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Tel: 08030-956805; 08070-679044

Email: enquiry@amorc.org.ng

Web: www.amorc.org.ng

DIRECTOR
Kenneth Idiodi

Design and Layout
Paul Goodall

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Cover spread

Zebra Grazing under Baobab Tree



UNIVERSAL LOVE



by Christian Bernard
Imperator of AMORC

NO ONE KNOWS many times the word 'love' has been thought, written or spoken about. But regardless of languages or eras, it is probably one of the words more widely used than any other. Why is this so? Simply because love alone sums up the reason for the existence of humanity and the goal towards which it evolves. Indeed, no matter what traditions and religions we consider, love is the virtue that all Messiahs and prophets have preached to their disciples and to humanity as a whole.

In this respect, the most famous phrase is assuredly the one that the Master Jesus spoke during one of his many sermons: "*Love one another.*" But he is certainly not the only one to have spoken thus. Zoroaster, Akhnaton, Moses, Buddha, Lao-tzu, Mohammed, Gandhi and generally speaking all teachers who have devoted themselves to the guidance of their brethren and sisters, have based their teachings upon this advice. According to modern dictionaries, love is defined as the "*...inclination*

to want the good of another besides oneself." Although this definition is incomplete, it gives a fair idea of the general meaning we must give to this word; for every person is not only a creation of Universal Love but also, and this is perhaps most important, a vehicle for that love.

But, what is Universal Love? To answer this question, we must first understand that the manner in which humanity conceives love is most often only a very pale reflection of what it is in the Absolute. On the human plane, it is primarily considered as a mental or emotional state. In its Cosmic Reality, it is much more than that, for it is a force. We can even say that it is the Supreme Force which underlies all that has been, is and will be. Whether we are aware of it or not, love is indeed the source of all visible and invisible creation, for it is love which is the motivating power of Universal Evolution. I would like to quote what a Master of the Rosicrucian Tradition wrote on that subject in one of his manuscripts:



Without Love, the Most Holy Trinity would be reduced to an un-manifested duality, for Light and Life can illuminate and animate the Spiritual Kingdom without ever taking shape in the material world of form. But Cosmic Necessity willed that Evolution function in the material as well as in the spiritual, the first, after all, being only an emanation of the second. For Evolution has its own requirements which the ordinary mortal cannot comprehend. Therefore, accept to believe that matter is as divine as the immaterial in its nature, and that the immaterial, such as you conceive it, can only evolve in contact with matter.

But, as you know, matter owes its existence to the power of attraction which occurs between the molecules composing it, and this force of attraction is that of Universal Love at work. Since the beginning of things, no energy has possessed a power of attraction as great as Love, for it is this power which gave the impulse to the Word, and the perpetual attraction which occurs between Creation and its Creator lies within it. Man is the most beautiful example of this attraction, for he is the most inclined to live the state of love. Therefore, learn how to love Light and Life and, along with them, all beings of Creation.

As can be seen from this quotation, no one can deny that the material world is governed by the law of attraction which operates between its particles. In this respect, love in its physical and chemical application corresponds to the law of duality. This explains why subatomic particles always seek their opposite polarity to give birth to the atom, which is considered by Rosicrucians to be the smallest unit of matter.

On a separate level, the atoms themselves group together by affinity to form molecules.

Let us take a simple example. We know that hydrogen atoms are subjected to a natural impulsion which incites them to fuse or more exactly, to unite with oxygen atoms to form the element water. In fact, all manifestations of nature conform to the law of attraction which perpetually operates between

opposite polarities and affinities. In the realm of physics, these opposite polarities are generally called 'positive' and 'negative.' In chemistry, they are known as 'active' and 'passive' principles; or, in some cases, as 'penetrating' and 'absorbent' agents. In the vegetable and animal kingdoms, they correspond to the 'male' and 'female' aspects of reproduction.

Material Manifestation of Universal Love

Regardless of the terminology, which in the final analysis is only a matter of convention, the fact remains that all material bodies, whether living or nonliving, unite through the working of a natural law to which the scientific name of attraction has been given. But what is attraction? Is it not precisely the material manifestation of Universal Love? Moreover, you will note that scientists are speaking more and more about 'electronic love' to designate the force which is the basis of the cohesion found in all stable material substances. Of course, some researchers insist that this love inherent in matter is not conscious, specifying that subatomic particles unite as the result of an unconscious and purely mechanical impulse. But without wanting to become involved in a dispute, how and with what right can they make such a declaration?

For centuries, the world of matter has been looked upon as an inert world. Today, a minority of scientists are beginning to talk about the memory of certain chemical compounds; I am thinking particularly of water. But if we concede that some forms of matter possess a certain kind of memory, we must admit that they are also endowed with a form of consciousness, for from a mystical and physiological point of view, memory is an attribute of consciousness. In fact, as Rosicrucian Tradition has always stated, no void exists

between so-called inert matter and the living world. Everything, from the tiniest grain of sand to the remotest star, is imbued with the universal flux of Cosmic

Consciousness. This is why matter gives birth to life when material and spiritual conditions are met.

In his book entitled *Transition From Matter to Life*, Emmy Guittès has made this point perfectly clear. Furthermore Francis Bacon, Emperor of the Order of the Rose-Croix (Rose Cross) in the 17th Century, emphasised this truth in his essay entitled "*Cupid, or An Atom.*" Indeed, he states:

On the human plane, Love is primarily considered as a mental or emotional state. In its Cosmic Reality, it is much more than that, for it is a force.



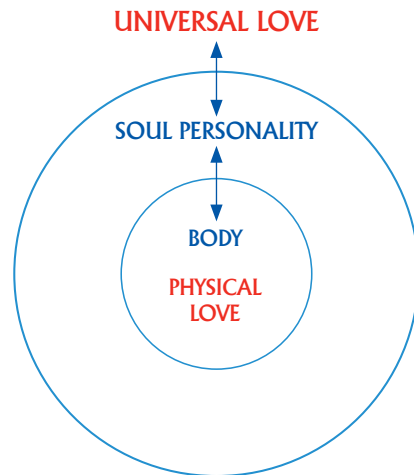
This fable [love] points at, and enters, the cradle of nature. Love seems to be the appetite or incentive of primitive matter, or, to speak more distinctly, the natural motion or moving principle of the original corpuscles, or atoms, this being the most ancient and only power that made and wrought all things out of matter.

Thus, matter itself is the theatre of the law of love, for it is this law, I repeat, which makes all manifestations of the created world possible, these manifestations having no other purpose than to contribute to the evolution of Cosmic Consciousness upon Earth. In this respect, matter and consciousness in no way constitute two opposite realms. In the Absolute, both are the complementary phases of Universal Life, for without the support of matter, consciousness could not find the impulse needed for its own evolution. On the other hand, without the specific activity of consciousness, matter would have no reason for being.

As stated in the ancient writings, in the beginning, matter and consciousness were as one in the Divine Mind, and it is only because evolution cannot escape the law of duality that this oneness, through the utterance of the Divine Word, divided itself into two complementary energies which we have named matter and consciousness. But I am convinced that when Cosmic Consciousness reaches the summum bonum of its evolution, matter and consciousness will fuse once again into a same energy centre. The material world as we know it will no longer exist, for it will have been spiritualised, with the meaning that mystics attribute to that word. Jean Charon has made this point perfectly clear in his book entitled *Spirit, That Unknown*, when he states:

At the end of the contraction period of the universe, there will be no matter left, at least in the shape we now consider this matter, that is, in the shape of a more or less important agglomerate of nuclear particles.... Electrons will use their spiritual properties which underlie thought, knowledge, love and action, with the intent to ever increase their "negentropy" to become more aware of the universe and better specify the ultimate goal it wishes to embrace.

Indeed, Life, such as it manifests on Earth, is none other than the result of a love story, which through time and space, has incited the union of matter with



Humans are constantly subjected to two forms of love: the one inherent in the particles which compose their body; and the other which strengthens the virtues of their soul. There is a continuous magnetic attraction between the realms of the material and the Absolute, matter and consciousness, indicated by the arrows.

consciousness. Humans are an example of this union, for they are body and soul. This explains why they are constantly subjected to two forms of love: the one inherent in the particles which compose their body; and the other which strengthens the virtues of their soul. This duality of love is responsible for the greatness of the human species, for it gives humanity the power to love the material world and to feel the attraction of spiritual beauty. In this respect, we must never forget that our earthly environment is the mirror which reflects Cosmic Harmony. People cannot experience Illumination if they deny the material universe, for they must learn how to control and to use that universe so as to reflect their understanding of the Divine.

Harmonise with Universal Love

Therefore before seeking to harmonise ourselves with Universal Love, we must begin to raise ourselves to that level of love which we can and must demonstrate towards our Earth and all creatures that live upon it. While we are on the subject, I feel that it is important to emphasise that as long as the majority of people persist in considering themselves as being entities apart from the other kingdoms of nature, all of humanity will remain thwarted in its evolution and will not cross the threshold of the collective initiation, which must definitively mark the transition into the Aquarian Age.

Most fortunately, consciences are reacting increasingly against those forms of aggression which compromise the future of our planet. Just take the case of animals. You will agree with me that there



have never been so many activities undertaken for the preservation of the animal species. Furthermore, to mention a very current topic, the number of people who oppose vivisection is ever increasing, which brings me much joy. This has come about because the collective unconscious feels the need for putting an end to this disrespect for life, knowing perfectly well that such a condition is necessary in order to prevent the death of a whole civilisation. Many years ago, Sri Aurobindo said:

The suffering that all men experience as conflicts, wars, epidemics and incurable illnesses is mostly the karmic consequence of all the suffering they have inflicted for centuries upon their lesser brothers, that is to say, animals and even plants.

Personally, I am convinced that he was essentially right and the day that humanity comes to respect all kingdoms of nature, its collective consciousness will become cleansed and in turn, this purification will bring about a physical and mental regeneration to each human being.

Daily life shows that people have not yet succeeded in loving one another as they should. Most often, their way of loving is purely intellectual or is limited to showing affection only towards a small number of individuals that, most often, does not go beyond the family or the circle consisting of a few friends. It is true that we must first

Daily life shows that people have not yet succeeded in loving one another as they should.

do good around us and express the best in us. However, that is not enough, for the field of action offered to humanity is ever-expanding. This is due to the fact that the destiny of the world depends more and more upon the ability of each nation to integrate itself



into the social, political and economic life of other nations. Therefore, we must devote more interest to the universal problems concerning the general well-being of the human collectivity. This can only be accomplished if we each learn to love others, regardless of what they are as individuals.

It must be kept in mind however that it is impossible to love everyone for at least two reasons: First, we are not perfect and should not behave as if we were; second, our daily behaviour is guided by certain affinities which motivate us to give the best of ourselves, whether within our family context or our professional framework. Therefore, at our present stage of evolution, it is wrong to pretend to love all beings equally and to do for them all as we would like them to do for us. Even supposing that we had the inner strength to do so, we could not manifest it through deeds, as we are obviously subjected to material contingencies which do not permit it.

Love Must Be Deep Within Us

Although we are not yet perfect enough to love every human being with the same intensity, we nevertheless have two duties with regard to Universal Love. The first is to love ourselves, for whoever does not love himself cannot love others. Indeed, love being a vibration, it is impossible to communicate it to others if we do not possess it deep within ourselves.

To love ourselves, we must accept ourselves as we are, with all the physical and intellectual characteristics which make up our personality. Just being ourselves, we can further evolve and contribute to the happiness of others. At this level, it matters little whether we are plain looking or beautiful, highly educated or not, prominent or anonymous; for it is the inner beauty, the intelligence of the heart, and the feeling of dutiful accomplishment which have always made the greatness of a human being.

