

# Rosicrucian Heritage

The background of the cover is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with warm, glowing colors of orange, yellow, and light blue. In the foreground, the dark, intricate silhouettes of tree branches and leaves are visible, creating a complex, web-like pattern against the bright sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

September 2014, Vol 21 No 2



# Experience Cosmic Consciousness

## The Rosicrucian Order

**Y**OU ARE one with the universe, and share the beauty, harmony and symmetry of all things. The conscious purpose and direction of the Cosmic instructs and directs everything, and you can learn the direction and purpose of a life meant just for you.

The psychic self is an innate Cosmic faculty of conscious volition that all humans possess but few understand and can use. If you want more in life than just the daily grind..., if you are seeking a way of accomplishing the most fulfilling you can for the rest of your life..., if happiness, peace and justice for all is what you seek..., then learn to attune with your psychic self, and experience the Cosmic Consciousness already within you.

If you enjoy this magazine, you have an open mind, and this message was meant for you! To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order, visit our website [www.amorc.org.ng](http://www.amorc.org.ng) or contact us for a free copy of our introductory booklet *The Mastery of Life.* “

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## CONTENTS

- 2 **Sanctum Musings: The Mystic at Prayer**  
- by Kenneth U Idiodi
- 5 **What Are Selfish Interests?** - by H Spencer Lewis
- 8 **Paradoxes** - by Martha Pingel
- 9 **Realising Our Desires** - by Kevin Obih
- 12 **Finding the Peace of Your Soul** - by Amelia
- 15 **Adversity** - by Anthony Okorie
- 17 **Reincarnation** - by Frank Hutton
- 21 **Causality: A Discussion** - by Einstein / Tagore
- 23 **Missions and Talents** - by Lilian Patterson
- 28 **Good Will** - by Saman Kadir
- 28 **The House of Wisdom** - by Bill Anderson
- 38 **The Hieroglyphic Monad** - by Paul Goodall
- 44 **Recent Rosicrucian Activities**

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## Cover spread

Only that dawn breaks  
to which we are awake.





# Sanctum Musings



by Kenneth U Idiodi, FRC

*Grand Administrator for English speaking West Africa of the Rosicrucian Order, and Director of the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC*

## The Mystic at Prayer

**A** PERSON WHO DOES NOT believe in the existence of God or spiritual beings will take prayer to be a futile exercise or at best a form of self-deceit that produces little more than psychological encouragement. An atheist will not engage in prayer. Madalyn Murray O'Hair, an American atheist activist and founder of the American Atheists once said:

*"An atheist believes that a hospital should be built instead of a church. An atheist believes that a deed must be done instead of prayer said."*

However, a person who chooses not to pray is not necessarily an atheist. There are in fact many people who believe that a Divine Creator exists yet do not practice any sort of prayer.

The awareness of God or of the spiritual realm comes by human instinct and so does not need to be learned. It is rather atheism that has to be learnt, which explains why it is more commonly found among the relatively well-educated class of people. Consciousness of our divinity often manifests as a peculiar stirring of the emotions. In an

attempt to interpret these sublime emotions arising from the inner self, an intellectual concept of God is formed. This attempt by Man has led to the formation of a variety of views on the nature of God.

### Different Views of God

Some people believe it is impossible for Man, who is merely a created being, to know of the existence of his Creator. In other words, they believe that the inherent limitations of Man prevents him from being able to prove or disprove the existence of God let alone know His nature. This is known as *agnosticism*. Others believe that God exists but is unreachable because He withdrew from creation after setting the universal laws in motion, thereby leaving the Universe to operate like an automated machine without His interference. This is called *deism*.

And then there are those who believe there are several gods in close contact with people, each attending to a different aspect of life; this is known as *polytheism*. When the belief in several gods includes the idea of the existence of a supreme God ruling over other, lesser



gods, this is classified as henotheism. The belief in one God only is called *monotheism*. However, a monotheistic belief also accommodates the existence of other spiritual beings. Another belief held by some is that God exists in everything and that Nature and all of us are a part of God. This is referred to as *pantheism*.

As can be seen, there is quite a range of interpretations of the nature of God among different religions and groups of people. Rosicrucians hold that the intellectual concept of God is subjective and that each individual has a personal view of what God is, hence the term "*God of my heart and realisation*" used in our prayers, rituals and literature. What God actually is, in totality, we may never completely know. However, how God appears to us in our realisation of Him will determine the manner in which we offer our prayers.

## Different Types of Prayer

If we are confused or uncertain as to who or what God is for us, we will face a definite obstacle to prayer. If we conceive of God as seated on a throne in a Heaven located somewhere beyond the skies, we may be inclined to pray in a loud voice accompanied with vigorous gesticulations and activities that would make us more noticeable. However, if we felt that our God was close by or within us and even in our consciousness, a mere redirection of our attention would be all that is required for prayer.

If we feel that God has certain likes and dislikes similar to ours, we would try to win favour by offering him compliments and things we feel He likes. If we took him to be like a superhuman father figure, we could even resort to tears and lamentations to sway him to attend to our desires, just as a child would do to gain the attention of a parent. On the other hand if we consider Him to be impartial and just, we would only make requests that are in harmony with justice and equality.

Some people have an impression of God that is so majestic, powerful and abstract that they become too intimidated to attempt any direct contact. Such people naturally would resort to 'channelling' their prayers to God through intermediate spiritual beings such as angels, saints, ancestors, avatars or cosmic masters.

## Objectives of Prayer

Another important factor that would affect the nature of our prayer is the goal we hope to achieve from it. There are a wide variety of goals that people attempt to attain through prayer. A common example is protection. It has often been said that when all is going well, many don't remember or care to pray. However, when danger strikes,

an involuntary prayer is often the first reaction.

Prayers for protection are probably the most frequent type of prayer offered by Man. Prayers for achievement perhaps, compete in frequency with those for protection, because aspiration is a fact of life for all human beings. When we achieve our goals in life we are thankful. We are also thankful when we realise that we have escaped a mishap, so prayers of thanksgiving are also common.

Being imperfect in nature, Man commits errors and therefore frequently has cause to regret an action taken. Serious errors of judgment can produce feelings of guilt and restlessness which may be alleviated by prayers of confession. Whatever our reasons for engaging in prayer, the immediate effect is often a feeling of relief when properly done.

Occasionally, prayer can lead us into a sublime state where we experience a profound connection with the deepest forces of our being. When in this state we know that we are in perfect union with the Divine Creator. There is a heightened clarity of mind and certain knowledge that all problems uppermost in our minds have been resolved by the Universe in one blinding flash of supreme power. This is Divine Communion and is regarded by mystics as the most worthy purpose of prayer.

## Learning How to Pray

To be able to offer prayers effectively so they are satisfactorily answered all the time, a proper knowledge of how to pray and the mastery of it through active practise are required. In other words the art of prayer has to be learnt just as we have to learn how to speak languages, how to play music or how to paint a picture.

Each religion has a prescribed technique for offering prayers which adherents learn to apply to various levels of accomplishment. In a religious family, prayer lessons begin from early childhood. Initially it is just a matter of repeating memorised prayers with the accompanying prayer positions or gestures. With time, the ability to focus our concentration and harness emotional power develops, and we start witnessing the potency of prayer.

At first we may be inclined to focus outwards, maybe to a point beyond the skies, and then later we may prefer to focus inwards towards the heart region or the centre of our being. Eventually we may just enter into a spiritual state, transcending the physical environment by a subtle transmutation of consciousness.

However, not everyone makes such quick and easy progress. Many people experience the frustration of having most of their prayers unanswered. The reason is quite simple and was explained by Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, first Emperor of AMORC, as follows:



*“God in His wisdom, decreed and established certain laws of universal operation in order that there might be system and order in the world. Such laws are applicable to all and are frangible. Any prayer which does not meet the requirements of such laws will not be answered; for could or would God answer all prayer irrespective of its motive or purpose, chaos would result.”*

## Conventions of Prayer

This may lead us to wonder which, out of the many conventions of prayer used by Man, is the one that meets the requirements of Universal Law. When we become accustomed to a particular style of prayer, especially one we have used since childhood, any other form of prayer radically different from this may seem weird and uncomfortable to us. Many people conclude therefore that other conventions of prayer different from theirs are either ineffective or directed towards negative beings opposed to God. This idea is not only arrogant and ignorant but also very far from the truth. The power of a prayer lies in what goes on within your consciousness, regardless of what you do outwardly.

In this regard, most if not all conventions of prayer can potentially produce positive results. The key lies in taking the necessary steps to ensure that what you are praying for is in harmony with the natural and spiritual laws of the universe. If you are praying for peace, you must also conduct yourself in a manner that promotes peace. Some people call upon God in prayer to destroy their enemies, a practice often referred to as ‘spiritual warfare’.

This is a misnomer because true ‘spiritual warfare’ is the battle that takes place between the inner and outer selves in a bid to rid oneself of one’s vices. Believing that God can be directed to destroy other human beings, inadvertently attempts to reduce Him to a position inferior to ourselves. This unfortunate attitude was eloquently described by Thomas Aquinas when he said:

*“It is clear that he does not pray, who, far from uplifting himself to God, requires that God shall lower Himself to him, and who resorts to prayer not to stir the man in us to will what God wills, but only to persuade God to will what the man in us wills.”*

If we are praying for health, we must adopt a healthy lifestyle, and if necessary, take prescribed medications from qualified health practitioners. If our physical activities run counter to the material laws of health, all

efforts for a spiritual solution will be in vain. If we are praying for prosperity, we must be willing to enhance the lives of others. Wealth will more easily enter into the hands of people who are inclined to materially uplift the lives of others. If we are seeking forgiveness, we should not only be truly sorry for what we have done, but also be ready to make reparations towards those we have harmed.

If we are seeking cosmic communion, we must have attained a significant level of patience and humility in our character. And when we pray, our utterances and gestures should be directed towards engendering the most sublime feelings of love, peace and harmony we can muster. It is not so much about what we say, but rather the heart we put into our prayer. As Mahatma Gandhi said:

*“It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.”*

The more our prayer is genuinely for the betterment of humanity, the more confident we should be of its success. And as we pray with confidence, our prayer naturally develops into a prayer of thanksgiving, for we intuitively realise that it has already manifested in the spiritual realm.

## A Prayerful Life

Our lives can become greatly enhanced when we make prayer a habit, praying every morning as we awaken from sleep and every night as we retire to bed. We should also seize every opportunity to offer a prayer during the course of the day. Each time we do so we momentarily draw close

to God and enjoy a greater share of His benedictions. These periods can be gradually extended until we become perpetually aware of the Divine presence.

The mystic understands that we are always in contact with God even though we are not always aware of it. We can enhance our spiritual development by trying to remain conscious of the presence of God at all times. When we achieve this, every gesture, every word and every thought will be a prayer. Let me end this sanctum musing with the following prayer by an unknown author:

*“O Great God! You are all in all! O Nature of all things above and below! You are everything, for which there has never been a beginning! I am nothing in myself, but everything in You. Living in You, I have everything from nothing. Live You therefore in me, and so bring me to the all in You. Amen.”*



# What Are Selfish Interests?



by H Spencer Lewis  
Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order (1915–1939)

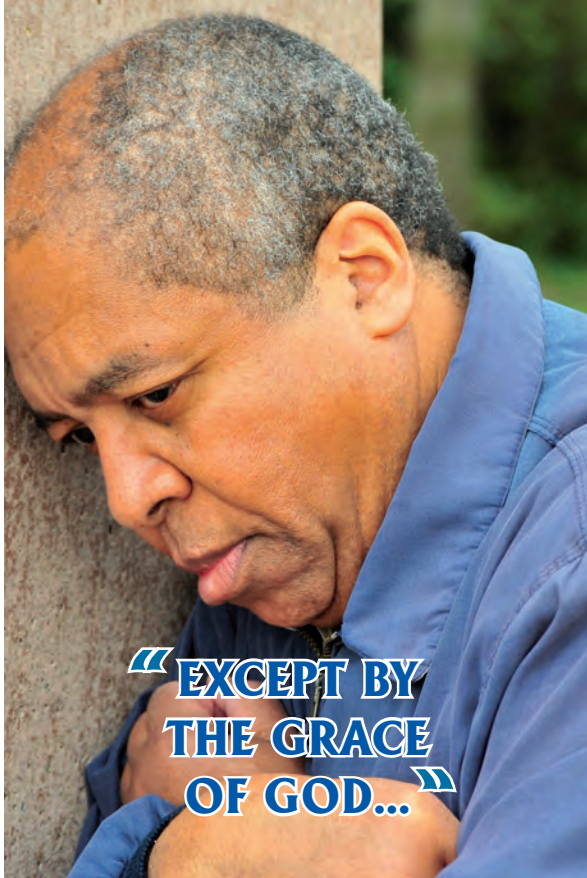


**A** QUESTION OFTEN ARISES in the mind of the student on the Path or the seeker for spiritual unfoldment as to how far one may go in urging or promoting one's own personal evolution and development without transgression of what seems to be the unwritten law of selfish interest. One must of course give careful consideration to a clear analysis of what constitutes selfish interests. If we stop to think of the very opposite of selfish interest we will have what might be termed a condition of 'selflessness'. Is such a condition at all possible, and would it be of any value to any of us?

Those who claim that the true attitude of the mystic and of the humanitarian should be a total lack of personal interest or selfish benefits, have in mind a vague and rather impossible condition of 'self-annihilation' as the proper mental attitude to be assumed. Such persons contend that our every thought, desire and act, should be impersonal and should extend beyond the self or ego and find action and reaction wholly in areas external to ourselves and in no way related to our own personal interests.

This would put forward a condition of self-annihilation to the extent that we would look upon the world and its problems as though they were not only separate from us but actually non-existent. We would have to take an assumed attitude of suspended existence and consider ourselves as either inferior or superior to the very conditions we are trying to improve, and disassociated in





“EXCEPT BY  
THE GRACE  
OF GOD...”

any way with the human problems which face humanity and which we hope to eliminate.

If we look upon the foreign missionaries as examples of devotion to the interests of others, then we would have to say, according to those who hold to the above idea, that missionaries should assume that all of the problems facing those they are trying to help, are problems which do not and cannot affect them. All of the problems they believed were their own are no longer in existence because, as entities, they do exist.

Such a viewpoint on the part of missionaries would undoubtedly affect the efficiency of the work they are trying to do, and would handicap them in their ability to sympathetically attune themselves with the needs of those they are trying to help. Cannot the same be true regarding the mystic in his or her general studies and activities?

### Sympathetic Attunement

Those who have devoted the greater part of their lives to the welfare of humanity have discovered that the first and most important step in their efficient work has been to sympathetically attune themselves with the mass of civilisation and to place themselves in the very centre of all the problems which face humanity. They must take the spiritual and philosophical attitude that, except by the ‘grace of God’, they themselves would be in the same position as those they are trying to help.

Mystics are always brought closer to humanity by

following the precepts of the philosopher who looked upon a worn and neglected person of humanity, ostracised by all and beaten by the conditions around him, and said to himself, “*Except by the grace of God go I.*” Such an idea is the safest guide for the lives of mystics in any of their activities, since it eliminates any tendency on their part to feel superior to others.

It is not necessary to lower oneself to a humiliating position in order to assist humanity. Humanity as a whole is not in a humiliating position, nor is it entirely in poverty, want and privation. Those who have the world’s richest bounties and are considered wealthy, and fortunately placed, also have their problems and their need for light, guidance and help. Therefore, in order to assist this class of society, mystics must be able to attune with them and see life from their perspective just as they do from the viewpoint of the most humble and lowly in the world.

