schools corresponds so convincingly with what we know of the physical universe today.

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Another model in nature corresponding to the Tetractys is apparent in the threefold structure of a water molecule.

# Prayer of the Morning

by Leane Grimshaw, SRC

Beloved Master, show the way,  
Operate through me this day,  
Let thy Being merge with mine  
That the flow may be sublime.  
Show me what must be achieved,  
That my load may be relieved  
Of the time-consuming dross:  
Leaving only Rose..., and Cross.





HE WAS CALLED *LA MÔME PIAF* (The Little Sparrow), but her given name was Édith Giovanna Gassion. She was born in Paris on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1915. Her early childhood was lonely, punctuated by regularly having to move from one relative to next, and much of her time was spent alone, religiously committing to memory the lyrics of popular tunes.

At 13 she left the confines of her relatives' homes and started her working career by singing in the streets of Paris. Later she was joined by her half-sister, Simone Berteaut, from whom she rarely parted until the time of her death. She worked for many years in the streets of the Pigalle (one of the less affluent districts of Paris), singing to occupants and tourists alike and passing around her well-worn hat for payment. But eventually she was invited indoors, into a cabaret. It was during one of those first experiences that a theatrical agent suggested she change her name from Édith Gassion to *La Môme Piaf*; and so was born Édith Piaf.

She wore a simple black dress (the only one she owned) and sang with her entire body, her hands lifting words and phrases for emphasis. Her style was not of the flashy show girl variety so popular at that time, so her initial reception by the Parisian audiences was not one of overwhelming approval. But after her apprenticeship in many cabarets, she moved upward to the more fashionable nightspots of Paris and neighbouring cities and even to America. Her reputation grew and she acquired a following of loyal admirers. During the early

part of her career, Édith lost her infant daughter Marcelle to spinal meningitis. The loss so affected her that for many years she mourned on the day that would have been Marcelle's birthday. She was never to have another child.

### Life of the Rose

Many lyricists supplied the words for which Édith was known, but one woman in particular was responsible for the music to the majority of her songs: Marguerite Monnot, whom she called "Guite." Piaf's most famous song, however, *La vie en rose*, was deemed "junk" by Miss Monnot. She refused to compose music for what she considered inferior lyrics, and so it was Édith herself who was responsible for this song from conception to performance.

In addition to performing, Édith took great joy in refining the talents of those around her and several French singers owe their style and delivery to her. She created for them better editions of themselves rather than force them into the Piaf mould to produce inferior copies of herself, as has happened so many times with Elvis clones. One of her first and better known protégés was Yves Montand.

Édith Piaf was a member of the Rosicrucian Order from 1955 until the time of her death on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1963. At her passing the world mourned a great artist and a person through whom many of life's joys and sorrows had sounded in song and reality. She was buried with a single rose clasped to her heart.





# The Many-Layered Dream World

*by Burnam Schaa, FRC*

**T**HE PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL and psychic world of dreams continues to be a fascinating area of our character, and this is compellingly true of the intellectually-dominated, scientific person or the overly emotional person. Paradoxically, it is in the very area of dreams

that these uncoordinated, or one-sided conscious attitudes are brought to light.

During our waking hours we all overlook some things; most are inconsequential, but some of them are important. This has the same consequences for our psychic life as a one-sided and incomplete diet has for the body. Dreams





are essential in educating us to the completeness and independence needed to bring to light all those functions and talents which have thus far attained but little conscious awareness, if any at all. It is wrong to say that what is mostly unconscious in ourselves is necessarily negative and therefore undesirable! But our dreams become opaque when we look at them too closely with our scientific mind. They can become clear however if we simply hold them up to the light of understanding.

Mystics refer to our dream experience as a "borderline" state of consciousness which occurs between the deep sleep of silence and our objective waking condition. Through experimentation, science has found that the dream state actually takes place in short intervals of time in which the dreamer is experiencing what becomes a long story to his recollection. For example: Can you remember a few of your own dreams where you were involved in some activity that would normally take hours to accomplish when you later thought about it? A limited interest in, or inability to recollect, our dreams can be two of the major reasons why we feel that we do not

dream much. On the contrary, science tells us that we all dream frequently during the night.

Within Rosicrucian philosophy are a number of simple experiments which help us to

*Within Rosicrucian philosophy are a number of simple experiments which help us to improve our ability to remember our dreams.*

improve our ability to focus our attention. Through the practise of these experiments we can train ourselves to observe and accurately remember what has been observed. This heightened ability will greatly aid us in remembering what we have dreamed.

### Toward the Psychology of Dreams

The dream experience must float up into our objectively conscious mind in the form of symbols that need to be interpreted by us if we are to have any realisation or remembrance of them. As we all know from practical experience, symbols are difficult to put into words.

For example, have you ever tried to relate a scene or event that took place during your working day to someone? You'll know how many words were needed to correctly convey even the simplest thing! Well, our dreams have just as much trouble trying to "explain themselves" to our objectively conscious self as we do in explaining objects or events to others. To complicate matters, the further we are in time from the scene, the more distorted our recall is likely to become. This principle also holds true for dreams. In order to be perfectly preserved, a dream must be recorded as soon after dreaming as possible.

From mankind's incessant preoccupation with the mental world has evolved the science of psychology, where two major schools of thought have developed from the researches of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. The evaluation of dreams varies according to whether we consider them from the standpoint of the Freudian Causal system, the technical name for the repressed dream-wish, or from the Jungian Synchronistic view, which states that "dreams contain the subliminal material of the given moment."

The causal approach of Freud begins with the theory of repressed desire, craving or wish-fulfilment. Although always "comparatively simple or elementary" according to this system,



*Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)*

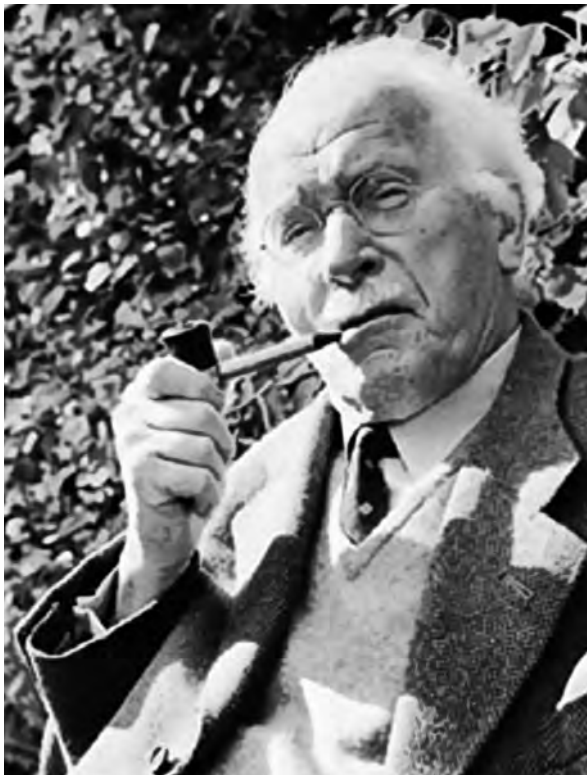


these repressions are said to disguise themselves in multiple forms. The adherence to an unvaried or uniform meaning for symbols can lead to the rather common, static example in Freudian psychology that all oblong objects in dreams are masculine symbols and all round or hollow objects are feminine symbols.

### Dreams and the Mystic

Jung says that it is unjustifiable to take the gender of dreams literally under all circumstances, while other contents are explained as symbolic. As soon as you consider your dream symbols as representing something that is possibly unknown at the moment to your reasoning mind, your ideas about what it is your dreams are trying to say to you are given a chance to expand.

As an analogy: treating our dreams only from the limited Freudian point of view is like treating the symptoms of a chronic headache alone without considering the possibility that it might be a symptom for a deeper ailment elsewhere. But to give a fixed meaning to symbols is the method most promulgated by universities which teach Freudian oriented Causal Psychology only,



Carl Jung (1875-1961)

for this is obviously more sympathetic to the scientifically-oriented spirit of our time, with its strictly causal type of reasoning.

The mystical student is particularly drawn to the many writings of the Swiss doctor Carl

*The evaluation of dreams varies according to whether we consider them from a Freudian or Jungian view.*

Jung because his concept that all dream images are important in and of themselves has strong resonance with the experiences of those who actively seek to understand their innermost thoughts and motives. Each symbol has a special significance of its own, and a definite reason for being included in our dreams. As against Freud's view that the dream is essentially a wish-fulfilment, a mystic might agree with Jung who says that "the dream is a spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious." Let's explore this statement further.

### Individuality of Dreams

From Jung's synchronistic standpoint, the dream symbol has more the value of a "parable" or "simile" in that it does not try to disguise what it is trying to say; rather, it teaches us to alter our psychological understanding, to "see" things from a totally different point of view. It is highly desirable for us to understand our dream's symbolic content so that we might achieve a healthy, well-balanced relationship between our conscious and unconscious state of being. Jung calls this the "individuation process" and a mystic might refer to it as "Consciousness of the Cosmic" or attunement with the Master Within.

What we have read about dreams is mostly the "causal" or fixed interpretation given to symbols and repeated endlessly in well-meaning books. When we accept these values only, the

*Each human being is unique where his or her dream world is concerned.*

dream content loses much of its importance as a special and personal message just for us. Each human being is unique where his or her dream world is concerned. Therefore, a "typical dream" is as rare as the proverbial hen's tooth, but unlike the said hen's tooth, it does exist in "motif" form.





*From Jung's synchronistic standpoint, the dream symbol has more the value of a "parable" or "simile."*

The value of the "typical dream" motif lies in the comparison that we can make with the motifs found in mythology, fairytales and medieval and Eastern alchemy. Chinese alchemy is especially fruitful in this vein. Children's fairytales can take on a whole new meaning for us as adults, if we can change our point of view regarding them.

### Origin of Dreams

On the other side of the dream spectrum, the philosopher Nietzsche suggested the idea that dream images should be regarded as an evolutionary mode of thought. In other words, just as the body still bears traces of its archaic development, such as the tiny muscles that move the hairs on our skin when we get cold, so does the human mind have vestiges from an archaic mode of thought. These no longer consciously realised beginnings still colour the unconscious material which rises to the surface of our consciousness.

The resulting dream symbols come from an area where time and space seem to have no set pattern, and antique, and at times, rather useless remnants of primitive "thought" can be brought

into our dream contents by chance association, or set off by our state of mind at the moment of dreaming. It really should not be too surprising that the figurative language of dreams is a survival from the thoughts of our first ancestors. However, our dreams contain a reflection of only certain contents of the general unconscious as a whole. These certain or partial contents are linked together associatively and are selected by our conscious situation at the moment of dreaming.

### Complementation

It must now seem quite obvious that in order to better interpret our dreams we need an awareness of where our consciousness was centred not only during the moment of dreaming, but during the past day as well. Dr. Jung says, "*The dream contains its unconscious complement, the material which the conscious situation has clustered together in the unconscious.*"

In other words, whatever has occurred to you during the past day and has remained incompletely realised, under or over evaluated, will attempt to "complement" itself, or show another side to the conscious situation through the vehicle of your dreams. Complementation is a form of compensation in that it provides the necessary balance for a wholly integrated personality. Well, it is right here that most of us run into difficulty by assuming clichés such as "people with gloomy outlooks should have joyful dreams." Unfortunately for us, this is not the case, because some dream compensations take the "reductive" form of "like curing like."

For instance: When some of us have dream experiences which are considerably worse in nature than the conscious situation at the time,

*Our dreams contain a reflection of only certain contents of the general unconscious as a whole.*

the impact of the dream alone can cause us to alter our conscious awareness and see a different perspective if only the thought that "things could be worse" occurs to us. In reality, dreams are trying to get us to examine our problems and our conscious attitudes which may not be in harmony with things as they actually are.

What we need to remember, though often overlook, is that the character of compensatory dreams cannot be separated from the whole nature



of ourselves as individuals. What is useful in teaching one person is not always useful in teaching another. It is very true that even professional dream interpretation is on shaky ground.

### Prospective Dreams

Our dreams can certainly let us know what our future prospects are. Jung labels this particular type of dream as prospective; but this function should not be taken as prophetic any more than a doctor's diagnosis or a weather forecast. As we know, these forecasts do not always follow through!