So our first duty is to love our own self and thereby succeed in loving others. Of course, that does not mean we must live for self alone and attend to our own happiness first. Such a course would make an egoistical being out of each of us, which is in complete

The number of people who oppose vivisection is increasing, because the collective unconscious feels the need for putting an end to this disrespect for life, knowing perfectly well that such a condition is necessary in order to prevent the death of a whole civilisation.



One of the traits that we need to cultivate is that of tolerance toward our fellow humans; it is imperative that we hate no-one.

contradiction to the goal which, as mystics, we must pursue. This simply means that we must master that which may sometimes inhibit us and prevent us from giving the best we have to offer.

Our second duty is to cultivate tolerance for, although it is a fact that we cannot love everybody, it is imperative to hate no one. If all people on this planet were content to be neutral towards people they consider their enemies, there would be no more wars. Therefore to love is, above all, not to hate and to entertain no malicious thoughts towards anyone. As it stands today, the world is still a world of differences, but such differences cannot be lessened by combating them with hatred. It is exactly for this reason that all revolutions created by humanity with the goal of destroying ideas by force have failed and wallowed in blood. Likewise, we cannot use violence to repress the natural and legitimate evolution which of necessity occurs within the collective consciousness of developing nations.

The Goal :To Express Universal Love

These few remarks lead me to consider a special matter. As I have just explained, it is true that the long-term goal of any human being is to express Universal Love in his daily behaviour. It is also true that we do not fight ideas by using the destructive power of hatred. This being so, at our stage of evolution it is not desirable to seek to be loved by everyone, for that would only be possible if we yielded to those thoughts, words, or deeds which are opposed to our integrity or to that of the ideal we are pursuing. In other words, I truly believe that anyone who strives to please everybody is of necessity a hypocrite. Indeed, hypocrisy is one of the most destructive human frailties, for it is always motivated by selfishness or weakness

In this respect, although it is true that the Master Jesus commanded that we love one another, he also added that whoever strives to have only friends lies to himself and moves away from the Kingdom of Heaven. Consequently, we should follow the path of Good and



refuse to compromise with the agents of evil, for we cannot serve the Light by encouraging the spread of darkness in any realm whatsoever.

Therefore, our duty is to oppose all attitudes which, under often deceitful appearances, jeopardise the true values of life.

Our duty is to oppose all attitudes which, under often deceitful appearances, jeopardise the true values of life.

In this regard, it is the love of truth which must encourage us to reject falsehood; it is the love of knowledge which must impel us to fight ignorance; and it is the love of virtue which must give us the strength to fight vice. From this point of view, love, in its noblest expression, has absolutely nothing to do with sentimentality, for the latter is just a form of weakness which often favours the interest of the individual over that of the collectivity.

But we cannot deny that we live in a world of strife and that the evolution of humanity depends upon the outcome of this strife. Consequently, it is important that all those who are aware of it muster up their courage and wage a merciless war against every form that evil may take upon our earth. Therefore, our love must work in two directions: listening to the angel that the God of our Hearts has placed within every human being, and silencing the demon that the 'Devil' would like to put in its stead.

Commandments of Love

To end, I would like to share with you the conclusions I have reached in trying to establish the commandments of love as they should be demonstrated in our daily life and at this point in our evolution. If we want to be servants of Universal Love:



- *Let us learn to love ourselves just as we are, though being careful not to make ourselves exclusively the centre of our concerns.*
- *Let us choose neutrality if the day should come that we have to choose between neutrality and hatred, for it is better not to love than to hate.*
- *Let us not seek to be loved by everyone, for whoever strives to please the majority lies to himself and feeds upon hypocrisy.*
- *Let us respect the freedom of others, but oppose all who use it to enslave the bodies and minds of others.*
- *Let us respect all forms of life, whether they be plant or animal, since Life is an expression of Universal Love.*
- *Let tolerance guide our thoughts, words and deeds, but never be used as a pretext to condone a weakness which would go against our ideals.*
- *Let us impart to others only what they are capable of understanding, for if our disclosures are not guarded, our brethren can become formidable enemies.*
- *Let us strive daily to do for others that which we would like them to do for us, and let us accept that they do for us what we have not known how to do for them.*
- *Let us be sincere and loyal in friendship, and never forget a kindness done to us.*

May the God of our Hearts help us to apply each of these commandments and, at the time of our transition, may we ascend towards the Cosmic with the absolute assurance that we have loved to the extent of our understanding of the Law of Love.



SELF REVIEW

by Bill Wilson



WHEN WE RETIRE at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while.





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 POWER OF CONVICTION

WHEN A person is described as having conviction we envision a person with strength of character and having the will to endure against all odds. This quality which provides the power to prevail against intimidating challenges confers an aura of invincibility upon people who have it. The ability to stand firmly on a principle or course of action sometimes gives an impression of being in possession of a mysterious spiritual power that offers the assurance that the eventual outcome of whatever is being faced will be favourable.

Not many people are capable of demonstrating conviction when required, especially when at the risk of personal harm. However, the potential for this exists in every normal human-being. The natural psychological tendency to seek gain and avoid loss makes us seek for reliable information that will assist us. If the knowledge we acquire proves to be dependable, it becomes a conviction.

The inherent tendency to strive for well-being is an expression of the survival instinct which the life force implants in all living things. There are situations though which seem to run counter to this principle, such as when people carry out actions that are unnecessarily life-

threatening. For example, on numerous occasions people have risked their lives running into burning buildings, almost completely covered in terrifying flames, just in order to save some personal property.

A closer look will however reveal that the survival instinct was still at work. For them, the agony in the thought of losing valuable property outweighed the risk of physical injury from fire. Our decisions are based on what we believe we stand to gain or lose from an action. Once our mind is made up, we act firmly even when what we believe may actually be wrong. On the other hand if we are uncertain our actions will be weak.

The Problems Of Uncertainty

Uncertainty is one of the most common problems of human existence. And when we become uncertain of the benefits of our activities, we are easily tempted to abandon them. Lack of patience or an inordinate desire for instant results can lead to a state of uncertainty whenever expectations are not met. The need for consistent application over a period of time in order to yield results is the natural order of things in Man and Nature. This seems



to have been disregarded by the contemporary world, evidenced by the increasing desire for immediate results. Unfortunately, this is now taking its toll on the society with people easily opting out of any process that requires a length of time to mature and yield results.

The institution of marriage has suffered severely from this, with divorce rates between married couples going up to ever increasing levels in countries all over the world. The country with the highest divorce rate is Belgium which reached a staggering 71% in 2016 and records up to 32,000 files for divorce each year. The leader of the worldwide Catholic Church, Pope Francis, once questioned the validity of marriages for couples who do not appreciate marital commitment. The Vatican press office, published a transcript of the Pope's remarks which read:

A part of our sacramental marriages are null because they [the spouses] say: 'Yes, for my whole life', but they do not know what they are saying because they have a different culture.

If marriage is understood as each partner giving the self as a gift to the other, then the sacrament in it, which means spiritual grace, will manifest according to the law of karma. For as you give, so too do you receive. Once both partners have this conviction, they become better positioned to overcome the challenges of marriage.

Couples entering into a life of marriage do not really know what to expect, it is like stepping into the unknown and many have developed cold feet and even cancelled marriage plans on the wedding day. Others take marriage like an exciting adventure which they embark on with the conviction that all will be well. When we attempt something we have never tried before, the tendency to feel anxious is natural. The conviction that we will do well despite our inexperience goes a long way to facilitating success in activities previously untried.

Attempting The Untried

Opportunities to try out new inventions which may improve our lives are usually received with excitement without any thought of the risks taken by the inventors who have invested their time and money with no assurance of success other than their own conviction. In many cases, inventors have had to overcome several additional daunting challenges in the effort to bring their ideas into practical reality.

Thomas Edison, a renowned American inventor and businessman, was responsible for many great inventions including the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and the long-lasting, practical electric light bulb. However, there were many stumbling-blocks on the path to his eventual success as a scientific inventor. As a child, after only three months of formal education, his instructor dismissed him as having too short an attention span for academics. So, his mother resorted to teaching him at home and assured him of his ability to succeed.

She also directed him to the local library where he read widely and awoke in his heart the fervour for scientific research. The depth of his understanding of the sciences gave him the conviction that he could invent useful devices if only he had the funds. However, not only was he hampered by the lack of funds but also by a severe deficiency in his hearing. He was eighty per cent deaf in his right ear and completely deaf in the other. But this did not deter him from pursuing his dreams.

At age 16, from selling papers and candy at a railway station, a chance encounter offered him the training as a telegraph operator and a job. This was at a time when telegraphy was the fastest growing industry in communication. The exposure and income he received in his new job provided him with the means to begin more extensive scientific research and experimentation. In another twist of fate he lost his job as a telegraph operator when one of his experiments caused an accident in the workplace.

Although he was no longer earning an income, which made him practically penurious, the extra time on his hands afforded him the opportunity to go into full time scientific development. He eventually invented some commercially successful products and forged ahead to establish a business corporation that set up the first known standard research and development (R&D) facility.

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realise how close they were to success when they gave up."

Thomas Edison (1847-1931)



Thomas Edison was faced with a lack of formal education, poverty, physical limitations, and other adverse conditions and yet contributed significantly to the technological advancement of the world. The almost super-human feats in his accomplishments were to a large extent due to a deep conviction that he could achieve what he set out to do. His life was a demonstration of the power of conviction.

False Beliefs

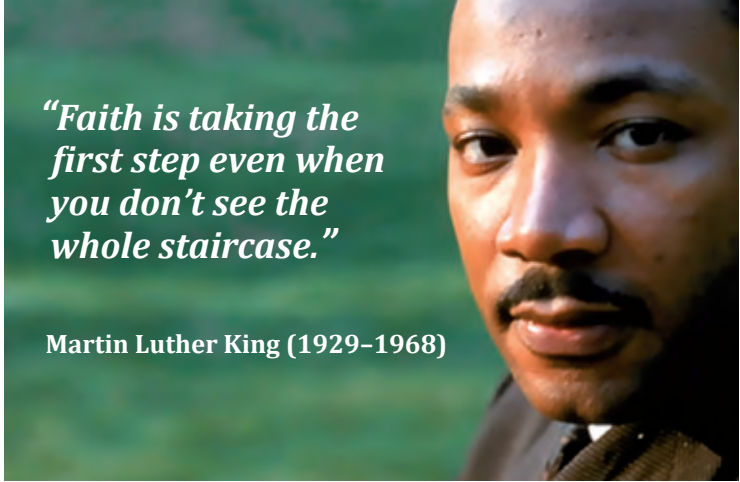
The Word web dictionary defines *conviction* quite aptly as an unshakable belief in something without need for proof or evidence. For a belief to be unshakeable it must be a belief in the truth, because only the truth could be unshakeable. However, many people have very strong beliefs in things that cannot hold up to serious scrutiny and or which many evidences of their falseness can be found. Actions that are based on false beliefs are unsustainable. Like an accidental fire which burns out as soon as the combustible materials are used up, so too do such actions dissipate for lack of substantiation of their merit.

The false belief of the infamous Adolf Hitler, that the Germanic race was superior to all other races, motivated him to attempt to dominate the world, which led to the Second World War. Before the end of his failed bid to conquer Europe, Adolf Hitler and his followers must have realised the falseness in their belief. And as a result, the desire to continue waging war must have been lost even before they were defeated. Hitler's belief in the superiority of his race was not a conviction since it was an untrue belief unable to withstand challenge.

A Vision Into The Future

A conviction could in a way be described as a form of discernment. And because it is based on truth, it will be validated by the experiences of life even in the face of opposition. Martin Luther King Jr., a renowned leader in the African American Civil Rights Movement of the sixties, had a strong conviction that equality of rights would one day be achieved in his country even if it he did live to witness it. In his last speech delivered a day before his assassination, his words were more like a prophecy when he said:

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And



“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

Martin Luther King (1929–1968)

He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land!