### Personal Progress

The salvation of humanity is not, however, a mass accomplishment but a procedure that is dependent upon the exemplification of principles by the individuals composing the mass. Reform of any nature must begin with the individual and proceed to the mass. Each person must be considered as a unique human being, not wholly independent of all other human beings but most certainly distinguished from the collective body.

**It is not necessary to lower oneself to a humiliating position in order to assist humanity.**

Our own position here on earth, incarnate in a physical body, is a demonstration, or shall we say, a salutary indication of the cosmic plan evolving us through personal experience and trials. As the fire burning in the crucible of the individual soul purifies the outer physical self, the spiritual flame and cosmic guidance is fanned into a dominating power in our being. To ignore our own incarnation here and ignore our own personal development and progress merely for the sake of helping others is to ignore the cosmic scheme intended for each individual including ourselves.

We have no more right to ignore what the Cosmic intended us to do for ourselves in this incarnation than we have to ignore what the Cosmic intended for every other human being. The moment we set aside our own development, progress and interests, and give thought only to others, we are attempting to arbitrarily alter the cosmic scheme. We may see the fallacy instantly in this





method if we assume that what is right for ourselves is right for every other human being. That would mean that every human being would set aside his own personal progress and even attempt to hold it back in his desire to help others. This would lead to confusion so far as progress is concerned and the mass of human beings would find a very definite delay in spiritual and mental progress.

## Self-Improvement

The truly ideal standard is that in which each person makes every effort to promote his or her own best interests and to bring personal evolution to the highest degree in every sense. We must seek first of all, to further our spiritual development to the broadest possible comprehension of universal principles that we are capable of. Then we

**Excellent examples of influence are those who are inclined to share their interests with others while raising themselves up.**

should proceed to lift up our own physical and worldly situation to a degree that is compatible with our spiritual one. If we have risen to great heights in a spiritual sense, we should also seek to raise ourselves in a worldly way as well.

At the same time however, we should have in mind the needs of all other fellow beings and seek not only to give each of them the same opportunity to rise to great heights but should also contribute in every way possible to the progress of all others. Looking at it from the purely economic and social point of view, the great problem that faces the world today is not that there are insufficient numbers of human beings devoted to humanitarian activities, or an insufficient number of unselfish workers devoting their lives, thoughts and powers to helping others; but that there is a great insufficiency of those who are attempting to promote their own best interests in the proper manner and to the highest standards.

We have enough humanitarian and good-will organisations, including schools, colleges, charity organisations, individual workers and other methods for the general help of those who require it. The great loss, however, is to be found in the inability of the individual (through lack of motivation more than anything perhaps) to raise him or herself up to a position in which they might develop moral precepts that steer a course toward a greater spiritual (and less selfish) outlook.

## Dangers of Self Interest

One need only travel through various nations such as certain sections of Egypt, Palestine, Persia [Iran] and India, as well as in the slum districts of any nation, to see that the great need there is for that ambition, that

personal interest, that dominating desire on the part of each individual to lift themselves up. The indifference to personal interest, the indifference to personal possibilities, and the indifference to the effect of this upon the mass of humanity is the great problem.

In each of these sad places where a section of the mass of humanity has slid downhill in all worldly progress and where one individual has suddenly taken it upon himself to promote his own best interests and lift himself to the highest worldly and spiritual standing, a great number have been influenced by his example. A younger generation has tried to exemplify what he has done, and he is held forth by parents and others as a model of what may be done.

The wholesome effect of such selfish promotion of personal interests is a matter that must be reckoned with because of its serious effects.

## The Ideal Example

Wherever we see individuals promoting their best interests, lifting themselves above the situations in which they were born, and doing this without becoming parasites upon humanity, and without injuring others,



we see excellent examples of good influence. When such people are not wholly indifferent to the rights of others and are not miserly in their personal ambitions, they cannot escape the blessing that they will inevitably bring to those around them. When they are inclined to promote their interests and at the same time share some of them with others, we have ideal examples of humanitarian action.

It behoves every individual to make the utmost of his or her life. We need not be wholly selfish nor should we be wholly selfless in our viewpoint of our desires and ambitions. But we must in fairness to the Cosmic plan and in fairness to the general scheme of things, make the best of each opportunity to promote ourselves and to rise to the highest worldly as well as spiritual powers.

Any one of us may be a chosen channel for the distribution of wealth after having acquired it, and until we each acquire it through personal ambition, we cannot serve in the Master's vineyard in the manner in which the Cosmic has decreed. It may be that our own personal advancement is desired by the Cosmic in order to stimulate the same ambition in the hearts and minds of hundreds or thousands of others. The life of every successful business person is a standard of possibility for the youth of every land.

The attainment of happiness, contentment and peace is a glorious demonstration to thousands. The ability to meet the obstacles of life and overcome them with the material things which one has rightfully attained is another excellent example that will help to fire the thoughts and actions of many others. We cannot bring complete happiness into our own lives without it flowing over the brim to bring happiness to others. We cannot possess great wealth without yielding to the temptation to spend it. By spending, we begin to share it with others, and even the act of spending is an encouragement to those who have suffered for the lack of inspiration.

Again it resolves itself into the element of motive. If our motive in seeking personal development is purely self-aggrandisement at the cost of happiness, peace and the advancement of others, we shall be checked in our career sooner or later, and find that we have created karmic debts instead of cosmic blessings. But if our motive is reasonable and not lacking in consideration of our obligations to the Cosmic and to all humanity, we will find that each and every personal ambition and desire is considered by the Cosmic and strengthened and fortified by it.



# PARADOXES



by *Martha Pingel*



**W**HENEVER WE APPROACH people for the first time, we find ourselves face to face with the unknown, the incomprehensible. The same is true when we discover new fields of learning. Man himself, examined in the light of his own experience and understanding, is also an 'unknown' at least until such time as he becomes aware that the seeming inconsistencies in himself are only differing aspects of the same thing.

Nature is filled with paradoxes of all kinds. The stars 'twinkle' but the twinkle is in our atmosphere. On a winding road, we see the moon first on one side of the road, then on the other. Cars moving at the same speed appear to each other as motionless. We light an ordinary match seemingly by friction, yet it is not friction but the removal of the protective coating over phosphorus that actually ignites the item.

Then there are the paradoxes of our 'humanity'. Lin Yutang, in drawing a distinction between reason and reasonableness, spoke of reason as 'the facts', indisputable and absolute; reasonableness as the common sense or the emotion that defies facts, often to the betterment of humanity. We are rational beings; we want to be rational; yet we seldom manage to live free of the entanglements born of our irrationality. Our logic is absolute; but our illogicality is legion!

To speak of paradox as only an illusion would be to deny its existence. We must learn that the paradoxical is the natural and that seeming inconsistencies are, when put together, different ways of arriving at truth. What a monotonous and non-productive world this would be if all paradoxes resolved themselves into certainties.



# Realising our DESIRES

*by Kevin Obih*

**L**IFE SEEMS to have meaning for us when our life's ambitions and aspirations are realised either in full or at least to a reasonable degree. On the contrary however, it is a mindless and wicked world if we have to continue our lives just managing to get by each day. In this case, life would seem to be meaningless, fruitless, aimless, directionless and indeed boring.

As Rosicrucian students and mystics we know that we can change any situation for the better. We have the tools to create the conditions we seek and make life more meaningful. In other words we seek to create our own world.

## Holding a Positive Thought

Often when a personal crisis arises, advice using the phrase "hold a positive thought" is commonly suggested to those involved. The question is, do these words have practical value or are they merely a way of calming down the distressed?

Holding a positive thought is defined by the average person as holding thoughts in mind that are opposite to those we call 'negative'. If a condition or circumstance is perceived as being malevolent or adverse, it is declared to be 'negative'. And negative in this context means that it negates, opposes or interferes with some goal, objective or state which is desired. Consequently, the opposite, namely the 'positive' thought, is the wish and image of the preferred condition. But is this pleasing mental picture going to provide the necessary or desired result? Will the mere thought of a desired improvement or the dissolution of a situation actually bring it about? Positive thinking which does not go beyond a simple positive thought can only bring disappointment to those who believe in merely thinking about things.

Practical metaphysics advocates holding positive thoughts when confronted with adversity. This approach however goes beyond what many of its adherents understand or actually do. The popular metaphysical principle is generally construed to mean that the positive



thought is projected into the Universal or Cosmic Mind and thereafter in some mysterious way, the thought, like a missile, will destroy all negative opposition. This is of course just wishful thinking.

Psychologically, the attitude is referred to as 'displacement', in that it is merely an intellectual transference of one's problems to another realm and power, there to be solved for us. Ironically the individual is relegating what he considers to be the Supreme Force or Intelligence to a position servile to himself. If the cosmic laws alone are expected to correct and adjust an adverse condition, the individual, in just transferring the thought, is in effect disassociating himself from these essential laws.

In the philosophy of metaphysics and true mysticism, the Cosmic or Universal Mind is not considered to be an agency of detailed solutions to human perplexities. The Cosmic neither has alphabets nor does it communicate in languages. Rather, as a source of illumination of the mortal mind, it serves to stimulate the human intellect. It does not provide an accretion of new ideas, but rather causes a rearrangement of the individual's thoughts; the basic ideas are already there.

All the Cosmic does is to rearrange them in a way that better suits one's present state. The conscious thought of the individual and the related latent ideas in his subconscious mind are necessary factors for producing the clarity needed to bring about the desired effect.

## Analysing Our Objectives

Cosmic assistance requires the full cooperation of the individual. He must realise that he is part of the mechanical process by which the success he hopes for can be achieved. Holding a thought therefore entails more than the mere mental vision of attainment. It requires an analysis of one's objective.

For example, is one's desire rational? Is it contrary to the natural laws of health of body and mind? Is it opposed to the body and mind? Is it opposed to the welfare of society? Further, is it contrary to one's moral standards or a suppression of one's conscience?

Positing that the 'positive thinker' believes that his objective is meritorious, (positive here indicates dynamism, activity and fulfilment of an effort or intent), the next step then is to reduce what he wishes to realise into the components of which it consists. Nothing desired is complete in itself unless it consists of essential elements. For instance, suppose one holds the thought of obtaining a house some time in the future. That thought depends upon many factors. In other words, what things should be done to first achieve this goal? Has consideration been given to the time factor involved, employment or



*Realisation of one's goal is the result of sincerely applying all the principles of positive and metaphysical thinking.*

source of income, currently available funds, or subsequent obligations which would be incurred?

## Realising Our Objective

These factors would need to be resolved and made to fall into place like the parts of a jigsaw puzzle. Most important is the first positive thought one has. This is the essential thought with which reason should concern itself. The thought should be projected into the Cosmic for the purpose of receiving information on how to go about realising our objective, in terms of what steps should be taken to accomplish it.

In holding such a principal element of your objective in mind, and at the same time personally seeking the help of greater judgment from the cosmic mind, you are making yourself a partner with the deeper insight of your subconscious mind; you are opening yourself up to the channels of cosmic consciousness. And in doing so you are also probing all the latent forgotten experiences that may in some way be related to your objective.

You similarly may become more sensitive to any thoughts of others that are sympathetically related to your own. Your thought, clearly understood and visualised if possible, is figuratively acting like a magnet. It attracts to it all impressions having a similar nature. Such impressions are not in themselves complete ideas, but act as a force that reaches down and rearranges the existing thought in your conscious mind, thereby creating a new order of clarity and comprehension.



Each element of a whole idea coming into the consciousness will link up with others of the unsolved problem, thereby aiding in bringing about a solution. Holding a positive thought then is really a constructive mental building project. One must realise that one can't expect help in solving a problem if it's not thought out as fully as possible in advance. Even when one has analysed a desire, defining its components and, if possible visualising them mentally, a satisfactory conclusion may still not be forthcoming. The next step is to go through a process of reaching further and deeper into consciousness with each component.

The greatest aid for the individual lies in the beyond, in the depth of the subconscious mind, which is ultimately our channel of communication with the universal consciousness of the Cosmic itself. There is a time lapse for the rearrangement of one's thought under the influence of the cosmic subconscious process; it is not instantaneous. The seeming delay is often due to the complexity of the thought which the individual holds in mind. The more complex the desire the longer it takes to rearrange and fulfil.

Note that persistent attempts to force a satisfactory conclusion of one's thought by continued concentration will seldom succeed. Such an act simply leaves the idea in the objective consciousness of the mind. Its focused intensity obstructs the flow of cosmically aroused impressions which are needed for the advanced judgment they offer. For analogy, everyone is aware of the futility at times of trying to remember a name or an event by concentrating on it. But then, sometime after the effort is abandoned, the answer will suddenly flash into consciousness with great clarity.

## Practical Steps

From the foregoing it should now be obvious that merely holding a thought, whose intricacies are not fully understood, is futile. It is also erroneous to conclude that a thought is positive merely because it is your desire. If, as already said, it is in opposition to natural laws, or is in conflict with other conditions herein cited, it would be a 'negative' one. Furthermore, another person may hold a thought for action which is contrary to yours. The elements of his thought however may be more harmonious with prevailing conditions than yours. Therefore, it is 'positive' in relation to yours.

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*Practice creative visualisation to imagine your wish fulfilled exactly as you want it.*

'Positive', in the ordinary psychological sense of the word, indicates the dynamic, active fulfilment of an effort or intent. For example, to stop a crime in progress is considered positive in action. To vote against and defeat a bad legislative proposition is also positive. Such are actions that produce constructive results. In creating our own world by realising own desires therefore, we may wish to adopt the following steps (there are several):

- Know exactly what you want and write it down in detail.
- Devise a well-defined plan and time-frame for achieving your goal and stick to it.
- Capitalise on your intuition, follow the 'still small voice within', and do so accurately.
- Allow the Cosmic to proffer insights and information to you.
- Embrace all opportunities that come your way.
- Cut off everything that does not serve your purpose.
- Practice creative visualisation to imagine your wish fulfilled exactly as you want it.
- Avoid being pessimistic and selfish.
- Be positive in attitude and repeat actions that have so far paid off in realising your desires while avoid those that have become obstacles to it.
- Consciously replace the mindset in which your wish was just a dream to that in which it is reality.

Finally, allow that old you to die and find yourself reborn as a wish fulfilled human being and give thanks to God and the Cosmic for granting your wish and enjoy all that you have accomplished, not forgetting to share these with others.





# Finding the Peace of your Soul

by *Amelia*

**C**HALLENGE IS necessary for growth and evolution in life. Without challenge, life becomes stale and stagnant. But which challenges will we choose to meet..., those offered by society, or those offered by the 'still small voice within?' From within? How absurd, you might think. Peace Profound may come from within, but challenge, tension and conflict are surely traits of the outer, not the inner world?

Peace, or rather the deep, all-encompassing type of peace known to mystics as 'Peace Profound', is found in the wisdom of the soul. But gaining access to that wisdom and thereby experiencing the peace that comes with it, can only come about by facing up to the challenges that come from within oneself. We need to meet the tension, stress and conflict 'internally', face it, and successfully deal with it in the intellect and emotions first, before we can deal with those same issues externally. We can only truly achieve Peace Profound by first meeting the storm and turmoil of the unknown internally. In other words we must learn to bravely face the so-called 'Terror of the Threshold.'

Metaphorically speaking, if the inspiration that comes from the soul does not create a veritable inner battleground, if there be no wounds struck there by love



*Although we face many unexpected challenges in our mundane lives and overcome them, we can only truly achieve that inner 'Peace Profound' by similarly meeting the storm and turmoil of the unknown internally.*

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and compassion, if there be no shattered bones brought about by the strong desire to forge ahead on the Path..., to be one with the God of one's understanding and greatest yearning..., then the knowledge of the soul is no home or haven. It is only a temporary shelter, a flimsy tent with gaping holes through which the stormy north wind passes.