Similarly, the prospective dream, as an anticipatory combination of probabilities, may coincide with the real outcome of things, but need not necessarily agree in minute detail. Since dreams in general can rely on the superior knowledge of subliminal memory traces that are no longer able to influence us consciously, they are in a better position to forecast. Yet this superior knowledge should not be made into a "psychopomp" or an all-seeing eye, as Jung warns, because the processes of consciousness and unconsciousness should be considered as equal parts of a whole. The wise mystic will find this quite harmonious with his own thoughts on the subject of duality.

So-called "psychic" dreams, unlike physically or psychologically-induced dreams, are always impersonal and further our highest and most spiritual natures. If there is no other way in which we can learn something that is important to our spiritual growth, we might become the recipient of dreams that are very special. They do not require any outside interpretation for us to understand their special meaning. However, our understanding of the contents, if not immediately, will, in time, follow in a most rational way, being quite reasonable and well-balanced.

### Living with Our Dreams

When we reach a stage of awareness when we no longer feel guilt or fear from the contents of



*When some of us have dream experiences which are considerably worse in nature than the conscious situation at the time, the impact of the dream alone can cause us to alter our conscious awareness and see a different perspective...*

our dreams, but can view them differently as being instead implements of teaching, then we are close to that understanding, knowing form of detachment which is needed for steady mystical progress.

The subject of dreams is so enormously complex that this short article cannot pretend to be more than a bare outline of the subject. However, I wish to stress that Jung's theory of dreams does not negate Freud's brilliantly-conceived, personalistic oriented psychology, it simply adds an impersonal factor, an acausal connecting principle that Jung calls "synchronistic."

In conclusion, this introduction into the Jungian psychology of dreams attempts to convey

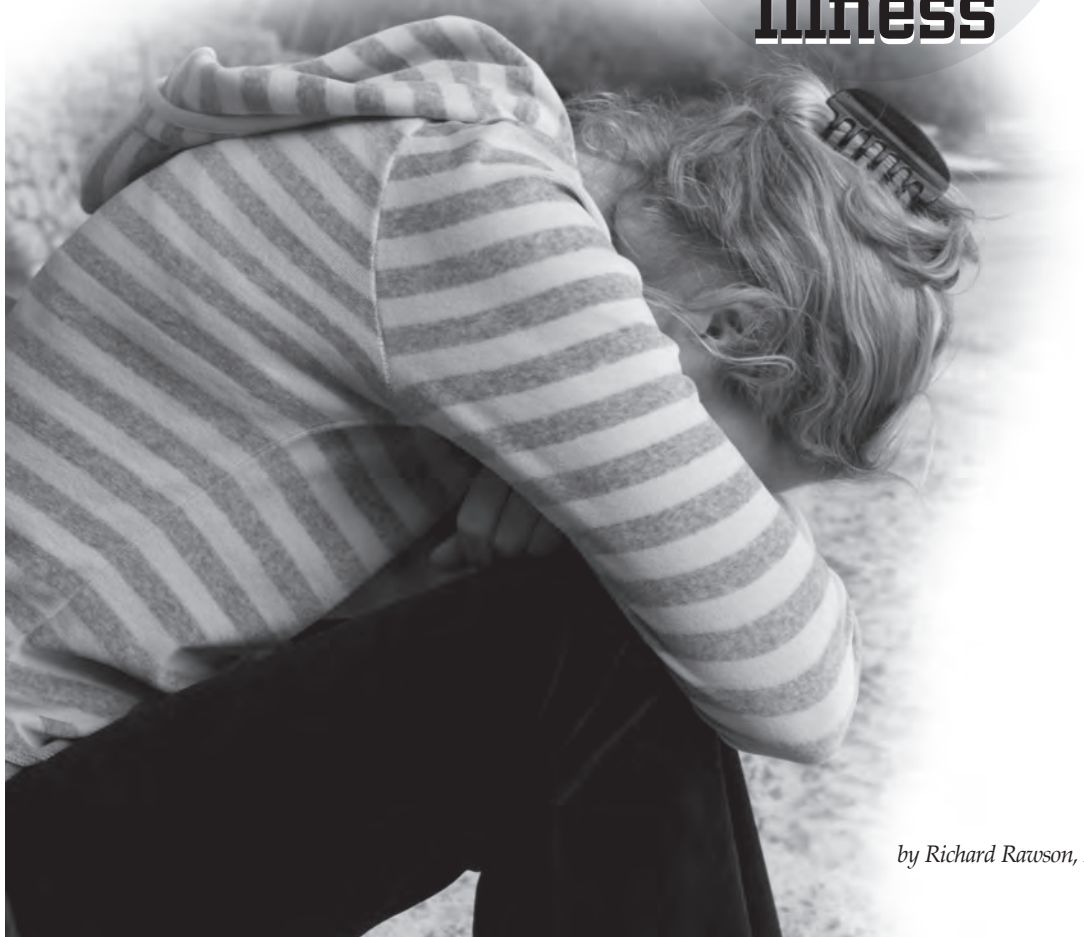
***So-called "psychic" dreams are always impersonal and further our highest and most spiritual natures.***

the value of considering our dream world as being of equal importance with our reasonable, conscious world. To give our dreams too much importance or none at all worth mentioning, is to make us flat or one-sided personalities, a condition which is far from the full and harmonious life for which we strive.

For further information see: *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Volume No. 8, "The Structures and Dynamics of the Psyche."



# Coping With Mental Illness



*by Richard Rawson, MD, FRC*

**M**ENTAL ILLNESS IS RECOGNISED as one of the most common afflictions affecting humanity. Depression and anxiety are the most frequent symptoms of conditions that may severely impair people's effectiveness and happiness. Excessive elation, impulsivity, hallucinations and delusions are other signs and symptoms of less

frequent, but still common, conditions that stop us from achieving our fullest potential. So common are these conditions that all of us know at least one person who suffers from it.

Some of us may live with a family member or have relatives who suffer one form or other of mental illness, and some of us may be coping with certain of these symptoms ourselves. It has been



said that the preliminary step to attaining self-mastery is learning the skill of coping with mental illness, and coping usually entails understanding in two areas: the nature of mental illness, and

*It is quite common for the mentally ill to minimise and deny their symptoms to avoid conscious confrontation with the fact of their condition.*

what to do about it. Rosicrucian principles are central to both.

Most of the symptoms of mental illness are more severe or persistent extensions of natural sensations, emotions or thoughts. It is quite common for those without mental health problems to feel concern about these symptoms and to fear that they may be mentally ill and to be afraid of official opinion that might confirm their concern. On the other hand, it is also quite common for people who are mentally ill to minimise and deny their symptoms to avoid conscious confrontation with the fact of their condition.

The actual distinction between what is “normal” and what is “illness” is in fact vague. Mental illness is actually defined socially. It is said to exist when common sensations, emotions or thoughts are so intense or persistent that someone is unable to adequately function in ordinary daily life activities. Coping with mental illness then, is really a matter of knowing how to deal with the symptoms, beliefs and behaviours of those who, for their own individual reasons, are burdened with an unusual intensity of “normal” subjective experience.

### **Intense Subjective Experience**

Most of us often desire an intense subjective experience..., if it is pleasurable. Few of us would think of intense pleasure as being a “burden.” Rather, it is a much sought-after goal of objective experience. Similarly, the avoidance of intense displeasure or pain is a universal attribute of the human personality. Both pleasure and pain are primarily subjective attributes of the mundane self, the objective individuality.

Excessive investment of personal time, energy and consciousness in the search for pleasure or to escape from pain can in fact become a major burden upon the resources of the objective individuality. When one is sufficiently burdened, objective individuality will fail to effectively address

the needs of objective reality. To cope with mental illness we must first understand the limitations of objective individuality which usually concerns itself exclusively with the world of ordinary emotional and physical experience. Without the awareness of something greater than our own ego, we will see the mundane world as a forceful, ever-present, hostile physical experience. The opportunity for pain will seem great and the opportunity for pleasure small. We will be motivated in virtually all of our activities to directing the physical experience away from pain and toward pleasure.

With consciousness of our greater self, the soul personality, an opportunity for peace, beauty and harmony becomes available, which is independent of the controlling forces of physical



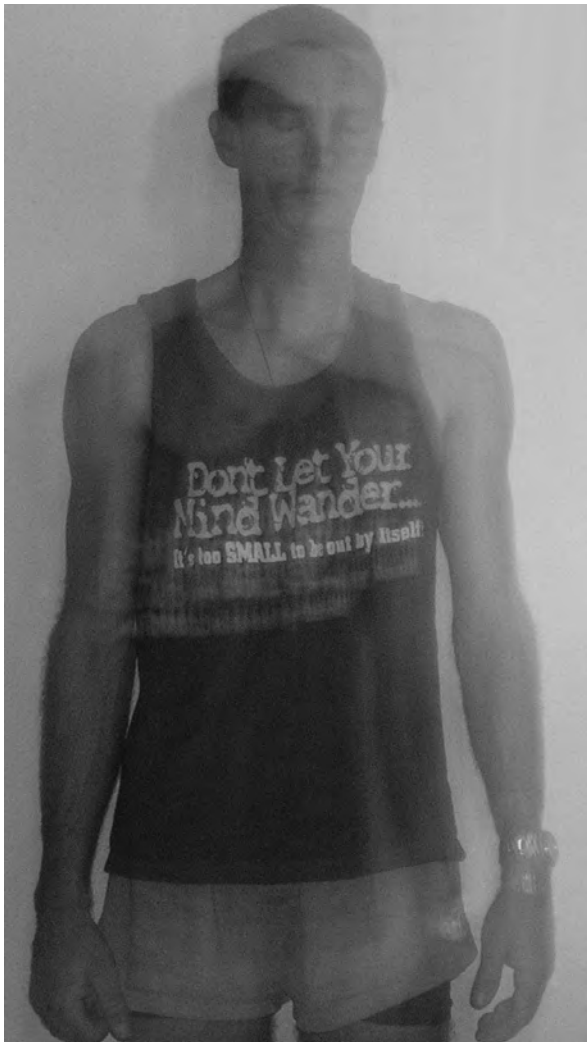
*It is quite common for those without mental health problems to feel concern about these symptoms and to fear that they may be mentally ill and to be afraid of official opinion that might confirm their concern.*

nature. Pain and pleasure are not denied; they are reduced in significance to their proper proportion to mere objective matters. *Self-mastery* is the single most important means for coping with mental illness in yourself and also for coping with mental illness in others.

### **Changing Someone Else**

When faced with the emotional distress or inharmonious behaviour of others who have a mental illness, we are impelled to try to do something to the other person to make them change. It should not take more than one or two tries to realise that attempting to change others is *not* a very efficient approach. The basis for this





*It is common to want to escape into the higher self; to disassociate from the everyday world and our vehicle in it.*

becomes more apparent as we realise that each of us is really a subtle and yet very powerful expression of both a higher and a lower self. When trying to change someone else, our attention is principally on the lower self, the objective personality, which is responsible for the mental illness.

The next temptation is to attempt to cause a change in someone else, but motivated from the perspective of our higher self. We hope to heal someone's mental illness either by compelling them to be aware of their own higher self or by absent healing. But once again we are betrayed by our own attention to the lower self which, in judging it in need of healing, is only reinforced in its significance by our own attention.

At another level, coping with mental

illness consists of a challenge to self-mastery. In this view, the attention is not upon changing someone else but upon the attainment of peace and harmony in the face of the most intense kinds of everyday experience. When fear, anger, hatred and despair lose their power to evoke their sympathetic counterpart and fail to diminish compassion, mental illness begins to wane. The innate attraction to peace, beauty and harmony within each human being awakens and spurs self-motivation to healing. Each encounter with the distress of others lost in the intensity of mundane experience is an opportunity to recall our own attachment to illusion and insignificance, to dissolve that attachment, and reunite with the quality of awareness that knows only love.

If not mental illness itself, then its close cousins, greed, self-destruction, arrogance, self-depreciation, impatience, inaction and stubbornness, are ever-present reminders of our own task of self-mastery. The power of these reminders may be particularly pointed and devastating when they disrupt the caring relationships we have with others. Often the personal anguish felt is greatest when we first begin to awaken to our own higher self, for it is then that the contrast is greatest between what we know to be possible and what we now experience to be so. Coping with mental illness and its cousins may seem to be the most difficult at this time.