Martin Luther King overcame many obstacles in his bid to establish true racial equality in his country. He constantly received threats to his life. Burning crosses on his lawn as warning threats from supremacists were commonplace and his home was once firebombed. He was violently attacked several times even from some African-Americans who opposed him. Once, he was stabbed by an African-American woman while he was signing his new book.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) launched several unwarranted investigations against him and he was arrested over 20 times. However, the challenges and threats to his life were inconsequential as deterrents to his cause because he was virtually living in what he had envisioned in his mind's eye; a virtual reality in which equal rights and justice had been achieved for all. It had a tangible and true existence to his awakened senses.

Creating Our Reality

The human mind has the ability to create psychic reality through thought concentration. And these mental creations impact other minds and influence the world. If strong enough, and in harmony with natural and spiritual laws, psychic creations can come into perfect materialization at the physical level. It is easy to understand how a conviction could in the same manner produce corresponding manifestations.

People who hold convictions in the manner described do actually employ the higher faculties of the



human mind which is why they seem to be in possession of a mysterious spiritual power. Such people usually have sharp probing minds and a calming sense of self-assurance that comes with the acquisition of higher knowledge. However, the power of conviction is not reserved for only exceptional people. It is available to anyone who makes the effort to acquire it through the practice of contemplation, concentration, and meditation.

Developing Conviction

By contemplating on our experiences, observations, and thoughts we will begin to develop a deeper understanding of the nature of our being and the universe around us. In the course of our contemplation, questions will arise for which no immediate answer may be found. Such questions should be concentrated upon with the intent of gaining answers from Cosmic Intelligence. If we are completely relaxed when in such concentration, we will begin to approach the threshold of meditation.

Physical relaxation can be facilitated by slow deep breathing in the form of complete inhalations and exhalations at a rhythm that is natural and comfortable. By focusing on a particular question, the conscious mind is made to refrain from its usual activity of generating a ceaseless train of thoughts. With the quieting down of our outer mind we will begin to perceive impressions from our innermost mind which is really an extension of the Universal Mind. We can then let go of our concentration and become receptive as we slip into a meditative state for a few moments.

All of this can be done in 10 minutes or less. Answers to our queries will come to us at the appropriate time which may be immediately or later, in some hours, days, or weeks. These answers should still be contemplated upon and tested against life's experiences. As we observe proofs of their validity their assimilation into our mental framework as convictions will be facilitated.

Progressing On The Path

Clearly it can be seen from the foregoing that a reasonable amount of personal effort is required in developing our convictions and this may explain why men and women of conviction are not commonplace. However, human progress

is shaped by such people. And in the words of Martin Luther King Jr:

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable [...] Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.

Eventually everyone will have to tread this path because the unfolding of the life's mysteries is delineated by the formation of convictions. Every conviction we arrive at is a rung on a symbolic ladder with which we climb out of the darkness of ignorance, superstition and insecurity into the light of knowledge, truth, and cosmic illumination. Thus, we can measure our level of advancement along the Path of Light by how many of our beliefs have been replaced by convictions. In this regard, re-examining your beliefs periodically is worthwhile practice.

Many people will discover that there is nothing that they can think of that they are absolutely sure of. Some will find that there a few beliefs that they have used as the

bedrock foundation of their lives which close scrutiny may show to be flawed in some ways. We should not be afraid to discard or amend faulty beliefs. With careful reflection, and in our innermost Sanctum, each of us will be able to

find at least one thing we can rely on. And it must be a truth, for only the truth is reliable. This one truth becomes the starting point of higher development, the first rung on the ladder of light, a reference point and cornerstone conviction for future convictions.

By contemplating on our experiences, observations and thoughts we will begin to develop a deeper understanding of the nature of our being and the universe around us.





My Friend Win

by *Madeleine Cabuche*

FOR MANY years, I was privileged to have a very dear friend, let us call her ‘Win’, possessed of many virtues. Her almost regal appearance and often stern expression seemed at variance with the mischief and laughter sparkling in her blue eyes and the two dimples which came and went each side of her mouth. For me, she provided a mother/grandmother relationship I had never previously known.

Serious by nature she was, nevertheless, a generator of laughter and joy. Whenever we got together, which was alas only once a year, laughter cascaded around us and we seemed to find some object of fun wherever we turned. Many were the late nights I would find her standing, serious and intent on some task or other when spontaneously something would trigger us both and we would collapse, speechless with laughter, across each other’s shoulders. One thing would lead to another and an hour might

pass before we finally subsided and she whispered a soft “goodnight dear” as she made her way down the long corridor.

Of course, there had to be something about her which was not quite perfect and it was, from my point of view, a big something. She was an adamant atheist. Her only divinities were Lenin and Marx. Despite her great love of art, literature, scenery, animals and all things beautiful, nothing could break through her absolute conviction that it all led to nothing and death was a final and total extinction. She would have been

outraged had I tried to intervene in her stoical acceptance of the recent death of her favourite son. In her eighties, along with anything from Jane Austen to Salman

Rushdie, she still found time to read diligently through immense tomes on early socialism. She was I think, both saddened and irritated by my lack of fervour for such

“Somehow, that morning, politics took a back seat and I found myself, for the first time, able to expound something of what I believed.”

matters. She knew of course that I had beliefs for which she could only feel a certain contempt, and steadfastly avoided any discussion of them until, miraculously one morning, there came a breakthrough.

For her, mealtimes were a social occasion, meant as much for talking as for eating and so we often talked during breakfast time, sitting one each end of the long table. Somehow, that morning, politics took a back seat and I found myself, for the first time, able to expound something of what I believed. This had to be done with a delicate precision and avoidance of any word holding the slightest religious connotation. Perhaps the fact that at long last I found this beloved person willing to listen inspired me to find the exact words, the exact analogies which she would be able to accept. Diagrams were drawn with index finger on the chequered tablecloth while, her head a little to one side, sky-blue eyes deeply concentrated, her formidable brain absorbing what was said, she let me talk on uninterrupted and without comment.

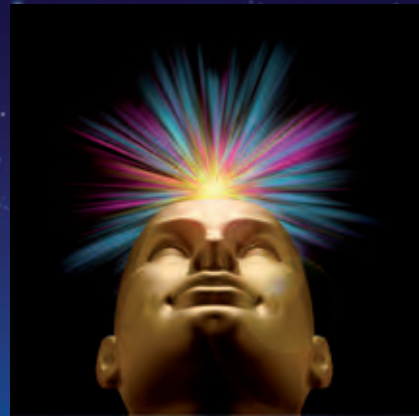
Although it would be too much to say she believed any of it, she obviously thought it worthy of her consideration, so much so that I felt unusually light and happy when I eventually went off on my much-delayed shopping errands. Just three months later, she took her own exit, bravely and in her own way, as she had always declared she would when she felt it to be necessary. For two reasons: firstly, she had developed an incurable illness, which she had kept secret from her family, having stated emphatically, many times, that she would never be a burden to anyone; secondly, the approach of her ninetieth birthday filled her with horror. She so detested 'old ladies'.

When I learned what had happened, my grief was tempered by gratitude that we had had the chance for that talk because I knew that, even at that late stage, the knowledge she had absorbed might help her to adjust to her new state of consciousness. Just four days later, I had proof of that. Whilst spending the afternoon with a sick friend, I experienced a slow influx of peace in the hitherto troubled atmosphere, then a strong impression of Win, over in one corner of the room; just her head and shoulders, surrounded by a faint silvery light, looking down on us, radiating the love and compassion which were her trademark and telling me not to fret, that all was well as she had now discovered the truth of what I had told her.

This happened around mid-afternoon and her presence lingered on throughout the evening. I remarked to my friend that I had sensed such a good, peaceful atmosphere around that day. She said that she had felt it too, adding, after a while: "Your friend Win was here, wasn't she?"

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

by Carl Sagan



"Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality. When we recognise our place in an immensity of light-years and in the passage of ages, when we grasp the intricacy, beauty, and subtlety of life, then that soaring feeling, that sense of elation and humility combined, is surely spiritual. So are our emotions in the presence of great art or music or literature, or acts of exemplary selfless courage such as those of Mohandas Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. The notion that science and spirituality are somehow mutually exclusive does a disservice to both."

The Creative Word in

Ancient Egypt

by Paul Goodall



TO THE ordinary person the use of hieroglyphs in ancient Egypt to record their language is, without doubt, one of the most commonly known historical facts. Their seeming ubiquity in the world of television, film and even advertising today belies their real nature, however. The word 'hieroglyph' comes from two Greek words meaning 'sacred carving', which is a translation of the Egyptian name for their own writing system, 'divine speech', and this is certainly a reflection of the status in which hieroglyphs was held by them.

Names are Things

To help us approach this subject let us consider the two medieval philosophical views held that describe the nature of words and their relationship to physical existence or reality. The first is that of the Realist which propounds that words are intimately connected to the things which they express. For the Realist the vocalised concept of a word captures the very essence of its meaning in a non-physical but spiritual reality. This concept is expressed in the name given to that particular thing. On the opposite side of the argument are the Nominalists. They believe

that words are merely just that, with no value other than as a conveniently descriptive function without any intrinsic reference to things.

The Realist point of view is derived from Plato where he discusses in his *Cratylus* (c. 360 BCE), in the form of a dialogue, the metaphysical status of words and their relationship to what we might call spiritual essences. What we glean from this is that the phonetic components of words such as vowels, consonants and mutes express universal principles or energies that are manifested in the natural and physical world, the inference being that the whole of nature is sound materialised. Accordingly, writes Plato from the mouth of Socrates in the dialogue, there exists a direct relationship between the sounds we utter, in whatever language we speak, to that which our utterances are referring. To maintain the integrity of his argument Plato has Socrates explain the basic etymological principles¹ to reconcile the differences in the sound of human languages.

The concept of the sacredness of language is implied throughout but particularly in the section where Socrates and Hermogenes work through cosmological names such as the hierarchy of intelligent beings, the soul and body, names of deities, astronomical entities, the elements and the principles of temporal regularity.² We know that the Greeks looked back to the Egyptians with respect and scholars still debate on the extent to which early Greece (c. 700 BCE) evolved under the influence of ancient



Ptah, holding a sceptre that is comprised of the Djed, or emblem of stability (which he is also standing in front of); the Ankh, (at the bottom) or emblem of life; and the Wasr, or emblem of power at the top that resembles a jackel's head..

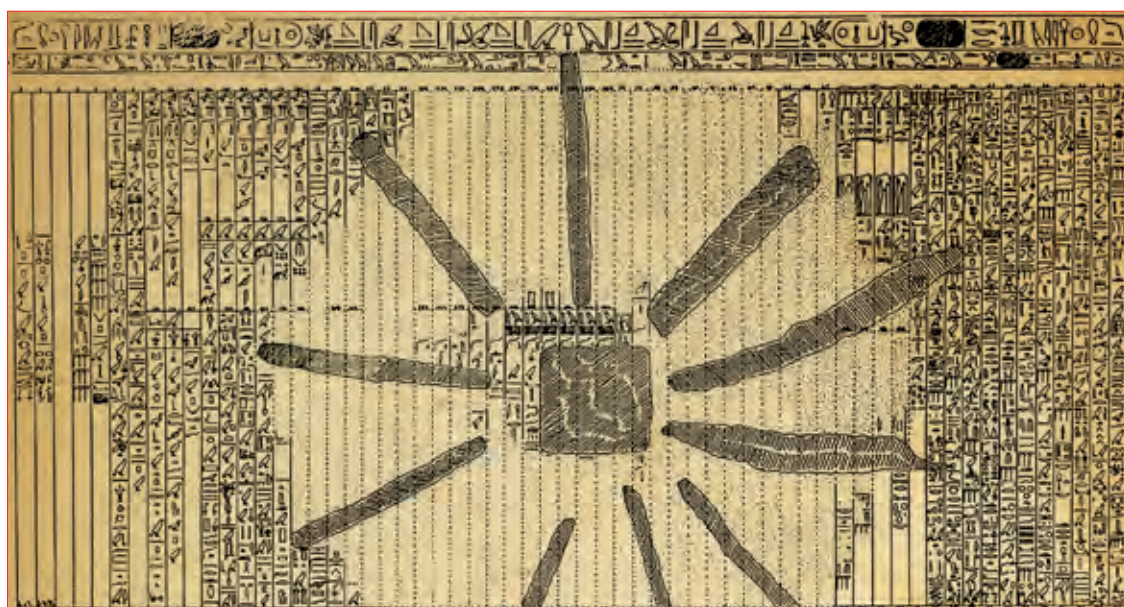
Egyptian culture to adopt their own unique civilisation. However, Plato is debating on the same level as the Egyptian viewpoint concerning the origin and nature of language, and the Egyptians certainly

regarded the spoken word as having a primordial ancestry.