For attunement with the soul to become a reality, the soul must be understood. It must be fought and struggled for and our best must be given to it. Attunement with the soul is not a shelter we casually seek once a week or in times of extreme distress. We do not go to church, temple or mosque once a week, in the belief that this is enough to enable us to find the soul. If we are to allow the soul to merge with our outer daily living, and indeed to take over our volition and control, our attunement with it must be our constant guiding light. Nothing else can compare to the importance of this. Energy should be flowing through us at all times, as though we were a sun beaming its light and energy to all the universe. And this is possible only when we have reached at least a modicum of attunement with our own individual soul.

### **Benefits of Attunement**

With the inspiration we receive from the soul, definite challenges quickly manifest, and they are almost all to do with ourselves; the manner we conduct our outer lives, the people we hurt, the small liberties and lies we engage in, the less than honest appraisals we have of ourselves..., the list is endless!

The ideas we receive from the soul are not simply idle thoughts, mere fantasies to mull about at the seaside on lazy days with a can of beer in hand. The impressions that percolate up from the soul are full of energy, dynamism and potential, and compel us to move forward with a sense of urgency to the crucial and most important things we should be accomplishing in life. The soul is the forge from which we receive the force, power and energy that makes each of us move forward on the inner plane of awareness. And that 'inner motion' inevitably translates in due course into outer motion as well, for we end up materially making great and important changes for the better to our lives in so many varied ways.

The inspiration and energy necessary to succeed in our work, achieve harmony in personal relationships, and reach inner peace, are all found in the gentle percolation of wisdom and inspiration that we receive from our own



soul. In very mundane terms, answers to questions ranging from the simple "what will I have for dinner tonight?" to the complex "what is the most important goal in my life?" are found by listening to this inner voice of the soul. The true answers are there, and they can collectively serve as the guiding light of your life. So how do we work with this inspiration? What is the key to achieving this attunement with the soul? How do we make this knowledge a part of our lives?

In answer to these questions, we simply decide when, and to what degree, we will follow the course outlined and inspired by the soul. Attunement with the soul, along with its attendant knowledge and inspiration, has always been available to us, if we would but stop and listen properly for a moment. We are always given the opportunity to follow the guidance of the soul, but the real question is: when will we implement the guidance, the urgings, and the whisperings of the soul in the way it has been given to us and in the spirit and with the intent with which it was delivered?

The answer is simple. First come to the realisation that the promptings of the soul are always good for you, are for your personal good, and for the good of those nearest and dearest to you. You do this by following those promptings a few times to the letter of the law and observing for yourself what wonderful results manifest. Secondly, once you have built up confidence in the advice and guidance



you receive from the 'still small voice within', stop trying to analyse every impression you get from your soul; accept and follow the advice precisely as given. In accepting the advice of your soul, you are also accepting yourself as the new master of your destiny. Still hampered by your frailties and inadequacies, you will however have the accurate guidance of the most capable and wonderful master guide you can ever know: the unlimited potential of your own soul. By the time you have reached this blessed state, you will have accepted that you are destined to become the shining reflection of your soul one day.

Be in no doubt that there still remains for you challenges piled upon challenges remaining for you to master as you struggle to retain the attunement with your soul. There will be tension, stress and inner turmoil; and at times when your attunement flags and you are overly pulled away from attention to the needs of the soul, there will be periods of deep loneliness and indeed of fear. But for as long as the connection with your soul remains, as long as you heed the voice of your inner master, you will have periods of intense happiness, great tranquillity, and Peace Profound even under the most trying of outer conditions. You will experience clarity of mind and of purpose, an inner radiance that makes you understand that you are on the right path without the slightest shadow of a doubt.

And you will be in complete harmony with the wishes of your soul, you inner master. These are things worth striving for: peace, love, understanding, compassion, achievement and power on a scale that only your inner master, the personality of your own soul, the God of your realisation, can ever know.

## The Eternal Quest

Mystics are veritable knights in shining armour, fighting inner battles in the cause of good. The knight therefore, who would come to know the safety of the soul, must also experience the dangers of straying away from it. If you, the seeker, would explore with care and understanding the great wisdom of the soul, know that there will be periods of great fear and loneliness as well, as you approach the soul, become dependent on its wisdom and its kind and loving ways, yet still manage to stray away from its presence. Just as if you would know the love and compassion of another person, you must extend your hand in faith, truth and sincerity to your own soul and keep it there, outstretched, regardless of your fear of rejection and failure.

The depths of the soul are discovered through the

intensity of your desire to know it. And you receive in accordance with universal law, namely in accordance to your willingness to give first and to patiently wait for your just rewards, even if that wait takes more than one lifetime to come to fruition. Through your growing intimacy with the soul, you learn many new lessons. You come to know the Oneness, your oneness with all nature and living creatures, indeed with all things. Even seemingly inanimate things like streams, rocks, mountains, the sea, the stars and planets all have their special place in the reality of our existence, that incredible universe wrapped around you specifically for the benefit of your evolving self.

When your consciousness extends to all of this, you are one with God, with the part of God that you can perceive in this life, what Rosicrucians refer to as the 'God of my Heart.' The sun knows you as do the stars, for there is really only one corpus of knowledge, one final way of 'knowing.' Subscribe to this knowledge with all your being, your total being, for in doing so you will come to know the challenge of attaining the soul..., the pain, the tension, and the stress of facing the seemingly unknown. Yet, you will come to know something greater and more everlasting

than anything else you have ever encountered... Love. The harmony of all consciousness is precisely this..., Love. It is a requirement of and a condition that must be met before any

person can fully experience Peace Profound.

At this point on the Path, you will reach a new, higher realisation of the nature of yourself, those about you, the ground on which you stand, and the stars in the sky. You are one in nature, harmony, peace and strength, and will remain there for as long as you retain that open channel of communication with your soul. The challenge has brought tension and inner turmoil in its wake, but you have overcome these and now know total peace, Peace Profound, harmony in its most beautiful and profound understanding. That is the nature of the soul..., your heritage, your birthright.

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"We need to increasingly live from the fullness of our whole hearts in order to become who we are meant to be and play the significant role that is ours to play."

Stasi Eldredge,  
*"Becoming Myself:  
Embracing God's Dream of You"*





# ADVERSITY

by *Anthony Okorie*



**L**IFE IS FULL of its ups and downs. Hours ago, your world may have been a placid cove of tranquillity; now it appears more akin to a raging storm. I'm sure you know the story..., without warning, adversity strikes. Adverse conditions manifest through divergent means: the loss of a loved one, betrayal by close friend, loss of one's job, ill health, financial crises, natural disasters, etc., the list is endless.

These problems are basically the same because their resultant effects are usually distressful for us. None of us know how or when adversity will strike, but we all know that at some point in life we will all have to face its test. How best then should we cope with this hardship in our lives?

## Coping With Adversity

We might say that our personal response to adversity reveals our true nature; the extent, or lack, of our spiritual maturity is indeed laid bare. Some people are almost

wiped out by the challenges they face; others cope with them with far greater competence and grace, and reveal to the world something special about themselves.

As seekers of ever greater, more beautiful and profound spiritual revelation, we must understand that mystical development is the result of an ever persistent striving to learn from our experiences. Even hard knocks in life won't be so bad if we know how to learn from the lessons that are undoubtedly meant for us and glean something positive from those experiences. Adversity in itself is not evil; it is a necessary tool for our overall growth.

Today's conquest enables us to acquire new strengths in preparation for the greater challenges ahead. We gain inner wisdom and our vision about life is broadened. With each unwholesome temptation resisted, with each temper tantrum brought into check and turned into smiles, with each kind word we give to someone who is anything but kind towards us; with each such act we grow inwardly and mature spiritually.



Many great inventions or achievements have come about after a series of trials and tribulations. Gold is refined by fire; iron is shaped, moulded and beaten only after being intensely heated. If we truly want the best out of life, if we sincerely wish to be used by as an instrument in the accomplishment of great good, we must be prepared to travel the way of adversity at some point in life. Adversity therefore, regardless of its source or form, is designed to be a turning point from which we take our greatest leap forward.

## Techniques for Overcoming Adversity

Every problem we come against has several solutions but only one is the best of the lot; not just for us but best for all involved. There are several techniques we can utilise to enable us conquer or ameliorate the effects of adversity in our lives. Three particularly useful ones are relaxation, thought therapy and cosmic attunement.

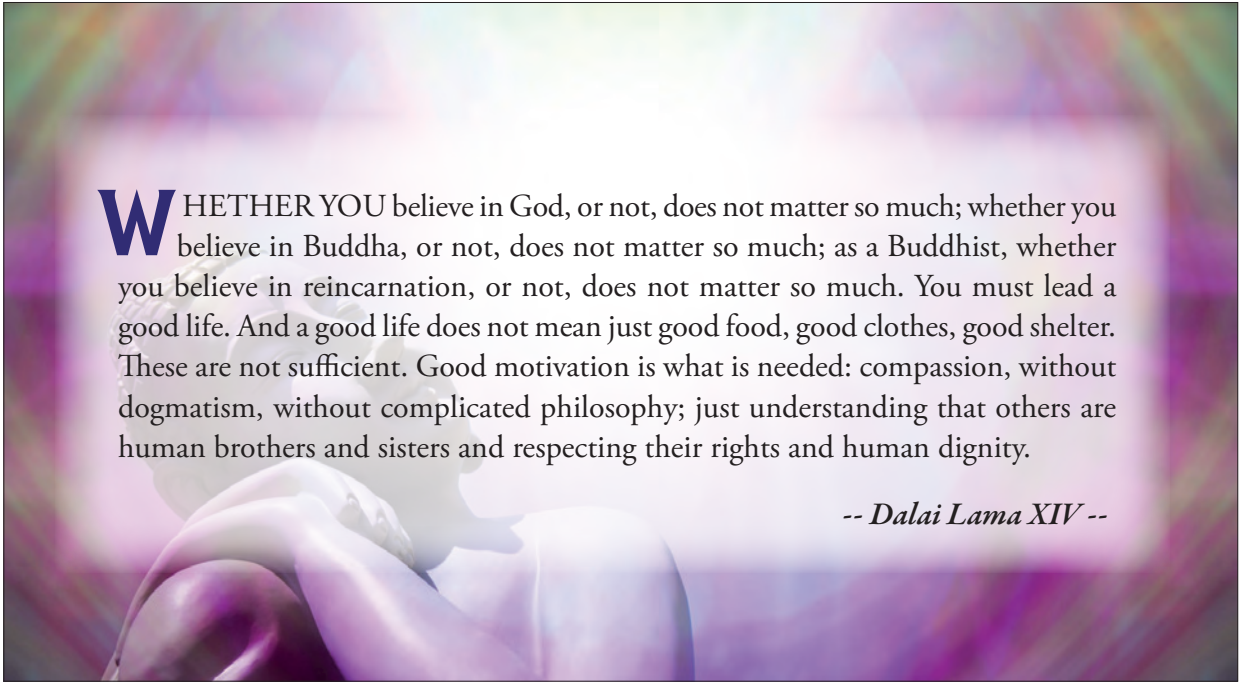
Relaxation is the key to opening the door to concentration, meditation and inspiration. We can relax by taking in deep or neutral breaths prior to any mystical exercise. Our anxieties, fears, worries and frustrations gradually disappear when we relax properly. Nothing is ever achieved in a confused state of mind. Relaxation allows the inner self to function normally. We gain inspiration and the solutions to our problems and that of others are revealed to us.

The importance of thought therapy is evidenced by the fact that the calamities that befall us are a result of our

wrong and negative thoughts. If we don't dutifully keep a watch on the thoughts we allow ourselves to harbour, we can with little effort think ourselves into poverty and sickness. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Thought creates reality. We can use this universal law to our advantage by consciously changing our thought patterns towards the finer things of life. Great and noble thoughts will create a great and noble future.

Lack of proper cosmic attunement is the real cause of every difficulty. Regular attunement with the earthly personality of our own soul, often referred to as the 'Master Within', give us solutions to most of our daily problems. Attunement enables us to be at one with the creative constructive forces of nature. We become co-creators with God and the directors of our daily affairs. It is this communion with the Christ consciousness within, that is the greatest key of the mystic.

In summary, from all the adversity you have faced so far in life, take just a small moment of time to reflect on what you have learnt from it. When you have realised the lesson do not dwell on the problem any longer. Whatever we focus on becomes dominant in our thoughts and we want our dominant thoughts to be on the positive things in our lives. The following quotation from Seneca is worth consideration and should assist us in our journey through life if we heed its message. "Happy is the man who can endure the highest and lowest fortune. He who has endured such vicissitudes with equanimity has deprived misfortune of its power."



**W**HETHER YOU believe in God, or not, does not matter so much; whether you believe in Buddha, or not, does not matter so much; as a Buddhist, whether you believe in reincarnation, or not, does not matter so much. You must lead a good life. And a good life does not mean just good food, good clothes, good shelter. These are not sufficient. Good motivation is what is needed: compassion, without dogmatism, without complicated philosophy; just understanding that others are human brothers and sisters and respecting their rights and human dignity.

*-- Dalai Lama XIV --*





# Reincarnation

by *Frank Hutton*

**F**OR MANY IN THE ancient world, particularly on the Indian subcontinent, reincarnation was the most logical and just conclusion they could come to about the possible continuance of life and consciousness after death. And today, in all countries of the world, though especially in civilisations rooted in one or other form of Christian ethic, reincarnation slowly but steadily is being accepted as an alternative to the stark finality of beliefs based solely on the Judeo-Christian-Islamic belief systems, the so-called 'Abrahamic' lineage.

The taboo surrounding the subject of reincarnation in past times is all but gone today, and more and more people each year openly, and often in defiance of their

religious faith, accept reincarnation as a more logical and certainly a more just system of belief than one which says that we have only one chance in this world to either make it to 'heaven' or to be eternally damned to 'hell'. As the penetrating light of mystical understanding spreads and illumines not only the darkened areas of the world, but more importantly, the darkened areas of the mind, humanity will sweep away those human-made restrictions, limitations and barriers placed in its path.

The collective philosophical reasoning regarding the purpose of life and the true nature of universal justice, inevitably draws us to the subject of reincarnation. That still, small voice within tells us that this is a natural



and logical explanation for the mystery of life. But the Western religious indoctrination and education we have received, has haughtily assured us from childhood that reincarnation is a superstition of unenlightened and ignorant people; that if it were truth it would after all have been taught to us, just as all other truth is. “*Why suffer earthly trials when we have been promised eternal peace in paradise if we will but follow the rules of the church? Be careful, why gamble? This could be your only chance!*”

It doesn't seem as though one has much of a choice..., either believe what the church hierarchy says, or spend the rest of eternity in the fires of damnation! Such a stark and devastating assertion is intended to shame us, and certainly it is intended to instil fear in us so we don't make the 'wrong' choice in life. But can we be sure that religious dogma is correct purely because it has existed for so long? Of course long usage is no guarantee of truth, so we must rely on our own inner wisdom when deciding what to do.

Oponents of reincarnation consider the birth of each human being as being the first and only incarnation of that individual. People are created by God, fully formed, with all their physical, mental and emotional traits, like new cars coming off a production line. And they have only one chance of either making the best of this single life, or completely messing things up and ending up in a place of eternal suffering. Where's the justice in that? It doesn't take a genius to see that such a regime is fundamentally flawed from the perspective of universal justice. If there is a God, then surely that God is impartial, and above all, upholds the highest form of justice that the human mind can conceive. Having one stab at living a life that is good in the eyes of the church, regardless of the conditions in which one was born, certainly lies far below the ideal of universal justice that even a child can conceive.