In response to the despair occasioned by the awakening, it is common to want to escape into the higher self; to disassociate from the everyday world and our vehicle in it, objective individuality. We may seek a spiritual devotion that denies the reality of the objective world and its many painful frustrations. However, this is not self-mastery, and it does not successfully cope with mental illness. Rather, excess investment in the transcendent can become a mental illness in its own right. Meditative techniques must be used then, not as

*Consciousness of our greater self, the soul personality, offers an opportunity for peace, beauty and harmony.*

an escape, but with a purpose of expanding the awakening within the objective world.

With full awareness and relevant participation in objective reality we may eventually dissolve the source of despair and mental illness with true understanding.



# MEDICINE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINA'S HEALING ARTS

by George Parulski

*In this article, we use Mandarin Chinese words transcribed into English using Hanyu Pinyin. Pinyin was developed in the People's Republic of China in 1958. It was adopted as the international standard for writing Chinese in Roman script from 1979, and is due to become the official Romanisation system in use in Taiwan by 2009. Hanyu Pinyin uses diacritical marks that show the actual pronunciation of the words in Mandarin, a language that uses tones to distinguish meanings of words. Many Chinese words are more familiar in the West using the old Wade-Giles system of spelling Chinese. I have included these in brackets.*

**H**EATED ROCKS, BURNING MUGWORT, stone needles and ginseng root, these were the tools of ancient Chinese physicians. The origin of their knowledge is buried in the dark folds of obscure history before the dawning of Christianity, even before the doctrine of the *Yi Jīng* (I Ching). The early benefactors of their healing arts included the

ancient Asian cave dwellers and later the warriors of the Chinese warlords. Oddly enough, many of the techniques they used were more effective than modern medicine.

The study of Chinese medicine is important, if not just fascinating, for many reasons. The use of acupuncture needles, *moxa* (a substance burned over an acupuncture point), and an amazing





varied collection of natural medicines is older than Western civilisation and has by no means been abolished by it. Chinese medicine is not just a system of healing but is tied in with a whole philosophy, a concept of the world, outside of which it loses all meaning. For the Chinese, humans are a small universe and an image of the larger one. The equilibrium of our bodies, of life on Earth and of the stars and planets are all controlled by the same mechanisms. To study Chinese medicine is therefore to gain a better understanding of Chinese thought: to begin to penetrate structures that at first seem not only foreign to us but even antagonistic.

Finally, that dense but never indigestible study ends with a very rich perspective, since, thousands of years ago, the Chinese had knowledge that seems beyond the reach of science as it existed at that time. Chinese medicine is therefore a message in a bottle cast into the ocean of centuries.

It is clear that a journey into Chinese medicine takes us far beyond both China and the human body. Traditional Chinese medicine rests on the application of certain philosophical principles. To understand it, we must become familiar with these principles. Humans are the

*It is clear that a journey into Chinese medicine takes us far beyond both China and the human body.*

summary of the universe, a microcosm (from the Greek *mikros kosmos*, small world) in relation to the macrocosm (*makros kosmos* or great world). Being an integral part of the whole, and at the same time a miniature version of it, we are subject to the same universal laws. The same idea of a relation between the life of the heavenly bodies and that of earthly organisms is also found in astrology and other divining arts.

For the ancient Chinese, all knowledge was summed up in three terms: *Yáng*, *Yīn*, and *Dào* (Tao). The word Yang originally meant "sunlight", or what pertained to it; Yin meant "shadow" or "darkness". The dualistic theory of Yang and Yin is cosmic in scope, since the sky and sun are Yang while the earth and the moon are Yin. All living beings contain both principles. Yang is masculinity, activity, splendour and hardness. It is left and black. The numbers that correspond to it are one and the other odd numbers. Yin represents



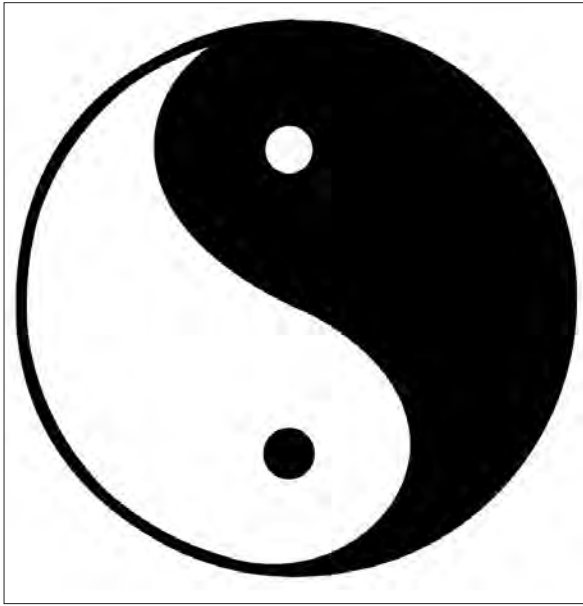
*Attending a Chinese healing clinic.*

what is feminine, passive, plain and soft. It is the void and is right and white. Its numbers are two and all the other even numbers.

The Cosmos of the Chinese was a Cosmos controlled by waves. Modern physics is based on waves, but the Chinese, who claim to have been the first to envision the concept, never thought of applying it specifically to the interpretation of physical phenomena. The entire universe is subject to slow and opposing pulsations. Some modern astronomers believe that the recession of the galaxies will someday be reversed and that the universe is animated by a reciprocating motion which recalls that of the two Chinese principles of Yin-Yang.

On the human level, "each person can be Yang in one sense and Yin in the other". The pulsation is found in the contraction and dilation of the heart-systole and diastole, succeeding one another rhythmically, keeping the blood in motion. In the lungs the pulsation is more in accordance with the rhythm of exhalation and inhalation. Yang and Yin are conceived as completely impersonal natural forces that are always found together: "The Tao is a Yang and a Yin". The Tao is the divine law that controls relationships between the microcosm and macrocosm. The Tao is also the beginning. According to the *Dàodéjīng* (Tao-te Ching or Book of Taoist Virtue): "To know the supreme Tao is extremely difficult. To communicate it is appallingly difficult. Who can boast of knowing its main characteristics?" Yet the Tao can be known through study and learning how to decipher it.





*Yáng and Yīn*

Another school that attempted to account for both the structure and origins of the universe claimed it was based on the five primordial elements. At first the two schools were unrelated to each other but later they merged. Wood, fire, earth, metal and water are the five elements of which all things are made. The five planets: Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Venus and Mercury, remain associated with the elements that gave birth to them. This correspondence extends to the five organs (liver, heart, spleen, lungs and

kidneys), the five seasons (late summer, being counted as a separate season), the five cardinal points (including the centre), the five colours (yellow, black, red, green and white), and so on. The individual's physical constitution, being divided into five different types, also represents the material form of the five elements.

All elements reflect the principle of Yin-Yang, and their relations have medical applications in both diagnosis and treatment. It was with these four theories: Yang, Yin, Tao and the five elements that Chinese healers founded their system of medicine. In legend, long before recorded history, the first great Chinese healer was the legendary Huángdì the "Yellow Emperor". With his minister Qíbó, he would enter into heated debates revolving around acupuncture or the influences of wind, heat, cold and humidity on the human body. The celebrated *Nèijīng* is often ascribed to him. The *Nèijīng*, the first great medicine book, is composed of two parts. The first part, Suwen, forms the basis and core of the book, embracing the entire realm of medical knowledge, herbs through broken bones. The second part, the Lingshu (spiritual

*The Tao is the divine law that controls relationships between the microcosm and macrocosm.*

nucleus), constitutes largely, a supplement to the Shuwen, dealing mainly with acupuncture.

### Acupuncture

Acupuncture is based on the concept that certain channels or ducts, now called meridians, extend internally, perhaps embedded in the muscles, throughout the body in a fixed network. The 365 points on the skin are the spots where those meridians emerge on the surface. Since skin points, meridians and the viscera are interrelated, and since all of these naturally harbour the ebb and flow of Yin and Yang, a cure is believed possible by treating one of the skin "outlet" points.

The insertion of needles into these strategic points is designed to diminish an abundance (excess) or to replenish a deficiency, depending on the particular need of the diseased organ. It is assumed that the stagnant Qi is drained and young fresh Qi is substituted.

Qi, (or Ch'i) is the vital energy or life force, the intrinsic force, that flows within the meridians



*Dào symbol*



and throughout the universe. There are two basic types of *Qi*: *Runqi* and *Weiqi*. *Weiqi* flows outside the body, generating and activating the flow of life, and is found in the foods we eat, the air we breathe, it is this *Qi* that sustains all life. *Runqi* is a liquid like substance that flows within the meridians keeping the balance in the body. *Qi* energy in the body is replenished by the foods we eat and the air we breathe.

What we might ask at this point is if there is any scientific evidence to support the theory of meridians in the body?

In June 1960, a team of Soviet doctors convened at the Russian Acupuncture Conference at Gorki (now known again as Nizhny Novgorod). While one group reported the success of acupuncture in treating impotence, other physicians at the conference told of their experiments in search of the meridians. They found that acupuncture points, existing precisely where Chinese physicians had known them to be for 5,000 years, could be detected by rubbing a sensitive stethoscope over the skin. The sounds, they reported, differed from those in other areas of the skin. They further stated that skin at those points along the meridians was less dense than at other points of the body. Two other scientists at the Gorki Conference, D.A. Galov and



*The Cosmos of the Chinese was a Cosmos controlled by waves. Here we see people being carried in its current.*

*It seems that acupuncture points, exist precisely where Chinese physicians had known them to be for 5,000 years.*

V.J. Piatigorski, found that skin temperature at acupuncture points differ from other skin-surface temperatures.

Professor Kim Bong Han, of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), reported that skin cells along these meridians were structured differently from most skin cells and that in addition there were clusters of another unusual kind of cell, later named "Bonghan corpuscles" in his honour.

### Healing With Heat

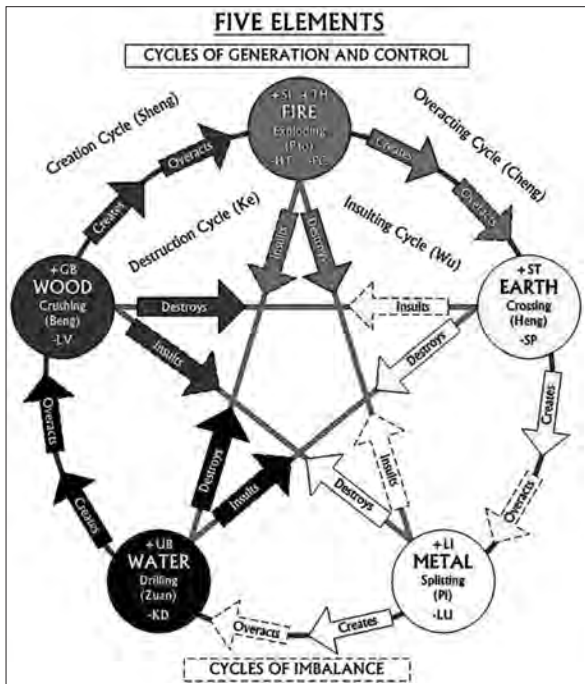
Heat treatment to alleviate certain ailments probably extends as far back as acupuncture and

herbal medicine. Many prominent Chinese scholars believe that the treatment called moxibustion may have been used to ease the rheumatic pains of prehistoric people, whose environment more often was cold and damp, especially for cave dwellers. It is believed that the Stone-Age Chinese first soothed aching joints by applying heated stones to their bodies, later refining the method through experimentation with burning mugwort. In the *Nèijīng*, moxibustion is referred to as a well-developed process.

In earlier times, the herb was burned to the skin and the ashes were rubbed into the wound. Even today, in some areas, we may see former patients bearing scars as a result of such treatment. In most modern Chinese clinics *ai-yen* leaves are formed into sticks about 10 to 13 centimetres long or into bean-sized cones or balls. A pleasant warmth on the skin's surface is desired and the *moxa* is usually removed before scorching occurs. In Japan and some parts of China, moxibustion is applied by small tubes fitted with handles containing the mugwort leaves.

