

# ROSICRUCIAN BEACON

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### Cover spread

Samothrace Dawn



# Mystical Highlights of *Zanoni*

by Orval Graves

**E**VERY now and again we stumble across an old literary classic that can move and inspire us. Lord Lytton's novel, *Zanoni* is one such book. Essentially it is several stories in one: romance, allegory, the Kabala, alchemy, magic, occult wisdom and Eastern fantasy. Written in 1842, the writing style may not suit all of today's readers, but we can still find spiritual and philosophical truths throughout this engaging novel, entwined in a fascinating story.

Before examining the book, it is worth briefly considering the life of the author, Edward George Earle Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873). In one of his literary essays he insisted that all authors should make their works as autobiographical as possible. Therefore, we can expect to find much of Lytton's own life and experience portrayed in this novel. One of Lytton's ancestors, just like the relative of Glyndon in *Zanoni*, Dr Bulwer, delved deeply into the occult arts. Lytton was raised in the home of Dr Bulwer

(his grandfather), which was literally flooded with books on metaphysical, spiritual and occult subjects and this provided a fertile ground for the esoteric urge to grow in Lytton's life.

Lytton's early knowledge of books and human nature carried him quickly and easily through normal studies at Trinity College in Cambridge, and allowed him time for his esoteric studies. When he was about 19 years old he and another student at Cambridge, Chauncey H Townshend, began experiments and studies in clairvoyance, mesmerism and other occult phenomena. During his school holidays Lytton stayed with a small group of gypsy families where he was taught chiromancy, astrology and the finer points of their occult practices. He was also taught to meditate, and spent much time alone learning to control his entry into true meditative states.

Lytton's mundane interest was history and he wrote many historical novels. Mainly however, he used his



historical training in politics. He became a prominent member of the British Parliament and was made a member of the peerage. He was married, but his married life was an unhappy one. Throughout his life he was what we might call an 'occult adventurer', ever seeking the boundaries between the possible, the probable and the impossible. He investigated every strange bit of knowledge he could find, but always returned to the spiritual, psychic and occult. His store of such knowledge was immense as well as reliable. Helena Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, refers to Lytton many times in her books *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*.

**Throughout his life he was what we might call an 'occult adventurer', ever seeking the boundaries between the possible, the probable and the impossible.**

Lytton had a dual nature. On the one hand he was a polished man of the world, while on the other he was a mystic and psychic of the highest order. Calm and collected at all times, he also developed an iron will and a powerful, inquiring mind. He was far more at home however, in his own inner world of vision and contemplation than among his fellow men and women of the world. Like many occultists of his era, Lytton had a superb memory, and is reported to have been able to repeat by heart all the Odes of Horace.

## A Passion for the Occult

Lytton's passion for occult studies lasted all of his life. He always maintained in his home an *Oratory*, or as Rosicrucians call it, a *Sanctum*. In this Sanctum he kept his most treasured manuscripts, his mystical paraphernalia, such as candles, incense burner, mirror and crystal balls. He was introduced and initiated into the Rosicrucian Order by Kenneth MacKenzie. The group to which he belonged was the "Continental Lodge" which had reportedly descended directly from a group of supposed medieval Rosicrucians.

It was rumoured in Lytton's day that he and Eliphas Levi were members of the last remnants of that same lineage of Rosicrucians, though this is probably based purely on the similarities of Lytton's book *The Strange Story* and Eliphas Levi's book *Transcendental Magic*. Lytton was associated with the Martinist Order and according to Madam Blavatsky (the founder of Theosophy) he also belonged to a certain mysterious fraternity in India. His son followed in his father's footsteps in this regard and

after extensive travel in Asia, established a mystic order known as the Grand Lamaistic Order of Light in 1882, in which were combined Rosicrucian teachings and Hindu philosophy.

Lytton believed that he received aid from the spiritual world in his writings. He believed sincerely that he was guided by a Cosmic Being when writing the novel *Zanoni*. Indeed, the English magazine, *The Occult Review*, once published an article telling how, once in the presence of a group of friends, a being, corresponding to Adonai in the novel, appeared and positively verified this belief of his. Lytton died in 1873 and was buried with other great members of the English nobility in Westminster Abbey, with these words: "*Lord Lytton's life was a solid good to the world. But like Hamlet, his real interest was never in 'this too, too solid flesh.'*"

In the introduction to the story of *Zanoni*, Lytton tells how one day he heard of the Rosicrucians in an occult book store. Truly this was the way that Lytton first made contact with the Order, and all events leading up to the story are probably biographical, as is *Zanoni* itself. The author cultivated the friendship of the old book dealer, and gradually won him over to telling him about the Rosicrucians. Finally, upon the death of the old book dealer, the author was given a long manuscript written, as he first thought, in an unintelligible cipher.

A few characters of this cipher are given on page 16 of the introduction to his first edition, and has puzzled a great many people. It has never been pointed out before that this was an old Rosicrucian cipher peculiar to the



*Portrait of Lord Lytton.*



English Rosicrucians. The cipher was considered by the English Rosicrucians to be the language of the angels, the so-called *Enochian alphabet*, though sometimes erroneously called the *Theban alphabet*. According to English occultists, this alphabet has a complete system of grammar as exact and classical as Sanskrit.

The English Rosicrucian Dr John Dee, was instrumental in receiving psychically the rudiments of this language, obtaining them, we are told, through the process of scrying. At one time a book store in England had for sale an ink facsimile of the Enochian tablets of Dr. John Dee, called "*Liber Logath*." There are other rare books today which contain many Rosicrucian ciphers, including all of those of Sir Francis Bacon, and "*Cryptomenytices et Cryptographiae*" by Gustavi Seleni (1624).

## Zanoni: A Peculiar Person

The story of *Zanoni* opens with a description of a musician of genius named Pisani who lived in Naples. Like most geniuses, he was continually being ridiculed and remained unrecognised for what he was. Pisani's daughter, Viola, who was a professional singer, succeeded in having one of her father's operas produced. She took the leading part in this opera, which proved to be a great success. Both father and daughter became famous overnight.

It was at this opera that our two main characters of the story appeared. Their names were Zanoni and Glyndon. Zanoni was a peculiar person with perfect poise, handsome looks, wealth and a strange look in his eye that created a stir in society and a fluttering in Viola's heart. Glyndon was a young English artist who, upon hearing Viola, immediately

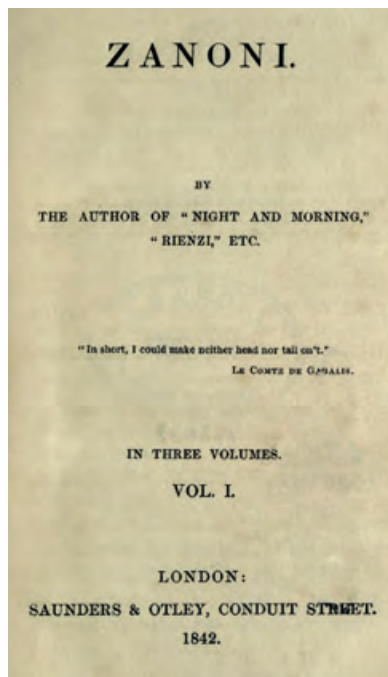
fell in love with her. In the city there were many strange rumours circulating about Zanoni. He was said to be a man one should avoid. He was a magician, learned in the dangerous and questionable arts of the East.

Some people said he had been in Naples 80 years before yet he looked as young in the present as he did in the past. He had much money, marvellous jewels and strange people for servants. He had also a peculiar locked room into which no one was admitted. Zanoni was especially reserved when any allusion was made to his birth or past. His wealth, his familiarity with the languages of the East, his gravity, stateliness and physical characteristics of dark hair and eyes seemed to point to the fact that he belonged to an Asian race. The character Zanoni is thought to be based upon the famous Rosicrucian, the Count of Saint-Germain.

We are next introduced to Zanoni's occult master. Zanoni went to this master, whose name was Mejnour, for advice and knowledge. Mejnour was a sort of intellectual giant. He had eradicated all his feelings and lived from his intellect alone. Zanoni however, still possessed a very sensitive emotional nature, as well as a keen intellect. The story continues with the death of Viola's father which left the young woman alone in the world. Glyndon, the English artist, decided to pursue his romantic interests in Viola, which incurred the displeasure of Zanoni. In a meeting with Glyndon with some of his friends, Zanoni said, astrologically speaking, that his ruling planet sat darkly in Glyndon's house of life. Zanoni hinted to

Glyndon that he possessed strange powers and great wealth which he could use against Glyndon if necessary.

He demonstrated this strange power one evening by coming up behind a gambler, Cetoxa, who had been losing continually at the gambling table. However, immediately Zanoni stood behind Cetoxa the gambler began to win back not only his losses, but a great deal more. A great occultist of England has explained this power of Zanoni's at the gambling table in the following way: By deep breathing and certain magnetic exercises Zanoni temporarily upset the balance of the vital life force in Cetoxa's antagonist, making the antagonist very negative. By a reverse process Zanoni made Cetoxa very positive. Being negative and upset, the senses of the antagonist began to reel, and he lost to the clear-headed, positively strengthened Cetoxa.



*Title page from the first edition of Zanoni.*



Despite this display of power, Glyndon felt himself unwillingly attracted to the strange Zanoni. Several apparently accidental meetings between Zanoni and Glyndon served to strengthen this attraction. However, Glyndon fell deeper and deeper in love with Viola, who was not strongly attracted to him. Rather, she was fascinated with Zanoni. Zanoni in turn seemed to take only a brotherly interest in Viola and seemed ever ready to protect and advise her. In fact, Zanoni eventually advised Viola to marry the English Glyndon soon, because of her loneliness in the world. However, Viola vowed that she loved Zanoni alone.



*Naples with Mount Vesuvius in the background.*

Zanoni then made it a point to visit Glyndon and advise him to propose marriage to Viola. Such action disconcerted Glyndon and made him uncertain of himself as regards Viola. Finally he decided that he wanted to know the secret and attain to some of the wisdom of Zanoni. Zanoni told him he had better marry and live an ordinary life, because it took great courage to follow in his footsteps. Such advice fanned Glyndon's desire to follow Zanoni definitely and to obtain the superhuman wisdom and eternal youth of the mysterious man.

Zanoni unintentionally removed the last superstitious fear in Viola's mind about himself by miraculously healing a sick woman. Previous to this time Viola had been somewhat fearful of his strange powers, but when she saw that these powers were for good and not for evil, she vowed she would rather die than live without him. Zanoni pleaded with her to leave the city, because he had heard she was in danger of being kidnapped by a certain profligate prince, but she refused to leave. Zanoni consented to marry her and protect her. It was too late, however. The thugs of the prince had already surrounded the house, and they temporarily overpowered Zanoni. Viola was taken from him to the house of the reprobate prince.

## The Portals of the Brotherhood

Prior to this episode Zanoni had finally consented to lead

Glyndon to the portals of the brotherhood of which he was a member. He cautioned Glyndon again regarding the seriousness of the step. Like all Neophytes, Glyndon was impatient and wanted to join immediately. Then at the end of Chapter IV, Book III, Zanoni delivers one of the most stirring and remarkable speeches about occult powers ever to appear in print. This speech and the magnetic power of Zanoni caused Glyndon to become fearful at the last moment. He ran away to hide on the very top of the volcano Vesuvius. However, he had given his word that no matter where he might be at a certain time he must follow Zanoni at his bidding. But he thought that by being on top of Vesuvius Zanoni could not find him.

Zanoni's soul was being troubled and disturbed by his decision to marry a mortal woman. He hoped to offset this weakness by bringing another person into his venerable brotherhood. Zanoni began to be fearful of losing some of his supernatural power. Nevertheless he proceeded to go to the home of the prince who was holding Viola prisoner. Previous to Zanoni's arrival at this prince's house, Mejnour, Zanoni's master, had already appeared to and warned the prince that Zanoni's presence would defeat him. However, the prince, undaunted by Zanoni's presence, invited him to stay for dinner so that he might poison his wine. Zanoni stayed and drank the

**Zanoni delivers one of the most stirring and remarkable speeches about occult powers ever to appear in print.**

wine, but strangely enough it did not harm him.

After the meal the prince became entangled in a drunken brawl with one of his guests and was killed. Zanoni released Viola and they sailed away to live for a few years on a lonely island where they had a child. The story then shifts back to Glyndon, who was found by Zanoni on top of Mt. Vesuvius and taken to the occult master, Mejnour. Mejnour took him away to an old rock castle in the mountains. Here Glyndon began his studies, which included such subjects as dreams, numbers, the Kabala, and Rosicrucian history. Glyndon's teacher took him on frequent trips along the mountainside for the purpose of instructing him on the essence and beneficial nature of herbs.

## The Dweller on the Threshold

One day Glyndon broke into his teacher's laboratory. His teacher had expressly forbidden him to ever enter the laboratory. The strange herbs, essences, incenses, the oil lamps and the elixirs were all examined by Glyndon;





in fact, the taste of a certain liquid induced an ecstasy which produced a startling and disastrous result. The elixir had caused at first an exquisite ecstasy, followed by the sensation of mental expansion, then shadowy beings of the other world appeared to his partially developed clairvoyant sight. The beings were frightening, antagonistic and horrible, the most frightening of which was the 'Dweller on the Threshold,' which confronted him because he was unprepared and not sufficiently developed to proceed further.