The Memphite Theology

There were essentially four Egyptian creation myths centred on the cities of Hermopolis, Heliopolis, Memphis and Thebes to give their Greek names. Each of these was associated with a particular deity or deities. Although they may represent competing ideas they are really different aspects of the same process. The one we are interested in is that of Memphis in the delta region of Lower Egypt. The principle god of the Memphite theology was Ptah who was considered as the creative representative of craftsmen and often found sculpted or depicted with the skull cap in the manner that skilled workers wore in the tomb reliefs of the Old Kingdom.

Hieroglyphic text on the Shabaka Stone; after Professor James Breasted (1865-1935) the eminent archaeologist.

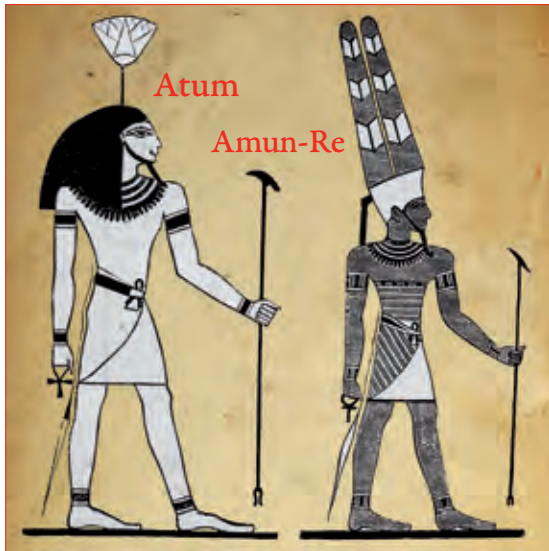


He was particularly revered as the patron of metal workers, sculptors and architects and perhaps this explains why this deity was often worshipped as the creator of the physical world.

Text from the so called 'Shabaka Stone' in the British Museum, however, demonstrates his association with the aspect of creation by thought and speech. Although a 25th Dynasty object the text inscribed on it infers that the original was written on papyrus or leather.³ A section of it refers to the notion of the creative word and the role of Ptah:

"Evolution into the image of Atum occurred through the heart and occurred through the tongue [of the creator]... but much older is Ptah, who enlivened all the gods as well as their life forces through this [the creator's] heart and through this tongue..."

The god Atum mentioned is the principle deity of the Heliopolitan step-by-step account of creation which is primarily concerned with the physical development of this deity into the forces and elements of the world. The heart that we read of here was regarded as the seat of human thought. Ptah, in this instance, although appearing to be identified with the creator's thought (heart) and utterance (tongue), is not the creator but the intermediary. We read that it is through the heart and tongue rather than by the heart and tongue that Ptah is involved in the evolution of Atum. Ptah then was seen as the divine force that assisted the creator's initial concept of the world to come into being. As the patron of artisans Ptah can be compared to



Atum wearing a lotus headdress whose duality of existence was expressed in the form of Amun-Ra.

the initial concept in the mind of the craftsman before the physical form is created out of raw materials.

Interestingly, in its presentation of Ptah as an intermediary between the creator and the physical world, the Memphite theology prefigures the role and place of the Christian Logos as expounded in the opening verse of the Gospel of John: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God... He was in the beginning with God. Through him all things came into being..”*

Just to clarify further, in the Heliopolitan and Memphite theology Atum and Ptah are actually part of the created world where Atum is the material source of creation and Ptah is the agent through which the world can be evolved.⁴ By the 18th Dynasty the Egyptians had begun to see that all these divine forces represented by the gods could be understood as aspects of a single creator they named Amun which means ‘hidden’. This god was set apart from nature although his presence was felt in the milieu of everyday life. This duality of existence was expressed in the form of Amun-Re, not seen but felt, hidden but manifest. The sun in Egyptian was known as ‘Re’ or ‘Ra’ and was the culmination of creation in the Heliopolitan system hence the combination of Amun and Ra.

The Creative Word

The Memphite theology credits Ptah as being involved with the creation of everything and significantly with the creation of ‘every divine speech’. In Egyptian this is termed *mdw-ntr* (‘medew-netcher’) meaning ‘speech of the god’ and is the same phrase used to describe hieroglyphic

writing. This is an apt way to define what hieroglyphs are in terms of what has been discussed so far; on the one hand they portray images of objects in the material world and on the other they are representations of ideas and turning that around we can say that creation itself is mirrored in the hieroglyphs.

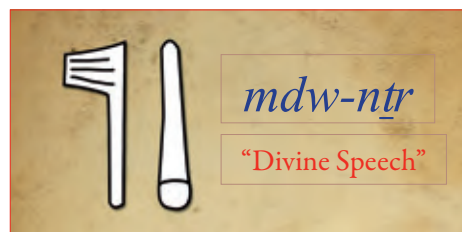
There were a number of ways the Egyptians expressed this creative aspect of the spoken word in their language; for example, the term “effective” or ‘effectiveness’, *ʒh* or *ʒhw* (‘akh’ or ‘akhew’) an abstract noun, was often associated with intellectual activity or speech and was a word that had connections to the concept of ‘magic’, *hkʒ* (‘heka’). Magic was associated with creative or ‘effective’ speech so the expressions ‘recite by magic’ and ‘speak with effectiveness’ are two ways of saying the same thing.

One person in all of Egypt had the responsibility of being effective and that was the Pharaoh. As an intermediary between mankind and the gods his was a sacred and important function for the maintenance and harmony of the kingdom and in this he was closely associated with two components of magic which the Egyptians called ‘perception’, *siʒ* (‘see-ah’) and ‘annunciation’, *hw* (‘hew’). Perception was the magical ability to see what was needed to be done and annunciation was the power to make that something happen through speech.⁵ We can see this creative aspect of perception and annunciation paralleled in the Genesis account of creation where we read:

- *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light [annunciation].*
- *God saw the light, that it was good... [perception].⁶*

Sacred Words; Sacred Sounds

Although the creative word was most closely associated with Ptah of Memphis, it was another deity we are perhaps more familiar with as Rosicrucians, that is identified by the Egyptians with the power of speech and the origin of writing; that deity was ‘Thoth, known by several names, one of which is ‘Lord of Writing’. He also has the magical ability to bring things into existence through the power of the spoken word and for this reason is readily aligned



with the hieroglyphs in their role as representatives of the physical and spiritual world.

The reverence with which the hieroglyphs were held is reflected in the following words of Amenhotep, son of Hapu who lived during the 18th Dynasty (c. 1550–1352 BCE): “I was educated in the god’s book and I looked on the tools of *Thoth* [hieroglyphic script]; I was prepared in their secrets...” From the same period Amenemhet Surer writes that he was ‘master of the secrets of the divine words.’⁷ Training in the mastery of hieroglyphs in the House of Life was long and arduous and was itself a work of ‘effectiveness’ that eventually allowed the scribe, but more especially the magician, to become ‘true of voice’, *mꜣꜥ hrw*, (‘maa kherew’). This mastery did not just mean being able to write or hew out the sacred carvings but to become intimately involved with their iconography, their inner language and potency of sound; to be initiated into the mystery of the relationship between sound and form.

Such was the ancient Egyptian perception of the intrinsic power of hieroglyphs to draw things into existence that the mutilation of them was a method employed to render them harmless. It may be difficult for the modern mind to understand this ancient attitude to writing and words. In our own time powerful oratory has an effect on the emotions and can bring about the most wonderful and evil of human actions but this is still not the same as the regard for which the ancients had toward the power of the written and spoken word. Indeed, the very act of having in one’s possession a particular writing or manuscript was enough to have the power to put into motion that which the words articulated.



Thoth, the god of letters, and recorder of the court of Osiris, judge of the dead; has an ibis head, sometimes surmounted with a crescent moon and feather; depicted here holding a pen which he is dipping into the ink-well at the top of the palate.

Whenever we look at pages of hieroglyphs in a book, or even better have the good fortune to actually stand in front of several columns of them at a temple in Egypt, we should reflect on the nature of the work it took to create them. These writings, carved

or painted, were meant to stand for as much of eternity as they were able to; bringing into permanent reality the thoughts and human emotions engendered within them. From the initial decipherment of them in the early 19th century and the subsequent development in their translation up to the modern day we know nearly as much about Egypt, its history, people and social order as we can. But more importantly we have a greater understanding of its collective spirituality and the relationship of that smaller group of people at the top of the societal pyramid crowned by the overlooking presence of the Pharaoh, who was the living intermediary between the people and the gods, those who represented everything in the universe and which were embodied within the hieroglyphs that were carved upon the statues and monuments.

Endnotes

1. Plato, *Cratylus*, section 390e – 427d.
2. Ibid. section 397c – 410e. see also <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-cratylus/#Ety390427>
3. Allen, James P, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 2004, p. 172.
4. Ibid. p. 181.
5. Ibid. pp. 156-157.
6. Ibid. p. 157.
7. Quoted in Naydler, Jeremy, *Temple of the Cosmos*, 1996, pp. 142-143.

The equipment of the scribe is synthesised in the hieroglyph that expressed the act of writing and also symbolised the scribe himself as well as the object of his technique, the written document. Pictured also are two examples of the scribe’s palette each with ink wells at the top.



LEARN TO GIVE



by Ike Nwajei

WHenever we talk of giving the tendency is to think that what is to be given is of a tangible, material nature. To a large extent this view is correct but it is not always so. Let us consider some illustrations of this.

A few years ago a certain young lady travelled to a neighbouring city to undergo a job interview. On reaching there she discovered that she was expected to come along with a medical certificate of fitness. She did not know anybody in that city and the amount of money she had was running low. Naturally she became worried and decided to look for a hospital to obtain the document. She reasoned that this was the best option available to her but was concerned about the frustratingly lengthy bureaucratic procedures typical of hospitals in that city.

When she got to a hospital, it was about 3:00 pm and the tempo of activity in the hospital was gradually winding down. By this time the young lady was hungry and feeling a little confused. She felt an impulse to approach a certain nurse whom she had noticed sitting and reading at her duty post. Not knowing what to expect she summed up the courage to recount her dilemma. The nurse listened to her problem patiently. And after offering her a few snacks and a soft drink to satisfy her hunger,

she arranged for the young lady to obtain the medical certificate, with the nurse personally paying the various fees that the hospital required.

The interview was spread over a couple of days and since it was late to travel back to her city, the young lady was accommodated by the nurse overnight. She completed her interview the following day and fortunately for her she was successful. The nurse as a matter of fact paid the transport fare for her journey back to her city. This story was narrated to me by this young lady at the funeral of this kind nurse who passed through transition many years later. The remarkable act of kindness of the nurse certainly left an indelible impression on the young lady.