One really wonders how people can be so sure and dogmatic about their beliefs. In his classic text, *Mansions of the Soul*, Dr H Spencer Lewis wrote:

*“Whether we accept the doctrine of reincarnation or not we will continue to live in accordance with some law, some principle, some scheme of things...”*

And further:

*“What we may believe, or think, in regard to reincarnation will not change one principle of the doctrine nor affect the laws involved one iota.”*

## Natural Law

It seems obvious that natural laws are inviolate. We cannot change them for our own selfish reasons. We accept the

tangible evidence of the laws of the physical world and if wise, cooperate with them to our advantage. Many aspects of the physical world and indeed the universe still confound us, for our knowledge is very limited, but we still do our best to cooperate with the laws that we know and understand.

Of course reincarnation is a belief system too. And like all belief systems, it cannot be empirically verified by any scientific laws we know... yet! Unfortunately, this opens the subject to all kinds of unbridled speculation and consequent literary trash. So few people have made an effort to do any personal research on the subject for themselves that it is understandable there are more misinformed popular notions about reincarnation than there is correct knowledge.

Most writers on the subject have simply rehashed the already abundant erroneous material available. Yet, for those who are truly think for themselves, there is much good, honest literature around, if one is prepared to search for it.

## Evolution and Refinement

The *sincere* seeker of esoteric truths prefers to draw a line of refining distinction between the several popular terms used to describe reincarnation. *Metempsychosis*, we find, is derived from 'metempsychoein', or the Greek words 'meta' (over, beyond) and 'empsychoun' (to animate).<sup>1</sup> It has to do with the mythical phenomenon of 'spontaneous generation'.<sup>2</sup> *Transmigration* has more accurately to do with soul force or a soul entity migrating from one animate vehicle to another. Such migration is conceived to be casual, if not chaotic, or in other words, without plan.

*Reincarnation* derives from Latin and means literally to be embodied again in flesh. Mystically it means also that the entity (the 'sentient thing'), which re-embodies and reanimates a new body, evolves itself to ever higher and more sophisticated levels of consciousness with each incarnation. Specifically, it precludes the possibility of retrogression from the human form to, for example, the form of some animal, as is understood in the concept of transmigration.

Since all the dominant religions of the East teach the doctrine of reincarnation, it must be admitted that the chief opponent of that philosophical doctrine has been the traditional Christian church. But why? There is evidence that up until a certain time even Christianity embraced the idea of reincarnation. The Jewish historian, Josephus (37-100 CE), in his 'History of the Jewish War' wrote:

*“...they say that all souls are incorruptible; but that the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies.”*





In the Christian book 'Revelations', the last in the Christian Bible, we read:

*"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."* (Revelation 3:12)

This could be a clear reference to the end of the process of reincarnation in the true Christian individual.

## Biblical References

*"Did I not live in another body, or somewhere else, before entering my mother's womb?"*

St. Augustine, *Confessions* 1:6

No less than St. Augustine (354-430 CE) himself wrote the above quotation but if we expect reincarnation references in the Bible to be headlined as daring proofs, we will be disappointed, for the subject was not mysteriously rejected in ancient times as it is by the church today. One must be capable of recognising references without the benefit of a headline or index to the subject.

For example, in John 9:1-3 we have the following incident:

*"As he [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'"*

*Since all dominant religions of the East teach the doctrine of reincarnation, it must be admitted that the chief opponent of that philosophical doctrine has been the traditional Christian church.*

Clearly the disciples were aware of reincarnation, for if they were not, they would not have entertained the notion that the man could have sinned before he was born.

In Mark 9:11-13 we have the following conversation:

*"...and they [Jesus' disciples] asked him, 'Why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?' [i.e. be reincarnated] And he answered, 'Elijah verily comes first, and restores all things... but I say to you, Elijah has indeed come, and they have done to him whatever they wished...'"*

There is clearly a reference here to reincarnation, and Jesus is saying that Elijah reincarnated as John the Baptist. That at least opens up the possibility of reincarnation within the Christian faith, even if not reincarnation by everyone.

And in Matthew 16:13-16 Jesus says to his disciples:

*"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they [the disciples] said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'"*

Once again this is a clear reference to reincarnation and demonstrates that the belief in reincarnation certainly existed with the early Christians.

And in the Old Testament too, there are several references to reincarnation. Reading the Bible therefore with an open mind, one realises that reincarnation is not the abhorrent concept portrayed by the modern church.

## Other Ideas

Among certain 'heretical' Christian sects such as the Manicheans, Priscillianists<sup>3</sup> and Cathars, the doctrine of rebirth or reincarnation was no stranger and in fact played a part in their suppression and destruction. It is probable that in all of Christian history there have been those who, although sincere in their faith, have nevertheless clung privately to the concept of reincarnation because of the private experience of revelation that they underwent which proved to them that they had incarnated before.

Rosicrucians have been asked in the past why they do not publish a list of thinkers and prominent people who have endorsed the doctrine of reincarnation. The answer remains that such a list would prove nothing about the



truth of the subject. Throughout history, great numbers of people have often been wrong in their opinions. On the other hand, this does not mean that such a list is unobtainable. Most of the venerated Greek philosophers accepted reincarnation without question, as did the Neoplatonists and the Gnostics after them. Spinoza, Leibniz, Goethe, Hume and other philosophers of their time shared in their acceptance of reincarnation.

The delightful, and beautifully composed, epitaph composed in 1728 by Benjamin Franklin, although not used on his grave (as is sometimes erroneously stated), declares his belief in reincarnation. It bears repeating:

*The Body of B. Franklin, Printer; Like the Cover of an old Book, Its Contents torn out, And stript [sic] of its Lettering and Gilding, Lies here, Food for Worms. But the Work shall not be wholly lost: For it will, as we believ'd, appear once more, In a new and more perfect Edition, Corrected and amended By the Author.*

The American philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

*"We are driven by instinct but have innumerable experiences which are of no visible value; and we may resolve through many lives before we shall assimilate or exhaust them."*

And Thomas Edison and Henry Ford were two great men, both of mechanical and practical bent, who fervently accepted the idea of reincarnation.

The last few decades have brought about a drastic change in the respectability of such subjects as reincarnation. In the past, courageous seekers and thinkers had to conceal their interest in reincarnation for fear of being ostracised from their church, family and friends..., indeed for fear of being burned at the stake! How different it is today where we have the freedom to discuss and express our opinions on many subjects.

Few people realise how privileged they should feel to be able to think as they wish. The time as come therefore for everyone to give thought to the concept of reincarnation, and to coolly and calmly compare it in terms of its superior logic and justice, to the crude, illogical and unjust concept of one life in which we, by chance, by the roll of the 'Cosmic dice', either make it to eternal paradise, or are condemned to eternal suffering in hell. Eternity is a long time..., only fools speak of it as though they understood it!

## Endnotes

1. Concerning metempsychosis, in the OED we read "the supposed transmigration of the soul of a human being or animal at death into a new body of the same or a different species."
2. Ibid., "the supposed production of living from non-living matter as inferred from the appearance of life (due in fact to bacteria etc.) in some infusions."
3. A Christian doctrine developed in the Iberian Peninsula (present day Spain) in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century by Priscillian.

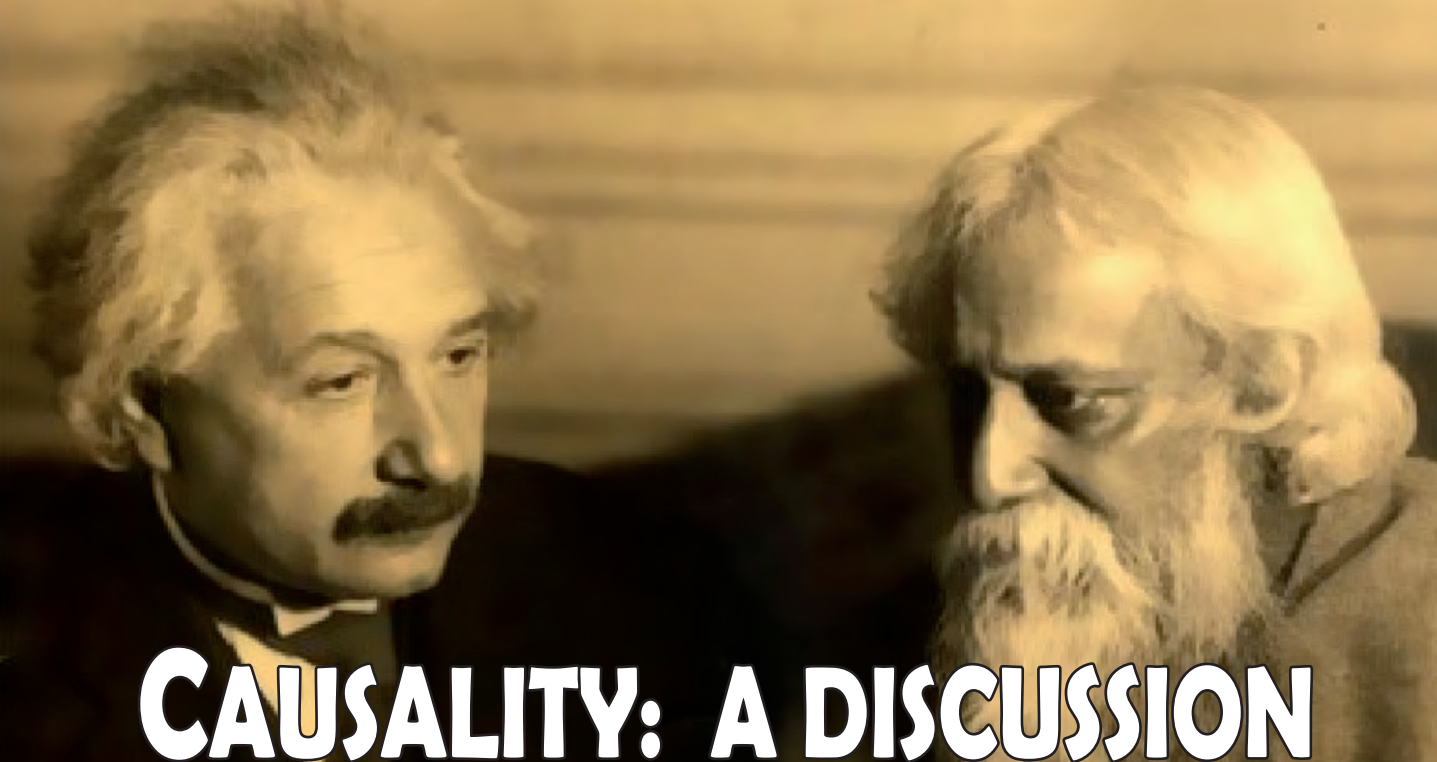
# Unending Love

I seem to have loved you in numberless forms, numberless times, in life after life, in age after age, forever.

My spellbound heart has made and remade the necklace of songs, that you take as a gift, wear round your neck in your many forms, in life after life, in age after age, forever.

-- Rabindranath Tagore





# CAUSALITY: A DISCUSSION

The Nobel Laureates Professor Albert Einstein (1921) and Sir Rabindranath Tagore (1913) met at Einstein's Berlin residence on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1930. The following conversation elegantly demonstrates how these two great men used the language of music as a metaphor to forge common ground between science and spirituality. Throughout this discussion Tagore's words will be preceded with "T:" and Einstein's with "E:".

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

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

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

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

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

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

T: I find a parallel in human psychology. Our passions and desires are unruly, but our character subdues these

elements into a harmonious whole. Does something similar to this happen in the physical world? Are the elements rebellious, dynamic with individual impulse? And is there a principle in the physical world which dominates them and puts them into an orderly organisation?

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

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

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

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



and then he can give spontaneous expression to his musical feeling within the prescribed regulation.

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

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

T: You have to be absolutely obedient to this too complicated music. In India, the measure of a singer's freedom is in his own creative personality. He can sing the composer's song as his own if he has the power creatively to assert himself in his interpretation of the general law of the melody which he is given to interpret.

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

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

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

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

E: Is the metrical form quite severe?

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

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

T: Yes, we have songs with unmeaning words, sounds which just help to act as carriers of the notes. In North India, music is an independent art, not the interpretation of words and thoughts, as in Bengal.

The music is very intricate and subtle and is a complete world of melody by itself.

E: Is it not polyphonic?

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

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

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

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

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

E: This is a question we Europeans cannot properly answer; we are so used to our own music. We want to know whether our own music is a conventional or a fundamental human feeling, whether to feel consonance and dissonance is natural, or a convention which we accept.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





# MISSIONS and



by Lillian Paterson

**W**E ENTER the world through the miracle of birth, live a short while on Earth, and then experience the mystery of transition and change again. Many people waste their lives steeped in self-indulgence, pursuing the desire for power, material riches and the respect or even adulation of others. But for those of us who pursue more spiritual lives, several questions are important, even if we haven't yet found satisfying answers to them: *Why am I here? And as I indubitably am here, what can I do to justify my existence? what talents do I have that can benefit others? And do I have some special mission in Life, something I'm 'meant' to do? and if so, what is it?*

A *talent* is simply a special natural aptitude or ability, something innate that we are born with. A *mission* on the other hand is a divinely ordained or self created task; it is

at the very least something that spiritually moves us to act. Unless we have devoted at least a part of our lives to using our talents or working towards a mission, we can lose our spiritual way. We can become 'human doings' rather than 'human beings' filling our time with endless activity but still feeling exhausted and unfulfilled at the end of the day. There comes a time in all our lives where we need to take stock and realise the importance of devoting ourselves to spiritual growth on a higher level, and this happens only when we begin attempting to work in harmony with the Cosmic and cooperate with natural law.

There are as many missions in life as there are fields of endeavour. Rosicrucians seek knowledge from as many avenues as possible, whether in the arts, anthropology, history, religion, philosophy and of course all the sciences.



This is not a scatter-gun approach but a quiet and methodical searching for the best avenue to pursue in life. Eventually, through the broad spectrum exposure they get to the latest available knowledge in many fields, they are able to identify what areas they are best suited to, and wherever possible, they go on to specialise in those fields. There is nothing new in this and is the way most other serious students of life go about planning their lives; but the difference is that Rosicrucians do it not merely for themselves, but do it in order to return a level of service to humankind and the world at large.

Rosicrucians come from all walks of life; they have different upbringings, different exposures to education, are of different ages and temperaments, and live sometimes continents apart under very different cultures. What they have in common though is a desire to grow spiritually outside the sometimes stifling confines of organised religions, and to find within themselves levels of mastery of life situations that go beyond the average. Given the mind boggling size of the universe, the human species must be but one form of intelligent life in existence, and there are undoubtedly many more, some (perhaps very many) of them far advanced of where we are today. Although we have learned so much as a species, there is still so much more to be learned, and unfortunately so many lessons we still fail to learn from. The mystic takes this on board, and for every failure, there is a quick and firm resolve to do better, get up and continue with the learning experience.

Rosicrucians speak of an allegorical path, a spiritual path they consider to be their highest calling to seek out and find. And once found, they enter into productive work and inner development not only for their own benefit but for the benefit of their beloved planet Earth especially. In other words they work for the collective as much as or possibly more than for their individual needs. The path they tread at any given time can be arduous, but they realise that the harder the journey, the faster the lessons of life need to be learnt and mastered. And where does the path lead to? It leads to mental and spiritual realms of Light, great achievement and ever higher forms



Source: [http://www.nigeriamusicnetwork.com/articles/read-iyanya-mbuk-biography-nigerian-music-artist\\_171.html](http://www.nigeriamusicnetwork.com/articles/read-iyanya-mbuk-biography-nigerian-music-artist_171.html)

of spiritual awareness.