For one treatment, three to five *moxa* balls are required. Sometimes they may be applied to various points of the meridians, or they may be applied one after another to the same point. A *moxa* stick burns about four to five minutes. If a sedating effect is desired, the stick is held over the appropriate meridian point. For a toning effect, strong, persistent stimulation to the meridian point, the glowing *moxa* stick is lightly tapped





Chinese elements: the individual's physical constitution, being divided into five different types, also represents the material form of the five elements.

against the skin. Overheating is avoided.

To relieve pain, a fresh garlic slab is placed over the point of treatment. A small hole is bored through the garlic and a *moxa* cone is ignited. To

*It is believed that the Stone-Age Chinese first soothed aching joints by applying heated stones to their bodies.*

compensate for lack of energy in an afflicted organ to re-channel Qi, a base of salt is used, followed by a cone of *moxa* being burned over the treatment point. When the salt becomes overheated, it is replaced.

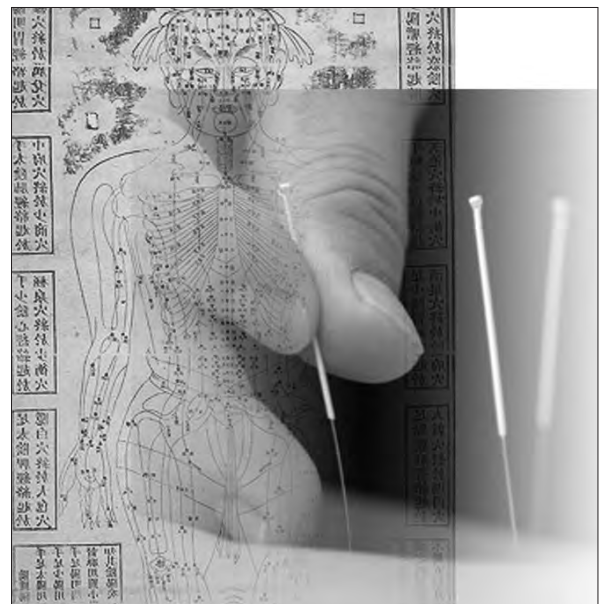
### Healing Herbs

Among the foremost cultural heroes of China is the legendary Emperor *Shénnóng* (Shen Nung the "Divine Farmer"), to whom is attributed the founding of agriculture and the first experiments with herbal remedies. This legendary emperor was conveniently blessed with a transparent covering across his abdomen, through which he could observe the inner workings of his body and note the effects of various herbal remedies. After compounding and self-testing hundreds

of herbal preparations, his observations were preserved in the first pharmacopoeia, called the *Běncào* (Pen-ts'ao) or *Herbal*. This work lists 365 preparations and their medical applications. The majority of these medicaments are herbal. Of the rest, forty contain animal material and eleven contain minerals.

The *Běncào* is followed by several pharmacopoeias written by eminent Chinese physicians. The most definitive of these works is the *Běncào Gāngmù* (Pen-ts'ao kang-mu) or *The Outline of Herb Medicine*. Completed by Lǐ Shízhēn (Li Shih-chen) in 1578 CE, the *Běncào Gāngmù* was a distillation of the therapeutic knowledge of the ages. The author spent thirty years researching through more than 800 existing works, checking and rechecking for possible errors. His completed work, consisting of many volumes, lists 192 medicaments of animal origin, 1,094 medicaments of vegetable origin (610 herbs, 484 trees and shrubs), 275 medicaments derived from metals and minerals and 31 medicaments from "everyday articles." In all, the work lists over 1,800 animal, vegetable and mineral drugs, and over 8,000 prescriptions. The result is a most complete pharmacopoeia still much consulted by folk doctors of modern China.

These substances generally are not thought to "cure" in the modern Western sense



Acupuncture is based on the concept that certain channels or ducts, now called meridians, extend internally, perhaps embedded in the muscles, throughout the body in a fixed network.





*Acupuncture is based on the concept that Smoke rises from moxa burning atop needles on the back of a patient during a treatment. Chinese Acupuncture and Moxibustion are based on a traditional Chinese medicine theory that heat from burning moxa transmitted to the skin indirectly through needles can help relieve pains on the waist, neck and shoulder.*

of prophylaxis and the immune reaction. Rather, Chinese folk remedies seek to maintain or re-establish, within the body, the balance of cosmic

*Many of today's drugs were known and effectively used by Chinese physicians and pharmacists many centuries ago.*

forces, without which, health and vigour are unobtainable.

Herbs, of course, play an important part in modern medicine, both in Chinese practice and throughout the world. Many of today's drugs, which are taken for granted by most of us, were known and effectively used by Chinese physicians and pharmacists many centuries ago, long before becoming a part of Western pharmacopoeias. What is known by many non-Chinese is that ancient Chinese herb medicines are often more effective than some modern synthetic drugs, and some of the Western medications are ineffective against diseases that are usually cured without side-effects by centuries-old Chinese medicaments.

As an example, acute bacillary dysentery, caused by bacteria of the genus *Shigella*, related to salmonella, was treated more effectively with a mixture of a variety of the peony flower and two other Chinese herbs, prepared according to ancient prescription, than with either sulphaguanidine or streptomycin. The latter drugs are both modern and widely used against dysentery.

Although Chinese medicines get more than

their share of criticism from the Western medical world, often that criticism is given without proper knowledge of the Orientals' multifaceted, multipurpose arts of healing. But if we take the time to delve into the facts, even the most dubious Western critic would find that their methods are thoroughly tested and often more effective than Western techniques, possibly offering an entirely new world of understanding to modern medical science and human health.



*Herbs play an important part in modern medicine, both in Chinese practice and throughout the world.*





# The Inner Revolution

*by Samuel Avital, FRC*

**A**S MYSTICS TRAINED TO OBSERVE keenly the phenomena of life around us, being in tune with the forces and laws of the universe and being both analytical and reverent toward all life, we can't help but see areas of corruption and decadence of our society but try to see beyond such appearances. This increases our work of

bettering ourselves and bringing about beneficial influences to all living things.

These observations and reflections must be acted upon in our lives every day, so that the manifestations of our actions become visible. Through positive action we prepare the ground for change and are willing to accept that change with our whole being, and with understanding and



compassion. We are in an era of wonder and great changes and can already see these affect many people all over the planet. Only the deliberately blind and selfish who ignore the hunger, war and

*The strength to serve comes from within, and must be maintained with all our love and understanding.*

upheaval of nations and individuals in all walks of life that are so manifest today, are content with the world as it is. Despite the negative thoughts and actions vibrating around the Earth, we must so to speak "keep the light shining," and visualise, hope and pray only for what is good for all concerned. In spite of the illusion of appearances, we must keep alive within us the flame of spiritual awareness and compassion for others, and kindle the flame with the murmurs of our heart, by always giving the very best of our talents and skills.

The strength to serve comes from within, and must be maintained with all our love and understanding. By doing so, our strength increases and is manifested with more power for the service of all. This inner power exists in every human being. Mystics are no different from others; they are simply trained to nurture an attitude of reflection and vigilant study of the laws of the Cosmic. Knowing that the laws are impersonal and are at work in all things, they succeed in their labour of love. They know that the source of being is a unitary actuality beyond all comprehension, and that all things are connected by invisible threads of love and attraction for a specific purpose in this lifetime. They understand the many paradoxes which puzzle those who do not observe life. Thus is born the deep conviction in the effects of their work.

### Power of Thought

Mystics know that an "inner revolution" can come about by their own thoughts, and they simply increase their efforts when results do not come about as quickly as they had hoped. They wait patiently and learn how to learn. These are the qualities that make them so ordinary and simple in their ways of living.

From observation and experience, mystics learn that our planet is surrounded by a force field

consisting of mankind's negative thoughts and actions accumulated over years of hatred, greed, selfishness and lack of will to share with others the blessings of life. This metaphorical field of darkness must be cleared by positive thoughts emanating from men and women of good intent, and all the more so by those who are involved in deliberate inner mystical work. Mystics join the great number of like minded people to heal the aura of the planet through their quiet work. They mentally and spiritually activate the rays of light to scatter the clouds of doubt and selfishness, first from their own hearts, and then from the world itself. In this way, and in humble increments, they aid in the efforts of all who are working in the same direction.

The purpose of the "inner revolution" is to bring about a change in the character of the person who aspires honestly to live in harmony here on Earth. The first step to initiate the inner revolution is simply to begin listening inwardly



*Mystics are no different from others; they are simply trained to nurture an attitude of reflection and vigilant study of the laws of the Cosmic.*

and examine the quality of thoughts in the mind. This must be done regularly if there is to be any effect at all. Observing our thoughts with scrupulous honesty can reveal what we are made of. Little by little, thoughts emerge that urge us to do what is necessary to correct the circumstances that are resulting in inharmonious conditions. By listening more deeply, the steps toward restoration and healing come to our aid, and by acting in this way we assist the inner forces to manifest as we visualise them.

This simple process enables us to penetrate the depths of our being. We must be willing to change in order to enjoy this beautiful



transformation. It opens before us a door to huge possibilities. This begins with the determination to cultivate self-honesty, and to act selflessly, with love, in all thoughts and deeds. An attitude of harmlessness is necessary to assist this change. In

*The purpose of the "inner revolution" is to bring about a change in the the person who aspires honestly to live in harmony here on Earth.*

time, the results of constant effort will manifest in self-evolution and a new urge to serve others in ways suggested by this inner guide.

Perseverance and simplicity are the keys to this holy work; the discovery of the inner jewel residing in our heart, the Flame of our being, the Light from the source of our becoming. By having a firm conviction, an open heart and mind, our way will be clear and sane. But we must work diligently and not expect results quickly. By changing ourselves, we can change others by the example we set without preaching or proselytising. Simply by being true to self, we radiate that inner light to all around us.

### Raising the Vibrations

Those who are aware of the immense psychic and mental pollution of the Earth are ready enough to do something about it. The low thoughts and emotions the minds and hearts of the ignorant have caused far too much crime and war. Now truly is the time for everyone concerned with the welfare of humanity to do whatever they can to raise her out of the mire she is in.

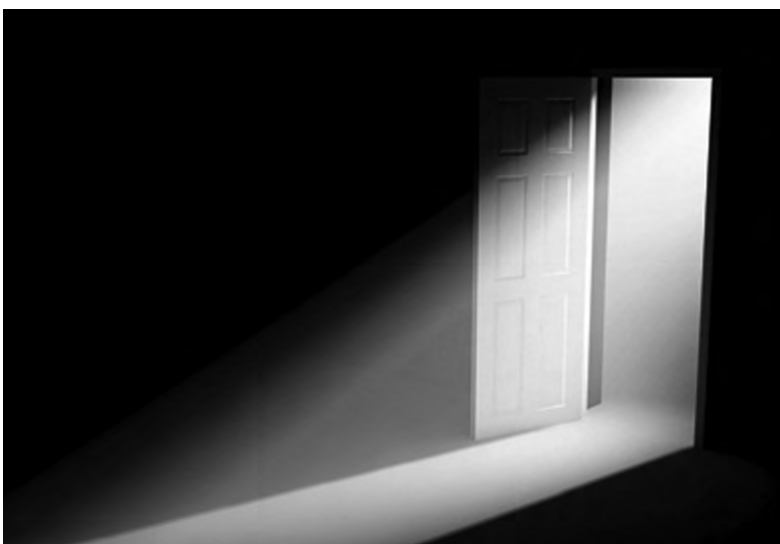
In his book *Shambhala, Oasis of Light*, Andrew Tomas says on this subject: *"The most essential is to neutralise the frightful aura of the Earth, brought about by the accumulation of the most vile instincts of humanity. Synchronised meditations on Peace and Brotherhood, if only for a few minutes on certain days, could accomplish miracles if directed to the whole globe. Already this task is assumed in part by some esoteric bodies and religions, but every human being aspiring to peace, brotherhood and harmony could participate in this noble effort."*

We need not be affiliated with any religion to participate in this task. Simply dedicate a few moments regularly to dwelling on peace and harmony to balance the psychic atmosphere around the planet. The awareness of this inner revolution can bring us to this task selflessly for that purpose, but we must of greatest urgency, *cultivate the silence within* in order to be effective in such work. On a retreat once I found on the walls of the library this inscription contributed by a Sufi brother: *"If the word you are about to say is not as beautiful as silence, do not say it."*

This golden rule guides us to cultivate the silence within so as to listen deeply, speak less and do more in humility and reverence.