Because of Glyndon's disobedience, and his weakness before the Dweller on the Threshold, Mejnour no longer considered him as a pupil. Mejnour drove Glyndon to travel the world with the Dweller continually appearing before him. Finally, Glyndon arrived in England, reckless and daredevil enough to win in everything of a physical nature. However, his nerves were worn to a rough edge and he was physically exhausted. He never dared to be alone and finally told his sister of his misfortune, upon which she too saw the external vision of her own conscience.

He could not bear to have her alarmed, so he left for Naples again where he found Viola, who had left Zaroni. Viola was afraid of Zaroni because he had tried by occult means to get her interested in the study of occultism. In fact, he had carefully planned a method so she might, by the use of a certain essence, rise up and experience the joy and wisdom of the Cosmic planes. However, Viola's Karma was such that she could not properly appreciate the psychic and spiritual values of this experience and it left her terrified. Glyndon told Viola that Zaroni was in truth a sorcerer, a devil, and bitterly reviled Zaroni because he blamed him for his own predicament.

Viola and Glyndon fled to France, which was in the throes of a bloody revolution, and Zaroni followed them there. He protected the two of them from danger and told Glyndon how to drive away the horrible phantom of the threshold and make peace between his conscience and his objective mind. Glyndon defied the fear caused by the spectre and resolved that come what might he would be strong and cling to virtue at all costs. The phantom

left and peace came into Glyndon's life. Zaroni proved to his wife, who was then in prison, that he was not a sorcerer, but a saint. He died in her stead on the guillotine, somewhat in the same manner as the hero in Dickens' "*Tale of Two Cities*."

Before his death Zaroni received assurance that all of his supernatural powers would be restored in another incarnation, with the added experience gained in balancing his head and heart through the human love of Viola. The last part of the story contains a realistic and historical description of the most horrible of all wars, a civil war, known in France as the Reign of Terror. The events of this period, and characters such as Robespierre, Desmoulins, Nicot, etc., are vividly described.

**The book itself is a three-fold narrative that covers romance, the higher initiation of a Master, and an historical tragedy.**

The deeper meanings in the book will be apparent to anyone versed in mysticism or spirituality. The book itself is a three-fold narrative that covers romance, the higher initiation of a Master, and an historical tragedy. The hero is a Rosicrucian who barter supernatural power for human love. He redeems his weakness by substituting himself for his wife as a victim of the guillotine. It is really a tragedy of the Soul. The Soul, after deviating from its course, is brought to itself through suffering and thus repents. In the final sacrifice the Soul achieves victory, regains its status, and sheds a blessing on one in particular and humanity in general.

In the notes to an old and rare edition of Zaroni Lytton personifies his characters as follows: Mejnour → science; Zaroni → idealism; Viola → human intellect; Glyndon → unsustainable aspiration. The book conceals a challenge that could lead seekers on to ever greater spiritual achievements on their spiritual path.

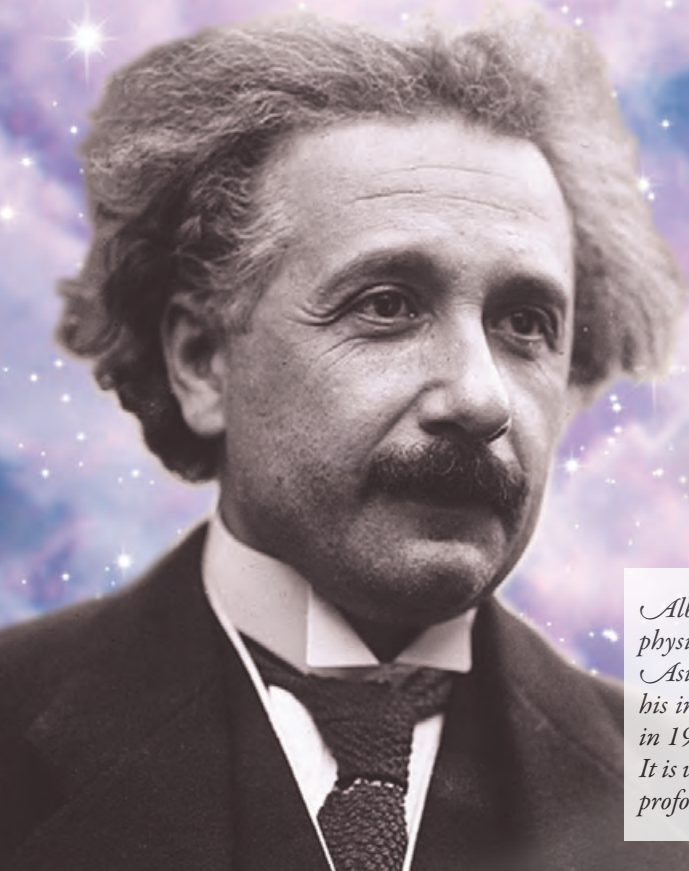


*France during the Reign of Terror.*



# Cosmic Religion

by *Albert Einstein*



*Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955) was a German-born theoretical physicist. He was one of the greatest minds of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Aside from his work on theoretical physics, he was also known for his influence on the philosophy of science. This article was written in 1954 and the language used is very much a product of the time. It is worthwhile reading and re-reading the piece to understand the profound meaning and to access his thought processes.*

**E**VERYTHING people do or think concerns the satisfaction of the needs they feel or their escape from pain. This must be kept in mind when we seek to understand spiritual or intellectual movements and the way in which they develop. For feeling and longing are the motive forces of all human

striving and productivity, however nobly these latter may display themselves to us. What then, are the feelings and the needs which have brought humanity to religious thought and to faith in the widest sense? A moment's consideration shows that the most varied emotions stand at the cradle of religious thought and experience.



## The Three Levels

In primitive peoples it is, first of all, fear that awakens religious ideas; fear of hunger, of wild animals, of illness and of death. Since the understanding of causal connections is usually limited on this level of existence, the human soul forges a being, more or less like itself, on whose will and activities depend the experiences which it fears. One hopes to win the favour of this being by deeds and sacrifices, which, according to the tradition of the race, are supposed to appease the being or to make them well-disposed to mankind. I call this the religion of fear.

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

A second source of religious development is found in the social feelings. Fathers and mothers, as well as leaders of great human communities, are fallible and mortal. The longing for guidance, for love and succour, provides the stimulus for the growth of a social or moral conception of God. This is the God of Providence, who protects, decides,

rewards and punishes. This is the God who, according to man's widening horizon, loves and provides for the life of mankind or even loves life itself. He is the comforter in unhappiness and in unsatisfied longing, the protector of the souls of the dead. This is the social or moral idea of God. It is easy to follow in the sacred writings of the Jewish people the development of the religion of fear into the moral religion, which is carried further in the New Testament.

**An important advance in the life of a people is the transformation of the religion of fear into the moral religion.**

The religions of all the civilised peoples, especially those of the Orient, are principally moral religions. An important advance in the life of a people is the transformation of the religion of fear into the moral religion. But one must avoid the prejudice that regards the religions of primitive peoples as pure fear religions and those of the civilised races as pure moral religions. All are mixed forms, though the moral element predominates in the higher levels of social life. Common to all these types is the anthropomorphic character of the idea of God.

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

## Cosmic Religious Experience

The religious geniuses of all times have been distinguished by this cosmic religious sense, which recognises neither dogmas nor God made in man's image. Consequently, there cannot be a church whose chief doctrines are based on the cosmic religious experience. It comes about, therefore, that precisely among the heretics of all ages we find men and women who were inspired by this



*Einstein at his office, University of Berlin, 1920.*







highest religious experience. Often they appeared to their contemporaries as atheists, but sometimes also as saints. Viewed from this angle, men like Democritus, St Francis of Assisi and Spinoza are near to one another. How can this cosmic religious experience be communicated to people, if it cannot lead to a definite conception of God or to a theology? It seems to me that the most important function of art and of science is to arouse and keep alive this feeling in those who are receptive.

Thus we reach an interpretation of the relation of science to religion which is very different from the customary view. From the study of history, one is inclined to regard religion and science as irreconcilable antagonists, and this for a reason that is very easily seen. For anyone who is pervaded with the sense of causal law in all that happens, who accepts in real earnest the assumption of causality, the idea of a Being who interferes with the sequence of events in the world is absolutely impossible. Neither the religion of fear nor the social-moral religion can have any hold on him. A God who rewards and punishes is for him unthinkable, because man acts in accordance with an inner and outer necessity, and would, in the eyes of God, be as little responsible as an inanimate object is for the movements which it makes.

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

No-one who does not appreciate the terrific exertions, and, above all, the devotion without which

pioneer creations in scientific thought cannot come into being, can judge the strength of the feeling out of which alone such work, turned away as it is from immediate practical life, can grow. What a deep faith in the rationality of the structure of the world and what a longing to understand even a small glimpse of the reason revealed in the world there must have been in Kepler and Newton to enable them to unravel the mechanism of the heavens, in long years of lonely work!

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

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

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

[...]

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

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



# Torrentius

## Early Rosicrucians in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Holland

by Walter Maybrook



**I**N THE early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the first versions of Rosicrucianism appeared in Holland and found an appreciative though harried, audience. At the time, Holland was one of the most favourable places for the study of Natural History and alternative approaches to spirituality, and there was enough tolerance in the country to allow the “Brethren of the Rose Cross” to work in relative freedom for a short while.

By 1622 there were reputed to be centres of Rosicrucianism in Amsterdam and the Hague, and a few years later in other centres in Holland as well, such as Warmond (near Leiden), but also in several other European cities such as Nuremberg, Erfurt, Hamburg, Danzig, Mantua and Venice. There is no doubt that

despite these reported “sightings” of Rosicrucians, the Brethren worked deeply under the cover of secrecy, though not sufficiently so as to bar entry to their ranks by people with sincere motives and no hostility to the broad tenets of these early Rosicrucians. The French natural philosopher and physician Samuel Sorbière (1615 – 1670) during his stay in Holland (1645 – 1655) wrote: “*There is no country in the world that is so favourably disposed towards the Brethren of the Rose Cross as Holland, where those who know the secret of the great work enjoy so much freedom.*”

The interest in the study of *natural philosophy*<sup>1</sup> in Holland was so great that in Dordrecht in 1619, Irenaeus Agnostus published his *Regula Vitae*, in which he spoke highly of the “*hochberühmte tugendhaften Fraternität des R.C.*” (the highly renowned, virtuous Fraternity of



the R.C.). In 1615 a Dutch translation of the *Fama Fraternitatis* appeared, and in 1616 the well known English physician and Rosicrucian apologist Robert Fludd published his *Tractatus Apologeticus integritatem Societas de Rosae Crucis* in Leiden which spoke highly of “the brethren”, though Fludd himself claimed he was not one of them.

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the people of Holland cherished and were permitted a degree of freedom of thought unheard of elsewhere at the time. Many different ideological and philosophical groups were tolerated. The *syncretists* and *alchemists* even enjoyed the protection of the Stadholders (vice-regents) of the Netherlands. One of them, Barnaud openly introduced the Stadholder of all the provinces (except Friesland) Prince Maurits of Orange (ruled 1584-1625) as their protector. From 1575-1577, Maurits had studied in Heidelberg. He was the uncle of Frederick V and godfather to some of Frederick and Elizabeth’s children, and offered them all a home in The Hague. His half-brother Prince Frederik Hendrik of Orange (ruled 1625-1647), who had married a lady of the court of Frederick V, was favourably disposed towards the emerging rigour of scientific enquiry and had been introduced to a Rosicrucian circle at Kassel. In time, he took several prominent people with close connections to this Rosicrucian group under his direct protection.

## Prosecution in Holland

However, the Rosicrucians of Holland did not entirely escape the more general persecutions of 17<sup>th</sup> Century freethinkers and those who sought knowledge of a deeper nature. One example of this persecution can be seen in the history of the painter Johannes Torrentius (1589-1644) an older contemporary of Rembrandt.

The period of greatest oppression began innocently enough before the Thirty Years War merely as polite criticism of the Rosicrucians, though no physical violence or prohibition as yet. Under the influence of a new and more intolerant form of Calvinism that emerged during those 30 years of terrible suffering, things steadily deteriorated for all people who had until then believed they had a right to freedom of thought and speech. One of the first stirrings of what was to come was a 1622 booklet *“Spiegel der Broeders van den roose kruysse, in dicht beschreven door een liefhebber der waerhey”* (*Mirror of the Brethren of the rose cross, written in verse by a lover of the truth*), informing readers in alarmist tones of the presence of Rosicrucians in Warmond, providing lurid, though undoubtedly false accounts of their secret activities.

In a hardly disguised manner, the author was acting as a mouthpiece for urban myths and unfounded



*Frederik Hendrik by Michiel Jansz van Mierevelt.*

gossip concerning anything perceived as a challenge to church orthodoxy, particularly in a time of vast and brutal trans-European religious conflict. Rosicrucians in particular were portrayed as “disciples of Satan”, heretics and scoundrels worthy of incineration. From a reply to this criticism we learn that, among other things, the Rosicrucians of Warmond assembled in the palace of Prince Frederik Hendrik on the Noordeinde in The Hague. Calvinist orthodoxy could not tolerate the free intellectual inquiry and philosophical propositions espoused by the Rosicrucians, for this, they believed, was an evil defilement of Holy Scripture.