Sharing With Fellow Man

My second story concerns a young man who was at a mechanic workshop to repair his vehicle. While he was waiting in the workshop, a commercial driver walked in with a troubled expression on his face. Impulsively he asked the driver what his problem was and was informed by the driver that his vehicle had broken down on the highway and needed to be fixed for him to continue a long-distance journey with his passengers. The repair required the replacement of an expensive component



which he could not immediately afford.

Moved by a feeling of compassion, the young man ascertained the estimated amount of money required, then asked him to wait while he went into a nearby grocery shop and borrowed the money from the owner who was a friend of his. He handed the money to the driver who was overwhelmed with gratitude, and wished him well.

After the driver departed from the workshop, a mechanic in the workshop who had observed what transpired faulted him for incurring a debt on account of someone he did not know, stressing that he would never do such a thing. The young man quietly reassured him that the grocery shop owner who knew him gave the money very willingly knowing it was being used for good and would be repaid. As for assisting the driver, he summed it up by saying that “*Allah gives to man to share with his fellow man.*”

A Good Doctor

The final illustration is about an elderly lady and her surgeon. The surgeon had performed a breast cancer operation on her and was the Chief Medical Director of his hospital. On a fateful day on his way to the airport for a scheduled flight he realised that he had forgotten to take an important file from his office and had to return to the hospital. He picked up the file and was on his way out of the hospital when the elderly lady showed up for an unscheduled consultation visit.

He calmly explained to her that he had a flight to catch and that one of his younger colleagues would attend to her. However, she insisted that she wanted him to attend to her. The surgeon, moved by sympathy, chose to attend to her, considering that she was a widow with a terminal illness, even though that meant he had to abort his journey. He led her to his consulting room, a decision he was very glad he took, for he was able to address a delicate problem that could have easily led to her transition. To the elderly lady he was not only a good doctor but also a kind human being.

The Privilege Of Giving

I decided to share these stories with you to illustrate the fact that what we give and the way and manner we do the giving are very important. The essence of giving was captured by Kahlil Gibran in the poem *The Prophet*. An excerpt from it reads;

Then said a rich man: “Speak to us of Giving.”
And he answered: “You give but little when you

give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. For what are your possessions but things you keep and guard for fear you may need them tomorrow?”

The world right now is battling with economic challenges and too many people are suffering in harsh conditions brought on by the economic difficulties. However, there is one thing we should not overlook and that is the blessings we enjoy in the form of life and consciousness. By having a deeper appreciation of what we have had and what we still enjoy our lives will be greatly enriched. Life is a gift and it offers us the privilege, opportunity and responsibility to give something back. It was Albert Einstein the German born American physicist who said: “*The value of a man resides in what he gives and not what he is capable of receiving.*”

A biblical quotation says: “*A generous man will prosper, he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*” (*Proverbs 11: 25–28*). And from the ancient Tibetan manuscript first published in book form in 1750 under the title *Unto Thee I Grant: The Economy of Life* we have: “*Happy is the man who has sown in his breast the seeds of benevolence, the produce thereof shall be charity and love.*” It is important to realise that your journey of generosity is an adventure measured not in miles, but in personal transformation and growth. Sometimes this transformation is smooth sailing, sometimes it takes us into uncharted waters, but always it is a course that deepens our faith and relationship with God.

Note that all happy people have discovered the secret of giving. We know that giving makes the world a better place and certainly you must have experienced the benefit of giving. Resolve henceforth to observe how your simple act of giving can improve your health, your relationships, your business, your happiness and more. Find and cultivate your own personal giving potential, choose the right times, causes and people to give.

The Indian spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda said:

It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world and thus become pure and perfect.

Endeavour to live by the Chinese philosophical saying which goes thus: “*He who obtains has a little, he who scatters has much.*” Always remember that the goal of all our actions on the mystical path is to render service to God, man and self and by so doing, we are gradually climbing the ladder of evolution and reintegration.



THE WORD WENT FORTH



A I O U

by Ralph M Lewis
(Imperator of AMORC
1939 – 1987)

DOWN through the centuries there has been a magical quality associated with words and utterances. They have been thought to have an inherent creativity. In fact, miracles have been attributed to the mere pronouncement of words. These notions are firmly fixed in cosmogony, philosophy, religion, and history. In our times they are an accepted belief and part of the practice of millions of people.

This conception of an efficacy of words and of human utterances can be traced to the dawn of history. It is most closely related to cosmogony, that is, to the theory of the creation of the universe and of all being. The ancient Egyptian city of Memphis was the site of a powerful priesthood serving the god Ptah. In remote ages Ptah was considered the patron god of artisans and craftsmen, and it was said that it was he who communicated the designs that craftsmen and designers of architectural structures created.

As the centuries passed, the priesthood contemplated this relationship of Ptah to craftsmen, and since Ptah

communicated ideas for design to craftsmen, they thought that perhaps he too was a creator. From this there eventually evolved the idea that the god Ptah was a master workman and the universe was his workshop. Subsequently, the priesthood declared Ptah to be a supreme being, and said that all things first began in the mind of Ptah. This was the first teleological theory in human history. In other words, it was the very first belief in a universal mind as a cause in itself.

But the priests went even further. They declared that it took Ptah's spoken word to materialise his thoughts and bring them into actual existence. One of these ancient priests relates in a poem how Ptah objectified his thoughts by means of the spoken word. He said:

"Ptah, the Great, is the mind and tongue of the Gods; it [the mind] is one that brings forth every successful issue. Ptah, from whom proceeded the power of the mind and of the tongue."





Marduk

The Power of Words

Cultures and civilisations quite remote from each other, expounded similar ideas regarding the creative power of the spoken word. The Sumerians considered a formally spoken word, such as a command, to be a definite, real thing. To them such words were thought to have special power if they were uttered by a priest or a deity. Words attributed by priests to the gods Enlil and Marduk were said to be true. This meant that they were in fact entities, vital things in themselves.

The Sumerian word *Mumu* meant ‘creative reason’, in other words, that which creates all things. Here again we see reason, or the mind, joined with the spoken word to denote power and creativity. The Babylonian priests said that the god Marduk was the creator of the world. Furthermore, he was identified with the word ‘Mumu’. In a Sumerian temple record of about 2850 BCE, this phrase appears: “*The word which he spoke shakes the heavens.*” Then, in another passage referring to the god, it is said: “*The word which on high shakes the heavens, the word which beneath causes the earth to tremble.*”

The Sumerians influenced other ancient peoples, particularly the Semites, and we find in Semitic writings the sentence: “*The word of Enlil rushes forth and the eye beholds it not.*” Then again, referring to the god Enlil, is this Semitic inscription: “*The utterance of your mouth is a beneficent Wind, the breath of life of the lands.*” As we compare sections of Hebrew theology with earlier writings, we find much similarity between them. There is an obvious syncretism, a borrowing. For example, a passage of an old psalm written after the Exodus is similar to early Babylonian theology. It reads: “*By the word of*

Yahweh were heavens created and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts.” And in the New Testament, John 1:1, there is this statement: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” We notice in this the monadical relationship of God and his Word. They are here a *monad*, one and the same reality.

The Kabala is another conception of the creation of the universe by the efficacy of voice. The *Sepher Yezirah*, one of the books of the Kabala, literally means ‘Book of Creation’. The first written record of the *Sepher Yezirah* is from about the 6th century CE (others would put it as early as the 3rd century CE). However, traditionally it dates back to antiquity. The word *Sepher* means ‘numerical emanation’. This means power emanating by numerals. Briefly, the book expounds that the attributes and qualities of deity are symbolised by the numerals 1 to 10. Some of these numerals are said to be male, others female. The first numeral, or 1, is said to be indivisible and incapable of multiplication. For example: $1 \times 1 = 1$, and $1 \div 1 = 1$. But the number 1 is said to have a reflection of itself which brings about the dyad, or the number 2.

From this emanation of numerals come air and the 22 letters of speech. In the various combinations of the 22 letters into pairs, all creation eventually came into existence. In the *Sepher Yezirah* it says: “*And from nothingness did he make something in all forms of speech and every created thing.*”

Logos

The early Greeks of the Milesian school of philosophy said: “*The cosmic substance is Reason, Wisdom and Harmony.*” This corresponds to the qualities attributed to the word *Mumu* by the much earlier Babylonians.



Ptah

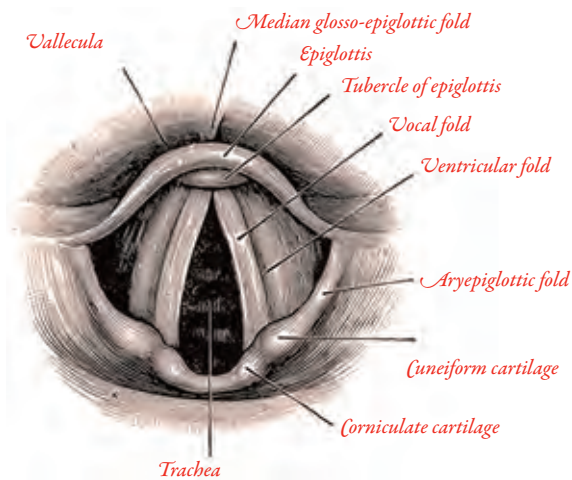


The Stoics said that God is law, working through the universe. They called this phenomenon *Logos*. They said the *Logos* is thought and mind expressed in action. *Logos* is the soul of the world manifesting in matter and in *Pneuma*, or breath.

We notice in this a similarity to the Egyptian teachings and recall the claims made for the God Ptah two thousand years earlier. He was said to have created the universe by transforming his thoughts into speech. The very name of God in Jewish philosophy was made a sacred and ineffable word, that is, not to be spoken. In all ancient cultures certain words were considered to have divine, creative power. The Greeks uttered certain words of purity before a divine service. In the New Testament, John 6:63, Jesus says: “*My words are Spirit and they are Life.*”

From the psychological and physiological points of view, speech is a transmission of power. It was the first means by which man could noticeably influence humans at a distance. He could impose the vibrations of his voice upon the air, which acted as a medium for it. Man’s voice, therefore, was not only action in itself, but it also caused other men to act. Speech is effective in language only in so far as it conveys an intelligence from one mind to another. At first though, speech invoked emotional and psychic responses, not intellectual ones, in other humans.

Language is derived from the imitation of common sounds which are heard. Men, for example, have imitated their own emotional interjections and utterances. They made into language sounds such as shouting, howling, stamping and tearing. Most important though is that speech must initially have evolved out of basic emotional cries; sounds that affected and were caused by basic human feelings, perhaps natural interjections such as *Oh*, *Ugh*, *Hmm* and *Sh*.



THE VOCAL CHORDS

Sounds of Emotion

In his work *Primitive Culture* (1871) the noted ethnologist E.P. Tyler cites some very interesting examples. A sudden pain that is not too severe causes a sucking in of the breath. This often causes the sound of *Ooh*. We also instinctively and emotionally react at times to blowing away something. In doing this, we expel the air, causing the sound of *Poosh*. To hiss is a ‘primitive’ emotional interjection. Anger will cause a violent expelling of air, causing a roaring sound. Surprise and astonishment cause the mouth to open and produce a short, quick inhalation of air. This produces the common sound of *Abh*. Emotional outbursts of enthusiasm by primitive people produced the loud sound of *Rah*. It denotes the responsive vitality of the person. Many languages incorporate these combinations such as our English word *Hurrah*.