Many people are drawn to the Rosicrucian Order because they hunger for greater enlightenment in their personal affairs; they have deep rooted yearnings for greater meaning and purpose in their lives, and often they have pressing problems that have evaded resolution so far. Through serious study, meditation, periods of visualisation and focused, concentrated awareness, Rosicrucians find their specific paths of activity and progress steadily on their respective inner journeys. By learning to listen with clarity and alertness, the wisdom of the divine inner self is imparted. And in this process, they become aware of

**Whatever talent or ability we need, it is almost certainly in us already, merely waiting to be aroused and brought into action.**

what talents they already possess, what talents they could develop, and what their individual contributions to life could be if they tried just a bit harder.

A great master once said: *“Seek, and ye shall find.”* And so true this is, for where there is a will there is always some way forward, and a corresponding ability within that can be developed in order to follow that ‘way’. Whatever talent or ability we need, it is almost certainly in us already, merely sleeping, waiting to be aroused and brought into action. Becoming aware of those latent abilities is usually half the problem. The human mind is always part of whatever solution finally emerges; and that solution is already partially formed in the mind, if only we could retrieve this valuable information. We are part of a great ‘Cosmic Awareness’ from which answers to all questions ultimately arise, and it is merely a matter of learning how to tap in to that great storehouse of knowledge and experience. It seems simple doesn’t it?



Yes it is in reality, but virtually no one believes it, and it therefore becomes hard.

When we focus our full attention inwards during meditation, the answer will always eventually come, if we have the patience for it to ripple up to the surface of objective conscious awareness. In meditation we find our lost connection with the universe and its Creator, and it is merely a matter of waiting for the answers to mature and form into patterns that we can recognise and put in concrete terms. Is there a so-called 'divine plan' for humankind. Undoubtedly there is, but its details are revealed only incrementally and only to some. The divine great plan for us is more beautiful than anything we could conceive, but it is also right there for the taking, waiting to be found, understood and accepted.

### True Expression

A sincere, spontaneous expression of the inner self is vital for both our mental and physical health. If we are constantly anxious about things, our chances of finding happiness and accomplishment are limited. We can't be aware of the beauty and wonder of creation if there is no joy in life and all we do is worry about our circumstances. If we keep your eyes fixed on the dust on our shoes, how can we see the glory overhead? Small miracles occur daily when we do what is right. Miracles occur especially when we love others unselfishly, giving of ourselves for the welfare of others, and especially when our inner self is in harmony with the deepest part of our being, known to Rosicrucians and many other mystical traditions simply as 'the Master Within'.

The Rosicrucian Order unfortunately occasionally arouses opposition, suspicion and criticism by people who have false conceptions as to its whole purpose and mission is. By being strong though and holding fast to the high moral standards and spiritual principles of their Order, Rosicrucians do not compromise themselves or dilute their yearnings for a higher life, simply because of the lower modes of thought and action that others indulge in. Doing anything less, would compromise the integrity of the paths they have chosen to follow, and would lead them swiftly away from the happiness and accomplishment they have found. It's so easy to say "been there, done that" and then wonder why some people can't keep

up with us. Well, some have not "been there, done that" and we can be certain that we too have not "been there, done that" in many circumstances where others have "been there, done that". So, patience and tolerance are the watchwords of any mystical path, especial one upon which Rosicrucians tread.

The activities, thoughts and verbal expressions of Rosicrucians are ideally always motivated by an optimum blend of spiritual ideals and physical realities. Ideals are fine but not always achievable. Sometimes the material realities of life are so overpoweringly important that we have to give ear to them a lot more than to our higher ideals. But don't ever forget those ideals in the heat of the moment, even if they can't be acted upon fully for the time being. Rosicrucians seek a balance to every situation and act accordingly, but always with patience and tolerance. Accomplishing such responses to the world around one requires a keen alertness and vigilance to what one is saying, thinking and doing that goes quite far beyond the norm. And it is this vigilance and frankly our awareness of our awareness that becomes so important when we seek to live the life of a Rosicrucian mystic.

A mystically led life requires obedience to natural and esoteric laws. We can't break natural law but we can certainly wear ourselves out trying to. Why try when it is clear we can never succeed. Better then to understand the natural and spiritual laws under which we must live and try our best to understand why they are as they are, and then willingly and with a smile cooperate with them. Life is a blend of the practical necessities of the physical world intermingled with the spiritual ideals of one's deeper self. And just as becoming a highly educated scientist requires a tremendous amount of intellectual work and many sacrifices to put oneself through university, so



Source: <http://www.babcock.edu.ng/new/index.php/home/academics/undergraduate-programs/school-of-nursing>



to does the process of finding one's true inner self and its innate divinity require much applied effort and sincerity of purpose. In fact taking up one's burdens and entering on a proper path of spiritual discovery is virtually the opposite to most ways of thinking, speaking and doing that involve a true mystic. Anyone aspiring to deeper spiritual awareness, namely every aspiring mystic, must dare to be different and be true to his or her inner self. We need to walk in the sunlight and remain tolerant of others always.

Each stage of our inner growth has given us a higher concept of what is right, and has in the process evolved for us a higher ideal. And the light of awakened consciousness illuminates our path indicates clearly the best way forward for us. Let us aim always therefore to bring this sunny disposition into the innermost recesses of our being, and allow its Light to lead us ever forward. The way will open up before us. Obstacles will be pushed aside. The purpose of every sound we hear, every person we meet, every book we read and every mission we accomplish will be revealed to us in some way. Our inner urge to progress will be ever-present until the work is completed and valuable lessons have been learned.

### Examples of Excellence

Genius always heeds the voice of the inner self and offers itself as a willing channel for divine manifestation. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the 'Sage of Concord', startled New England when he became a free spirit and resigned his pastorate. He then devoted the rest of his life to travel, lecturing and writing, and bringing a form of free spiritual enquiry into the minds of many who would have been able to acquire it in no other way. His works stressed the importance of a strong reliance on the inner person and the freedoms that this inner self already has and wishes to share with the much smaller, less refined outer being of day-to-day life. If Emerson had not found his own niche and talents, our world would have lost a literary genius of great sophistication and value to the world.

The American-Yugoslav scientist Nikola Tesla gave up the joys of love and family life, and lived for his experiments and inventions. He conceived the alternating current method that brought about new uses for electricity. The idea came to him in a flash one day in his youth while admiring a sunset. His greatest achievement was the discovery of the rotating magnetic field and the alternating current or AC. This invention would effectively lead to the production and transmission of electricity over

miles of wire that could not be accomplished through the transmission of direct current or DC.

Anna Pavlova, the Russian dancer who popularised ballet, knew at the age of eight what her mission in life would be after attending a performance of Tchaikovsky's ballet *Sleeping Beauty*. She was physically frail but very determined in her quest to become a great ballerina. She knew that God meant her to express beauty through dance so she instilled a love of ballet in anyone who came to see her, and contributed greatly to beauty in the lives of so many.

The famous Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo did not belong to any art movement of the time and his work was truly original. His creative energies came by attuning directly with the Divine Mind, and those energies were eager and willing channels of expression of the holiness he saw. His '*Pieta*'

raised him to the rank of Italy's greatest sculptor. He decorated both the Sistine Chapel in Rome and the Medici Chapel in Florence, the latter of which ranks as his architectural and sculptural masterpiece.

These are just a few examples of great minds who were spiritually inspired, who used and developed their talents, and fulfilled their missions in life. However, not everyone can occupy the centre stage. Not everyone can

**Genius always heeds the voice of the inner self and offers itself as a willing channel for divine manifestation.**



*Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)*





*The 'Pietà' of Michelangelo (1475-1564)*

attain fame, power and glory. There are other tasks and missions more humble but just as important in the cosmic scheme of things. Worthwhile, purposeful living is the key to the life of a mystic. Humble service performed with love and dedication is always blessed. In the eyes of our Creator there is no difference between the street cleaner, the dishwasher, the scientist or the physician. Knowing this, each person must find his or her own place in life. We must use our time in such a way that at the end of life, we will have something constructive to show for the time we were privileged to be on our beloved planet Earth.

Just as different instruments of a symphony orchestra combine to produce perfect harmony, we all have a role to play in creating harmony in the Cosmos. The all-important thing is to care, to love and to help one another. When we do this we become a part of the flow of life and energy that has neither beginning nor end. We are no longer alone and separate but become an involved and integrated member of humankind. No one becomes great until they give themselves to something greater than themselves. The inner urge to serve is sacred and must not be disregarded or suppressed. It is an innate need of our deeper self to express itself as widely as it can, and it does so through service to causes greater than the individual self. Let us therefore spread light and love where there is ignorance, hatred or darkness. Let us speak of peace and reconciliation wherever there is talk of war and strife. We must all become involved in some way, whether it be at home or at work, in some higher purpose. By serving others, we help ourselves, and what we are and what we do flows out and helps to determine what others will become.

Whenever you can, extend a friendly hand to those

who are not yet on a path; help them to enter a path meant for them; help them to open doors to new understanding. We can never know how far-reaching our words and actions can be to those who are striving to better themselves. And it is often the simplest expressions of humility that carry the greatest weight. At times all we have to do is to listen with a loving heart, and then we can look with compassion upon our troubled friend and say: *"I know, I understand, I have been there too."*

Our journey on the path of spiritual evolverment will be smoother and present fewer obstacles if we just keep our hearts and minds free from resentment, intolerance and impatience. We may have "been there, done that", but many have not..., yet. Therefore open yourself to the divine inflow, so it can work freely through you. Become enriched by the spiritual action of reaching out to others in need.

Rosicrucians especially find it their duty and privilege to raise the vibrations of their environment with positive thoughts and emotions, even if in very subtle and humble ways. They experience the joy of fellowship as they love and serve wherever they are needed. And then, when the mission has been accomplished, with the great joy, gratitude, and tranquillity they say: *"To this end was I born. For this cause I came into the world."*



*Anna Pavlova (1881-1931)*



# Good WILL

by *Saman Qadir*

**W**E ARE LIVING through one of the great crises of human history. Issues of peace and war, poverty and abundance, of racial, political and religious conflict face us on every side. Brutal aggression by those with the gun are all too plain to see. And underlying all is the basic conflict between material and spiritual values, between self-interest and world service.

A mere 14 years ago, relative peace and prosperity reigned as we entered the third millennium. And there was a universal recognition that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century heralded a truly 'New Age.' Science unites the world across all cultures, religions and political views; and the storehouse of human knowledge is greater today than ever before. Countless movements based on kindness, compassion, tolerance and goodwill are trying valiantly to create a better world. And despite the prominence given to terrorist movements at the present time, there is a growing recognition of our essential human unity.

The decisive question today is whether we can solve our problems before they tip over beyond our control. The race is on for the future of humankind, and only people of goodwill in the world can guarantee a successful outcome. How therefore, can we combine our strengths in a united world service in these critical times?

We have the power to affect world events through the little *good thoughts, kind words and compassionate actions* we perform. Multiply this by millions and we have an immense force for good. Channelled in unison, the combined thoughts, words and deeds of people of good intent can create a channel of communication between the Divine and humankind through which spiritual energies will flow to heal and rebuild our deeply troubled world. Through daily Celestial Sanctum contacts, Rosicrucians channel their energies to heal the world. Let us not neglect our duty in this.

# THE HOUSE



## The Beit al-Hikima of Baghdad

by *Bill Anderson*



# OF WISDOM



*Mustansiriyah Madrasa, Baghdad*

**F**OLLOWING THE DEATH of the Prophet Muhammed (632 CE), the Islamic world was ruled by the four Rashidun or 'Rightly-guided Caliphs'. They were succeeded by the 'Umayyad' family, whom we first met in a series of articles in the *Rosicrucian Beacon* about Muslim Spain. They were an Arab dynasty and ruled their growing empire, the *Dar al-Islam*, from Damascus, where they made extensive use of the native Christian Syrians in running their administration. For the first time since Alexander the Great, Egypt, the Middle East, Persia and parts of India, together with Spain and North Africa were united politically, administratively and economically under one ruler.

The Arabs found in the countries they had conquered, developed civilisations with organised governments, advanced economic systems in agriculture, irrigation and

industry and well-developed sciences such as mathematics, astronomy and physics. The resulting 'Pax Islamica' allowed the free flow of raw materials and manufactured goods, agricultural products, luxuries, people, techniques and skills, but above all, ideas and modes of thought which lifted the barriers between East and West.

Surprisingly perhaps, the Arab conquest of Syria and Iraq in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century did not, on the whole, interfere with the academic pursuits of the great Middle Eastern centres of learning such as the Syriac Christian schools at Edessa, the monastery at Qinnasrin, Nisibis, Mosul or the university city of Jundishâpur. Harran, in Northern Syria, was the home of a sect of 'star-worshippers' known in Arabic sources as the *Sabaicans*, allegedly founded by Alexander the Great. At the other end of the Islamic world was the city of Marw, at the gates of Central Asia and also renowned as a centre of learning. Both cities were a focus of Hellenism and Zoroastrianism well into the Islamic period.

However, it was the city of Edessa in modern Turkey that played an important part in preserving science and philosophy and transmitting it to the questing Muslim minds. Scholars from all these centres could interact with each other and pursue their studies without the need to pay attention to any official dogma. This first dynasty of Caliphs ended in 750 CE, when the *Abbasid* family with their Persian backers overthrew the Umayyads and killed all but one member of the family, who fled to Spain and founded the ruling dynasty of 'al-Andalus'. The new Abbasid dynasty (750-1258) moved the capital from Syria to Iraq, the richest province of the empire, and one that had traditionally been opposed to the previous dynasty.

## Gift of God

In 764 CE, the new capital was founded by the second Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur (reigned from 754 to 775 CE) close to the old Sassanid Persian imperial capital at Ctesiphon. Its official name was *Madinat as Salaam*, the 'City of Peace', but it became better known by its Persian name *Baghdad*, the 'Gift of God'. By about the year 800 it had reached the zenith of its greatness and splendour under the famous Caliph Harun al-Rashid (r. 786-809 CE) forever associated with the 'Tales of the Arabian Nights'. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries were Baghdad's golden years, incorporating the material glories of the reign of Harun and the intellectual and literary glories under his son Caliph al-Ma'mun who reigned from 813 to 833 CE.

If we were able to travel back in time, we would see the two vast semi-circles, twelve miles in diameter, on both banks of the river Tigris, forming the circular



*The city of Baghdad at the time of the early Abbasid Caliphate.*

city of Baghdad. The city was surrounded by numerous suburbs covered with parks, gardens, villas and beautiful promenades, rich bazaars and finely built mosques and baths that stretched for a considerable distance on both sides of the river. At its height the population of Baghdad and its suburbs amounted to over two million people. The palace of the Caliph with its famous green dome, stood in the middle of a vast park whose gardens were adorned with exotic plants, flowers, trees, fountains and sculptures and also contained a zoo and an aviary.

Here the Caliph held court with ceremony worthy of a Byzantine or Persian Emperor. Surrounding the palace were the lesser palaces of the great nobles that also stood on the same side of the river. Immense streets crossed the city from one end to the other, dividing it into blocks or quarters, each under the control of a supervisor, who looked after the cleanliness, sanitation and comfort of the inhabitants. Every household was supplied with water all year round and the streets, gardens and parks were regularly swept and watered. No refuse was allowed to remain within the walls. At night, lamps illuminated the main square in front of the palace and the surrounding streets.