**Calvinist orthodoxy could not tolerate the free intellectual inquiry and philosophical propositions espoused by the Rosicrucians.**

In 1624 the Delegated Council of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland ordered the Court of Holland to start an inquiry into the Rosicrucians, and asked for an opinion about them from the theological faculty at the University of Leiden. The over 3,000 word long Latin worded *judicium* (judgement) of the Leiden theologians was devastating and entirely what the church had wanted. As a



result of this, the Council of the city of Haarlem received a letter warning that a sect, calling itself *Broeders van den Roosen Cruce* (Brethren of the Rose Cross) “...which each day more and more increases and expands itself...” had also been established in Haarlem and that these people were “...very erroneous and heretical in religious affairs.” The lords of Haarlem were requested to do everything necessary to bar the sect and to pay special attention to the already well known painter Johannes Torrentius “...who was said to be surely one of the most important ones of said sect.”

## Torrentius the Martyr

Without warning, Torrentius was accused of being a “dangerous individual”. And so, this young and highly gifted incautious painter became the victim of a cruel, mediaeval desire for persecution. He was lied about and slandered, statements were fabricated and notarised acts were drawn up of the utterances allegedly made by him or through a third party, and of the drinking toasts that he and his friends were supposed to have proposed. Some utterances were reported to have been made 15 years earlier and in the majority of cases, the allegations were not upheld by the witnesses when they were called to testify.

Eventually, after several years of malignment, Torrentius and his friend Coppens were eventually arrested on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1627 with the authorities claiming that “... public opinion had demanded it.” From the transcript of the trial against Torrentius, it became apparent that there were other powers after him, with the principal persecutors being two Dutch reformed ministers, *Henricus Geesteranus* and *Dyonisius Spranckhuysen*, who were careful to remain behind the scenes while they ran a relentless campaign of incitement of people to come forward to testify against this highly creative artist. The result was that Coppens was exiled, but Torrentius was tortured in an effort to extract confessions from him.



*Dungeons below Haarlem's Town Hall where Torrentius may have been held.*



*Haarlem, Cornelis Beelt, c. 1640.*

Finally, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1628, Torrentius was tried in court. He had to be carried into the court as he was paralysed from the waist down due to the severities of the torture he had endured on the rack. A large crowd of people had come from far and wide to see this ‘heretic.’ Among them was Lodewijk van Nassau, the natural son of the formerly powerful Prince Maurits of Orange who had ruled the Dutch Republic from 1585 until his death in 1625 and who had provided a degree of protection to the early Rosicrucians. Lodewijk had come to Haarlem with his retinue specifically to attend the session of the court. But by then public opinion had been manipulated and set it against the defenceless Torrentius. Quite remarkably, he was tried *extra ordinarius*. Why he was not tried *ordinarius* is made clear from the *Formbook* of Willem van Alphen (1682). In it he wrote: “*From extraordinary procedures no minutes were kept in the Cause List of the Procurator-General, contrary to the case of those towards whom ordinarius actions were taken. When the actions are taken extra ordinarius and justice was delivered on the confession of the delinquent, the latter is not allowed to appeal against the condemnation.*”

According to surviving documents, the city of Haarlem did not want to get involved in an “unnecessary and endless” trial and so, Torrentius was conveniently denied the right to defend himself. Although Prince Frederik Hendrik tried to intervene with a personal letter to allow Torrentius to take legal action *ordinarius* and to be freed on bail, this had no influence on the by then all-powerful Lords of Haarlem. Inconveniently however, Torrentius had not confessed to any wrongdoing, despite having been “...tortured with heavy torments”, and the Haarlem judges were deeply frustrated that they could therefore not close the case.

The advice of five lawyers from The Hague was obtained and their conclusion and advice





*Torrentius at the time of his conviction.  
Print by Jan van de Velde.*

ended with the words: *“Also notwithstanding that said T, having been tortured, had given no further confession, this means that he shall be sentenced not as a confessus, but as a plenario convictus.”* And so, he was sentenced on the basis of conviction alone. In the trial, not the slightest attention was given to counterstatements by witnesses for the defence and Torrentius was convicted because of *“his godlessness, abominable and horrifying blasphemy, and also for terrible and very harmful heresy.”* In the comfort of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century democracies where the rule of law is upheld, it seems incredible that such injustice could have taken place.

**Torrentius was convicted because of *“his godlessness, abominable and horrifying blasphemy, and also for terrible and very harmful heresy.”***

### Reprieved

The sentence demanded was the burning at the stake but instead the verdict given was 20 years imprisonment. A second attempt by Prince Frederik Hendrik to intervene was also unsuccessful. Finally King Charles I of Britain, who was a great admirer of the paintings of Torrentius, sent a personal letter to the Prince of Orange (whose son had married Charles’ daughter) in which he wrote that he was very sorry that such a unique talent would be lost. Tactfully, the King said that Torrentius had been rightly punished for such a tremendous crime, but that the two-year imprisonment he had already suffered, and other chastisements, should have satisfied the judicial authorities.

The Lords of Haarlem resisted all attempts to free their victim, but unexpectedly, the Prince signed a pardon and Torrentius travelled to England where he became Court Painter to Charles I. There he remained until 1642, but the damage caused by the tortures he had undergone before his trial had left him with a broken and deformed body. Of his once robust appearance, only a wreck remained when he returned to Amsterdam to his mother. He came home to die, and on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1644

his mortal remains were buried in the Nieuwe Kerk, in Amsterdam.

Although the tortures had done irreparable damage to his physical body, his mind and talent had not weakened under the misery he had endured, as is reflected in one of the few works he is known to have painted in England. It is the tableau of Jesus with the Pharisees and the adulterous woman (John 8:3-11). This painting is also a sort of revenge of this great artist. In it he depicts those who were the chief offenders of his persecution as the sinister figures of the Pharisees. We can recognise in the painting the portraits of the clergymen Geesteranus and Spranckhuysen as well as the cruel Bailiff of Haarlem, Cornelis van Teylingen.

Torrentius and his friend, the wealthy merchant Coppens, were associated with the Remonstrant movement, which the Church saw as a great threat to its authority and the unity of the state. Furthermore, Torrentius was accused of being part of the *“secte den Roose Cruce”*, and in the words of the Mayor and Alderman of Haarlem, *“... one Torrentius, who is said to be one of the principal members of the aforesaid sect.”* Being accused of being part of the Remonstrant movement was sufficient cause for incarceration, for civil war had nearly broken out in 1623 due to the widening gulf that had opened up between the Remonstrants who sought freedom of thought and speech, and the increasingly conservative forces within the Church. But being accused of being one of the principal members of the Brethren of the Rose Cross was an entirely more sinister matter and one deserving of being burnt at the stake.

The arrest and incarceration of Coppens and Torrentius, and later the torture of Torrentius, on the accusation of being a Rosicrucian, was a heavy blow for the Rosicrucian presence in Holland. But the Rosicrucian influence remained, *“sub rosa”* and influenced for example the pioneering philosophical work of Holland’s greatest



*Baruch Spinoza.*

philosopher, Baruch Spinoza. Indeed, some of the core principles of the original brethren of the Rose Cross finally became a formalised system of philosophical thought through the life work of Spinoza. His ethics were, even in his own day, seen as rising above the bickering differences of belief between the three Abrahamic faiths which had



for centuries persecuted each other. Tellingly, on one of his treatises, Spinoza ends with a rose, which in Rosicrucian symbolism represented the human soul and eternal link with the Divine.

Attached to a key, Spinoza wore this seal as a symbol of his entrance to a Divine truth. Like a true Rosicrucian, Spinoza sought as far as possible to live the life of an unknown servant of humankind and even forbade his name to be mentioned on his *Ethica*, which was completed in 1665. Both in his *Korte*

*Verhandelingen* (Short Discourses) and the notes of his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, he recommends secrecy. His desire for secrecy, coupled with not mentioning his name on his writings, is wholly in line with the traditions of the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century authors and defenders of the allegorical Brethren of the Rose Cross. In times when free thought and free speech could lead to severe punishment and even execution, such advice was a reflection of the times and place in which he lived.

Torrentius was not the only, nor even the first, Rosicrucian martyr. In 1620, Adam Haslmayr, secretary to Archduke Maximilian von Habsburg, together with others accused of being Rosicrucians, were sentenced as heretics and dabblers in magic and were sent as slaves to work on galleys for the rest of their lives. *Wassenaers Historisch Verhael* (Wassenaer's Historical Story) states that at the same time five fratres Rosae Crucis were hanged in Germany.

## Rosicrucian Symbols in the Art of Painting

Although it was alleged during Torrentius' trial that he was connected with the Rosicrucians, indeed, was one of their main leaders, some argued that this was merely a fabrication to try and bolster the case of the prosecution. However, we can see from the few of his surviving paintings some secret signs that would indicate that he may have had some Rosicrucian connections.

In modern times, Rosicrucians reach a certain part of their studies where they are given the title *Frater (or Soror) Rosae Crucis*, designated nowadays



*Emblematic Still Life (1614) by Torrentius.*

as *FRC* and *SRC*. Similar titles existed in Rosicrucian circles in Torrentius' day. In his painting, *Emblematic Still Life* (1614), the letters "ER+", or *Eques Rosae Crucis* (Knight of the Rose Cross) appear. Instead of a specific letter being used for the word "Kruis" or "Cross", a "+" sign was used. The work as a whole appears as an emblem of moderation, one of the key Rosicrucian principles of his day.

There is yet another item worth mentioning. In the painting of the adulterous woman, in which Torrentius depicts Jesus

writing the initials "RV" with his finger in the soil, we can see at the head of the "R" a small rose in the still wet paint.

An important discovery in the field of painting is the fact that several of the old Masters painted according to a geometrical system when determining the size and composition of their paintings. De Haas has shown that geometrical Rosicrucian symbols are not only the basis of the paintings of Torrentius, but also of some works of Rembrandt, especially the *Nachtwacht* (Night Watch). It is possible that several of these old master artists were secretly associated with the Rosicrucian Order.


It is possible that several of these old master artists were secretly associated with the Rosicrucian Order.

The connection between Rembrandt and the Order, although perhaps tenuous on the surface, is reinforced by the fact that in the foreground of the *Nachtwacht*, a red rose was originally painted, though Banning Cocq (who commanded the Company in the painting) later replaced it with an orange on the copy in the British Museum. It can also be shown that the geometrical basis of the composition of the *Nachtwacht* is founded on the aforementioned Rosicrucian symbols.

## Footnotes

1. *Natural Philosophy* (Latin *philosophia naturalis*) was the precursor of *Natural Science* which took hold in Europe during the mid to late 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Natural Philosophy was the philosophical (as opposed to empirical) study of nature and the physical universe.





# I Am a Rosicrucian

by *Mary Sheriff*

**H**OW MANY of us come across areas of learning where the subject being taught seems completely beyond our comprehension? We can't fully grasp the knowledge we're supposed to be absorbing on a week by week basis, but new information keeps coming, more and more of it, all so interesting and tantalisingly close to understanding, but for the time being beyond our reach. We listen to academics of high standing, and others who were fortunate enough to reach high levels of education in various areas and we long to understand what they know with such ease.

As seekers, we never rest in our quest to understand things, especially things of a spiritual nature. And we

try to catch up and cover lost ground whenever we have fallen behind on our path of spiritual discovery. Maybe we never had opportunities for study and higher education, or maybe we had all the education we needed but never put it to good use. Or maybe we were simply lazy and lost important opportunities that we now sorely miss. Whatever the reason, our instincts finally catch up with us and we set out on the path again with a determination to move all obstacles out of the way.

This was why I became a Rosicrucian, and a wise step it was for me; for there is more willing assistance on this path than most would believe possible, if we would but accept the help being offered. Still, are we not all at



some time or other overcome by a feeling of failure to grasp what we need to learn, what seems so close and easy of reach if we would but stretch a bit? Perhaps that was why the Rosicrucian knowledge I have sought to acquire for most of my life has come to me in such a slow, steady manner, proceeding as if on a spiral path with each area of life being covered in greater and greater detail each time one full revolution of the spiral has taken place.

We have all no doubt wondered if we couldn't speed up our digestion and assimilation of esoteric knowledge if we received all facts and figures a bit faster. Why does true knowledge have to come to us so slowly? It is a fallacy to think that the acquisition of wisdom can come about any faster than we are innately designed to absorb it. We can digest and internalise new knowledge only up to a maximum speed and trying to go faster is likely to lead to life difficulties we were never designed to handle. True knowledge cannot be imparted to us any quicker than a certain optimum which differs from person to person and which is dependent on our present state of inner evolution. This highlights the fact that we are individuals with past histories, here to learn through our experiences for the ultimate outer manifestation of our soul.

**You are as valuable in many ways as the most brilliant scholar, for often you may possess more innate understanding of the human side of life than any amount of intellectual learning can give.**

Each person is as important as the next, and it is vital we remember this. And those who have more knowledge on a specific subject should consider themselves well blessed and always be willing to impart this knowledge to others anxious to receive it. If we have a particular blessing in life, and we all do to one extent or other, we should make the effort to become familiar with the needs of others in our particular area of expertise and pass on the blessing of greater understanding to those who seek it.