We see therefore, that an emotional tone and vowel sound are connected. It has been said:

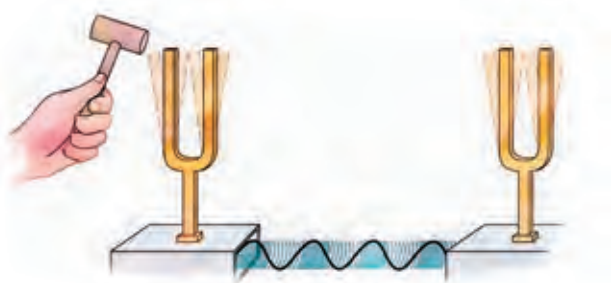
“An emotional tone may be defined as a vowel whose particular musical quality is that produced by the human vocal organs when adjusting to a particular state of feeling.”

Our feeling, our psychic and emotional responses therefore, cause us to emit sounds and words which express them. Obviously then, such emotional vowels produce similar emotional feelings in other humans. In fact, even dogs can react to a human cry of pain, even though no language is used. Consonants on the other hand, are not musical vibrations as vowels are. They are merely sounds which accompany vowels. In language though, we use consonants in connection with words.

How did speech develop in man? Articulate speech is a later function of man, according to the assumptions of anthropologists. They assume that man attained an erect position and the full use of his arms before he mastered articulate speech. In the cortex, the outer layer of the brain, the portion devoted to speech is a much later development than other functions. In fact, the speech portion in the brain does not appear until shortly after birth.

How are vowels formed? Seated in the larynx is a pair of vibratory membranes called the vocal chords. They are located at the upper end of the windpipe, and air passing through them cause the chords to flap or to vibrate. In the human voice the musical effect of these vibrating chords is enhanced by the mouth cavity. This cavity acts as a sounding board, and changing the shape of the mouth as we speak or sing, modifies the quality of the sound which is produced. We can imitate the larynx mechanically, thereby demonstrating its functions. First,





we stretch a thin piece of rubber over the open end of a tube and then we split this sheet of rubber into two halves. When we blow through the tube, the rubber flaps of the sheet vibrate. This vibration then, is similar to what the vocal chords do.

Sound Vibrations

We know the physical effect that sound vibrations can have on our environment. The sonic boom of jets is a common example. Objects which are in resonance, namely objects which have some integer multiple of each others' rate of vibration, will always vibrate in sympathy with each other. If we strike one of two tuning forks that are in resonance with each other, the other will immediately begin to vibrate as well. Dissonant vibration can often shatter or cause a change in the physical form of things. Fine glassware for example has on occasion been shattered simply by the intensity and pitch of a good soprano's voice.

The human organism is a vibrating entity with receptor organs and psychic centres associated with a few of those receptors and responding to certain specific vibrations. Such psychic centres are for example, the pituitary, pineal and thyroid glands. When stimulated by certain auditory, olfactory and other vibrations, their functions may be either accelerated or depressed. Particularly noticeable to early humans must have been the effect that certain combinations of sounds had upon them emotionally and psychically. Certain words were not mere collections of syllables with a tone accent; they were chanted speech. The rhythmic note and tone constituted the essential elements, and such words were considered voice magic because of their effect upon the feelings and thought of early humans. The vibrations of the voice suggested power, life and vitality.

This then, was the beginning of *chanting*. Indications of chanting can be traced to remote Babylonian tablets. Some of these tablets show words, ideographs, used as a chant. The vowels, A, E, I and U were placed at the beginning, middle and end of lines. It appears that this was done to indicate the tones in the chant. In the

philosophy of India are found *ragas*, that is, melodic phrases or melodies. Legend states that five of the ragas were first uttered by the god Siva, and the sixth raga by another deity. Each of the ragas consisted of several notes. In the *Upanishads*, part of the Vedic literature of India, the syllable *Aum* is a vocative symbol of the Supreme Spirit. It stands for the three primeval qualities. The letter 'A' is for Brahma, the Creator; the 'U' is for Vishnu, the Preserver, and 'M' for the God Siva, the Destroyer.

Men and women learned through experience that certain words, combinations of vowels, had either a beneficial or harmful effect upon those listening. Consequently, these words found their way into the sacred writings and literature of philosophical and religious orders. Some of these were just intonations of vowels without any specific thought related to them. From the different cosmogonies (i.e. theories of creation) has descended a great legend. It is said that at one time all the *vocal power* that had created the universe was contained within *one word*. That word was one of the greatest secrets of humanity. Legend relates that man betrayed his cosmic trust and subsequently fell from his high estate. In this way, the word became lost, and in various ways it has been sought ever since.

Many Tibetan and Buddhist chants are said to incorporate parts of this lost word. It is but another way in which humanity seeks to experience harmonious realisation of God and the Cosmic. Words, aside from any psychic effect, are also powerful as symbols of thought. Francis Bacon said:

"Men suppose their reason has command over their words; still it happens that words in return exercise authority on reason."

The vocative and written word can be dynamic. It is a force once released not easily controlled. Therefore, nothing should be more carefully selected than our words.



Aum is a vocative symbol of the Supreme Spirit.





Egypt as the Cradle of Mystery Schools

by Earle de Motte

QUITE A few scholars suspect or refute the claim of Egypt being the original home of the initiatory Mystery schools of the ancient Mediterranean lands. But there is considerable support for the position which accords the Egyptians primacy in the introduction and development of a Mystery tradition which is kept alive in the Mystery schools of our own day.

It is fortunate that we have an historical record of several visitors to Egypt from the Greek and Roman world from the 6th century BCE to the 3rd century CE, travellers who subsequently wrote down what they had seen and experienced about the ‘mysteries’ of Egypt. Among other things they related about the advanced state of civilisation along the Nile valley, they referred to the temples, tombs, pyramids and other structures associated with the mysteries of their religion, some even

participating in their rituals and being accepted as initiates to their special mysteries.

Those who witnessed very private ceremonies, or who were accepted as candidates for initiation, pledged themselves to silence, though they did provide us with some intimation of what occurred. What they did not reveal however, were the more arcane aspects of the initiatory process, preferring only to vouch for the existence of special knowledge of a secret nature among the priesthood of a culture that “...*was more ancient when Greek culture was young.*” Writer and lecturer Rosemary Clark says:

“By their admission the mystery tradition of their own cultures borrowed from, or literally copied their practices from Egypt.”¹



Diodorus, Apuleius and Herodotus

The Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus, travelled through various cities of Egypt and the 'fertile crescent' in the 1st century BCE, and in his later accounts he mentioned eleven notable visitors to the Nile. Let us look at the testimony of some of those on record.

The first of these writers, Apuleius, a Roman traveller and writer of the 2nd century CE, was famous for his novel, *The Golden Ass*, in which the central character, Lucius, narrated that he had undergone an initiation in Egypt. In the narrative he stated that he had been initiated into the mysteries of Isis and was bound by oath not to reveal in detail what took place. He did not however feel constrained to conceal the fact that he had spent 10 days in austere preparation, and was then led into a deep sanctuary where he spent the night. During the night he said he had approached the very gates of death and was permitted to return "through all the elements".²

The sublime moment occurred when he "...saw at the dead of night the sun [the symbol of Ra, the sun god] burst into the darkness." Osiris, the 'Lord of the Afterworld', became united with the sun, whose daily death and rebirth are another symbol of human destiny. The candidate, at this stage, identified himself with Osiris, then with Ra, and was borne through the elements and approached the gods above and the gods below.³ Lucius' successful initiation into the mysteries of Isis was followed a year later by his initiation into the mysteries of Osiris.⁴

Herodotus (5th century BCE), the 'father of history', wrote that Pythagoras may have developed his doctrine of reincarnation from his exposure to the Egyptian notion of *transmigration*, and recalled the following in his own travels through Egypt:

At Saïs (a city in the Nile Delta), is found the tomb of one whom I hesitate to name..., on a lake at night; the Egyptians give a representation of the suffering undergone by him; they call them Mysteries, and about them my lips maintain a religious silence.⁵

The tomb is that of Osiris; the events indicate the central position of Osiris' life, death and renewal in the instruction and experiences of candidates for the Mysteries. Diodorus also notes their secret nature when

The two Mysteries of Isis and Osiris, as they were popularised in later times, spread far and wide throughout the Roman Empire, as did the other Mediterranean Mysteries, with which they competed for the hearts and minds of the people who sought salvation in one cult or another

he complains about a contemporary tendency to profane the Mysteries:

In olden days, according to received tradition, the priest kept the manner of the death of Osiris a secret; but in later times, it came about through the indiscretion of some that that which had been hidden in silence among the few, was mooted about by the many.⁶

Descriptions of the Transformative Experience

With the passage of time and the decline of Egyptian civilisation resulting from Greek and Roman occupations, the gradual unveiling of some of the secrets gave our next commentator, the Roman philosopher Iamblichus, the freedom to say more about the initiatory process. He referred to the objects present, and the kind of magic used, in the sacred drama, and pointed to the fact that the enactments of the life of Osiris were all allegorical. It therefore required the seeker of special knowledge of having to find the mysterious meaning and awareness of divine things through ritual and symbol alone.⁷ Priests were able to shift their consciousness, he revealed, from this world to the other, and acquired their knowledge through contact with the gods.

Six centuries earlier, Plato [in his *Phaedrus*] partly 'lifted the veil' of the Mysteries even though he tried to limit disclosure of detail by concerning himself primarily with their impact on the initiate:





Part of the frontispiece from 'Bohn's Libraries 1902 edition of The Works of Apuleius: a portrait of Apuleius flanked by Pamphile changing into an owl and the reclining Golden Ass.

In consequence of this divine initiation (in secret chambers in Egypt) we became spectators of single and blessed visions, resident in a pure light, and were ourselves made immaculate and liberated from the surrounding garment which we call the body and to which we are bound like an oyster to its shell.

He even pointed to the aim of the Mysteries, namely, "...to lead people back to principles from which the race originally fell." The two Mysteries of Isis and Osiris, as they were popularised in later times, spread far and wide throughout the Roman Empire, as did the other Mediterranean Mysteries, with which they competed for the hearts and minds of the people who sought salvation in one cult or another.

In the year 31 CE, we have the Greek writer Heliodorus of Emesa talking of the peculiar nature of the Mysteries. He defined the arcane nature of the knowledge within the Egyptian Mysteries and, by implication, their exclusivity. He asserted that the stories of Isis and Osiris contained the secrets of nature and were not capable of being understood by the profane, but only by those prepared for instruction in private by subdued light.⁸

Plutarch's Revelations

Rivalling Apuleius' account of his experience of the Egyptian Mysteries is the presentation of the complete narrative of Osiris in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*

(Concerning Isis and Osiris). There is no comparable or fuller account of the myth of Osiris in Egyptian literature, presumably because the myth was so well known and widely celebrated at festivals that a written record was considered unnecessary. Plutarch compiled the story from fragments taken from diverse sources.

But what is of great moment to our present theme is that aside from the detailing of the mythological framework of the Osirian Mysteries, he mentions other significant details on the nature of these Mysteries. He writes about the soul of both the living and the dead receiving the same impression as it emerges from the physical body and travels in the invisible or shadow world. He believes that 'the powers' (*neteru*) [or Gods] should not be demeaned by treating the Mysteries as mere repetitions of grain cycles, and reveals our contact with the gods through thoughts and dreams as being of limited value when compared with the soul being released (by the Mysteries):

"...since the Mysteries will help us gaze with insatiable longing on the heavenly beauty which may not be spoken of by the lips of man."