Baghdad was a city of marble palaces and mansions, usually several stories high, lavishly gilded and decorated, and hung with beautiful tapestries and hangings of brocade or silk. The rooms were lightly and tastefully furnished with luxurious divans, costly tables, unique Chinese vases and gold and silver ornaments. For miles along both sides of the river you would find the palaces, kiosks, gardens and parks of the great nobles, with marble steps leading down to the river's edge.

This then, was the setting for a remarkable institution, the *'Beit al Hikma* or 'House of Wisdom' said to be the



translation of the Sassanid Persian designation for a library. It was founded by the seventh Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun in 832 in imitation of the university at Jundishapur. With the foundation of Baghdad, the centre of world learning gradually moved to the City of Peace, becoming the heir of Athens, Alexandria and Jundishapur as the new cultural metropolis of the Western world. It was also the setting of the 'Tales of the Thousand and One Nights' (*Alf Layla wa Layla*), which was compiled during this period from the Persian tales of Indian origin called the *Hezar Afsana* ('One Thousand Tales').

Many of the stories in the book describe the soul's journey through life. The narrative tells the story of the king, the vizier, his daughter and her two maids Sheherazad and Denazad. These tales reflect Indian ideas such as reincarnation and became popular in Baghdad, from which their popularity spread throughout the Islamic world. It is known that the Caliph al-Ma'mun entrusted Sahl ibn Harun with the translation of Persian books.





## The Persian Connection

But the story of how the *Beit al Hikma* came to be founded really began during the reign of al-Ma'mun's great grandfather, the Caliph al-Mansur (r. 754-775 CE), an autocrat who modelled himself on the great Persian sovereigns of the ancient Near East and whose interest was also in alchemy. It was at his court that a new office appeared for the first time in response to the growing complexities of running the ever-expanding commercial, political and military empire: This office was that of the 'Vizier' (*wazīr*). The first Vizier, Khālīd ibn Barmak (705 - 782 CE), was a Persian of Buddhist origin from Balkh in Afghanistan, who had served as counsellor and treasurer to the Caliph.

Khālīd was a remarkable man, and willing to help the Caliph reshape the empire after the image of the late Sassanian Persian Empire. He was praised by the scholar al-Masudi for possessing "deep wisdom, energy, learning and forcefulness" while the historian Yezidi described him as "generous, true to his word, pious, humane, firm and clever." His learning was profound and he was famous for his generosity to scholars and poets, characteristics that he passed on to his descendants. For many years his family, the 'Barmakids', enjoyed a power unequalled in the history of the Near East. It was thanks to the influence of this family and their Persian clients that the government of the Arab empire was gradually 'Iranianised'. He was succeeded in office by his descendants, thereby creating a dynasty paralleling that of the Caliphs.

Nawbakht, the court astrologer, and his son Abu Sahl and other colleagues such as al-Farazi and Umar al-Tabari, with many others sponsored by the Barmakid family, translated and promoted Persian texts into Arabic and Neo-Persian. They were all Iranians and aimed to incorporate Sassanian Persian culture into Abbasid ideology and guarantee the continuity of the Iranian heritage. Christian and Jewish learned families from Persia such as the Bukhtishu and Hunyan families were also great translators of Syriac, Greek, Persian and other texts into Arabic. Both families had served at Jundishāpur University for generations. The Bukhtishu and Masawayh families spoke Persian, worshipped as Nestorian Christians in Syriac and translated books into Arabic, serving generations of Caliphs.

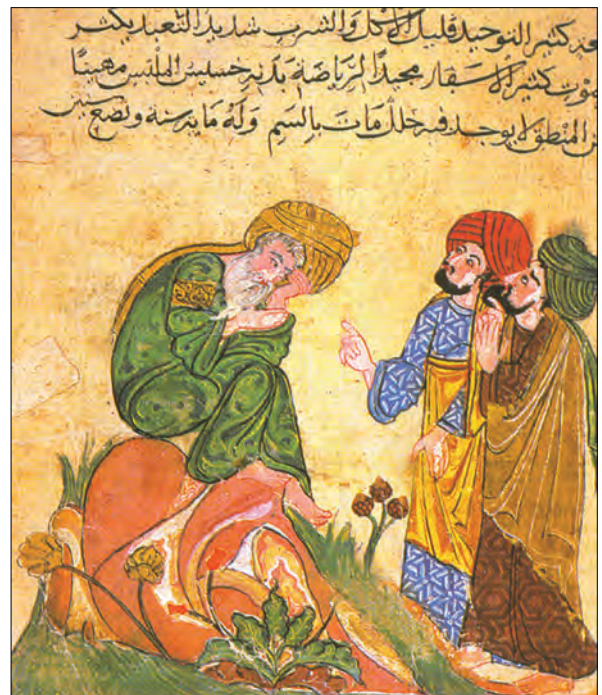
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*Baghdad was the setting for the 'Tales of the Thousand and One Nights' (Alf Layla wa Layla), which was compiled during the Abbasid period. It originated from the Persian tales of Indian origin called the Hezār Afsana ('One Thousand Tales').*

Barmakid Family	
Khālīd ibn Barmak	d. 782
Yahyā al-Barmakti	d. 805
Ja'far al-Barmaki	d. 803
Fadl al-Barmaki	d. 808

The Barmakid family, whom we first met in the June 2002 edition of the *Rosicrucian Beacon*, amassed fabulous fortunes, entertained lavishly, were extravagantly generous with their wealth, and began to eclipse the Caliph in popularity and power. In time, the administrative centre of Baghdad moved to the east bank of the Tigris, close to the palace of the Barmakids, where it remained until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 803, the Abbasid Caliph, Harun al-Rashid, decided to end their power. After beheading the then current Barmakid Vizier, Ja'far al-Barmaki (b.767 - 803), his closest friend and son of the previous Vizier, Yahyā al-Barmakti, he went on to wipe out the rest of the family and those closest to them.

The Barmakids had used their power to introduce Iranian (Persian) culture, art and ideology to the other nations of the empire and to expand Iranian cultural influence. Known as a wise and generous family, they were admirable Viziers, wise administrators and (more



The Early Abbasid Caliphs	
Abu'l Abbas As-Saffah	750-754
Al-Mansur	754-775
Al-Mahdi	775-785
Al-Hadi	785-786
Harun al-Rashid	786-809
Al-Amin	809-813
Al-Ma'mun	813-833

importantly to the Caliphs) they filled the public treasury. As a family they were strong, eloquent and gave good advice. For several centuries after their demise the expression 'time of the Barmakids' was used to signify all that was good, a golden age.

The Iranianisation of the empire had an influence on Islamic thinking, feeling and writing. The Arabic discovery of Sassanian antiquity and Hellenic thought at the same time added a fresh impetus. In the field of literature, there was a co-ordinated Iranophile movement called *shu'ubiya*. It consisted of a reaction against Arab domination, both political and cultural. The promoter of this anti-Arab opposition was Sahl ibn Harun, director of the *Beit al-Hikma*, though before him there were members of the Barmakid family. These great ministers were all famous for their broad tolerance. That their underlying motive was either coolness toward Islam or faithfulness to Iranian beliefs did not matter.

Harun al-Rashid had had two sons and after his death in 809, the relationship between these two deteriorated. The youngest, al-Amin, ruled until he was deposed in 813 and his brother, al-Ma'mun, then took power. It had been al-Ma'mun who had governed the vast eastern province of Khorasan from the city of Marw before his father's death, and he was largely responsible for cultural expansion in this area. An Arab historian wrote:-

*"He looked for knowledge where it was evident, and thanks to the breadth of his conceptions and the power of his intelligence, he drew it from places where it was hidden. He entered into relations with the Emperors of Byzantium, gave them rich gifts, and asked them to give him any books of philosophy that they had in their possession. These emperors sent him all those works of Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Euclid, and Ptolemy that they had.*

*"Al-Ma'mun then chose the most experienced translators and commissioned them to translate these works to the best of their ability. After the translating was done as perfectly as possible, the Caliph urged his subjects to read the translations and to study them. Consequently, the scientific movement became stronger under his reign. Scholars held high rank, and the Caliph surrounded himself with learned men, legal experts, rationalist theologians, lexicographers, annalists and genealogists."*

During his reign, one day a week was always set apart at court for literary, scientific or philosophical discussions. There are also many records of court debates on religious subjects between Muslims and men of other faiths.

### The House of Wisdom

The *Beit al-Hikma*, a research and translation centre, often called the *khizanat al-hikma*, was founded and built in Baghdad by Caliph Harun al-Rashid but was given a new impetus under his son al-Ma'mun. The complex, whose current whereabouts is uncertain, included a vast public library, astronomical observatory, and bureau of translation. It was to exert a considerable influence on the development of Islamic thought and culture.

Its directors were Sahl ibn Harun and Salm, assisted by Sa'id ibn Harun. It included an important staff of translators, of whom the most famous were the *'Banu 'l-Munadhhdhim*, as well as copyists and binders. This was an age of international scholars working with many different languages. Many were multilingual, equally conversant with Greek, Syriac and Persian, and gradually they were drawn to the court in Baghdad. Many Greek works, including Plato and Aristotle,



*Ptolemy's 'great mathematical syntax' (Megale Syntaxis) was translated and transmitted to the West by the Arabs and known as the 'Almagest'. This was an astronomical treatise positing geocentrism (an earth centred universe) as a harmonious and geometrical design along with mathematical trigonometry.*



were translated into Arabic; a world atlas was compiled and the sciences flourished. Among the other works translated into Arabic were the medical texts of Galen and Hippocrates, Euclid's *Geometry* and Ptolemy's astronomical writings. Later in Spain, Ibn Rushd (Averroës, 1126-1198) wrote his commentaries on Aristotle. These commentaries profoundly influenced such prominent western philosophers as the Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas.

The House of Wisdom's large library was enriched by the translations that had been undertaken. Scholars of all races and religions were invited to work there. They were concerned with preserving a universal heritage, which was not specifically Moslem and was Arabic only in language. The Caliph had the best-qualified specialists of the time come to the capital from all parts of his empire. There was no lack of talented men. The rush toward Baghdad was as impressive as the horsemen's sweep through entire lands during the Arab conquest. The new intellectuals of Baghdad eagerly set to work to discover the thoughts of antiquity.

One significant result of the Arab conquests and the most important factor for the spread of knowledge was the introduction of paper-making by Chinese prisoners-of-war in 751. Paper quickly supplanted all other writing materials during the first decades of the Abbasid era. Almost all non-literary and non-historical secular Greek books that were available throughout the eastern half of the Byzantine Empire and the Near East were translated into Arabic. Many of the Greek writings that have reached us from Hellenistic and Roman times to Late Antiquity, and many more that have not survived in the original Greek, were translated: astrology, alchemy, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music theory, Aristotelian philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, physics, zoology, botany, logic, medicine, pharmacology, veterinary science, handbooks on military science and collections of wisdom sayings.

Numerous works were translated from Indian languages including the famous book on astronomy and mathematics entitled *Siddhanta* i.e. knowledge, science and religion. The Arabic translation of the book appeared during al-Mansur's reign under the title *Al Sindhind*, which is a modification of the original title. This book introduced Indian mathematics with the number symbols still used in Arabic and the Arab science of numbers developed as a result. The Arabs added the cipher *Zero*, without which the Arabic numerals would have been similar to other systems. Without it we would have been unable to solve various kinds of equations. The Zero facilitated all arithmetical operations and freed the numbering system from complexity. The employment of

The Persian mathematician, Mohammed ibn-Musa al-Khowarizmi (780-850), suggested that a little circle should be used in calculations if no number appeared in the tens place. The Arabs called this circle *sifr* or 'empty'. Zero was crucial to al-Khowarizmi, who used it to invent algebra in the ninth century. Al-Khowarizmi also developed quick methods for multiplying and dividing numbers, which are known as algorithms, a corruption of his name.

Source: <http://www.livingscience.com/27853-who-invented-zero.html>

the Zero in mathematics led to the discovery of decimal fractions that are found in the book of *Miftah al Hisab* (The Key to Arithmetic) written by the mathematician Jamshid ibn Mahmud Ghayyash al-Din al-Kashi, completed in 1427. This discovery was the real prelude to detailed mathematical studies. The Arabic numerals that included a zero and decimal fractions were one of the greatest gifts of Islam to Europe.

The way in which al-Ma'mun kindled the enthusiasm of others is admirable. Three brothers, the sons of Musa ibn Shakir (an astrologer and astronomer), tried to distinguish themselves by giving fabulous sums of money to collect manuscripts and to bring translators together. The *Banu Musa* ('Sons of Moses' as they were



Baghdad from a 14th century manuscript



called), were themselves scholars who made advances in mathematics and astronomy. The search for knowledge was supported by the entire elite of Baghdad society. It was not the pet project of any particular group to be used for their own agenda and it was subsidised by an enormous outlay of public and private funds.

## Baghdad -- 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Centuries

In Baghdad, during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Abbasid Caliphs had created a sophisticated capital and presided over a brilliant court. The tolerant and cultured society that they championed salvaged and absorbed the remnants of the ancient Classical and Persian civilisations. In great part, this was due to the liberalism of the prevailing *Mu'tazilite* philosophy that argued for the importance of reason in religion and theology.

This was a world where poetry was put to music and wine was a part of everyday life. It was the Golden Age of Islamic civilisation, before the strictness in attitudes we associate with Islam today took over. It was an age when Muslim, Jew and Christian lived and worked together in harmony, exemplified by the work done in the House of Wisdom. The caliph's library contained many Persian manuscripts and, in fact, was based on the Persian model, which had functioned as an idealised national archive.

In the Caliph al-Ma'mun's time the director of the library was the great Persian nationalist and expert, Sahl ibn-Harun. Another famous Persian mathematician and astronomer, Musa al-Khwarizmi, was also employed full time by the library at this time as well. Ibn-an-Nadim, the most famous associate of the library, listed all the books and their origins in his famous index compiled in 987-88 CE, the *Kitāb al-Fihrist*. A great part of this index has survived and is a valuable source of information about this time. Because it includes the titles of a large number of works that are no longer extant, as well as biographical information on little-known early authors, it throws light, for the modern scholar, on otherwise obscure facets of medieval Islamic intellectual history in many fields.

## Scholars of the Library

The House of Wisdom, with its ever-increasing number of manuscripts, soon became a hub for scholars and the busy workshop of translators and scribes. Books were sorted out and assigned to the various translators according to their specialisation. There is a list of some 57 scholars associated with the House of Wisdom still extant. Among the more famous were:

Al Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ibn Matar, who completed the translation of Euclid's *Elements*. He also translated

other Greek authors including Aristotle, Archimedes, Pythagoras, Apollonius, Theon and Menelaus. Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi who was born in Khiva in Central Asia and systematically explored arithmetic and algebra. The latter derived its name from his discourse: *Kitāb al-Jabr wa al-Muqabla*. This book was translated into Latin in 1135 by Robert of Chester, an Arabic scholar who studied and lived in Spain and was Archbishop of Pamplona. His translation of the book remained in use in European universities until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The knowledge of geometry flourished and with it architecture and design. Ibn Khaldun was later to describe geometry as a science that "*enlightens the intelligence of man and cultivates rational thinking.*"

Al-Ma'mun's court astronomer was the already mentioned Musa ibn Shakir. His three sons Muhammad, Ahmad and Hassan, known as the *Banu Musa*, devoted their lives to the search for knowledge. They exemplified the Prophet Mohammed's dicta:

- Seek learning even if it be in China.
- The search for knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.
- The ink of scholars is worth more than the blood of martyrs.