On the other hand, if you ever feel inferior or ineffective in a particular area of your life, remember that there are always other areas where you have a lot more to offer than you realise, and maybe a lot more than most others. You are as valuable in many ways as the most brilliant scholar, for often you may possess more innate understanding of the human side of life than any amount



*The great mystic Jakob Boehme.*

of intellectual learning can give. If you apply this intimate knowledge of life to everyday situations, you can do so much for the benefit of your fellow creatures, human, four-footed, six-legged, furry, feathery or wet. In this way, and by a judicious application of the Rosicrucian principles, you attract the love and friendship of those who you may have felt were leaving you behind.

Many inspired people have left the world a virtual sea of knowledge and illumination. The great mystic Jakob Boehme pursued the humble occupation of a shoe maker, finding joy and peace in simple living. Yet, the illumination which was divinely accorded him has guided others now for centuries. The advantage of inner knowledge is that it teaches us to select what is beneficial and avoid what is injurious to both ourselves and others, thereby resulting in harmony and the eventual unfoldment of the inner self.

Francis Bacon, when explaining the advantages of this inner knowledge and its efficiency in diffusing happiness said: *"Let us conclude with the dignity and excellency of knowledge and learning, whereunto man's nature must aspire."* So, as Rosicrucian mystics, we naturally aspire to the highest ideals of the centuries-old Rosicrucian path. We know we can only attain our ideals through hard inner work, by truly attempting to live the Rosicrucian ideal. Yet, we are ever free to choose alternative paths through life, and we never scoff at the choices made by others. For we are tolerant of all attempts to hear the call of the Inner Master, that still small voice of Divinity which resides in every human heart.

For us, however, the Rosicrucian path is the best there is, for whereas it may be slow and steady in its progression, it is stable and guarantees the eventual results we seek. Most all of us have learnt through this Order of Light that if we persevere long enough with the principles we are taught, we eventually do succeed, sometimes beyond our wildest hopes. As Belgian poet Maurice Maeterlinck once wrote: *"It is not by renouncing the joys that are near us that we shall grow wise; but as we grow wise, we unconsciously abandon the joys that are now beneath us."*

We need not fret and bother too much at the relative slowness of our progress on the path. Nor do we need to worry too much about our relative lack of understanding in our chosen fields. With time and a maturity that can only come through experience, all we seek will be revealed. Patience and perseverance have their reward. Let us therefore continue on our chosen paths, extending Light, Life and Love to all we meet. And with pride, we can say to whoever wishes to know: *"I am a Rosicrucian."*





# SAMOTHRACE:

## SANCTUARY OF THE GREAT GODS

by *Marc Cornwall*



**T**HE ENGLISH word ‘mystery’ derives from the Greek word *mysterion* meaning “secret rite or doctrine.” The follower, male or female, of such a mystery was a *mystes*, “one who has been initiated”, from the Greek verb *myein* meaning “to close or shut”, referring to privacy or secrecy.

The Mysteries<sup>1</sup> were schools in which all religious functions were closed to the uninitiated and for which the inner workings of the school were kept secret from

the general public. The most famous of these were the Eleusinian Mysteries which persisted for approximately 1,000 years in the form generally known to scholars, but may have been preceded by an older version dating back at least another 600 years. Some claim that the Eleusinian Mysteries lasted from 1450 BCE until 392 CE. During the period we know the Eleusinian Mysteries definitely operated, the ritual of public religion changed significantly, from the religions of the Bronze Age, to the





*Bronze and copper statues of Sabazios which were worshiped during the Roman era. Hands decorated with religious symbols stood in sanctuaries or were attached to poles for processional use.*



*Statue in Madrid of Cybele sitting in a chariot drawn by lions.*

Iron Age, to the Hero cults of Hellenistic civilisation, and again to the imperial cults of the Roman era. But throughout this time, the ritual performances of the mysteries themselves appear to have remained unchanged and were revered throughout the ancient world.

and Phrygian Sabazios (the Sky-Father god), and the Phrygian (Anatolian) mother goddess Cybele. There is a famous fountain statue of her driving a chariot drawn by two lions currently in the Plaza de Cibeles in the Spanish capital Madrid.

For among the many excellent and indeed divine institutions which your Athens has brought forth and contributed to human life, none, in my opinion, is better than those mysteries. For by their means we have been brought out of our barbarous and savage mode of life and educated and refined to a state of civilisation. And as the rites are called 'initiations', so in very truth we have learned from them the beginnings of life, and have gained the power not only to live happily, but also to die with a better hope.  
 -- from Cicero's *Laws II, xiv, 36*.

## Samothrace

Samothrace is a calm and atmospheric Greek island in the North-eastern Aegean Sea some 11 miles (17km) long and 69 square miles (178 square km) in size. It is unspoilt with wild and luxuriant vegetation watered by many springs. The island was not politically significant in ancient times, as it has no natural harbour and most of the island is too

What we have discovered about the older Greek mysteries we can assume reflects certain archaic aspects of a proposed common ancient Indo-European religion, with parallels in Indo-Iranian religious belief, which we do know something about. The mystery schools of Greece and Rome included the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Dionysian Mysteries and the Orphic Mysteries. Some of the many gods and goddesses that the Romans nominally adopted from other cultures also came to be worshipped in the Mysteries; for instance, the Egyptian goddess Isis, the Persian Mithraic Mysteries (who worshipped the god Mithras), the Indo-European Thracian



*A map of the Aegean Sea showing the main sanctuaries and mystery schools.*





*The beautiful Mount Fengari (Moon) where Greek mythology tells us that Poseidon sat to watch the Trojan war unfold.*

mountainous for cultivation. It is dominated by Mount Fengari which rises to 5,285 feet (1,611 m). Though not politically significant, Samothrace was significant in another way because of a divine cult that survived from the initial arrival of the Indo-European peoples into modern Greece and Anatolia (Turkey), if not from even earlier times.

It was the home of the *Sanctuary of the Great Gods*, which was a site of importance for Classical and pre-Classical Greek religious ceremonies. Among those who visited the shrine to be initiated into the island's Mysteries were the historian Herodotus (484-425 BCE), the Spartan admiral Lysander (died 395 BCE), Philip II of Macedon (382-336 BCE), father of Alexander the Great, and the Roman Consul Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus (100-43 BCE), the father-in-law of Julius Caesar.

The island's ancient city, called Palaiopolis ("old city"), was situated on the north-west coast. South of this lie the remains of ancient walls, which were built in massive Cyclopean style, as well as the remains of the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, where mysterious rites took place which were open to both slaves and free people, unlike the Eleusinian Mysteries. The traditional account from antiquity is that Samothrace was first inhabited by Pelasgians (pre-Greeks) and the Indo-European Carians from Anatolia, and later Thracians from the Balkans. At the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BCE the island was colonised by Greeks



*Philip II of Macedon (ruled 359 to 336 BCE).*

from Samos, from which derived the name 'Samos of Thrace', later to become Samothrace. The archaeological evidence suggests that the first major Greek settlement was started around the early part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE.

The temple complex, known as the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, is one of the pre-eminent Pan-Hellenic religious sanctuaries. The complex was independent of the city, as attested to by the dispatch of city ambassadors to the sanctuary during festivals. It was celebrated throughout Ancient Greece for its Mystery religion, a chthonic<sup>2</sup> religious practice as renowned in its time as the Eleusinian Mysteries. Many famous people in antiquity were initiates, and it is even mentioned by Plato and Aristophanes. During the Hellenistic period, after Phillip II came to the throne (359 BCE), it became the Macedonian national sanctuary where the successors of Alexander the Great vied to outdo each other's munificence. It remained an important religious site throughout the Roman period, and even the Emperor Hadrian visited.

## Who Were the Great Gods?

The identity and nature of the deities venerated at the sanctuary remains largely enigmatic, as it was forbidden to pronounce their names. Literary sources from antiquity refer to them under the collective name of Kábeiroi, while they carry the simpler epithet of Gods or Great Gods on inscriptions found on the site, which was a title or state-of-being rather than the actual name.

The pantheon of the Great Gods consists of numerous chthonic deities, primarily predating the arrival of Greek colonists on the island, and congregating around a central

**The Great Mother was often depicted on Samothracian coinage as a seated woman, with a lion at her side, or a lion or leopard on either side of her.**

figure, the Great Mother (Magna Mater to the Romans), who was a mediator between the "boundaries of the known and unknown", the civilised and the wild, the worlds of the living and the dead. The Great Mother was often depicted on Samothracian coinage as a seated woman, with a lion at her side, or a lion or leopard on either side of her. Her original pre-Greek name was Axieros. She is associated with the Anatolian Great Mother and the Trojan Mother Goddess of Mount Ida. The Greeks associated her equally with their fertility goddess Demeter.





*Goddess Hekate (Left) and The Great Mother - Magna Mater (Right).*

The Great Mother is the all-powerful mistress of the wild world of the mountains, venerated on sacred rocks where sacrifices and offerings were made to her. In the sanctuary of Samothrace, these altars corresponded to porphyry outcroppings of various colours (red, green, blue or grey). For her faithful, her power also manifested itself in veins of magnetic iron, from which skilled craftsmen fashioned rings that initiates wore as signs of recognition. A number of these rings have been recovered from the tombs in the neighbouring necropolis.

Hekate, a pre-Olympian chthonic goddess, under the name of Zerynthia, and Aphrodite-Zerynthia, was especially venerated at Samothrace, her cult having been distanced from that of the Great Mother and more closely identified with deities more familiar to the Greeks. She was regarded as ruling over the earth, sea and sky, as well as a more universal role as “Saviour” and “World Soul.” These labels may seem odd to the modern mind but not so strange when we consider them in the light of spirituality as expressed in the plethora of different belief systems that have emerged in the first 16 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The concept of a “World Soul” as an agglomeration of the souls of all humans and animals sharing the Earth, has greater acceptance nowadays than it did only 50 years ago when it would not have made sense to many people. The Rosicrucian Order speaks of a “human égrégoré” in much the same terms.

Kadmilos the husband of Axieros, the Great Mother, was a fertility god identified by the Greeks as Hermes. The sacred symbols associated with him were a ram’s head and a baton. Two other male deities were his constant companions or servants. These two may correspond to the two legendary heroes who founded the mysteries of Samothrace, the brothers Dardanos and Eetion. They are associated by the Greeks with the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux), divine twins popular as protectors of sailors in distress.

There were also a pair of underworld deities, Axiokersos and Axiokersa, identified with Hades and Persephone, but they do not appear to be part of the original group of pre-Greek deities. The legend, familiar to the Greeks, of the rape of the goddess of fertility (Persephone) by the god of the underworld (Hades) also played a part in the sacred dramas celebrated at Samothrace, though less so than at Eleusis. During a later period, this same myth was associated with that of the marriage of Kadmos, king of Thebes, and Harmonia of Samothrace, possibly due to a

similarity of his name to Kadmilos.

## The Kábeiroi

In Greek mythology, the Kábeiroi were a group of enigmatic chthonic deities. They were worshiped in a mystery cult closely associated with that of Hephaistos (Vulcan in Roman mythology), centred in the north Aegean island of Lemnos, but also at the Samothrace temple complex and at Thebes. In their distant origins the Kábeiroi and the Samothracian gods may include pre-Greek elements, or other non-Greek elements, such as Hittite, Thracian, Proto-Etruscan or Phrygian. The cult



*Remains of the Sanctuary of the Great Gods.*





*Digital reconstruction the early beginnings of the Samothrace temple complex.*



*Plan outline of the site with different colours denoting different time periods.*



*Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.*



*Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.*



*Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.*



*Digital reconstruction of a Samothrace site.*





*The Korymbantes were helmet-crested warriors armed with short swords and carrying round shields. Beating their shields in frenzied dances, they worshipped the Phrygian goddess Cybele, the Great Mother of Samothrace. Being offspring of Thalia and Apollo, the Korymbantes were mentioned in several of Plato's dialogues. In this image of the Parabiago plate, Cybele is accompanied by her consort Attis.*

was always local to Lemnos, but the Samothracian mystery cult spread rapidly throughout the Greek world during the Hellenistic period (323 BCE – 31 BCE), eventually initiating Romans.

There is some dispute about the number of deities that made up the Kábeiroi. Some consider that the Kábeiroi were twin gods who presided over the orgiastic dances of the mysteries of Samothrace which were held in honour of the goddesses Demeter, Persephone and Hecate. They were famed metal-workers, sons of the god Hephaistos, who served their father at his Lemnian forge. Like their mother Kabeiro, the pair were also sea-divinities who came to the aid of sailors in times of danger and stress. According to Clement of Alexandria (150-215 CE) who had an extensive knowledge of Greek mythology and mystery religions, the Kábeiroi were originally three in number, but two of the brothers murdered the third. In the play *The Kábeiroi* by Aeschylus, the two gods welcomed the Argonauts to their island and initiated them in a drunken orgy. But for some, the Samothracian Kábeiroi were a larger group of deities which included not only the sons of Hephaistos but also several Korymbantic sons of the god Apollo. Both groups were portrayed as shield-clashing, dancing warriors of the orgiastic ceremonies.

## The Sanctuary

The Samothrace sanctuary was open to all who wished to worship the Great Gods, although access to buildings

consecrated to the Mysteries was reserved for initiates. These rituals and ceremonies were presided over by the priestess in service to the people. The head priestess, and often a prophetess, was called a Cybele (Sybil in English).