This attitude is what we need to allow us to join the assembly of minds and hearts united in this beneficial task. It comes as a result of the invested effort in changing ourselves and contributing to the well-being of all from the light within. This *inner revolution* on the personal level can bring about the manifestation of *self-evolution*. With the radiation of our light toward all, we add to the healing and restoration of the planet that we cherish for the continuation of human civilisation. We also help bring about the leap to the next level of realisation of Cosmic Consciousness and serve the spiritual Masters in their great work.

I hope these words agree with your innermost aspirations and further your work toward that noble goal of being one in all and with all.



*The first step to initiate the inner revolution is simply to begin listening inwardly and examine the quality of thoughts in the mind.*





# Experiencing Perfection

*by Amorifer*



**A**MONG THE FESTIVITIES AND GOOD cheer celebrated at the end of each year is the traditional Christmas raffle. I was fortunate to win a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle on such an occasion. The puzzle depicted a bowl of flowers resting on a windowsill, and the light streaming through the

window emphasised the beauty and rich colours of the flowers.

It was the first time I had attempted to put together a puzzle of that size but with the occasional help of relatives it was completed after some five weeks. I reflected back on the times when I wanted to give up after struggling for over



an hour, and all I had managed to put together was a miserable number of some four pieces or so. And again on the few times when I had forced a piece into place, only to discover the knock-on consequence on many other pieces becoming unable to be placed. I soon realised that all but

*Some of the attributes of "perfect" are to be faultless, excellent, precise or absolute.*

a gentle tap on each piece was required to put it into place.

Now that the puzzle was completed, the euphoria soon faded but for some inexplicable reason I had the feeling that there was some important point I had missed. About a month afterwards, I began to receive "intuitive flashes" during the borderline state of consciousness following on from sleep and prior to waking fully. I realised that on putting the final piece into place, I had experienced perfection. The puzzle was completed, with no more effort and time required to fit the puzzle together. The scene depicted by the puzzle had matched the scene on the box-cover perfectly. But was there more to this "revelation" that meets the eye? For me, a chain of mystical thinking on the subject unfolded and I would like very much to share these ideas with you.

The subject of this article: "Experiencing Perfection" is comprised of just two words, but considering each word separately and together can give rise to much worthwhile thought. Let's consider "perfection" first. Some of the attributes of "perfect" are to be faultless, excellent, precise or absolute. Associated with the property of being perfect is the context in which it is applied. For example, as previously described in the context of assembling jigsaw puzzles, perfection is achieved immediately the final piece is put in place. Perfection on the other hand occurs in many other forms, especially in the context of mathematics. For example, the simple sum  $2+2=4$  is perfect, as this is always true in decimal arithmetic. There are more complex ones in the mathematical context for example there are the so-called perfect numbers.

In Geometry, theorems can be classed as perfect, so much so, that it is claimed that Pythagoras, the father of geometry, said that "in the beginning God geometrised." It is important

to realise that these examples of perfection (axioms) are of the material universe. In the Cosmic, perfection is absolute. I can't find words to describe what the term: "perfection is absolute" means..., only to imply that it is of the highest and most inclusive of all possible levels and states of perfection.

Now let's consider "Experiencing." To have an experience, the corresponding "Knowledge" must impact on the forefront of our consciousness. The experience may manifest on the material plane with a strong physical bias, or on the immaterial plane, such as emotional or illusionary experience. I would like to explain what I mean by: "Knowledge." Essentially I believe there are two planes of existence in addition to the Cosmic. There is the *material plane* wherein we (physical selves,) the stars, atoms, energy waves and so on, exist. Temperature, time, spatial dimensions have a major impact on the material world. Then there is the *immaterial plane* of our consciousness and experiences. There is no matter in the immaterial plane and our subconscious/unconscious thoughts and experiences exist therein. Temperature, time and spatial dimensions have little impact on this plane.

Finally, there is *the Cosmic*. The Cosmic is not really a plane, as it has no spatial dimensions. Time has no impact on the Cosmic, and because there is no time, there are no vibrations whatsoever, since vibrations are a function of time. So what is the Cosmic then? A simplified answer to this very deep question is that the Cosmic is essentially



*Putting the puzzle together is analogous to the way we go through life.*



Absolute Perfect Knowledge. This is explained in the ancient Vedic text of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. When we think about it, Knowledge is immaterial. Knowledge does not have vibrations. It does not possess spatial dimensions. By the way, we must not forget the Light, Life and Love of the Cosmic, but elaborating on these principles is outside the scope of this article.

The analogy of experiencing perfection through completing a jigsaw puzzle can now be explored in more detail. Knowledge and experience are essential for us to live "normal" lives. I would like to suggest that the essential difference between the two is that knowledge is introduced to our consciousness once only, and thereafter that knowledge becomes our personal experience. So repeating "2+2=4" indefinitely will not lead to cosmic illumination. The experience so learnt may occur again and again, and may be further refined through association with more knowledge and/or experience.

So when we pick up a piece of the puzzle for the first time we have the 'knowledge' of that piece. We examine it and use our experiences to consider where best to place it. If we place it correctly, we have an experience of 'minor'

perfection. With each experience of minor perfection we get closer to completing the puzzle. The box-cover is like our soul personality; it is a complete "scene" of what illumination holds for us. Those of us with a mystical disposition will most likely choose a puzzle with a box-cover of a particular and similar design to each other.

In this analogy, the Cosmic is the Absolute Perfect Design of all designs for jigsaw puzzles. Further, the way we go about putting the puzzle together is analogous to the way we go through life. Do we seek help occasionally to complete

*The Comic is essentially Absolute Perfect Knowledge.*

the puzzle? Do we regularly seek to experience perfection to complete our puzzle?

I sincerely hope this article will be of benefit to you and that with meditation on the subject, you will discover knowledge and its corresponding "perfect" experience. As I arrive at the end of writing this article, I would like to share a thought that sprung to mind: "Knowledge is of *light* and *actuality*, experience is of *life*, *love* and *reality*."



A  
Pure  
Heart

*Jean Pierre de Caussade, (1675-1751)*

A pure heart and good will! The one foundation of every spiritual state! The pure heart could well say to every soul: "Look at me carefully. It is I who generate that love which always chooses the better part. I produce that mild but effective fear which arouses such a dread of wrong-doing that it can easily be avoided. I impart that excellent understanding which reveals the greatness of God and

the merit of virtue. And it is also I who causes that passionate and holy yearning which keeps the soul resolute in virtue and in expectation of God."

Yes, O Pure Heart, you can invite everyone to gather round you and enrich themselves with your inexhaustible treasures. There is no spiritual practice, no path to holiness, which does not find its source in you.



# The Cathars

by Bill Anderson, FRC

## Part 3

Inspired by the book "Great Women Initiates"  
by Helene Bernard, SRC

*This is the third part of the series of articles about Catharism, which is regarded as a heresy by the Christian Churches. Ever since they first tasted secular power following the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, the Church has been reluctant to let go of it. Power, as they say, corrupts. Catharism was a popular reaction against the power and dogmas of the Church and was its greatest threat up until the Reformation.*

*Many Rosicrucians feel an affinity with these courageous men and women who dared to think for themselves and risked a terrible death simply because they lived their lives in the spirit of early Christianity.*

*However their spirit never died; and modern Rosicrucianism owes a great debt to these Good Men and Women, whose ideas were so far ahead of their time. The memory of them is dear to us.*

*O just God of all good souls!  
You who are never deceived,  
who never lie or doubt, grant  
us to know what you know, to  
love what you love; for we are  
not of this world, and  
this world is not of us!*

**I**N EUROPEAN HISTORY, THE 11<sup>TH</sup> century is regarded as the beginning of the High Middle Ages. Both the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries in western and southern Europe witnessed a phenomenon referred to as the "Medieval Warm Period," a time of warm weather similar to

what we are living through today. It was a time when grapes were grown in Europe as far north as southern Britain. Agriculture flourished and the surpluses, combined with the growth of population in towns, as well as the artisans and tradesmen who flocked to these ready markets, encouraged the growth



of trade, merchants and what we would today refer to as the Middle Classes.

By the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, there was a commercial renaissance that further stimulated the development of town life, resulting in an early form of capitalism and a more sophisticated commercialised culture. New sets of values arose, notions of equality and citizenship began to appear. Long distance trading and travel, including pilgrimages to Rome, Constantinople, the Holy Land and Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, northern Spain, encouraged the free flow of peoples and ideas.

In the Languedoc, Catharism not only gained support from much of the rural aristocracy, but many of the great nobles too. Society here was markedly more tolerant and cosmopolitan, and had attained a higher degree of prosperity than other areas of Western Europe. With its distinctive and diverse culture, Languedoc and Catalonia, whose languages Occitan and Catalan were mutually intelligible, were prominent centres of the 12<sup>th</sup> century renaissance and the cradle of troubadour lyric poetry, which flourished under the patronage of the noble courts. Here also the Jews enjoyed better treatment than in the rest of Christian Europe, and it was at this time too that the Provençal Jews were in the throws of a cultural and religious renaissance, which led to the production of the first classic book of the medieval Kabala, the *Sepher Bahir*.

Catharism enjoyed its greatest success in Western Europe in the independent towns, Toulouse, Carcassonne, Béziers and Narbonne in the Languedoc and cities such as Florence, Bologna, Cremona, Viterbo and Orvieto in Italy. It

*In the Languedoc, Catharism gained support from much of the rural aristocracy and many of the great nobles too.*

was in Italy that the struggle between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, who supported respectively the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor and were active in the centre and north of the country during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, provided a fertile ground for the propagation of new ideas. In this era there was a struggle for power between the Popes and the Holy Roman Emperor who was usually of German ancestry. The Cathars in Italy were generally linked by ties of family and profession or other networks of association. In



*Santiago de Compostela, site of the tomb of Saint James the Apostle and goal of countless religious pilgrims for a millennium.*

Italian towns Cathars were civic treasurers, guild priors, rising bankers and prosperous artisans, the kind of people who were at the forefront of political and economic change. They tried to build a strong, independent commune. The political situation also encouraged the rising of burghers against their ecclesiastical and lay lords who tried to restrict and restrain their aspirations.

To discover why people turned away from organised religion, it is important to look at the times in which Catharism flourished. Particularly in northern Italy, southern France and Catalonia in north-eastern Spain, there was no large, centralised state to contend with and personal liberties were generally greater, for the aristocracy at least. The lands were ruled by a number of independent lords, or there were city states who played off their more powerful rivals against each other. In Occitania, the rivals were the kings of France, England or Aragón; in Italy it was the Holy Roman Emperors against the Popes.

This age also saw the birth of the Knights Templar to whom the persecuted Cathars would turn for help in their greatest hour of need. It also saw the beginning of the Crusades, an event that has soured Christian-Islamic relations ever since.





*Catharism enjoyed its greatest success in Western Europe in the independent towns, Toulouse, Carcassonne, Béziers (illustrated here) and Narbonne in the Languedoc and cities such as Florence, Bologna, Cremona, Viterbo and Orvieto in Italy.*

On the other hand, the wealthy Norman Kingdom of Sicily was one state where Christians, Muslims and Jews lived and worked side by side in peace and harmony. Muslim Spain and Catalonia also enjoyed a similar state of affairs.

### Catalonia and Aragón

By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Barcelona had developed in a way that was similar to the great mercantile towns of northern Italy. Catalonia shared a border with the Muslim Taifa kingdom of Zaragoza, one of the rival kingdoms that arose after the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba in 1031. The Banu Hud clan had seized control of Zaragoza from a rival clan. Their rulers were great patrons of culture and the arts. But the last king of Zaragoza, forced to abandon his capital, allied himself with the Christian Aragonese under Alfonso I el Batallador who, in 1118, conquered the city for the Christians and made it the capital of the Kingdom of Aragón. This in turn became a cosmopolitan state where Christians and Muslims, for a while at least, lived peacefully side by side.