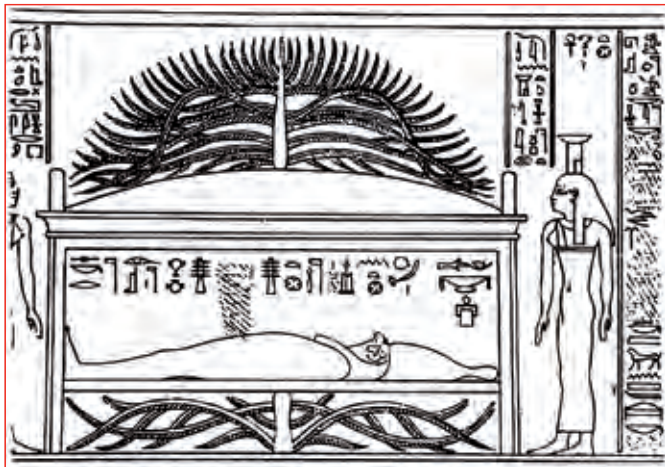
Additionally, Plutarch informs us of secret robing rooms in secluded parts of temples, which had wall inscriptions, implying the need for a feeling of separation from the mundane world, for quietness and obscurity. The presence of sacred images and symbolic language would also increase one's wonder at being in the presence of deity.

Reconstruction of the Testimony

From these partial revelations and the expressions of wonder at the Egyptian Mysteries by Greek and Roman visitors who heard of, and in some cases were permitted to participate in them, we have a less hazy impression of the character of the Mystery schools. It is sufficient to make summation even without reference to the subsequent study of Egyptian literature inscribed on walls and written on papyri, or a close study of the plans and layouts of various building structures in which initiations were conducted.

There are references to the preparation and discipline required of candidates for initiation, the time of the event, and the time spent on the process and the statements about the ability and higher knowledge of the hierophants who conducted the ritual. The core of the Initiation was the impact produced on the candidate of the enacted drama of the life of Osiris. It was intended to convey to the candidate the very nature of the human condition and its final destiny. The use of symbols and allegorical language





At the core of the initiation was the impact produced on the candidate of the enacted drama of the life of Osiris. Candidates would undergo a voluntary, simulated death to still their senses and suspend the functioning of their worldly ego.

Not all priests were entrusted with conducting the Initiation process, and that is what one would expect; for in any higher religion there is the clergy in general, and then others who are specifically appointed to perform certain rituals and institutional offices. The priestly caste had among them skilled initiates who could facilitate the process of enlightenment of a person such as a candidate for initiation.

Iamblichus, a Roman philosopher of the 3rd century CE, described the process in a reverse direction:

“...the priests, through sacerdotal theurgy, were able to ascend from a material state of consciousness to a realisation of the universal essences.”

One assumes that they could also use this knowledge and ability to cause this changed realisation in their neophytes seeking initiation into the Mysteries. The experience was the same. Call it what you like, magic, theurgy, psychiatric manipulation of one’s consciousness..., the foreign visitors who were accepted for initiation all agreed that the Egyptian hierophants were skilled in the art. And that makes us conclude that they knew the laws of cause and effect at the metaphysical level and were able to apply this knowledge in ‘miraculous’ ways.



Initiation as a Controlled Process

Whereas the nature of priestly power, subsumed under the term ‘magic’ is not known to

The priestly caste had among them skilled initiates who could facilitate the process of enlightenment of a person such as a candidate for initiation.

were the essential instruments for communicating meaning at a deeper level of understanding.

Candidates would undergo a voluntary, simulated death to still their senses and suspend the functioning of their worldly ego. This was the breakthrough point which resulted in their spiritual self undertaking a journey into another region, passing through all the elements and forces of the shadow world of the unconscious, observing or experiencing suffering on the way, and then returning to their body and to normal consciousness. Some of the experiences in the other world included moments of terror, seeing ‘blessed visions’, being bathed in light, and a feeling of liberation from the physical body and the attractions of the sensory world.

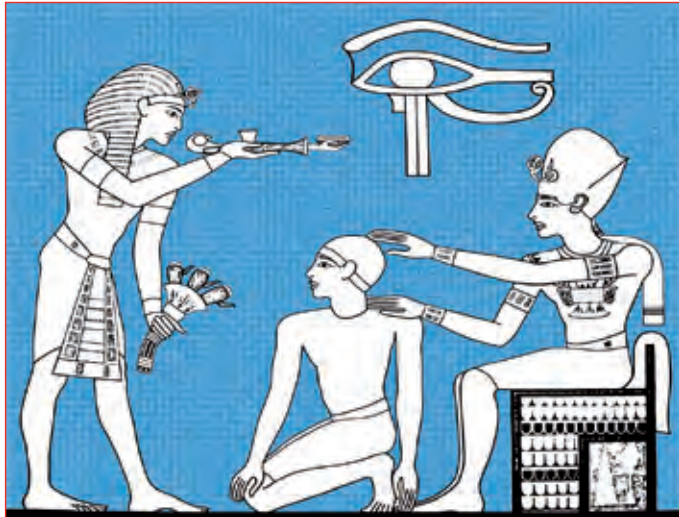
Priests as Initiatic Masters

Witnesses sometimes recalled the awe inspiring ‘magical’ power of a priest conducting initiations. Proclus, the 5th century Neoplatonist philosopher, in delving into the principles of Egyptian magic, touched on the ability of priests to cause candidates for initiation to alter their state of consciousness. The hierophants had obviously ‘been there’ and returned, and fully understood the resonance between the visible and the invisible world.

With such experience, they had developed their ability “to change the cause of action and focus divine virtues upon inferior natures.”⁹ Murray Hope, a writer with a background in parapsychology and ancient esoteric wisdom, credits the Egyptian hierophants (although conceding that the issue is debatable) with the ability to:

“...penetrate the consciousness behind the brain, in the manner of hypnosis, and reach down deep into the consciousness, at which point subtle vehicles are believed to be connected.”¹⁰





The modern mystic Paul Brunton (1898-1981) argues persuasively that the initiatory process and the resulting changes in consciousness were under the control of the priests.

where the secluded spots within the sacred building complexes were wherein the initiations took place, apart from the mention of names of festival sites, is not specified by classical writers. However, Ammianus Marcellinus, the Roman historian (330-400 CE) spoke in general about their existence: there were:

...subterranean passages and winding retreats which, it is said, men skilful in the ancient mysteries, by means of which they divined the coming of the Flood, constructed in different places lest the memory of their sacred ceremonies should be lost.¹²

us precisely, as it was only reported by witnesses and supported by the highly suggestive illustrations of the funerary texts, the modern mystic Paul Brunton (1898-1981) argues persuasively that the initiatory process and the resulting changes in consciousness were under the control of the priests.

The principle which lay at the back of the experience of initiation was that a person's normal worldly nature:

...could be temporarily paralysed by a profound lethargic sleep, and their usually unnoticed psychic or spiritual nature awakened only by a process known to the hierophant. A person who was artificially plunged into such a coma would seem to an observer as one really physically dead; in fact, in the symbolic language of the mystics, they would be said to have 'descended into the tomb', or been 'buried in the tomb'.

Thus deprived of their bodily vitality, and with the force of their passions and desires temporarily lulled, the candidate would truly be dead to all earthly things, while their consciousness, their soul-body, would temporarily separate itself from the flesh.¹¹ Only in such a state would they see the spirit world and visions of gods and other entities; and travelling through infinite space and time, they would know their true self. Eventually they would return to their normal world, transformed and spiritually reborn, to carry forth within them the secrets of both worlds.

Secret Chambers of Initiation

The physical surroundings played no small part in creating the atmosphere for consciousness alteration. Exactly

To add to sparse information like this, we owe much to subsequent discoveries of modern archaeologists and the interpretations and nature of the structures uncovered. The initiations took place in subterranean or secluded chambers, halls and corridors, on the walls of which were inscribed messages in sacred writing and associated vignettes. These formed a supportive backdrop to strengthen the dramatic effect of the mythic narrative and priestly 'magic'.

René Adolphe (R.A.) Schwaller de Lubicz, the renowned author of works in the sacred geometry of Egyptian temples, maintains that the temple itself provided esoteric teachings through its implicit architectural and spatial relationships,¹³ whilst Rosemary Clark, in her seminal work on esoteric Egypt, points to the existence of underground crypts and roof chapels in the temples of Dendera, Edfu and Abydos, "...all being places for commemorating the transitions and transformations of human life."¹⁴ She identifies specific religious ceremonies called *shetat*, translated as 'mysteries' or 'secret rites'. These were practised by select members of the temple, engaging in ritual dramas, elaborate ceremonies and rites employing spells of protection and transformation for the soul entering the region of the gods (*the neteru*).

These ritual dramas are inscribed in the sarcophagus, the Horus Mystery Play, and the chamber of the Pyramid of Unas. Reserved ceremonies having a bearing on the initiation of kings are in evidence at Karnak and Luxor. At Edfu there is a written injunction imposed on witnesses against any revelation of the Mysteries. Much earlier in the



20th century, the esotericist Lewis Spence observed that in the Ptolemaic temples of Edfu, Dendera and Philae,

...the very chambers in which the Mysteries were enacted have been found (and that these) were placed in parts of the temple to which entrance was difficult or forbidden to the public.¹⁵

He cites the example of Philae

...where there was a little temple of Osiris, composed of two chambers in the roof of the edifice, yet the rites are inscribed in hieroglyphs at the architrave of the pronaos.¹⁶

The classic example of the Mystery School layout of course is to be found in the Osireion at Abydos,¹⁷ which was designed as a subterranean hall and incorporates an underground water-filled chamber, ten columns that supported the roof, and other structural details, which “...expressed the process of transformation through death and rebirth as rendered in the myth of Osiris.”¹⁸ Lucie Lamy, commenting on the dimension and proportions of the temple, found the use of the square roots of 5 and 2, the numbers of rebirth and regeneration.¹⁹ Myth and architecture were integrated to literally stage the descent into the underworld of the candidates for initiation and their prospective identification with Osiris.

We may then conclude, in the first place that these reports of contemporary witnesses, subsequent research up to the present, and first hand inspection of initiatory sites, have given us insights into the very depths of the Mystery Tradition of Ancient Egypt. And secondly, being older than the classical civilisations of the Mediterranean, and being in contact with them, Egypt must have been the source of much of the thought and practice of the Mystery Schools of Greece, Rome and the Middle East.



Endnotes

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16. Ibid.
17. This refers to the still largely intact Osireion located at the back of the temple of Seti I, and not the much older Osireion located about a kilometre away consisting only of scant remains and the outlines of wall foundations in the desert sands.
18. Ozanic, op. cit., p. 66.
19. Lamy, ibid.