The most common rituals were indistinguishable from practices at other Greek sanctuaries. Prayer and supplications accompanied by blood sacrifices of domestic animals, primarily sheep and pigs, burnt in sacred hearths, as well as libations made to the chthonic deities in circular or rectangular ritual pits. A large number of rock altars were used, the largest of which was surrounded by a monumental enclosure, the Court of the Altar, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE (site number 11).

The major annual festival, drawing envoys to the island from throughout the Greek world, probably took place around mid-July. It consisted of the presentation of a sacred play, consisting of a ritual wedding which may have taken place in the building with the Hall of the Choral Dancers which was built in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. At that time, the belief arose that the search for the missing maiden, followed by her marriage to the god of the underworld, represented the marriage of Kadmos, king of Thebes and Harmonia, which took place on Samothrace.

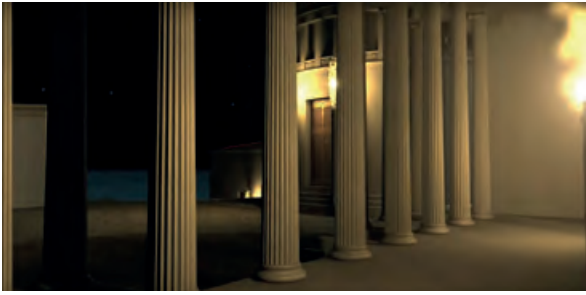
The name Kadmos means a 'round shield' which was the attribute of the Korymbantes, the shield-clashing demi-gods of the Mysteries. The frieze on the Temenos (site number 14) may be an allusion to this marriage. Around 200 BCE, a Dionysian competition was added to the festival, facilitated by the construction of a theatre (site number 10) opposite the great altar (site number 11). According to local myth, it is in this era that the city of Samothrace honoured a poet of Iasos in Caria for having composed the tragedy *Dardanos* and having effected other acts of good will around the island, the city and the sanctuary.

Numerous votive offerings were made at the

**The Samothrace sanctuary was open to all who wished to worship the Great Gods, although access to buildings consecrated to the Mysteries was reserved for initiates.**

sanctuary, which were placed in The Hall of Offerings, a building made for the purpose next to the Court of the Altar (site number 12). Offerings could be statues of bronze, marble or clay, weapons, vases, etc. However, due to Samothrace's location on busy maritime routes the cult was particularly popular and numerous often very modest offerings found their way there: excavations have turned up seashells and fish hooks offered by mariners





*Images show digital visualisations of the Samothrace site.*

or fishermen who were likely thanking the divinities for having protected them from the dangers of the sea.

## The Mysteries

Like all of the ancient mysteries, the essential core remains an enigma. We can use information from other like-minded cults, information from ancient writers as well as archaeological finds, however, a unique feature of the Samothracian mysteries was their openness as compared to the Eleusinian mysteries. The initiation had no prerequisites for age, gender, status or nationality. In this way it resonates with Rosicrucian practice.

Everyone, men and women, adults and children, Greeks and non-Greeks, the free, the indentured, or the enslaved could participate. Nor was the initiation confined to a specific date and the initiate could on the same day attain two successive degrees of the mystery, as long as it took place during the sailing season from April to November. The only condition, in fact, was to be present in the sanctuary. According to the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (c. 90-30 BCE) the rites held here in silent trust by the community of the initiated promised not only protection at sea but the opportunity for initiates to become more pious and more just and better in every respect than they were before.

The first stage of the initiation was the *myesis*. A sacred account and special symbols were revealed to the *mystes*; that is to say the

initiate. According to Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BCE – 27 BCE), the ancient Roman scholar and writer, the symbols revealed on this occasion symbolised heaven and earth. In return for this revelation, which was kept secret, the initiate was given the assurance of certain privileges: Hope for a better life, and more particularly protection at sea, and possibly, as at Eleusis, the promise of a happy afterlife. During the ceremony the initiate received a crimson sash knotted around the waist that was supposed to be a protective talisman; compare this to the apron worn by members of other modern mystical groups. An iron ring exposed to the divine power of magnetic stones was probably another symbol of protection conferred during the initiation.

The site was developed over the two-century long period. The sanctuary occupies three narrow terraces on the west slopes of mount Agios Georgios, separated by two steep-banked torrents. The prospective initiates entered the Sanctuary of the Great Gods from the east through the Propylon of Pharaoh Ptolemy II which was also known as the Ptolemaion (site number 20), which spans the eastern stream and functions as a bridge. Immediately to the west, on the first terrace, on the Eastern Hill there is the Theatral Circle a somewhat circular paved depression, nine metres in diameter, containing an altar in the centre, which was where the beginning of the initiation process took place. This was the primary location of the public, sacred activity. It was surrounded by a grandstand of five steps, the outermost of which held 40 life-sized bronze statues. It played a key role in completing the initiates' experience by effecting their final transformation upon leaving the sanctuary.

A winding path descends towards the main terrace, between the two streams, where the main monuments



*The Arlington Reservoir Rotunda is an exact replica of the Arsinoë Rotunda on Samothrace.*



to the cult can be found. A large tholos<sup>5</sup>, the Arsinoëion, or Arsinoë II Rotunda, named after Ptolemy's wife Arsinoë II (site number 15), the largest covered round space in the ancient Greek world (20 metres in diameter), may have served to welcome the theores, sacred ambassadors delegated by cities and associations to attend the great festivals at the sanctuary. The decoration of rosettes and garlanded bull's heads leads some to believe that sacrifices may have also taken place here. The rotunda was built on an older building of which only the foundation has remained. At the Arlington Massachusetts Reservoir is an exact copy of the rotunda.

Prospective Initiates entered the sanctuary from the east although the preparation for the initiation took place in a small room south of the Anaktoron (or House of the Lords, site number 16), a type of sacristy where the initiate was dressed in white and was given a lamp. The *myesis* then took place in this Anaktoron, comprising a large hall capable of accommodating numerous already initiated faithful, who would attend the ceremony seated on benches along the walls. The initiate carried out a ritual washing in a basin situated in the southeast corner and then made a libation to the gods in a circular pit.

At the end of the ceremony, the initiates took their place seated on a round wooden platform facing the principal door while ritual dances took place around them. They were then taken to the north chamber, the sanctuary where they received the revelation proper. Access to this sanctuary was forbidden to non-initiates. The initiates were given a document attesting to their initiation in the mysteries and could, at least during the later period, pay to have their names engraved on a commemorative plaque.

**...the discovery of numerous lamps and torch-supports throughout this site confirms the nocturnal nature of the initiation rites.**

The second degree of the initiation was called the *epopteia*, literally, the 'contemplation'. Unlike the one-year interval between degrees which was demanded at Eleusis, the second degree at Samothrace could be obtained immediately after the *myesis*. In spite of this, it was only realised by a small number of initiates, which leads us to believe that it involved some difficult conditions, though it is unlikely that these conditions were financial or social. It seems to have concerned moral issues, as the candidate was auditioned and required to confess their sins. This



*View over the Hieron of Samothrace.*

audition took place overnight in front of the Hieron (site number 13). It was the most important building in the sanctuary and is 40 metres long by 13 metres wide. It is not known who dedicated this building, but given the magnificence, it was likely a royal.

Although it is a type of temple, there is only a single prostyle. It seems to have functioned as a *telesterion*, or place of the mysteries, as it has benches for seating down both sides of the hall just like at Eleusis. The architectural ornamentation of the facade is noteworthy for its elegance. The interior boasts the largest unsupported span in the ancient Greek world, some 11 metres. The south end of this building is an apse, which constitutes the most sacred portion. This apse may represent a grotto for conducting chthonic rituals. A foundation was recovered here which could have supported a giant torch, and generally speaking, the discovery of numerous lamps and torch-supports throughout this site confirms the nocturnal nature of the initiation rites.

After the interrogation and the eventual absolution awarded by the priest or official the candidate was brought into the Hieron, which also functioned as an *epopteion*, or 'place of contemplation', where ritual cleansing took place and sacrifice was made into a sacred hearth located in the centre of the 'holy of holies.' The initiate then went to an apse in the rear of the building, which was probably intended to resemble a grotto. The hierophant, also known as the initiator, took his place on a platform in the apse where he recited the liturgy and displayed the symbols of the mysteries. Afterwards the initiates went for a good, social meal in a banqueting hall.

During the Roman era, towards 200 CE, the entrance to the Hieron was modified to permit the entrance of







*The Winged Victory of Samothrace in the Louvre, Paris.*

live sacrificial offerings. A parapet was constructed in the interior to protect the spectators and a crypt was fitted into the apse. These modifications permitted the celebration of the Kriobolia<sup>3</sup> and the Taurobolia<sup>4</sup> of the Anatolian Great Mother, which were introduced to the *epopteia* (greater mysteries) at this time. The new rites saw the initiate or possibly only the priest by proxy, descend into a pit in the apse. The blood of the sacrificial animals then flowed over him or her in the fashion of a baptismal rite.

**The statue conveys a sense of action and triumph as well as portraying artful flowing drapery, as though the goddess were descending to alight upon the prow of a ship.**

On the third and final terrace, west of the spiritual centre of the sanctuary, is primarily occupied by votive buildings such as the Miletean Building, so named as it was dedicated by a citizen of Miletus (site number 5), and the Neorion, or naval monument (site number 6). It is also the location of a banqueting hall (site number 7). Three other small Hellenistic treasuries are not well known (site numbers 1 to 3). Overlooking the central terrace, the space is above all dominated by a very large

Stoa or portico (104 metres long; site number 8) which acts as a monumental backdrop to the sanctuary. It lies above the Theatre.

To the south of the Theatre (site number 9) is a building called the Fountain of the Victory. In this fountain stood the world-famous statue known as ‘The Winged Victory of Samothrace’. The statue lacks its head, but is a visually-compelling sculpture that catches one particular moment in time. It portrays the ancient Greek goddess Nike or Victory alighting on the prow of a ship. It is 8 feet (2.5m) high. It was created not only to honour the goddess, but also to honour a sea battle. The statue conveys a sense of action and triumph as well as portraying artful flowing drapery, as though the goddess were descending to alight upon the prow of a ship.

The sculpture is notable for its convincing rendering of a pose where violent motion and sudden stillness meet, for its graceful balance and for the rendering of the figure’s draped garments, compellingly depicted as if rippling in a strong sea breeze. This statue, one of the greatest surviving pieces of Hellenistic sculpture, now to be found in the Louvre museum in Paris, is my personal favourite piece of sculpture.

## Notes

1. When discussing the Greek ‘mysteries’, the implication is that what was done and experienced by the *mystes* was something of a deeply sacred nature. For this reason, it is usual to capitalise the first letter “M” of “Mysteries” to honour of the spiritual nature of the ceremonies they conducted.
2. Chthonic: “in, under or beneath the earth”, thus “subterranean”. The meaning here is about deities or spirits of the underworld, especially in Greek religion.
3. Kriobolia: Sacrifice of a ram.
4. Taurobolia: Sacrifice of a bull.
5. Tholos: A circular structure, often a temple, of ancient Greece and Rome.

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# Universal LOVE

by Daniel Bita Minsili

*This article is an adaptation of a presentation made at a Convention of Rosicrucians held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in August 2012.*

**L**OVE IS the primordial law of Divine manifestation that extends to all beings in the immense web of life. It is a glimpse into the very source and reason for the existence of life. The sense of love we feel for other beings, even the humblest of creatures, comes from this vast universal source of inclusiveness and justice.

In general, love is a harmonious, heartfelt, inner bond established between us and our environment.

We experience it as an attractive force binding us to certain principles, things, people and of course our far distant cousins of the animal kingdom. The intensity, duration and beauty of this connection is highly variable and depends on the object of our love. The most common expressions describing this are: desire, physical attractiveness, sentimental or emotional attraction, passion, communion, fusion and ecstasy.

Love has long been celebrated by poets as the highest





*Plato's Symposium, depiction by Anselm Feuerbach.*

of human feelings. The early philosophers of classical Greece were the first to reflect on love. For Empedocles (495-430 BCE), love was an attractive force wrestling a force of repulsion; thus, love sparks a happy union of two human beings while hatred or wrestling is cause of separation. Is love the sign of a personal deficiency for which we ought to find a remedy? Should love be a constant quest or should it disappear when the aim is achieved? So questioned Plato (428-348 BCE) in his *Symposium* which concerns itself at one level with the genesis, purpose and nature of love.

According to Dr Harvey Spencer Lewis (1883-1939, former Emperor of AMORC), there is a hierarchical order from the lowest form of love to the supreme love. At the bottom of the ladder is instinctive love related to sexual attraction and to the satisfaction of bodily needs. These sensual desires are temporal and need to be continuously excited to be satisfied. The next level is intellectual love. It includes the desire to create, acquire knowledge and to achieve in arts or trades. Unlike sensual desires, intellectual love grows with satisfaction.