The works of the *Banu Musa*, were exceptionally creative. They wrote on celestial mechanics, the atom, the origins of Earth, the Ptolemaic universe, the properties of the ellipse, planes and spheres. Their knowledge of geometry served in practice to create canals, bridges and architectural designs.



*Scholars at an Abbasid library from the poet al-Hariri's Maqamat al-Hariri. Illustration by Yahyá al-Wasiti, Baghdad 1237. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)*



*An illustration of the human eye according to the physician and translator Hunayn ibn Ishaq (see below). From a manuscript dated circa 1200.*



Muhammad ibn Musa, on one of his travels, met Thabit ibn Qurra the Sabaeen (826 - 901) from Harran. The latter was master of three languages: Greek, Syriac and Arabic and was soon appointed court astrologer to Caliph al-Mu'tadid (892-902). He was an invaluable addition to the House of Wisdom. In 70 original works he wrote on every conceivable subject including mathematics, astronomy, astrology, ethics, mechanics, physics and philosophy, and published commentaries on Euclid, Ptolemy and other Greek thinkers and philosophers. The two sons of Thabit ibn Qurra also became famous. Sinan was a famous physician in Baghdad. He was director of several hospitals and was court physician to three successive caliphs. His son, Ibrahim, also became a prominent scientist. He invented sundials and wrote a special treatise on this subject.

The greatest medical mind in the House of Wisdom was Hunayn ibn Ishaq al-Abadi (809 - 873). Born in Hira, he was the son of a Nestorian pharmacist. As a young man he had attended lectures at the University of Jundishâpur. He had learned Greek in Alexandria and soon translated the entire collection of Greek medical works including Galen and Hippocrates. The *Banu Musa* introduced him to al-Ma'mun's court. Hunayn was an extremely gifted and talented translator. Far from being just a literal translator, he tended to be more scientific and duly interpreted the original text by cross-reference, annotation and citing glossaries. His original contributions included ten works on ophthalmology. He travelled far and wide within the empire and even into the Byzantine Empire in his search for rare and ancient books. He rose to the highest honour by being appointed the director of the House of Wisdom by Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861).

Qusta ibn Luqa al-Ba'lbakki (820 - 912) was another accomplished translator and scholar. He was a native Christian Greek speaker from the Lebanon, who brought Greek manuscripts with him to the capital. He has forty original contributions to his credit. He wrote on diverse subjects such as mirrors, hairs, fans, winds, logic, geometry and astronomy. Yuhanna ibn Masawayh was an early director of the House of Wisdom. He served under four Caliphs: al Ma'mun, al-Mu'tassim (833-842), al-Wathiq (842-847) and al-Mutawakkil. He wrote about medical, especially gynaecological problems.

The impact of the works emanating from the House of Wisdom was tremendous. Islamic science, philosophy, art and architecture all benefited. Agriculture, government,

prosperity and economic wealth were also benefactors. It was ultimately responsible for producing philosophers like al-Kindi, al-Farabi and some of the greatest thinkers, scientists and philosophers of Islam. In addition some of the greatest Islamic physicians had available to them all the knowledge of ancient Greece, Syria, India and Persia and in turn they contributed through their astute observation and originality.

## Falsafa

The historian Ibn Khallikan (1211 - 1282) reported that women also taught classes in which men took lessons. Few Westerners recognise the extent to which Arab women contributed to the social, economic and political life of the empire. Arab women excelled in medicine, mysticism, poetry, teaching and oratory and even took active roles in military conflicts.

Travelling to other cities to seek knowledge under the direction of different masters was a common practice in the early centuries of Islam. From Khorasân to Egypt, to West Africa and Spain, and from the northern provinces to those in the south, students and teachers journeyed to attend classes and discuss social, political, religious, philosophical and scientific matters. This custom was later popularised in Europe during the Renaissance.

The arrival of philosophy on the intellectual scene seemed to challenge many of the traditional Islamic sciences. The Caliphs and other influential Muslim patrons in the great aristocratic households were interested in *falsafa* or philosophy for its practical advantages. At that time, philosophy was a single package that included all the



## Christian - Muslim Relations



*A fragment from a previously unknown Judaeo-Arabic version of the treatise Kitāb hudūd al-mantiq ('The Definitions of Logic') by Abdišū Ibn 'Bahriz, a bishop and scholar of Harran and later Mosul and Hazza (active at the turn of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries). It consists of one parchment folio with a stub. It is written in a calligraphic Abbasid book hand and translates as: "The book regarding the definitions of logic based on Aristotle the philosopher, belonging to Sadaqa Ibn Ishāq." The 28 lines of the verso containing the beginning of the Judaeo-Arabic text (not shown here), are written in a formal Hebrew square script. The Judaeo-Arabic orthography shows some hallmarks of Early Phonetic Judaeo-Arabic Script (EPJS), which dropped out of use in the tenth century. All in all, the evidence points to an early date for this copy, probably the tenth century.*

*(Adapted from - <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/fotm/september-2010/#sthash.okinetzC.dpuf>)*

human sciences: astronomy, mathematics, medicine and technology, as well as metaphysics. But the Caliphs also had a political reason for supporting the philosophers. This was because the philosophers, along with the Persian civil servants, did not share the Arabs' disdain for all that was not Arabic or Islamic. They were a convenient support for the Caliph when he did not want to be hemmed in by religious scholars insisting on their narrow interpretation of the *Sharia*.

Al- Ma'mun favoured the Mu'tazilite theological school, which defended certain positions by means

of philosophical methods that other schools, like the Hanbalites in particular, opposed, because they disregarded a literal interpretation of the Koran. For example, the Mu'tazilites taught the freedom of human choice as opposed to divine predetermination, and the absolute unity of God and all his attributes, except for his word, the Koran, which they held was created, thereby countering Christian teaching on the Logos. They believed that human beings had responsibility for their own actions.

## The Majlis

In the House of Wisdom al-Ma'mun daringly separated scientific studies from traditional theology, and not only collected rare and valuable manuscripts but also a galaxy of teachers skilled in the arts of ancient learning. The pro-Persian al- Ma'mun had been educated in Marw (or Merv) in Khorāsān in a neo-Hellenistic atmosphere. He was deeply interested in scientific studies and applied philosophical principles to Islamic doctrine. He gathered a new group of courtiers around him, very few of whom had any connection with previous Caliphs' courts. He regularly presided over their discussions in a *majlis* or salon in his palace.

His dissertations, written down as treatises and aphorisms, reflect openmindedness and an intellectual candour remarkable even today. When these people, most of who were from non-Arab backgrounds, mingled in the market place, Caliphate or Barmakid courts or nobles' palaces, groping to break through language barriers, they discovered exciting new facets of knowledge. "Ideas sprang up in their minds like seedlings after a heavy rain." The greatest demand was for the works of Plato and Aristotle. In these, Islamic students found insights into ambiguous passages in the Koran. Unlike earlier Muslims who had regarded their holy book as that part of an eternal wisdom which was put into words by the hands of honoured and righteous scribes and communicated to mankind through the Prophet Mohammed, to be accepted without question, these later scholars found that by using the scientific approach of interpreting the unknown in terms of the known, of leading the mind gradually into the profound and abstract, they could explain even the most puzzling revelations.

Enthusiastically now, they studied and discussed the sacred writings of antiquity, attempting to interpret their own canonical tradition and to elucidate questions ranging from human conduct to divine justice, which arose from confrontations with Christians. Their results are the innumerable explanatory commentaries that form the basis of present-day Islamic philosophy. The



translation of a vast corpus of writings into Arabic from Persian and Sanskrit resulted in Arabic becoming the most important scientific language of the world for many centuries and the depository of much of the wisdom and sciences of antiquity.

## Epilogue

The *Beit al-Hikma* proper, does not appear to have survived the orthodox reaction of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil although there is subsequent mention in Iraq during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, of several scientific libraries owing their existence to private initiative and the fact that the Caliph al-Mu'tadid, who knew Greek and was a patron of science and philosophy, had sought to favour the work of various scholars whom he had installed in his palace. Only the Fatimids in Egypt were later to found similar official academies, of which the most important was the *Dar al-Hikma* or *Dar al-Ilm* established by the sixth Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim in Cairo in 1005, and which will be the subject of a future article in the *Rosicrucian Heritage*.

We should have great admiration for this highly cultured Islamic civilisation born in Baghdad. In this centre of universal culture were found polite manners, refinement, general education and the confrontation of religious and philosophical thought that made this Iraqi metropolis the 'Light of the World'. About two centuries later Cordoba, the capital of Muslim Spain, began to vie with Baghdad as the centre of ancient learning. From Cordoba, Graeco-Arabic philosophy and science were transmitted across the Pyrenees to Paris, Bologna and Oxford in the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Men of letters and science gathered in Baghdad either through cultural affinity or because they had been summoned to the caliph's court for their worth or competence. The city of Baghdad became a leading centre of learning from which Graeco-Roman wisdom passed on to the Western world. The writings of Aristotle and Plato were translated in the House of Wisdom and advances in medicine, astronomy and other disciplines laid the foundations for modern Western sciences.

The Abbasid strategy of encouraging translation led to the flourishing of Islamic intellectual and experimental sciences. *Arabic* therefore became a vehicle for science and not only for poetry and literature. Scholars of all races and religions were invited to work there. They were concerned with preserving a universal heritage, which was not specifically Muslim and was Arabic only in language. The Caliph had the best qualified specialists of the time come to the capital from all parts of his empire and there was no lack of talented men. The intellectuals of the

refined and sophisticated court in Baghdad eagerly set to work to discover the thoughts of antiquity.

Were it not for their role in the recovery of ancient learning, in its preservation and circulation throughout their empire and on to the scholars of Western Europe, our culture might well have lacked its scientific renaissance and entirely lost its philosophical heritage. The search for truth spread like a contagion through all levels of society. Wealthy and influential families rivalled each other, vied even with the Caliphs to hire wise and gifted men to instruct their children and themselves.

It really cannot be overstated the debt that we in the West owe to those great minds of the Golden Age of Baghdad, who collected, preserved, translated, edited and ultimately added to the vast knowledge of an ancient world that was fast disappearing. Without the work done in Baghdad, our world would be immeasurably poorer spiritually, and our imagination can only begin to comprehend what our history and our lives would be like today, without the knowledge that spread throughout the world from the House of Wisdom on the banks of the Tigris.


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*A fragmented page from the kitāb al-mūsīqī al-kabīr ("The Great Book Of Music"), by Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (c.872-950). Yet another Arab polymath, al-Fārābī was learned in philosophy (falsafā), science (such as it was then), cosmology, logic and music theory. He spent almost his entire life in Baghdad.*





# The Hieroglyphic Monad of Dr. John Dee

by Paul Goodall

**T**HE HIEROGLYPHIC MONAD, an enduring example of John Dee's intellect and mystical disposition, was realised during a period of history when there were great upheavals in religious and political thought. The established church with its soteriological dogma or concept of salvation from sin was under threat from the rising influence of thinkers grounded in Neo-Platonic and Hermetic thought. Whilst many avoided challenging church doctrine or politics by the use of rhetoric and literary style, others such as John Dee and the later Robert Fludd and Michael Maier were expounding their philosophies on the dignity of man and the transforming power of Nature through the Hermetic disciplines of magia, alchymia and cabala.<sup>1</sup>

While an earlier text of Dee's, *Aphorisms* (1558), was based on the observation of nature and empirical experimentation, the *Monas Hieroglyphica* of 1564 reflected Dee's more mystical approach to the nature of reality as his objective faculties gave way to an increasing reliance on intuitive conceptions based on imagery and number. Form in symbols came to embody the heavenly mysteries and offer avenues to explore these through contemplation and meditation.

In keeping with the manner of the period Dee employs elusive exposition so that only initiates and those of sufficient intellect were capable of understanding its complexity and could profit from it. Indeed, the frontispiece to *Monas Hieroglyphica* displayed the inscription *Qui non intelligit, aut taceat, aut discat* ("He who does not understand should either be silent or learn").

There was also, of course, a very real need to avoid charges of heresy, a danger that was the bane of such thinkers at this time. It was, in fact, this use of veiled language that brought accusations of heresy against the work, but Dee had already expounded its wisdom to Queen Elizabeth who, while keeping a certain distance from him, sympathetically encouraged him to pursue his studies.<sup>2</sup>

The Hieroglyphic Monad was, in fact, conceived some seven years earlier in 1557; after seven years of mental preparation and twelve days of writing, records Dee in his preface, the *Monas Hieroglyphica* was finally printed in 1564 at Antwerp, and contained a prefatory dedication to Emperor Maximilian II, the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor, to explain the purpose of the book. Dee was





*The title page to Monas Hieroglyphica, 1564. The diligent viewer will see the numbers 1 - 4 on one side of the right hand scroll and 1 and 4 on the other, placed at irregular intervals against certain letters; this is likely to be some kind of unexplained cipher.*

keen to show no debt to human authority, only to God and Reason.

*“And although we have not in any way relied here on any human authority, we shall in a friendly way disclose [our findings] to our followers whenever it was possible and convenient to elucidate by our light some notable saying or writing of a very ancient philosopher;... so, for instance, with regard to certain mysteries of Hermes, Ostanes, Pythagoras, Democritus and Anaxagoras, into which we descend into our hieroglyphic demonstrations, though not for the purpose of seeking in them confirmation of our own tenets.”<sup>4</sup>*

Dee makes it plain that the Hieroglyphic Monad can be used to illuminate the writings of the ancient philosophers. The text itself is presented as 24 Theorems which are embodied in one composite symbol. He approaches his subject from two positions: firstly by



## TRANSLATION OF THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE TITLE PAGE

*He who does not understand should either be silent or learn.*

*The Hieroglyphic Monad  
of John Dee, of London*

*to*

*Maximilian, by the grace of God  
the most wise King of the Romans,  
of Bohemia and of Hungary.*

[On the left and right scrolls flanking the egg shape:]

*Mercury becomes the parent and the King of all planets  
when made perfect by a stable pointed hook.*

*May God give thee of the dew of heaven and of the fat of the earth. Gen. 27.*

*Printed by Willem Silvius, Royal Typographer, Antwerp, 1564.<sup>3</sup>*

*Message to  
the reader.*

*Dedication.*

*Nature of the  
Hieroglyph.*

*Blessing.*



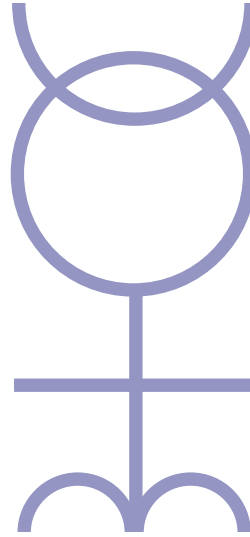
acquainting the reader with the geometry of the symbol and its mystical, mathematical and cabalistic meanings and secondly from the perspective of the privileged capability of man to unite his duality into a unified whole.<sup>5</sup>

## The Hieroglyph

An examination of the hieroglyph shows it to be essentially made up of the astrological and astronomical symbol of Mercury.<sup>6</sup> The primacy of Mercury is demonstrated on the title page where Dee calls it the 'parent and King of all planets'. The use of Mercury is consistent with Hermetic thought as Dee later states that Mercury embraces all mysteries in its form.

As you study the figure more closely other planetary symbols become evident, such as the Sun, Moon, Venus, and the astrological sign of Aries at the base. Taurus is situated in the upper half. Less obvious are the symbols of Jupiter and Saturn. A combination of the Sun and Aries produces Mars. Other features include the cross and the circle. On the title page the whole glyph is enclosed within an egg shaped boundary which suggests the idea of creation through birth and rebirth. Supporting this are two flanking pillars with the symbols of the sun and moon (male and female) set against them.