Especially following the fall of Montségur, though even before that time, there was a trail across

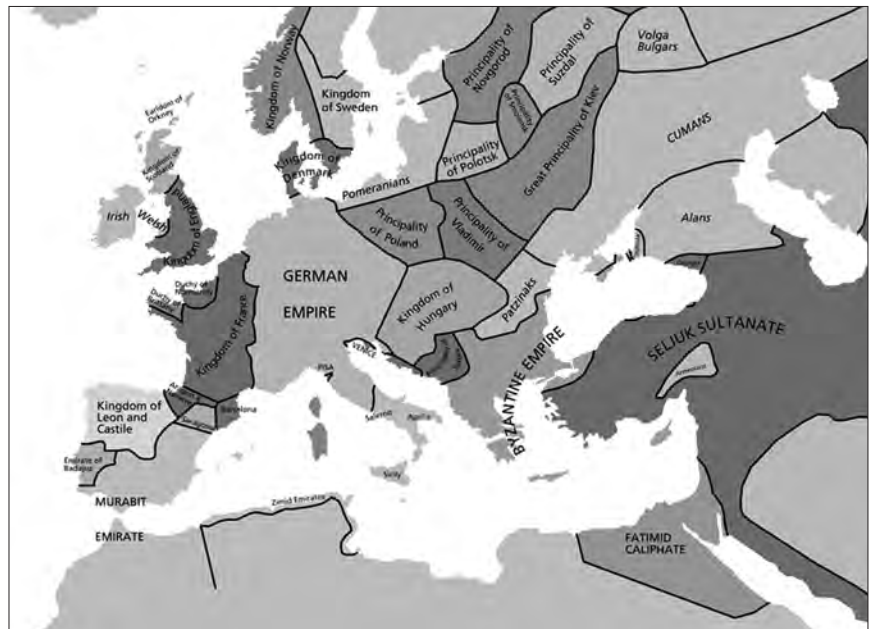
the Pyrenees, which allowed Cathars and others fleeing the Crusaders or the Inquisition to cross from Occitània into Aragón and Catalonia. It is now known as the *Camí dels Bons Homes* or "The Route of the Cathars." The trail is some 189 kilometres long, linking Montségur in the department of Ariège in France with the sanctuary of Queralt in Catalonia, Spain. The route wound its way through medieval villages, past templar churches and strategic castles and hermitages where the fleeing Cathars would find sanctuary.

Many Cathars who tried to escape the troubles in the Languedoc also fled into the Roussillon, nowadays in southern France, but in those days it belonged to the Counts of Barcelona, then to the kings of Aragón, so the French armies

*Following the fall of Montségur there was a trail across the Pyrenees allowing Cathars to flee from Crusaders or the Inquisition.*

couldn't touch the Cathars there. These lands were fully integrated into the crown of Aragón. In fact the kingdom of Mallorca, which was a dependency of the crown of Aragón, had for a time its capital in the French city of Montpellier.

Catharism in Catalonia may not have been as intense as in the Languedoc but it certainly flourished there for many years. In Catalonia,



*Europe at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century showing Barcelona which had developed in a way that was similar to the great mercantile towns of northern Italy.*



as in the Languedoc and Provence, the noble families gave aid and support to the Cathars. There were many Cathars in the region. There also seems to have been a Cathar bishop in the Valle de Aran, a small valley in the Pyrenees in the northwest of Catalonia, but by 1216 Cathar Catalonia seems to have been a dependency of the Bishop of Toulouse. Many Cathars settled in Andorra too, where many textile workers belonged to the faith.

Following the troubles in Languedoc, Cathars fled either to Lombardy or Catalonia. Very few actual Cathar writings have survived, but we know of the following texts: *The Secret Supper*, *The Vision of Isaiah* and *The Book of the Two Principles*.

### Fin' Amors

In late Roman times, northern France was the land of the Franks, a Germanic warrior tribe. In contrast, southern France and Spain were the lands of the Visigoths, a different Germanic tribe, but they ruled over a local population that had been Romanised and civilised for centuries. The laws and customs of southern Europe were more favourable to women than lands further north where women were treated little better than chattels.

The Troubadours were poet-singers. Most were not itinerants, in spite of what many people think, but serious court poets who only occasionally went from castle to castle. Troubadour means "inventor" or "composer" in Occitan. The elevation of the lady in the poetry of *amor cortés* or "courtly love" was a distinct reversal of the actual social status of women in the Middle Ages. This

*The Troubadour tradition began in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Occitània.*

courtly love was a development of a new attitude towards women.

The Troubadour tradition began in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Occitània, but it subsequently spread into Provence, Italy and Spain. Under the influence of the Troubadours, related movements sprang up throughout Europe: the *Minnesänger*



*The Troubadours were poet-singers. Most were not itinerants, in spite of what many people think, but serious court poets who only occasionally went from castle to castle.*

in Germany, and the *Trouvères* in northern France. The texts of Troubadour songs deal mainly with themes of chivalry and courtly love. They sang about what they termed *fin' amors*, literally, "fine love." Most of their songs were metaphysical, intellectual and formulaic. Many were also humorous or vulgar satires. It is thought that the concept of *fin' amors* came originally from the love poetry of al-Andalus, Muslim Spain, where Arab poets had been worshipping their ladies in verse and song for over 200 years.

The classical period of Troubadour activity lasted from about 1170 until about 1220, and the best known Troubadours belong to this period. It was also during this period that the lyric art of the Troubadours reached the height of its popularity and the number of surviving poems is greatest from this period. In Occitània there were female Troubadours called *Trobairitz*, Their existence may have

been a result of the power that women held in southern France during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Women had far more control over land ownership, and Occitan society was far more accepting of women than were other societies of the time. During the Crusades many men were away from home, which left women with more administrative responsibility and consequently more power.

### Being Cathar

The Cathars have fascinated people down through the ages. What was it about them that attracted so many people in so many countries? Catharism, as a Christian religion with dualistic and Gnostic elements, had its roots in the Paulician movement in western Turkey and Bulgaria and the later movement known as the Bogomils, also from Bulgaria. Both were offspring of the original early Gnostic Christians and the Cathars belonged to this same lineage.

Fulk, the Catholic bishop of Toulouse (1206-31), once asked a knight why he did not expel "heretics" from his lands, and received the following answer: "We cannot. We have been reared





*Cathars vehemently repudiated the Christian significance of the Crucifixion and the Cross.*

This placed them at odds with the Catholic Church as regards material creation, on behalf of which Jesus had supposedly died. Intrinsically they believed that the material world was evil and therefore implied that the Catholic God, whose word had created the world in the beginning, was Satan. Furthermore, because the Cathars saw matter as intrinsically evil, they denied that Jesus could have become incarnate and still be the son of God. Cathars vehemently repudiated the significance of the Crucifixion and the Cross. In fact, to the Cathars,

*in their midst. We have relatives among them and we see them living lives of perfection."* Like many medieval movements, there were various schools of thought and practice amongst the Cathars, from Flanders and the Rhineland to Bosnia; but the dualist theology was the most prominent, being based on the irreconcilable incompatibility of love and power. As matter was seen as a manifestation of power, it was also incompatible with love. They did not believe in one all-encompassing god, but in two, both equal in status. They believed that the physical world was evil and created by the *Rex Mundi* ("King of the World" in Latin), who created all that was corporeal, chaotic and

Rome's opulent and luxurious church seemed to them the embodiment and manifestation on Earth of the *Rex Mundi's* sovereignty. Clearly there were ideological differences between Catharism and Catholicism that could not be bridged.

From the Cathar faith came practical injunctions that were considered destabilising to the morals of medieval society. For instance, Cathars rejected the giving of oaths as wrongful; they believed that an oath served to place you under the domination of the god of this world. But rejecting oaths in this manner was seen as anarchic in a society where illiteracy was wide-spread and almost all business transactions and pledges of allegiance were based on the giving of oaths. This action was revolutionary, as sworn fealty formed the bond of all feudal relations.

Catharism taught that sexual intercourse and reproduction propagated the slavery of spirit to flesh, so procreation was considered undesirable. Informal relationships were considered preferable to marriage among Cathar *Credentes* or "Believers." Good Christians or "Perfects," as they were called by the Catholics, were supposed to observe complete celibacy, and separation from a wife or partner would be necessary for those who would become "Perfects." For the Believers however, sexual activity was not prohibited, though procreation was strongly discouraged, resulting in the charge by their opponents of sexual perversion.

*Like many medieval movements, there were various schools of thought and practice amongst the Cathars.*

powerful. The second god, the one whom the Cathars worshipped, was entirely disincarnate, a being or principle of pure spirit and completely unsullied by the taint of matter. He was the god of love, order and peace.

According to some Cathars, the purpose of human life on Earth was to transcend matter, renouncing perpetually anything connected with the principle of power and thereby attain union with the principle of love. According to others, the individual's purpose was to reclaim or redeem matter by spiritualising and transforming it.





Killing was abhorrent to the Cathars and the "Perfects" avoided eating meat, cheese, eggs, milk and butter. War and capital punishment were also condemned, an incredible abnormality in the medieval age. Such teachings, both in theological intent and practical consequence, brought upon the Cathars condemnation from religious and secular authorities as being the enemies of Christian faith and of social order.

### Consolamentum

The *Consolamentum* was thought to purify the soul through the Holy Spirit before death to enable its ascent to Christ. This purification was done by book and words, not by water, as the Catholics taught, and it was considered to be a one time sacrament. The ritual of the *Consolamentum* was said by the Cathars to be an apostolic ritual passed down by the laying on of hands, person to person, from Jesus and his disciples. It was believed to transmit the "baptism by fire" received by the apostles at Pentecost, which the Cathars believed supplanted the older Jewish ritual of water baptism.

Those who had received the *Consolamentum* were automatically at the same time ordained as Good Men and Good Women (Perfects); they

*Killing was abhorrent to the Cathars and the "Perfects" avoided eating meat, cheese, eggs, milk and butter.*

were expected to live ascetically, giving up meat and alcohol, and to maintain strict celibacy. When they travelled around the country they were accompanied at all times by a companion of the same sex, known as a *soci* (male) and a *sòcia* (female). In emulation of the Apostles, they were expected to give up their material goods and travel from town to town, ministering to Believers and healing the sick.

Upon reception of the *Consolamentum*, the new "Perfect" surrendered his or her worldly goods to the community, vested himself in a simple black or blue robe with cord belt, and undertook a



*The ritual of the Consolamentum was said by the Cathars to be an apostolic ritual passed down by the laying on of hands, person to person, from Jesus and his disciples.*

life dedicated to following the example of Christ and his Apostles; an often peripatetic life devoted to purity, prayer, preaching and charitable work. Above all, the Good Christians were dedicated to enabling others to find the road that led from the dark land ruled by the "dark lord," to the realm of light which they believed to be humankind's first source as well as its ultimate end.

### Church Hierarchy

Nicetas, said to have been the Bogomil bishop of Constantinople in the 1160s, travelled to Lombardy in order to reinforce the dualist beliefs of the Cathars of that region of Italy. He then travelled on to the Languedoc. In 1167, in the presence of representatives of Cathar churches in Languedoc, France and Catalonia, Nicetas presided over the Council of Saint Félix de Caraman at which he renewed the *Consolamenta* and confirmed the episcopal office of six Cathar bishops, whose names are given as:

1. Robert d'Epéron, bishop of the French, i.e. of northern France.
2. Sicard Cellierier, bishop of Albi.
3. Mark, bishop of Lombardy, apparently synonymous with Italy.
4. Bernard Raimond, bishop of Toulouse.
5. Guirald Mercier, bishop of Carcassonne.
6. Raymond de Casals, bishop of Agen.

The Cathar church was organised hierarchically;



at the top of the hierarchy was the Bishop, elected by the community. He was assisted by the *Filius Major*, who was destined to succeed the Bishop at his death, and also the *Filius Minor*, who similarly would succeed the *Filius Major*. Below them came the deacons or deaconesses, the “Perfects” (Good Men and Good Women), who had been consoled and were permitted to give the *Consolamentum* to others. Then came the *Credentes* or Believers, the vast majority who had not been consoled, but were Cathars, and then the *Auditores* or Listeners, who were sympathetic, but not yet ready to become Believers.