**The highest type of love is spiritual motivation or mystical love.**

In other words, its realisation stimulates the mental faculties and strengthens talents. This type of love is never satiated and includes the love of wisdom. It is the love of idealism and of freedom, the love of the mystery of being and nature. The highest type of love is spiritual motivation or mystical love. In this type of love, our ego wants nothing

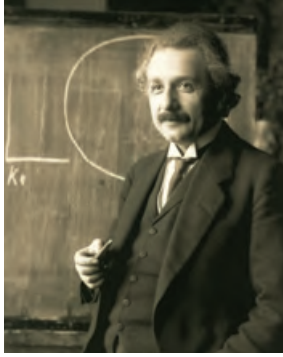
for itself, seeking instead a merger with the totality of all that exists and which is considered as the ultimate transcendence available to humans. This transcendence is commonly referred to as God, the Cosmic, the Absolute or the Universal Mind.

To raise our consciousness, we must impose our will on all levels of our being: the physical, the mental, the emotional and the spiritual. In all traditions, everything is love. It is the Supreme Force behind everything that was, is and will be. It is the Force which is the cause of all visible and invisible creation, because it is the driver of Universal Evolution. A Rosicrucian adept once said:

*Since the world began, no other energy possessed an attractive power as great as love. For it is this energy that gave to the Word its initial impetus, and also in this energy lies the perpetual attraction exerted between Creation and the Creator. Humanity is the best example of this attraction, since we have been the most prone to experience this love. We must therefore learn to love the Light and the Life in addition to all the beings of creation.*

Albert Einstein (1879-1955), on the same subject, affirmed that humanity is part of the whole called the Universe, a part limited in time and space. However, as humans we experience our own self, our thoughts and feelings as if we were separated from everything else around us. This is a kind of optical illusion of consciousness. This illusion happens to be like a prison for us, restricting us to our selfish desires and limiting our





*Albert Einstein.*

affection for the few people who are closest to us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures, the whole of nature and its beauty. In fact, as noted by the present Emperor, as long as the majority of people will insist in regarding themselves as being apart from other kingdoms of nature, humanity will remain blocked in its evolution and will not cross the threshold of collective initiation which should necessarily mark the transition to the Aquarian Age.

**Thus, the hallmark of a true love between two people is that it arouses within the lovers the longing for God.**

We tend to love another not for who they are, but for their inner traits that we intuit are lacking in ourselves. From a metaphysical and alchemical point of view, there is a true complementary half for every living being. However, human beings have lost the deep meaning of marriage, and tend to make wrong choices, taking for pure and enduring connections, mere physical attraction.

According to mystical tradition, for the alchemy of marriage to operate and to become the cosmic and celestial union of two complementary beings, the divine essence of each of them must be united by a natural attraction before the physical body can properly be united or connected. Thus, the hallmark of a true love between two people is that it arouses within the lovers the longing for God. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) said about love:

*...if a relationship does not lead to God, that love is not real, even if it brings the greatest happiness and the purest joy in human terms. And that's why to love someone, is in fact to go beyond human feelings and emotions and to help them find the way of divine love; to be loved meaning then to be supported in the search for the Divine.*

Love is an attribute of the soul, it is this attribute that a couple learns to cultivate through a reciprocal abandonment, which is the key to any spiritual relationship. The desires of each individual ego melt under

the purifying fire of love and turn it into a real aspiration for growth and the expression of deep spiritual feelings such as compassion and trust.

## Where Are We Going?

If increased awareness has appeared in the attitude of a growing number of people and organisations around the world, much remains to be done for men and women of the whole world to recognise themselves as brothers and sisters, and come to express this bond in their behaviour.

Each of us has witnessed, either up close or from a distance, violence and horrors perpetrated by people against each other. Torn between selfishness, cruelty, ignorance of laws and a blind materialism, humanity seems to have lost its bearing, its heart and its reason. This huge lack of love in the heart of men and women alike, makes them act like wild animals seeming intent on destroying themselves.

The language of force is still prevalent in the relationships between countries as it is between individuals. Here indifference, lack of confidence, hypocrisy and the race for profit dominate people's minds. Additionally, superstition, ignorance and fear can trap consciousness. At the other extreme, a minority composed of neophytes, students and initiates of Orders of Wisdom and people with awakened minds work diligently for regeneration of humanity.



According to Rosicrucian teachings, the diversity of thoughts and behaviours among humans is due to a difference of evolution, that is to say, a difference of experience and knowledge. As energy, the soul is the same in all humanity; however, its individualised expression through our mind and body is dependent upon what each of us makes of it. The ultimate goal of all humanity is the perfection of consciousness, and to achieve this goal, humanity must confront all obstacles and all trials without diverting from its path.





*Swami Vivekananda.*

This advancement is achieved by the combined action of the universal cycles, particularly the influence of successive eras and of humanity making use of its free will to express the divine wisdom in its behaviour. Past eras have contributed to the transformation that took place gradually in the minds of humanity, especially in their approach to the mystery of life and death.

**Swami Vivekananda:** *There is in this life, only one good we must possess at all costs, and that good is love. That's the only true treasure of life. Blessed is he who finds it..*

**Dalai Lama:** *Humanity is a whole. Without the human community, no human being could survive.*

**André Maurois:** *Whoever becomes foreign to others becomes a stranger to himself. To some extent, to be is to love.*

**Mother Teresa:** *If we do not experience peace, it is because we have forgotten that we all belong one to each other..*

Our teachings remind us that men and women are but cells of the one body, the body of humanity. The transition from the individual to the collective, from the human love to the love of humanity is a crucial step in the evolution of love itself and in the evolution of humanity. Each of us needs to love and to be loved. Thus, the love of

humanity cannot express itself at its best unless through a personal relationship. To live, thrive and grow in freedom, we need to find someone who recognises us as unique, encourages us to evolve and to become our true self. To overcome the negative influences arising from our diverse behaviours, we need to learn to speak the language of love.

Such language is of cosmic origin and reflects the harmony that governs all laws of creation. A thought of love, a word or an act of love, breaks all barriers that differences of language, of race and culture could create. However, like all other languages, the language of love must be learned, and that can only happen if we all learn to love one other regardless of who we are as individuals. Because of our imperfections and of material contingencies that apply to us, it is not possible to love every person with the same intensity. And it is not desirable to seek to be loved by all either. However, we do have two simple responsibilities in relation to the love of humanity:

1. The first is to love ourselves; for if we don't do that, how can we love others? To be able to love ourselves, we have to accept ourselves as we are, with all the physical and intellectual traits that make our personality.
2. Our second duty is to cultivate tolerance; for while we probably cannot love every person as much as various others, it is nevertheless imperative that we hate no one. Above all, love means not hating others, and not harbouring malicious thoughts about anyone.

Love towards humanity makes us feel concerned by suffering and human misery. We must create within ourselves a feeling of compassion and accept that every person is, deep within him or herself, sacred. And we can move towards this by doing at least the following:

- Do not wait to forgive another for the offense you have taken, consciously or unconsciously, due to the perceived thoughts, words and deeds of another.
- Give yourself to others, in the sense of truly caring for their wellbeing.
- With all that you give, give only with love.

Whoever is at the service of others must therefore seek to reach spiritual maturity. Their mind must be fed with inner calm and prayer. Daily meditation, study and practice of our teachings, services in our affiliated bodies





have no other purpose. What makes the difference, like in any spiritual quest, is the sincerity, consistency and perseverance with which we walk on the path. The goal of human love and of the love of humanity is to cause the heart of each and every person to merge with the heart of God, to achieve a spiritual wedding, enlightenment, or the Rose-Croix state, whichever terminology you wish to use.

The state of spiritual perfection involves the integration of love in all aspects of being. In this state, love illuminates everything, embellishes everything and brings joy. It radiates its soft rays of light and life in the cottage as well as the palace, in the valley as much as on the mountain top, on the hospital bed or on the pallet of the poor. Enlightened beings have entirely defeated the illusions of life and are devoted fully to the service of their fellow humans. And in the process, they become channels of Divine love.

We can only express the best of ourselves in ways that are inscribed in our spiritual identity. It contains our archetypal codifications and the scale of priorities of our existence. The anchor of service to the “Great Work” therefore necessarily involves discovering one’s inner being, without knowledge of which it is difficult or impossible for us to rise toward greater spiritual heights.

### Communion with our Inner Master

Listening is an essential attitude with which we can respond to the need to communicate with others and gain access through their words to their inner personality. When successful, it’s almost as if we are closer to an individual who seeks to express him/her

self and who needs us to do just that. At that moment, their whole being speaks to us, not just words, but also with gestures and looks.

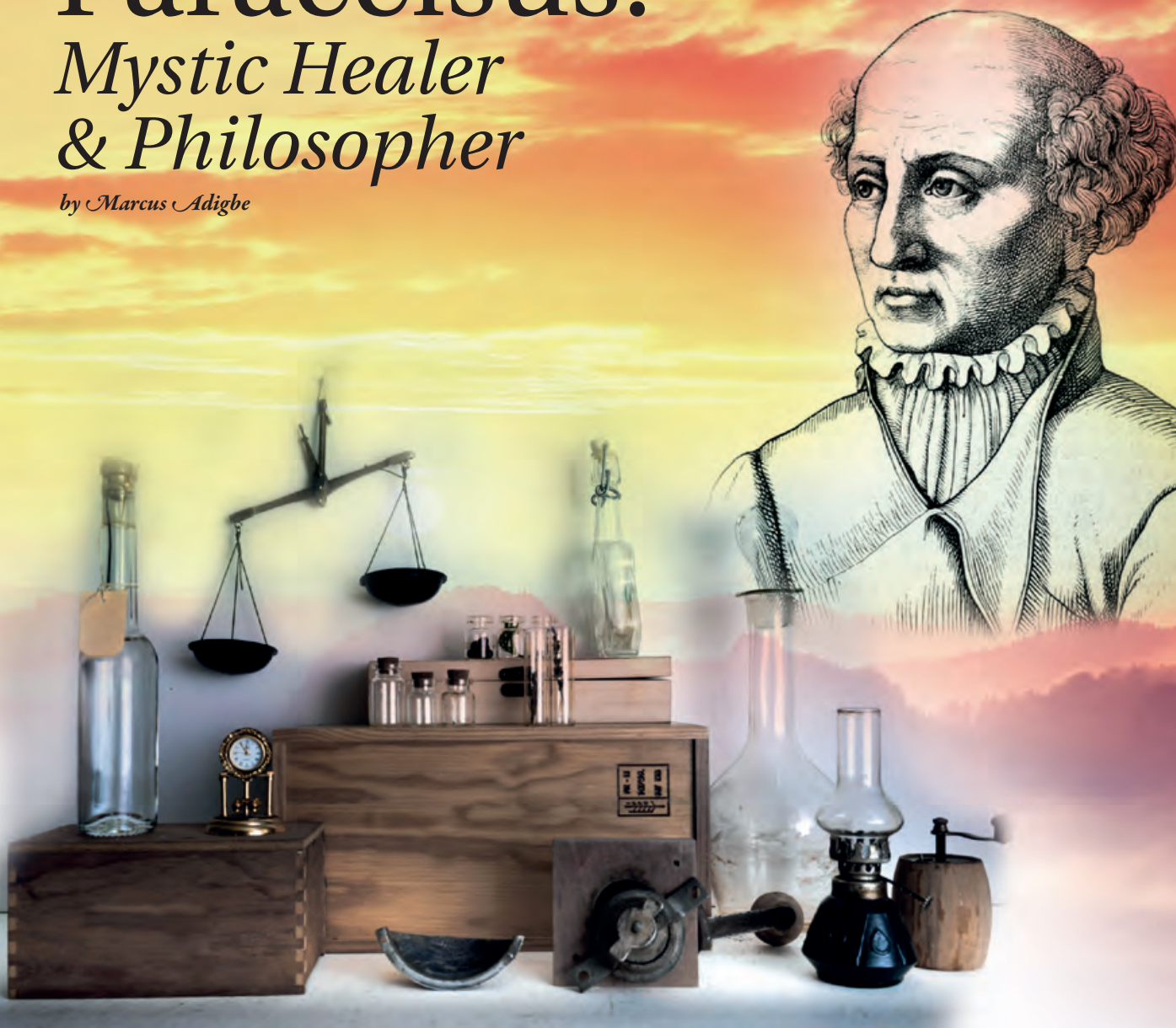
In its most mystical applications, listening does not consist only in listening to others with compassion. We must also turn towards the divine soul within us, because as an emanation, it constantly aspires to reveal the wisdom it has. The only way to do this is to go into meditation and purification in the depths of our heart, to commune with our Inner Master. For it is in such a communion that we can receive the influx of the Word. This is precisely what Louis Claude de Saint Martin suggested when he said that “*The great truths are taught in silence.*” To find the way to our freedom, to our divinity, is undoubtedly one of these great truths that our Inner Master will make a point to teach us. For Saint Martin, we have two keys to access communion with our Master Within: prayer and meditation.

Rosicrucian Meditation is a form of cosmic attunement which includes an active phase of reflection and analysis of a problem, followed by a passive phase of contemplation and receptivity, in which a solution can be given to us. Practised regularly, it will place our consciousness under the inspiration of the Divine wisdom within us, which opens the path to success and happiness. Prayer, meanwhile, consists in turning the human soul to things pertaining to the divine, and its purpose is to unite with the mind of God to become one with Him. True prayer leads to this state of dialogue and communion with God in the depths of our heart. The secret of the progress of humanity lies in their prayer, said Saint Martin..., and the secret of their prayer resides in the preparation.