Dee manages to synthesize these forms into a coherent whole producing a composite symbol expressing cosmic and metaphysical laws, its prime function being as a revelatory figure leading to an intuitive understanding of divine reality.

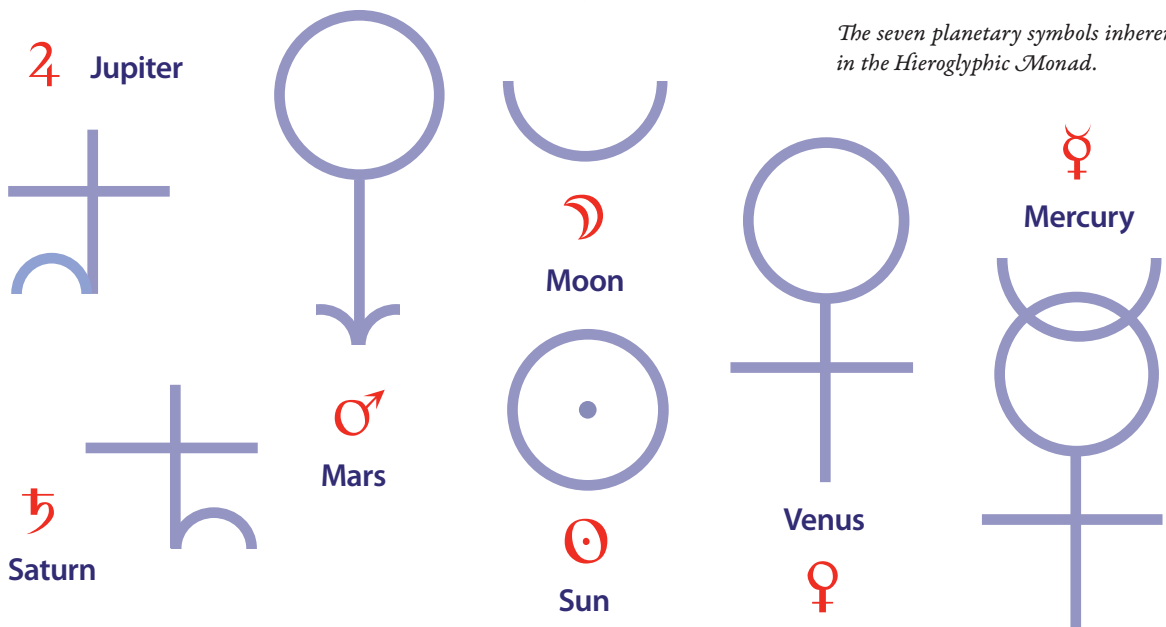


*The hieroglyph, while deceptively simple in appearance consisting of an arrangement of lines, curves and a circle, required John Dee to write of its complexities so that the observer might engage with it on a particular level. As one reads through his 24 Theorums his enthusiasm for his subject is clearly felt.*

## THE HIEROGLYPHIC MONAD

The 24 Theorems that one reads in the *Monas Hieroglyphica* provide a supporting exposition in which Dee opens by justifying its component parts in Theorem 1. This sets the key as it states that the simple representation of things is achieved by the *line* and *circle*, but a circle cannot manifest without a line and a line cannot come into existence without a point, a monad (Theorem 2).

This is an important concept that must be kept in mind when considering the Hieroglyphic Monad as a



*The seven planetary symbols inherent in the Hieroglyphic Monad.*

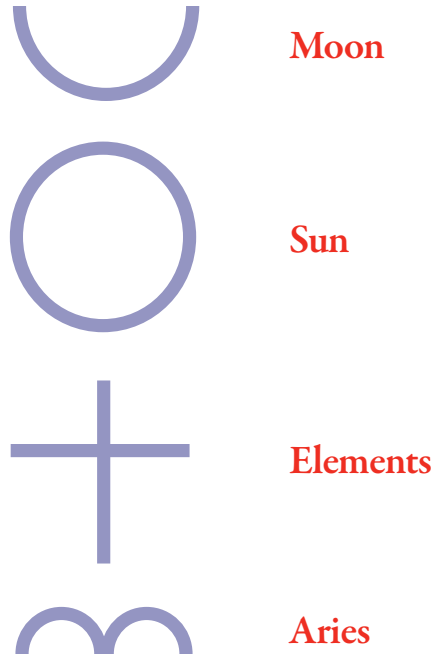


whole. Those familiar with the Cabala will notice this creative process at work in the Supernal triangle of *Kether*, *Chokmah* and *Binah* on the Cabalistic Tree of Life diagram. The monad represents the initial point of creation out of which the universe manifests itself (Kether), followed by its projection into a line (that is rectilinear movement - Chokmah), followed by the formation of the circle (circular movement - Binah).

From this can be seen the manifestation of the Law of Duality expressed in the line and the circle. We also see this concept conveyed in the figures of the Sun (circle) and Moon (half-circle) which are intertwined. The Sun and Moon are often used in alchemical emblems to represent the sexual polarities, male and female. This duality may also be found in the symbolism of the Masonic *square* and *compass*.

Looking at the cross supporting the circle, this is firstly of a *ternary* or threefold nature consisting as it does of two lines crossing at a central point. Dee relates these three parts to Body, Spirit and Soul. There is also a *quaternary* or fourfold concept here; having four lines, and if one adds the monadic point, the *quinary* Principle is produced symbolising Spirit over the four elements. Again, the *septenary* principle is obtained from the sum of the threefold and fourfold principles just outlined ( $3+4=7$ ), while the product of the three and four ( $3 \times 4=12$ ) generates the *twelvefold* principle.

Dee elaborates comprehensively on the quaternary, which he feels is one of the more important aspects of the glyph. For example, he says that if the cross is turned 45 degrees it represents the Roman numeral 'X' (10) with the upper part displaying a 'V' (5). Multiplying these together ( $5 \times 10$ ) gives 'L' (50). In this way the Latin word 'LVX' (light) is obtained. Within this word the mystery of the Risen Christ (Osiris) is revealed.



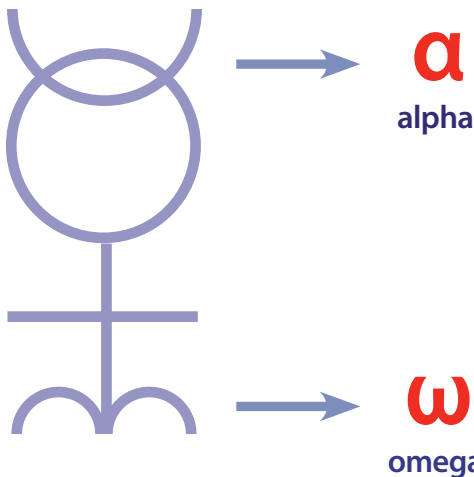
Allied to this last point is another feature of the hieroglyph. Referring to the diagram the Greek letter alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is seen in the upper half on its side, and the sign of Aries in the lower half can be seen as an inverted omega ( $\omega$ ).<sup>7</sup> Positioned between them is the cross, presenting an interesting relationship.

The sign of *Aries* subtended at the lowest point of the hieroglyph is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, it is representative of cardinal *Fire*, which is necessary to separate the natures of the Sun and Moon (Theorem 10). Secondly, it will be seen that its form embodies the development of Duality from the monad situated as it is at the extreme lower tip of the glyph. This process continues to project to the sign of *Taurus* in the upper half and ultimately on to the other signs.

The importance of placing this Fire sign within the Hieroglyphic Monad reflects the alchemical nature of this Element but it is also important from a Rosicrucian viewpoint, as Fire is an initiating and transforming agent. It purifies and transmutes the Soul.

Taking this all into account the evolving process of creation can be seen in its four main components as set out in Theorem 10:

- *Fire* (Aries - initialising)
- *Elements* (cross - earth)
- *Sun* (circle - male, positive)
- *Moon* (half-circle - female, negative)



The whole of the Hieroglyphic Monad is given further emphasis on its manifesting quality by the presence of the surrounding egg shape, the form of which was used in ancient cosmology.

## A Spiritual Alchemy

Why did John Dee produce this symbol and what did he intend its function to be? C H Josten has speculated that Dee:

*“...had reached a level of introspection from which it was possible for him to develop the thoughts of his spiritual ancestors, the ancient sages, precisely as they would have wished.”<sup>8</sup>*

Renaissance thought generally regarded the teachings of the classical scholars and philosophers to be superior to their own and thereby closer to the universal truth. Dee had no faith that spiritual advancement was possible in his own time for he believed that knowledge had become debased. He saw *man* and not metal as being the subject of alchemical transmutation. Those seeking the philosophers’ stone through the traditional practices of alchemy were in his eyes fraudsters. His was a spiritual alchemy in which the Hieroglyphic Monad was to pave the way for future aspirants. However, as Josten points out, Dee recognises that once the aspirant has been transmuted he is then ready to produce the philosophers’ stone in the external world.<sup>9</sup>

Dee’s preoccupation with numbers can be seen throughout his analysis of the hieroglyph reflecting his knowledge of Pythagorean principles. He was a mathematician as well as a Hermetic philosopher and as such had studied Billingsly’s translation of Euclid’s *Elements*, making some corrections and annotations. He drew up a *Mathematicall Praeface* for the 1570 edition in which he postulated mathematics as a philosophical science. Dee believed that through the study of mathematics and in particular geometry one would be brought closer to the nature of the manifested universe and thereby closer to God. He was able to produce by virtue of his intellect and intuition a symbolic figure that embodied these principles, that by meditation and contemplation upon would transform one’s consciousness and have the power to effect the spiritual transmutation of the individual.

## The Hieroglyph after Dee

The earliest record of reference to it following the printing of *Monas Hieroglyphica* in 1564 was by Bongus in his

*Numerorum Mysterae*, 1585, which was reprinted in 1591. Bruno’s *de Triplici Minimi* published in the same year and Zetzner’s *Theatrum Chemicum*, 1613 (reprinted 1659) also made reference to it. Jacob Boehme made use of it too in “The Clavis” or “Key,” 1647, analysing it in a similar way to Dee. Steeb, in his *Coelum sephiroticum*, 1679, amalgamates the hieroglyph with Cabalistic geometry to represent a scheme of the universe.<sup>10</sup> There were several more publications that adopted the hieroglyph for their own use including George Welling’s *Opus Cabbalisticum*, 1719, where there appears a large adaptation of the Monad in his illustration of the universe.

The best-known association, however, is with the second and third Rosicrucian Manifestos (*Confessio Fraternitatis*, 1615, and *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz*, 1616, later translated as “The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz”). Frances Yates in her *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 1972, was the first academic to propose John Dee’s relationship to the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. The *Confessio* is prefaced by a discourse entitled *Consideratio Brevis* (“Brief Consideration”) by one Philip a Gabella. It is not clear whom this writer is and the name could be a pseudonym referring to ‘Cabala’.<sup>11</sup>

Yates goes on to review the influence that the *Monas Hieroglyphica* has on this text quoting as it does from the first thirteen Theorems while interspersing with other material. The discourse ends with a prayer in the same expressive style as Dee followed by a preface to the *Confessio* that begins immediately after it. Yates sums this up when she says:

*“The Dee-inspired Consideratio Brevis, and its prayer, seems absolutely assimilated to the Rosicrucian manifesto, as an integral part of it, as though explaining that the ‘more secret philosophy’ behind the Rosicrucian movement was the philosophy of John Dee, as expounded in his Monas Hieroglyphica.”<sup>12</sup>*

Other authorities do not agree entirely with Yates’ theory here. Rafal T Prinke sees the Dee connection as subordinate to that of the Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius. Prinke states that the other material in *Consideratio Brevis* is based on Sendivogius’ *De Lapide Philosophorum Tractatus duodecim*, 1604, (“Twelve Treatises on the Philosopher’s Stone”).<sup>13</sup>

Just as significant is the appearance of the hieroglyph in the “Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz”. The invitation to the ‘Royal Wedding’ that Christian Rosenkreutz receives bears the Hieroglyphic Monad in the margin. As there are seven component parts to the symbol (crescent, circle, point, vertical bar, horizontal



bar, left crescent and right crescent) this reinforces the sevenfold structure of this allegory.<sup>14</sup>

### Afterword

John Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad can truly be called a mystical symbol, for it captures the essence of the Hermetic philosophy that, while for centuries had lain dormant except to the initiated until the advent of Marcilio Ficino's translation of the Hermetica in 1463, was now being presented to those outside of the initiatic tradition. This was only possible because of the continuing advances of the printing press and the number of books being produced. Some today outside of esoteric circles may frown on his use of astrological and astronomical correspondences but he was a man of his time. He could only convey truth and knowledge as he realised it in the language of the Renaissance. His presentation of the *Monas Hieroglyphica* was in keeping with the manner of the age.

There are many aspects of this subject that have not been covered in this article. It was not the intention that it should be an in-depth analysis of this subject or of Dee's thought processes. Many writers, academic and otherwise, have dealt with this enduring symbol comprehensively, some in a rather cynical fashion and many sympathetic to what John Dee was trying to achieve. It has hopefully served as an introduction to a topic that the reader and modern Rosicrucians particularly will find immensely interesting and thought provoking.

### Endnotes

1. There are many spellings applied to this word. I have adopted the period spelling, i.e. the Christianised version, for this article.
2. <http://galileo.rice.edu/Catalog/NewFiles/dee.html>.
3. From C H Josten, "A Translation of John Dee's Monas Hieroglyphica with an Introduction and Annotations," in *Ambix* XII 1964.
4. Ibid. p.201.
5. György E Szőnyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, SUNY, 2004, p.162.
6. Gareth Knight, "Dr. John Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad," in *The Hermetic Journal* 1979, Vol. 3, pp.25-28.
7. Calder Thesis, "Numbers: Logistical, Formal and Applied," Chapter VI Part 6. (<http://www.johndee.org/calder/pdf/Calder6.pdf>).
8. Josten, op.cit. p.100.
9. ibid.
10. Calder Thesis, Note 39.
11. Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, Routledge 1998 edition, p.46
12. ibid. p.47.
13. Rafal T. Prinke, "Michael Sendivogius and Christian Rosenkreutz," in *The Hermetic Journal* 1990, pp.72-98.
14. Adam McLean, *A Commentary on the Chymical Wedding*, Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks 1984, p. 80.



"Nature is a temple in which living columns sometimes emit confused words. Man approaches it through forests of symbols, which observe him with familiar glances."

*Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) French poet and essayist*



**Rosicrucian Activities  
in West Africa  
Edo/Delta Conclave  
Feb 2014  
Benin City, Nigeria**



Above (left to right)  
GC Dr Odjoh, GC Dr Nwajei,  
Grand Administrator Kenneth Idiodi,  
GC Prof John Idiodi.



Above: Cross section of some Light Bearers, Junior Order and Members at the Conclave.



Above: Courtesy visit with His Majesty the Oba of Benin Kingdom, a Grand Patron of the Order, in his Palace.



Grand Administrator Kenneth Idiodi and his spouse Bridget with Officers at the opening ceremony.



# THALES LODGE

Grand Councillor Dr. Nwajei accompanied by Regional Monitor Malaka and other officers inspecting the new Temple Building under construction at the premises of Divine Chapter, Agbor, Delta State.



Grand Councillor Wahwua and Officers inspecting Thales Lodge premises.



Thales Lodge Library



THALES LODGE  
Group photo with members.



Only that dawn breaks  
to which we are awake.

-- Henry David Thoreau