### Good Men and Good Women

To the Cathars, the continuity of the *Consolamentum* from the time of the apostles, the laying on of hands from one generation to the next, was all that counted. Simply put, Cathars believed that Jesus had been a manifestation of spirit unbounded by the limitations of matter and not a real human being. They believed that the cross was not something to be revered, but an

*Upon reception of the Consolamentum, the new “Perfect” surrendered his or her worldly goods to the community.*

instrument of torture. The Gospel of John was their most sacred text, and they completely rejected the Old Testament. Most of them proclaimed that the God of the Old Testament was, in reality, the devil, and proclaimed that there was a higher God, the True God, and that Jesus was his messenger.

The Perfects formed the core of the movement, though the actual number of Good Men and Good Women in Cathar society was always relatively small, numbering perhaps a few thousand at any one time. Regardless of their number, they represented the perpetuating heart of the Cathar tradition, the “true Christian Church,” as they styled themselves.

These Cathar holy men and women or “Perfects” had to undergo a rigorous training of three years before being inducted as a member of the spiritual elite of the Cathar movement. This induction took place during a ceremony, in which various Scriptural extracts were quoted, including, most particularly, the opening verses of the Gospel of John. The ceremony was completed by a ritual laying-on of hands as the candidate vowed to abjure the world and accept the Holy



*Saint-Félix-Lauragais is an important site. It is here that in 1167, the first Cathar Synod was held. The event was attended by many local notables and presided over by the Bogomil papa Nicetas of the dualist church of Constantinople, assisted by the Cathar bishop of (Northern) France and a leader of the Cathars of Lombardy. The main item on the agenda was how to divide Southern France into bishoprics, appoint bishops, and guarantee that the area was properly looked after by travelling Perfects, spreading the Cathar message.*

Spirit. At this point, the Good Christians believed, the Holy Spirit was able to descend and dwell within the new Good Man or Good Woman; hence the austere lifestyle needed to provide a pure dwelling place for the Spirit. Once in this state of housing the Holy Spirit within themselves, the Good Christians were believed to have become semi-angelic, not yet released from the confines of the body but containing within them an enhanced spirituality which linked them to God even in this world.

Although the Good Men and Good Women lived a simple life with few of the physical comforts enjoyed by the rich and powerful, they preserved a certain elegance in that simplicity. They were very close to nature, indeed closer to nature than those who called them Earth-hating. Like the Manichaeans and Buddhists, their attitude toward the world may be better described as that of compassion. They did not find value in accumulating hoards of wealth, yet they retained what was necessary to see after their own welfare and those of others. They believed that purgatory did not exist. You were saved only by perfect penance in life, and a spirit destined for salvation that failed to make perfect penance in one body would return in another. They denied the resurrection of the flesh and also denied damnation, as it implied a contaminated and treacherous God.

They were vegetarians or even vegans. The Good Men and Good Women stayed in modest



hospices and travelled in pairs to preach and minister to the laity. Most Cathar Believers did not emulate these practices, but lived ordinary lives. They heard the Perfects preach and took part in the rituals that included a formal bow of reverence to the Perfects and the Consolamentum, the laying on of hands that purified the soul, enabling its escape from the material world at death; the “good end” that all Cathars hoped for. The Cathar faith radically separated the life of the spirit from everyday life, but the austerity of the Perfects made them social models. People had enormous respect for those they considered genuinely saintly.

### Being a Good Believer

Believers constituted the main part of the Cathar community in every region. Ordinary people believed that the Perfects were good men and women, that salvation lay in them and not in the priests of the Catholic Church. These Perfects represented in their persons an ideal purity, unsullied by material concerns.

While the Good Men and Women vowed themselves to ascetic lives of simplicity, frugality and purity, Cathar Believers were not expected to adopt the same stringent lifestyle. They were, however, expected to refrain from eating meat and dairy products, from killing and from swearing oaths. Catharism was above all a populist religion and the numbers of those who considered themselves “Believers” in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century included a sizable portion of the population of Languedoc, counting among them many noble families and courts. The Believers often drank, ate meat and led relatively normal lives within medieval society; in contrast to the Good Men and Good Women, whom they honoured as

*The Believers vied for the honour of housing the Good Men and Good Women on their travels.*

exemplars. Though unable to embrace the life of chastity, the Believers looked toward an eventual time when this would be their calling and path.

Many Believers would also eventually receive the Consolamentum as they neared death. It was the equivalent of the Last Rites of the Cathar community, a ceremony of purification of sins which was intended to enable the soul to pass into death in a higher spiritual state, thereby enabling it



*Although the Good Men and Good Women lived a simple life with few of the physical comforts enjoyed by the rich and powerful, they preserved a certain elegance in that simplicity.*

to achieve a better incarnation in its next existence in this world or to return to God. Performing the ritual of freedom at a moment when the heavy obligations of purity required of the Perfects was expected to be short, some of those who received the sacrament of the Consolamentum upon their death-beds may then have stopped taking further food or drink in order to speed death. This act was known as the *Endura*. It was claimed by the opponents of Catharism that such self-imposed starvation amounted to suicide in order to escape this world. But that was not at all the reason behind it.

The Believers vied for the honour of housing the Good Men and Good Women on their travels, in the tradition described in the gospels of how the Apostles were to move among the wider community. As the Cathars built no churches or places of worship, preferring to hold their ceremonies in peoples’ homes or natural places such as fields, caves or forests, it was a particular honour to have the sacraments performed in one’s home. When believers encountered Perfects they would perform the *Melioramentum* by bowing





*The Cathars built no churches or places of worship, preferring to hold their ceremonies in peoples' homes or natural places such as fields, caves or forests.*

deeply and genuflecting to them and they in turn uttered the *Convenanza*, a prayer as a form of greeting, acknowledging the Holy Spirit within them. It was a ritual salutation or adoration.

Whenever they celebrated a communal meal in a sacramental fashion, they recited the Lord's Prayer, though asking for "supersubstantial" bread rather than daily bread. Here is an extract from a 14<sup>th</sup> century Occitan Cathar prayer, called the *Payre Sant* as recorded by the Inquisitors of the Languedoc: "O just God of all good souls, you who are never deceived, who never lie or doubt, we fear lest we meet death in this world foreign from God! for

***The Cathars, in accepting the idea of reincarnation were, in their belief, cognisant of the grim existential reality of human existence.***

*we are not of this world, and this world is not of us, and grant us to know what you know, to love what you love."*

### **Cathars and Reincarnation**

The Cathars believed in the doctrine of reincarnation, that the individual soul would be born into this world of suffering again and again until it had reached the state of inner purification which meant it could return. It was in this way that the Cathars interpreted the idea of Eternal Life in Jesus Christ. They argued for a return to the essence of Christ's teaching, an embracing of the Apostolic ideal of human

behaviour and rejected the established Church as "the Synagogue of Satan" for having turned its back on Christ's message with its vast material power, wealth and corruption.

The Cathars, in accepting the idea of reincarnation, were cognisant of the grim existential reality of human existence (the prison of matter). The path to spiritual liberation became obvious: matter's enslaving bonds must be broken. This was a step-by-step process, accomplished in different measures by each individual. Those who were unable to achieve liberation during their current mortal journey would return another time to continue the struggle for perfection. Thus, it should be understood that reincarnation was neither a necessary nor a desirable event, but a result of the fact that not all humans could break the enthralling chains of matter within a single lifetime.

Their emphasis on liberation from earthly limitations grew from their insight that only freedom from these limitations could remedy the infirmities of the soul. By their acceptance of the limitations of earthly existence, the Cathars were actually far more understanding of the weaknesses of human nature than the forever condemning and punitive reaction of the mainstream Church. Their tolerance and reluctance to moralise human behaviour actually served to create less evil in their followers and those who had contact with them.

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*This declaration was presented at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, held in Chicago, Illinois, USA. It was then signed by 143 leaders from all the world's major faiths. It was offered to the world as an initial statement of a group of rules for living on which all of the world's religions can agree.*

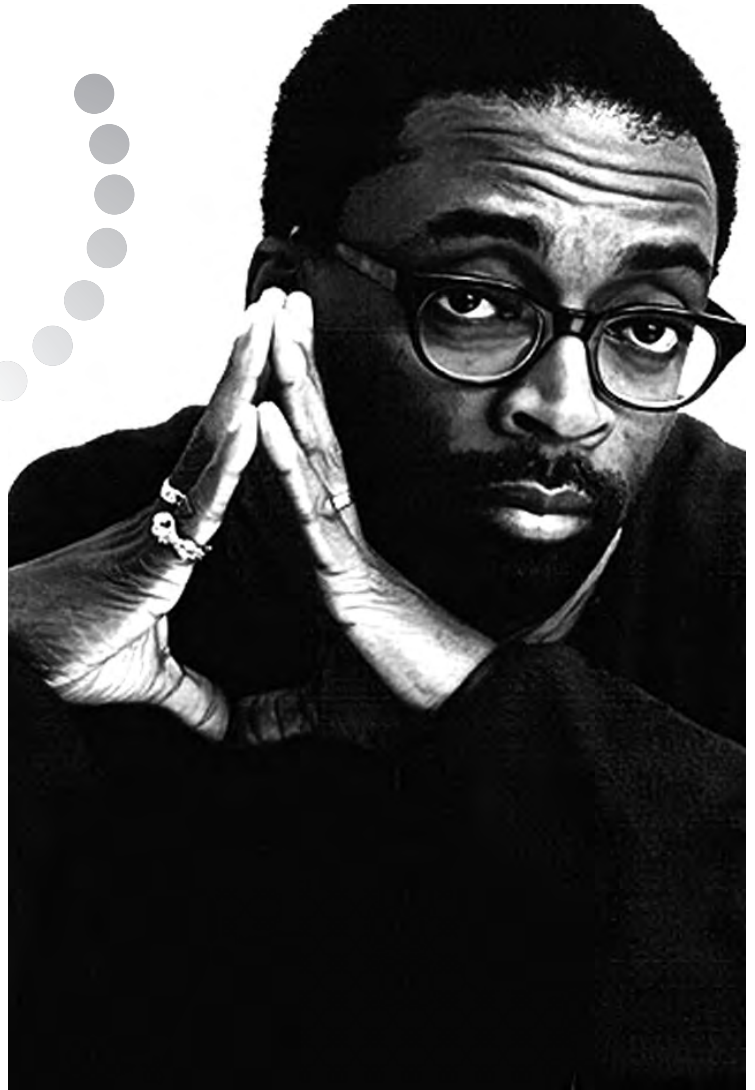
.....*We Declare*.....

- We are interdependent. Each of us depends on the well-being of the whole, and so we have respect for the community of living beings, for people, animals and plants, and for the preservation of Earth, the air, water and soil.
- We take individual responsibility for all we do. All our decisions, actions and failures to act have consequences.
- We must treat others as we wish others to treat us. We make a commitment to respect life and dignity, individuality and diversity, so that every person is treated humanely, without exception. We must have patience and acceptance. We must be able to forgive, learning from the past but never allowing ourselves to be enslaved by memories of hate. Opening our hearts to one another, we must sink our narrow differences for the cause of world community, practising a culture of solidarity and relatedness.
- We consider humankind a family. We must strive to be kind and generous. We must not live for ourselves alone, but should also serve others, never forgetting the children, the aged, the poor, the suffering, the disabled, the refugees and the lonely. No person should ever be considered or treated as a second-class citizen, or be exploited in any way whatsoever. There should be equal partnership between men and women. We must not commit any kind of sexual immorality. We must put behind us all forms of domination or abuse.
- We commit ourselves to a culture of non-violence, respect, justice and peace. We shall not oppress, injure, torture or kill other human beings, forsaking violence as a means of settling differences.
- We must strive for a just social and economic order, in which everyone has an equal chance to reach full potential as a human being. We must speak and act truthfully and with compassion, dealing fairly with all and avoiding prejudice and hatred. We must not steal. We must move beyond the dominance of greed for power, prestige, money and consumption to make a just and peaceful world.
- Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed first. We pledge to increase our awareness by disciplining our minds, by meditation, by prayer or by positive thinking. Without risk and a readiness to sacrifice there can be no fundamental change in our situation. Therefore we commit ourselves to this global ethic, to understanding one another, and to follow socially beneficial, peace-fostering and nature-friendly ways of life.