# Paracelsus: *Mystic Healer & Philosopher*

by *Marcus Adigbe*



**T**HE NAME *Paracelsus* was both loved and feared throughout Europe during this great mystic's lifetime, but even more so during the century which followed. Although he was a physician first and foremost, he was also an alchemist and mystic who inspired several generations of seekers of Light. He lived from 1493 to 1541, a period of great transition, and his contemporaries included Erasmus, Thomas More, Zwingli and Martin Luther. Paracelsus' opposition to the philosophy of Aristotle and the then

accepted techniques of healing by Galen was deeply frowned upon. But his refusal to accept the broader, conventional world view of his day guaranteed trouble for him. But he was a resilient and learned man, both from his life experiences and through his observations of nature. And apart from being a doctor, he was also a geologist, philosopher, biologist and alchemist.

Born in Einsiedeln in Switzerland in 1493, Paracelsus' father was an impoverished German doctor and chemist. His mother died when he was very young, and his father



took his only son to Villach in southern Austria where the young boy received a basic education at a mining school where his father taught chemistry. From an early age, Paracelsus was exposed through his father's work, to the secret arts of metallurgy and alchemy, the transmutation of baser metals into gold. He later said that his father had taught him the *"adept philosophy"*, though it is not clear whether he was referring to *"exoteric alchemy"*, the transmutation of base metals into gold, or to what was to become the Paracelsian form of mystical philosophy. Although he learned some Latin, his dislike of textbooks is well known. Despite his aversion to textbook learning, he did however attend several universities and would no doubt have found his knowledge of Latin very useful indeed, since many lectures in his day were held purely in Latin.

At fourteen, he began the life of a wanderer. At that time, many young people wandered across Europe, going from one university to another, seeking famous teachers, new ideas and increased knowledge. He attended the universities of Basel, Tübingen, Vienna, Wittenberg, Leipzig, Heidelberg and Cologne. But all these great centres of learning lacked what he was seeking, and he resolved to study nature directly. After several years, began graduate work at the University of Ferrara in Italy, where he was freer to express his unconventional opinions on the conventional knowledge of the day. He liked the Florentine Academy, absorbing the ideas of notable luminaries such as Ficino and Pico della Mirandola.

Following his graduate work, he left Ferrara and settled for a while in Naples where he worked as a surgeon in the army of Charles I, King of Spain. Because of the failure of doctors to cure many diseases, he is reputed to have said one day: *"You injure ten while saving one."* While one day seriously considering leaving medicine for good, he is said to have received comfort in the words: *"God has not permitted any disease without providing a remedy."* It was not knowledge but tradition that was the problem.

There is still disagreement as to whether Paracelsus ever received his medical degree. Perhaps he did, but it may equally be that, like his father, he never completed his degree, for he frequently questioned the value of such a title which he believed had so little true knowledge associated with it. But Paracelsus had an innate talent for healing, curing the rich for

money, but treating the poor for free. The young physician travelled through many countries, though his whereabouts between 1517 and 1523 is not known.

It is known that he worked in both Denmark and Russia, from which he eventually had to flee before a Tatar invasion. It is said that he was taken prisoner by the Tatars but escorted to Constantinople where a magus

**...his main concern was in discovering *"the latent forces of Nature"* and how they could be used in finding better cures and improving the health of mankind.**

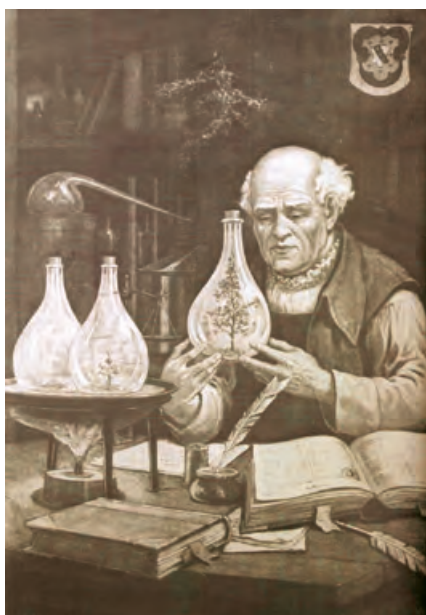
gave him the Philosopher's Stone. To mystics this has been interpreted as being his final induction into the mysteries of esoteric alchemy. Later he travelled through Palestine, Egypt, Greece and the Balkans, gaining wisdom and accomplishing miraculous cures wherever he went. He was in Rhodes during its siege by the Turks, but managed to continue his travels to Venice and Dalmatia. Finally in 1524 he returned to his father in Villach, an experienced and accomplished mystic and by now a well-known healer.

Throughout his travels in Europe and the Near East, Paracelsus sought increased knowledge of alchemy. Although he used this knowledge in developing more effective medical treatments, his main concern was in discovering *"the latent forces of Nature"* and how they could be used in finding better cures and improving the health of mankind.

## Chemistry

Although much of Paracelsus' work is extremely arcane and hidden from modern understanding, other parts of it, especially those relating to chemistry, are thoroughly modern. He is in fact credited with having been the one to have coined the word *chemistry*. He knew for example that zinc was a metal and that metals were characterised by fusibility, namely, that they were all prone to oxidation. But is remembered first and foremost for his alchemical work which uniquely was applied not for making gold but for producing new cures and medicines.

Paracelsus was above all, a healer and physician. The idea of his





*Archidoxa* was startling and radical in his day, but remained an inspiration to medical and alchemical seekers for generations to come. According to Paracelsus, healing power lay not in matter but in a special force he called the “quintessence”, a subtle and invisible “essence”, force or property of nature which made all things right, and cured all things physical, mental and spiritual. This elixir was the preserving power, the Arcanum, the transmuting and restoring hidden power of God. Although what he said and did seem strange to our modern ways, he truly was one of the great founding fathers of chemistry.



He believed in a correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm and the old adage “as above, so below”, was central to his methods. Man is the microcosm, but the food he eats is from the “great world”,

**Although what he said and did seem strange to our modern ways, he truly was one of the great founding fathers of chemistry.**

the macrocosm. And as he lives in the macrocosm, the “great world” becomes a part of man. So too with his healing methods, substances within the macrocosm, ordinary chemical substances of the material world can and do impinge upon and to an extent heal the inner being. Nature has forces and bodies both visible and invisible, and Paracelsus used them to good effect throughout his career.

Like Cagliostro, he cured patients that other physicians had given up on. But sometimes these successes were followed by intrigue, disgrace and conflict with academic physicians. He recognised hereditary factors as the origin of many diseases, and this was in an age when sufferers of hereditary illnesses were punished for the supposed “sins” of having been afflicted with their illnesses rather than being treated in any compassionate way. The “*living plasma*”, analogous to what Rosicrucians call the *Vital Life Force*, was for him the very basis of the animate. This quintessence was the basis of life itself, and his arcane methods and studies eventually brought biology into the realm of medical science.

Strasbourg in 1526 was a centre of humanism. The city had a good printing press, a school of surgery, and nearby, a school of the *Brethren of the Common Lot*

where he had friends. Paracelsus and the heads of the school of surgery wrote and lectured in German instead of Latin, a radical departure from the past. One of the school doctors however challenged him to a public discussion, but he apparently lost the debate. Disgraced by this public humiliation, he left Strasbourg in spite of the fact that he was known as a gifted healer. He went to Basel where friends suggested he see Frobenius, a printer and publisher who had a leg infection. Doctors had diagnosed amputation of his leg, but Paracelsus cured it instead. Against Paracelsus’ instructions, Frobenius later

moved to Frankfurt where he soon died, a death which was falsely blamed on Paracelsus.

Arriving in Basel during a time of conflict between the Protestant majority and Catholics at the university, at the request of the Reformation faction, Paracelsus was offered and accepted the posts of municipal doctor and professor. Public discussions were the norm at the time, but the Reformation party avoided them, and Paracelsus did not take part, not wishing to serve the political ends of either faction. Denied a lecture room at the university, he lectured outside the university and began by taking off his professor’s robe. With more students attending than usual, he lectured on diagnosis, therapeutics, pharmacology and the like, and inspected pharmacies as part of his duties, as well as seeing a regular stream of patients.

When commencement celebrations were held on St. John’s Day, the students put into a bonfire all they did not want or like. Paracelsus was there, and his students, under his orders, put the principal medical text of the time, the *Canon of Avicenna*, into the fire. It was perhaps a foolish way of expressing his disapproval of accepted medical instruction and practice, but he stood his ground firmly. This action, together with his attempt to correct certain abuses of pharmacies, barbershops and others under his authority, aroused opposition and soon a satire about him was put on the door of the church.

## The Wrath of Doctors

Paracelsus went to Zürich to find help, and during his absence, the doctors of Basel plotted against him, arranging for a certain official to fall ill. Paracelsus was called in and cured the man, but felt that the fee he received was inadequate. Taking the matter to court, he lost the case against the man. Although Paracelsus wrote frequently and anonymously against the magistrates and



clergy of the city, it was obvious who the real author was. This merely stoked the flames of hatred against him and eventually, the city council drew up a bill of attainder. He was warned in advance by a friend and left in a hurry.

In Nuremberg, the doctors wanted a debate. Instead, he asked them to send a patient to him, suggesting a syphilitic. He was put in charge of a prison leper hospital, which included syphilitics, and there, he cured nine of fifteen patients. But the medical guild was still against him, and when he attempted to publish his first pamphlet on syphilis, followed by a book on the disease, the aldermen would not allow their publication even though they were the best works on the subject. His *Paragranum* was a denouncement of the medical guild, and outlined what he considered the four main subjects of medicine: philosophy or natural science, alchemy, astronomy and virtue or power. He supplemented the Hippocratic oath by defending his system of medicine, and would not accept a fee unless he thought he had earned it. Distrusting pharmacists, he treated everyone affordably and the poor for free, regardless of religion, and in a day and age, where medical services were often denied to Gypsies, Jews and Catholics in a now predominantly Protestant city.

Paracelsus taught and wrote through a series of "Paramiric" essays, and his *Paramirum*, meaning "wonder", dates from this time. Knowledge of medicine should not be just about wondering, it should be about allowing nature itself to do the healing. "*Nature heals*" he said, "*the doctor nurses. Man is his own doctor. The body heals itself.*" Natural phenomena result from natural forces or powers.

**Central to him now was the religion of love, and this included love of the poor and outcast. Although overtly Christian in his beliefs, he was non-sectarian, and without a doubt, an accomplished mystic.**

### Paracelsus and the Reformation

Some Reformation groups were persecuted and their leaders were killed. Paracelsus understood their problems and tried to help them. He knew the trance state and he also knew that a magician could not do harm unless the victim believed that he could. Faith works two ways. It can permit harm, but it can also heal. He sometimes stayed with Anabaptists and agreed with many of their doctrines, but he rejected some of their ideas such as adult baptism. As the movement declined, he however continued helping them as a doctor and healer.



*Aurora thesaurusque philosophorum 1577 (title page). First edition of a collection of alchemical treatises attributed to Paracelsus.*

It is evident that he later changed from his study and medical practice, to a spiritual life of meditation and solitude. Although he continued writing, he published no more works. His teaching continued, but it was no longer the most important part of his later life. Central to him now was the religion of love, and this included love of the poor and outcast. Although overtly Christian in his beliefs, he was non-sectarian, and without doubt an accomplished mystic.

The *Great Surgery Book* was published in 1536, but the rest of his works did not appear until twenty years after his death. Other works by him include *The Great Astronomy* and *The Sagacious Philosophy of the Great and Small World*, as well as many others. In 1540, Prince-Bishop of Salzburg offered him a place to live and he spent the remainder of his life there in peace. On 21<sup>st</sup> September 1541, he made out his last will and testament and three days later he died. Paracelsus was a remarkable man, not only for the medical advances he made during dangerous times of religious fervour and change, but because of the legacy of spirituality which he bequeathed upon generations of healers and doctors who followed in his footsteps. Mystic healer and philosopher of the soul, Paracelsus remained an example that many attempted to emulate for centuries to come.





# DOES HEALING INTERFERE WITH KARMA?

by *Divinator*

**H**AVE YOU not undergone periods of that feeling of sheer delight, when everything is magnificent and the world is a glorious place, and yet conversely at other times, we are beset with periods of mental or physical anguish when the world assumes a far less agreeable appearance? For me, this is the *Law of Karma* in action, when our every thought or action has a noticeable result on our wellbeing and outlook.

Rosicrucians are well aware that this law always operates for their ultimate benefit in the long term, no matter how severe the negative aspects may be at the time. I write with the experience of nearly 82 years in this incarnation, having been through extreme pain and distress, as well as moments of sheer rapture. But I am convinced that my experiences have resulted in moulding my character and outlook for the better, although I did not always think so at the time.



A persistent question has bothered me for some time. It is this: If a person is undergoing pain or suffering, and keeping in mind that the Law of Karma operates for the ultimate benefit of the sufferer, are we interfering with the patient's spiritual growth when we try to reduce or heal the ailment? Regardless of the logic of this question, I innately can never ignore the feeling I always have of an inner *imperative* to help wherever possible, always, and regardless of who it is or what creature is involved. But the inner conflict raised by the question remains: Am I, or am I not, *really* helping the person?

So, as suggested many times to me during my 58 years of Rosicrucian studies, I one day entered my home sanctum with a yearning to receive a clear answer to my question from what I have come to recognise as my soul, something so deep, wise, compassionate and mysterious that Rosicrucians invariably refer to it as the Master Within. I began with a special relaxation technique, stilling my mind and relaxing every muscle in my body. In this state of rest I contemplated the question a while, and then asked the question to follow me as I entered the silence of a deep state of meditation in which I lost all consciousness of my external being. Quickly and without warning I slipped into a state of being I can only describe as the absence of awareness of everything in existence other than the certainly that I existed. I have no measure of how long this lasted, but it could not have been more than a few minutes at most. Upon 'waking up', the answer followed my like an obedient puppy eager to please and bring me comfort.

With the best will in the world, we often apply the wrong attitude to a person in need of assistance. When confronted with someone suffering from a life-threatening and painful illness, we immediately tend to think of all the awful symptoms and side effects associated with it. Have you not noticed when a name is mentioned in a healing circle, the response is invariably "What's wrong with him?" The reaction is automatic, produced by feelings of compassion, but it is wrong, for we are subconsciously visualising the very negative conditions which the person is suffering from, rather than its opposite..., and that cannot help. Only doctors, nurses and those in a position to offer immediate help need to know the symptoms. With true spiritual healing, the less we know about the details of the illness, the more likely we are to succeed.

The hard lessons we sometimes have to face in life happen to us because of the universal Law of Karma. The law neither punishes nor rewards, it educates, it teaches, it makes us intimately aware of the things we do that harms others (and ourselves) and the things we do that helps them. Negative experiences occur only to guide

us to changing our outlook for the better and thereby evolve to a higher, more universal and spiritual plane of existence. Surely therefore, are we not to conclude then that more good than harm is accomplished when we help to improve a sufferer's attitude? So, instead of blindly endeavouring to eliminate the affliction itself, something we may have very little understanding of, and which could well be in conflict with the patient's personal karmic lessons, we should instead avoid dwelling on the person's specific illness, and focus instead with power and humility on the simple fact that the person needs help. Here is what I would advise you to do:-

Relax as you normally would before entering a period of deep contemplation or meditation. When at ease, begin to visualise all that is good, beautiful, positive and joy-filled; see the beautiful side of life, the things that bring joy and laughter into people's lives and close bonds of love and affection. For some it may be a soul stirring musical composition, for others a beautiful country setting or a seascape, and for others it may be the heart-melting smile of a child, or the stirring verses of some excellent poetry. Whatever it is that influences you the most, that brings to you a sense of the sacred and the infinite, be sure to follow it; allow it flow through your being until you feel completely at ease and full of the Divine Love of your Creator.



Then concentrate on the person you intend helping, visualise her surrounded by, and infused with this aura of divine, luminescent love. Visualise the aura as a dynamic, rapidly rotating region of scintillating white light in and around her, nothing static, full of motion and energy, full of power, and specifically, full of the power of healing. Hold the image a while and then dismiss it entirely from your mind with a heartfelt prayer that what is deserved will be received. The matter is now in the realm of the Cosmic and will without doubt abide by the obligations dictated by her Karma.





This is where I had intended to end, but I feel it necessary to stress, for our mutual benefit, the immensely creative power that this force possesses. Do not underestimate the power of Divine Love to overcome all things, including illness. For it is the alchemical marriage we all subconsciously seek, and will eventually give us the answer as to why we exist and what our true purpose in human form is. It is the mysterious force behind all healing and will therefore negate or reduce the necessity for negative Karma by influencing our outlook. And even beyond that, it can influence for the better, large groups of people, political parties, countries, international events and even the world in general.

The first step, the most important but also the most difficult one, is to develop this mystical love in our own being, where the seed already awaits, ready to burst forth into bloom. Rosicrucians are extremely fortunate in that they have been given powerful techniques to enable them to enhance this gift for the benefit of all humankind. It is the balance of positive and negative forces in the world that will determine our collective fate. Each of us has an outstanding responsibility, in that, individually and without exception, we are the creators of our own fate, while collectively, we are the creators of the destiny of our village, town, country, national or international events.

Consider for the moment our every thought, word or action, whether negative, positive or neutral. You can be sure of one thing..., it will go into the fabric of your karmic tapestry, and help to build your fate, your destiny. In every

way imaginable, it will most assuredly determine your future! Because none of us are perfect, we inadvertently create negative influences for our future for which we will compensate sooner or later. If we were perfect, we would have no need of walking this kindergarten Earth and would instead exist in ways and on levels unknown to us in the present. It is so easy to become angry at someone's behaviour. Our reaction may vary from mild annoyance to blind rage, but each reaction will have an effect on our enjoyment or otherwise of life on Earth. Therefore, the more pleasant, positive and spiritual we are now, the more enlightened our future will be.

Healing does not generate Karma of the painful sort, but it will most assuredly have an effect, one that may well be good and wholesome for everyone within our karmic reach. If healing is done with sincerity and compassion, the benefit will be positive for the healer. And if the correct procedures are followed, and the patient's Karma allows it, it will help the patient too. But quite apart from sending healing to people we know, it is vitally important that the world in general also receives our healing thoughts of Divine Love. In a very real sense, our very future depends on this.

And so, I will close with the following sentence: every action we take, every sentence we speak, every thought we think, will affect our future..., *and our future begins now!* Therein lies the key to our happiness and, more importantly, our ultimate salvation with the beautiful and glorious state of illumination.





# Philótimo

by Bill Anderson

Kefalonia,  
Greece

**A**T THE time of writing of this article (early 2017) the world is undergoing a painful transition, some would call it a regression, with many believing that nations are becoming increasingly hostile and xenophobic towards those they consider to be alien to their narrow, selfish interests. Taking a longer view of things however, history seems to unfold, not in a linear manner, but rather in the form of a spiral with similarly themed events unfolding over and over, each one but a shallow disguise of events from the past.

The Western world has much to thank Greece for: democracy, trial by jury, individual rights and obligations, mathematics, abstract geometry, trigonometry, the discovery that the Earth is round and not flat, measuring its circumference to within a 10% accuracy and the development of the first steam engine. The 7<sup>th</sup> Century BCE pre-Socratic philosopher Thales, one of the Seven Sages of Greece, said: “*Philótimo to the Greek is like breathing. A Greek is not a Greek without it. He might as well not be alive.*”

The word is used extensively in Hellenistic period literature. In his early writings, sometimes in a bad sense,

Plato’s uses it ironically in his *Republic* as “*loving honour or distinction, ambitious.*” However, in later years the word acquired a more noble meaning, and by the Christian era, it had a firmly positive connotation, and its use in the Bible probably cemented its use in modern Greek culture.

## Philótimo in Modern Greece

Today, Philótimo is a complex constellation of values summing up the best qualities of Greek culture and character. The Greek spirit of doing what is right and honourable, even when it goes against your own interests, and even if your life may be in peril, is part and parcel of Philótimo. It means doing something out of a sense of duty, honour, courage, personal sacrifice, kindness, compassion, empathy and generosity, rising above pettiness and trivialities.

The person who displays Philótimo embodies decency, dignity, respect, truthfulness and sincerity, such as giving to others without asking for anything in return. It reminds me of the Occitan word *Paratge* from the time of the Cathars as written about in the June 2013 edition of the *Rosicrucian Beacon*. And we have a similar concept



in the precepts found in the sections entitled “*Morality*” and the “*Rosicrucian Utopia*” in the 2001 Rosicrucian treatise, the *Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*.

Philótimo impacts the world far beyond imagination and aspiration. The word comes from the Greek root words “*filos*,” meaning *friend* or *lover*, and “*timi*,” meaning *honour*. But the meaning extends far beyond these words too, in that it encompasses the concepts of pride in self, pride in family, pride in community and doing the ‘right thing.’ It is an all-encompassing concept giving meaning to life that stretches well beyond ourselves.

People nowadays rarely do things for others without expecting something of equal or greater value in return. The virtue of personal sacrifice is sadly fading fast. Technology is creating personal bubbles where the focus on ‘self’ is paramount. It seems to me that fewer and fewer people these days feel comfortable talking to others because they fear being branded as being politically incorrect. Sometimes people are reluctant to help stranded motorists because, though stranded and in need of help they may be, they surely have mobile phones and can help themselves! People are less generous as well because of occasional reports of donated funds ending up in private hands. Rarely do workers take pride nowadays in what they can contribute to the company they work for, but rather, what more they can get out of the company. As far as doing the right thing goes, there is no longer a bright dividing line between right and wrong, which makes doing the right thing nearly impossible.

**Philótimo is considered to be the highest of all Greek virtues, and determines and regulates how someone should behave in their family and social groups.**

The solution is simple: Become a Philótimo person! Be aware that your thoughts, but especially your words and deeds are not only a reflection of yourself but a reflection of your family, your community and your country. Take pride in what you do simply because you have taken the time and effort to do it! Help others simply because they need help! Do what you consider to be right because you have a duty to do the right thing! Even though the lines between right and wrong are blurred, and sometimes concepts of right and wrong themselves are corrupted, we know deep within us what is right and wrong. We all possess an innate superior wisdom of deep spiritual dimension which can inform us what is right and wrong for us, for our family and friends, for our society, our



nation and our planet. There is no real excuse, for we can find universal values of right and wrong if we search for it sincerely.

Philótimo is considered to be the highest of all Greek virtues, and determines and regulates how someone should behave in their family and social groups. It is mostly about respect and doing the right thing. In its simplest form, it means “doing good”, and it ensures one’s behaviour will make one stand out from others. It demonstrates the kind of people we are and the manner in which we were brought up. Philótimo is a way of life. Greek children are said to have Philótimo when they display unconditional love and respect towards their parents, grandparents and friends. It can mean gratitude for a small gift someone might have given you, or a small random act of kindness someone may have shown you. It is an appreciation and admiration for heritage and ancestors, and for the sacrifices our ancestors made so we can live better lives. Speaking in Athens during his final foreign trip, President Obama said:

In all of our communities, I still believe there’s more of what Greeks call Philótimo - love, respect and kindness for family, community and country, and a sense that we’re all in this together, with obligations to each other. Philótimo, I see it every day and that gives me hope. Because in the end, it is up to us. It’s not somebody else’s job, it’s not somebody else’s responsibility, but it’s the citizens of our countries and the citizens of the world to bend that arc of history towards justice. And that’s what democracy allows us to do. It’s why the most important office in any country is not president or prime minister. The most important title is citizen; and in all our nations it will always be our citizens who decide the kind of countries we will be, the ideals that we will reach for, the values that will define us. In this great, imperfect but necessary system of self-government, power and progress will always come from “*We, the people....*”



# Know Thyself

by Cecilia Hawkins  
(1928 - 2003)

*Am I these hands, these feet? Am I this mortal flesh  
and blood? These bones?*

*What is it that touches a flower, smooths a loved one's  
cheek? Punches a bag, kicks a ball? Turns the rich  
brown earth to plant a seed?*

*If I must know myself I must start by digging back in my  
memory to look at my hopes and dreams, successes and  
failures. I must remember the days of my youth and  
all those years in between.*

*The picture of rippling, glistening sand seeming to stretch  
to infinity; the sound of the booming of the surf  
impinging on my consciousness. That little child,  
maybe three or four years old - was that myself?*

*The feel of the breath bursting in my lungs as I ran for the  
tape, yet couldn't win. Was that myself?*

*Who was it who marvelled at a sky so filled with stars it  
seemed there was no space left to add even another  
one. Who turned away, sick to the stomach at  
the pain in the eyes of a rabbit, its leg severed by a  
threshing machine. Was that myself?*

*Am I my emotions? My joys? My pain? When I  
laugh so hard that my stomach knots; when I weep  
so much that my pillow is sodden with tears; when  
red hot anger flares like jagged daggers, searing and  
burning; or music lilting and sweet lifts my soul on  
shining wings - is that myself?*

*When my body hurts, my head wracks, my stomach gripes,  
my dislocated arm sends shafts of agony shooting  
through me - is that myself?*

*All of these things, these seemingly little happenings in  
the larger scale of things, this happiness, suffering,  
mounting one upon another, day after day, to confuse  
or enlighten, encourage or frustrate, the common  
round of duties, pleasures, evasions, satisfactions, all of  
these make up the being I call myself. My little self.*

*I am friend, enemy; child, parent; helper, hinderer;  
bringer of kindness or pain.*



*But what of that larger me? That greater me? What of the  
me that is one with God, apart from all the cares of  
the mundane plane?*

*Where can I look? How shall I find my greater self?*

*Shall I search in the heart of the rose? Shall I empty all  
the cupboards of my mind, examining like stones or  
jewels, my loves and hates; my griefs and pleasures?  
Turning them over and over, again and again?*

*Should I dig in the sand, rifle through the many pages of  
many books? Listen to the song of the trees as they sway  
and sussurate in the wind? Scrabble through drawers?  
Open cases?*

*No! No! Let me turn my back on these things of the world.*

*Let me shut myself away within the magic of the rings, the  
circles I create. Surround myself about with peace,  
and there alone, in the stillness, in the silence, isolated  
from all fear and harm, free from the cares that daily  
infest, let me find the eternal, immortal, all loving,  
the one within me that encompasses the world. That  
no longer restricts me, hampers me, holds me but  
melds and blends with me, my little self, to expand  
my being in ecstasy that I become one with the all, the  
universe, the eternal. I am everything, all beings; and  
everything and all beings are me.*

*For a little moment I am One with God.  
I know myself!*