# Today's Lack of Concentration

by *Ralph M Lewis, FRC*



**I**N NATIONS PROCLAIMING TO have a higher standard of living, there is an alarming deterioration in one important personal quality..., that of concentration. It is a fact of life that modern people find it increasingly difficult to concentrate or even ever think of what is required for their deeper inner needs. Concentration is the art of focusing the intellect on certain stimuli, such as various sounds and sights, or even abstract thoughts. When we consciously, that is, wilfully listen, we are focusing our awareness upon the vibrations of sound in order to realise and understand them. Sometimes the deliberate directing of our attention in this manner is effortless, but at other times it can be extremely difficult. In the latter instance the consciousness or attention tends to vacillate and

digress to some other stimuli requiring less effort.

This experience has always been common. Certain stimuli or objects of attention are more appealing to us than others, and what appeals is of course what we find gratifying in some manner. And where there is an element of emotional interest as well, it is easier for us to hold the focus of our attention steady. Awe, fear, joy, love, hate and curiosity all aid in keeping the focus of our attention fixed upon some thing, event, or series of impressions.

Ennui or boredom is the consequence of having a placid emotional state. What we experience has not aroused us emotionally and we actually become fatigued and disturbed. To counteract this, we therefore attempt to direct our consciousness to other stimuli which have for us greater attention



value. However, not all concentration is caused by external impressions. Imagination, idealism, and mental discipline play a prominent part in the duration or sustaining of concentration.

In our imagination we may establish an ideal. By that we mean a preferred thing or condition, which we desire to attain. And an ideal is a mental desire. The factors that enter into the realization of the desire, what needs to be accomplished or acquired, may require considerable physical or mental effort. The effort may result in fatigue. The eyes may tire, the limbs ache, but there is the mental drive to continue. The mental image of the ideal, the preferred desire, becomes the incentive. Merely the visualisation of the ideal may provide an emotional satisfaction that mitigates the irritation of the fatigue. Inventors and scientists often work long hours, even missing meals and sleep in an almost feverish concentration upon their creative work. Many persons in various lines of work, inspired by an ideal, often forget their physical well-being in order to succeed in some plan.

### Harnessing the Mind

Mental discipline is the harnessing and disciplining of the will in order to concentrate one's mental and/or physical powers on a desired objective. There is a strong element of personal control of one's behaviour and faculties with a clear aim in mind. Learning, for example, requires this mental discipline. Being not merely the acquisition of new impressions, experiences or ideas had as



*Mental discipline is the harnessing and disciplining of the will in order to concentrate one's mental and/or physical powers on a desired objective.*

immediate, self-evident knowledge, learning has a subjective side as well. It requires the use of reason, logic and analyses of experiences, and the formation of specific notions as distinguished from just what we may see or hear.

Things that we perceive are not necessarily immediately comprehended. The impressions we receive may be too strange, too complex or out of our normal range of past experiences for our minds to be able to apply meaning to them. True study for example, is more than just reading and understanding individual words. It consists of extracting meaning from them and combining them into a communicative and informative whole.

*Certain stimuli or objects of attention are more appealing to us than others.*

Individual words have meanings in themselves, but combined into sentences and paragraphs, and taking these together as units of information, those groups of words may convey entirely different overall meanings.

To learn, we must concentrate. We must make the mind figuratively hew to the line until understanding is reached, even though the process may be temporarily fatiguing, a kind of aggravation. In youth there is usually the compulsion by parents and teachers for the necessary concentration on school studies. With adulthood however, mental discipline becomes essential. The individual must evaluate the essential effort and any discomfort it may cause against the eventual satisfaction of the attainment.

### Entertainment and Learning

A distinction must be made between entertainment and learning. The former is intended to amuse, to provide pleasure to one or more of the senses. Entertainment avoids any concentration where there is need for reasoning or voluntary activation of the processes of mind. Principally in entertainment the mind is passive. It is bombarded from without by impressions which require little exercise of thought upon the part of the recipient. The emotions respond without any conscious volition.

What one may learn from an experience of entertainment depends on the impact its elements have upon the emotions. If the entertainment is thrilling, exciting or very amusing, the incident is wholly or partially remembered regardless of any intellectual value which it may have. Simply put, in entertainment the mind does not seek out ideas from its impressions. Rather, certain ideas implant themselves in a readymade form upon the consciousness..., readymade in that the mind simply accepts them without further analysis...,



a potentially dangerous and damaging situation to be in.

Obviously, entertainment is more popular than learning, because the latter requires the harnessing of the mind through mental discipline whereas the former involves just sitting back and enjoying the ride. We are creatures of habit, and so are most animals. Habit is a kind of groove, a path of least resistance that we are inclined to follow. Once we find a technique of doing something, we

*Entertainment is more popular than learning, because the latter requires the harnessing of the mind through mental discipline...*

do things this way over and over again as it requires the least amount of mental effort. And just as we can acquire a learning habit, we can get stuck in an entertainment habit too. Prior to the advent of television, there was a greater balance between entertainment and learning for the individual. Although radio was popular as a predecessor, more persons even then read books and periodicals partly for entertainment and information.

But even casual reading requires concentration. One can't scan the pages of a book or an article as one does the television screen and have comprehension of the contents. The words and sentences in a book or periodical must be combined correctly before sensible, meaningful ideas can be extracted and the continuity not lost. One therefore acquires a reading habit, that is, the patience to indulge the necessary concentration, no matter what the nature of one's reading. Furthermore, if in past decades one went to a public lecture, whether charged for or for free, about some learned subject such as history, science, philosophy or world affairs, one expected that it would be at least of an hour's duration. One would not make an effort to attend for less time than that. Ordinarily the listener found it not difficult to sustain his or her concentration upon the subject for the hour or a slightly longer period.

### Television Advertising

Today, circumstances are quite different, particularly where television has become popular. Advertisers who support the television programs must hold their audiences and to do this their programs must psychologically place the viewer in a passive

state. This means that the viewer is required to put forth only a minimum effort in concentration. The impact of the program, therefore, must be primarily emotional rather than intellectual. To accomplish this an educational subject must be dramatised and made entertaining, rather than being a straightforward appeal to thought and reason. Consequently, the presentation of the program elicits little original thinking upon the part of the individual and makes few demands on one's intellectual powers. There are, of course, strictly educational programs but these are limited and subordinated by the entertainment variety.

The incalculable harm that this condition accomplishes is the lessening of the ability of the individual to sustain concentration that calls for thought. Straightforward lectures on television by necessity of course are mostly limited to a period of fifteen minutes or less. The viewer therefore has gradually and without being aware of it, formed the habit of limiting thoughtful concentration to that period of time. Eventually even a short lecture become too much to focus one's attention on.

Television has undoubtedly affected the reading habits of millions of persons as well. This is reflected particularly in the United States in the decline in circulation of some former popular periodicals. Long articles are generally not tolerated and are soon cast aside, unless they are of a fictional character. Nonfictional material is condensed, abbreviated, and simplified, to require a minimum of voluntary concentration or mental effort.

In an analysis we have found that even in those subjects where persons profess an interest and upon which they would, a decade ago, have listened to a well-presented address for an hour, such must now be generally limited to a period of 35 minutes. Beyond that time, audience concentration begins to waver. Sadly, there is no longer the habit of sustained thought for a longer period of time by a majority of persons.

Since creative development and individual progress are dependent upon thought and voluntary mental activity, the laxity of concentration of this type today is truly alarming, and the results will in the long term lead to a widening of the gap between those who can and actively use their faculty of concentration and those who see no need to make any effort at all.





# A Sense of Purpose

by Lorraine McArdle, SRC



**H**A VE YOU EVER BEEN ASKED WHAT your goal in life is? Well, just ask your friends. Ten to one, they will look at you in amused puzzlement, as they try to work out what you're trying to get at. Actually, most people would probably not be able to give you an answer at all, let alone a clearly focused answer that really expresses their deepest sentiments. The average person certainly doesn't seem to have thought much about it, and regrettably, goals in life are pretty much an academic exercise for most people.

However, it wasn't always so. In the Stone Age, man certainly had a very definite purpose in life. His goal was simple, direct, uncomplicated and urgent: survival! When faced with several alternative courses of action, he knew on what rock to base his decision, he knew which course

of action to choose that would most likely lead to survival. No neuroses for him; no confusion of values. Life may have been dangerous, but it certainly was purposeful.

*In primitive culture concepts of the supernatural gave added meaning and value to the rituals of birth, growth and death.*

In some primitive cultures, the eventual introduction of concepts of the supernatural gave added meaning and value to the rituals of birth, growth and death. The ancient Hebrews found their God and gave over their lives to following his laws and spreading the message of his oneness among the peoples of the world. Nations and states have since risen and disappeared, but this sense of lofty purpose has preserved the Jewish



identity for three millennia. From its traditions sprang two great world religions: Christianity and Islam that gave meaning and purpose for centuries to the lives of their followers.

### Ancient Goals

The goal of the ancient Greeks was to become as gods themselves. They strove to live the perfect

*What do we have to hold onto to give meaning to our existence?*

life, an all-round, many-sided life of virtue and moderation. Only when they began to lose sight of this ideal, to lose their sense of purpose, did their culture decline.

And Rome? The subordination of the individual to the glory of the state! All for Rome! This ideal may seem far from noble to modern eyes that have seen the modern variety of state worship precipitate numerous wars and suppression of human worth. Nevertheless, Rome's system served the ancient Romans well for a time, and made them masters of the Mediterranean world, only to see their glory wither and die when purpose was replaced by aimless self-indulgence, and ideals based upon by material self-gratification.

### Life Today

But what about us today? Survival alone is no longer enough of a purpose in life. The successful battles against disease and economic deprivation have given large parts of the world a good expectation of reasonable longevity. In developed countries at least, people can plan ahead with ease and assurance. Of course, the shadow of some ultimate battle looms over them, but its implications are so vast, so beyond the grasp of an ordinary human mind, that for the most part their existence is affected by it only indirectly.

But this is not enough. This is existing, not living a meaningful life. Our ancestors found meaning in religious faith, in an orderly universe created by a just and loving God. Today, traditional religious beliefs are increasingly becoming outmoded models of living. So what do we have to hold onto to give meaning to our existence? We do have our material possessions, of course. Affluence has become a god, and self-indulgence is its temple. Ask your friends, "What's your goal in life?" and if they were honest, their

answer would probably reflect a desire mainly for material advantages.

There's nothing wrong with these desires. They are human, worthwhile wishes. It is just that they won't work as basic goals. They're not true life purposes and can at best give us only transitory satisfactions. Are you earning as much as Mr Jones? Well, what about Mrs Smith? She earns more, so how can you be satisfied? And when you catch up with Smith, don't forget there's Brown ahead of you. Do you have a new car? In a few months, they're coming out with newer models. Watch it, or you'll be left behind!

### Less of the Material

However much wealth you may possess, it's never enough to fill the soul. There's always room for more, always a sense of incompleteness, a raw, aching gap. And this concentration on things and indulgences leaves less and less room for meaningful human relationships. The more we have, the more we sense our need for something more; or if we could only realise it, *something else*.

But we don't realise it. When we are alienated from ourselves and others, we make the wrong decisions because we don't really know what we want. We think we want power, when what we are really longing for is the great force that binds all living things together..., love. We may think we want wealth, when what we really need serenity. We may seek self-indulgence, when what we really truly need is a sense of oneness with the universe and all mankind.

Have we lost our sense of purpose? The old values have been discarded but have we found something meaningful with which to replace them?

*The old values have been discarded but have we found something meaningful with which to replace them?*

It's difficult to admit that our life is purposeless, but until we can realise this, we will never be able to seek and find new goals. And find them we must, for without a sense of purpose, we lose contact with that divine spark which uplifts and illuminates life. We become mere flotsam upon a meaningless, capricious sea of existence. We must find a rudder and a direction and be able to say with the poet William Ernest Henley: "*I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul.*"





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Whatever happens, happens rightly.  
Watch closely, and you will  
find this true.

In the succession of events there is  
not mere sequence alone, but  
an order that is just and right,  
as from the hand of one who  
dispenses to all their due.

-- Marcus Aurelius (121-180CE)