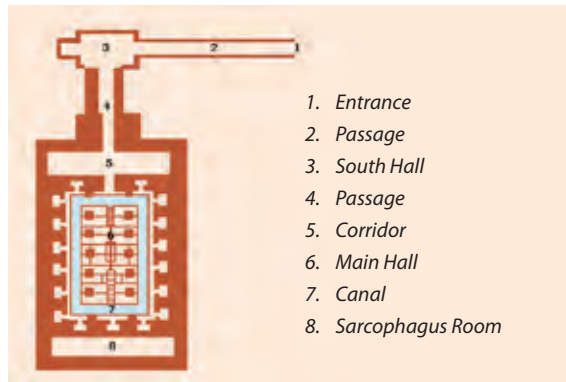


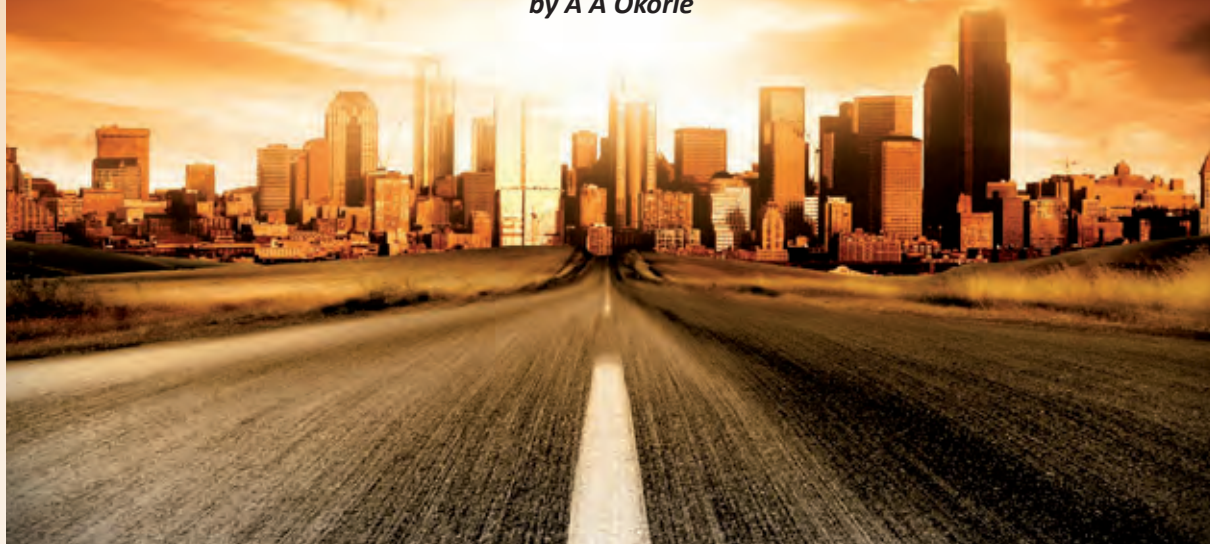
Diagram source: http://www.bahusis.be/egypt/egyptie/plans/abydos_osireion.html

The remains of the Osireion at Abydos, the classic example of the Mystery School, was designed as a subterranean hall and incorporates an underground water-filled chamber.



THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

by A A Okorie



I STILL remember vividly the day we left our rural abode for the city. Prior to that day, our parents had spent time, energy and resources planning for a successful journey to a new life. We had confidence in our parent's ability to provide the best for us and had an inner conviction that our journey will definitely lead us to our envisaged Eldorado. In our minds eye, we saw nothing else but a fruitful and a prosperous future filled with countless opportunities. The journey to the city was not entirely smooth; nevertheless, we weathered the storm with stoic equanimity. We were prodded on by our mental picture of success and were further comforted by a unique, inspiring, emblazoned inscription on both sides of our vehicle which read 'no harm in trial'. Life is a journey and requires a lot of painstaking preparations. Our cherished desires can be achieved through constructive efforts, creative thoughts and by having an open mind.

Each day we come across persons whose lifestyles inspire us, people that are adventurous, confident, optimistic and humane, as well as individuals who see life as an accident. This latter group will always complain of their countless troubles- poverty, hunger, the lack of good friends and the cruelty of fate without giving credence to their own thoughtlessness.

Three Basic Principles

A successful engineer, doctor or businessperson could never have achieved greatness through wishful thinking. Energy, time and resources were expended on tutelage, rigorous studies and practice. A breakthrough in life will be achieved, definitely, if we observe these three basic principles:

1. We must have a real understanding of that which we seek and endeavour to acquaint ourselves thoroughly with our goals.
2. Our desires must be in harmony or consistent with the goals of the inner self, bearing in mind that the creative process can only be achieved through the technique of concentration and visualisation.
3. We must have confidence that whatever goal we are seeking can be achieved.



Our Creative Powers

The popular axiom “*Man is the architect of his fate and the creator of his destiny*” should serve as a constant reminder that our journey on earth, our works and careers are affected by our attitudes of mind, our thoughts and actions. The one who spends some time each day to send positive thoughts of love, harmony and peace to all humanity will succeed in creating favourable conditions in his life.

We have the powers to create conditions for ourselves wilfully with an understanding of what we are doing just as we also have the ability to shape our destiny unconsciously. In our mystical journey, most of our works are performed in secrecy and quietude. Silence is golden and secrecy is the order of life. In silence we gain strength and in secrecy we establish a cooperative link between our inner and outer selves. In this wise, former Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order Dr Harvey Spencer Lewis, said:

...the greatest good that any Rosicrucian can accomplish for mankind can greatly be carried out in silence and secrecy from his home. In public, a Rosicrucian can perform seeming miracles without moving his fingers or casting a single glance noticeable to others. So far as the obligations of the Order and the specific promises of its various degrees are concerned, there is none that calls upon the member to reveal his identity or to live in such a manner as to distinguish him either to the casual or careful observer [...] By our fruits shall we be judged and the Masters will do the harvesting not we.

We are essentially both spiritual and worldly in our living and Nature has provided us with an abundance of the material things to support our existence. Periodically, we come face to face with the temptations of vain gloriousness which we often succumb to. A profound understanding that we cannot survive independently and distinctly from each other will assist us tremendously.

We came to this world with nothing and we shall leave with nothing. Whatever we have now is but a loan from the Cosmic which will be transferred to others at the appropriate time to manage or mismanage. We exit the stage with two intangible possessions- our experiences and our karmic load.

The Law Of Change

Everything in Nature is evolving. All is subject to the laws of change. Before the advent of the gramophone, the

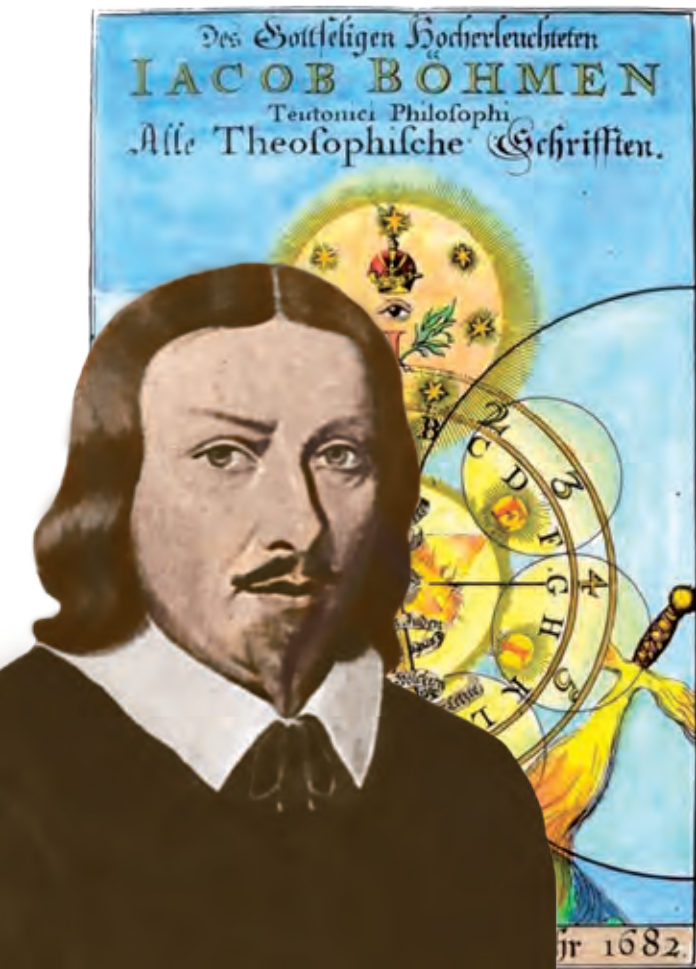
jukebox was considered the best and the latest musical gadget. Both have been consigned to the annals of history as we now have several newer inventions which in time will become obsolete.

As a growing child I admired a Mercury Monarch motorcar, to the extent that I wished to have one in my adult years. Back then it was not only the real thing but the ideal car. Presently, the Mercury Monarch, even as a gift item, will serve a better purpose as a relic or a piece glorious of artefact. In our daily living, let us make conscious efforts to strike a balance between our worldliness and our spirituality. This we can achieve through constant meditation and attunement. Again in the words of Dr Lewis:

The Mystic has every right as everyone to give thought to his or her daily needs and material requirements. To seek material comforts, some luxuries or even all of them and sufficient financial means to assure health, happiness and peace-in material as well as spiritual things- is not inconsistent with the ideals of the real mystics of all ages.

Material wealth is necessary for our overall wellbeing. It will assist significantly in the advancement of our great work- to extend our mystical ideals to all including the rich and the powerful. The journey of life is replete with pleasures and pains. In any circumstance, let us not forget to put the knowledge which we have acquired over the years into practice. The mere study of spiritual or cosmic laws does not make one a mystic. Knowledge in its dormant form is meaningless. Its power can only manifest when it is applied. In these tumultuous times, let us remember that we are not alone. Let us remain committed to an aspiration towards the noblest ideals.





JACOB BOEHME

The Seer and the Vision

by Brian Aubrey

It was from these experiences that he elaborated, in a series of lengthy volumes, his description of ‘eternal nature’, the term he gave to what he thought was the very texture of existence itself in its most fundamental, unified and powerful state. He described it as being made up of the dynamic conflict between seven fundamental properties from which all existence takes its origin. He conceived these properties in terms of the opposites of fire and light, wrath and love, and declared that each property was necessary for the existence of the others, because he was convinced that nothing in the universe could know itself except through dynamic interaction with its own opposite.

A Dynamic State of Creative Tension

Everywhere about him Boehme saw this clash of opposites, of light and darkness, driving the universe on. But in eternal nature he saw the strife raised to a higher plane in which *all opposing energies were held in a dynamic state of creative tension or equilibrium*. He called it a ‘triumphing joyfulness’, the universal mind rejoicing in itself in a ‘coincidentia oppositorum’ of breathtaking power and majesty.

This inspired vision of a dynamic harmony of fire and light at the very heart of existence is one of Boehme’s most profound contributions to the history of ideas. It dominated his mind and he wrote of it again and again, at length and with compelling force. He was absolutely certain that he had penetrated to the creative centre of life itself. Christian mysticism had never seen anything like it before, although there is no doubt that Boehme was influenced by the Sephirothic tree of the Kabala.

THE MYSTIC philosopher Jacob Boehme is one of the most extraordinary figures in the history of ideas. Born in 1575 in a village near Görlitz, Germany, Boehme was by trade a shoemaker. Although he received only elementary schooling, and despite humble origins, Boehme has exercised an enormous influence on some of the most profound thinkers of the modern period. The German philosopher Schelling for example, called Boehme “*a miraculous phenomenon in the history of mankind*”, and the English poet Coleridge declared him to be a “*stupendous human being*”.

Boehme’s exploration of the nature of existence, his astonishing insight into the laws which govern the universe, is indeed compelling. Nevertheless, he remains an obscure figure. Few have the patience or time to wade through his dense and difficult German prose in order to grasp the splendour of his vision. But the effort, once made, is rewarding. Much of Boehme’s knowledge came in a series of remarkable moments of illumination, which at the time surprised him as much as they later astonished his readers. Boehme wrote of these experiences, the first of which came in 1600 at 25 years of age, that he had learned more in a quarter of an hour than if he had studied for many years at a university.





An anonymous and posthumous life portrait (c. 1720) of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) together with a photo of his house in Görlitz, where he lived from 1590 to 1610.

Microcosm and Macrocosm

Yet the first man of Creation, and ancestor of all human life, retained the ability to become once more the master of his circumstances. His knowledge, passed on to us, now lies dormant, not lost. This can be further understood by looking at Boehme's distinctive treatment of the ancient idea, strongly emphasised in Hermeticism, of the correspondence between *microcosm* and *macrocosm*. 'As above, so below'.

Although a commonplace of Renaissance thought, Boehme gives the statement the vibrant life and immediate significance of a philosopher possessing deep intuitive insight into the laws of nature. It rests first on what Boehme calls the 'signature', meaning that in the outpouring of creative energy which gives rise to the material world, eternal nature 'signs' itself in every aspect and detail of creation. To understand the 'signature' of an object is to penetrate its essential qualities, to see it as a manifestation of its source in eternal nature. To

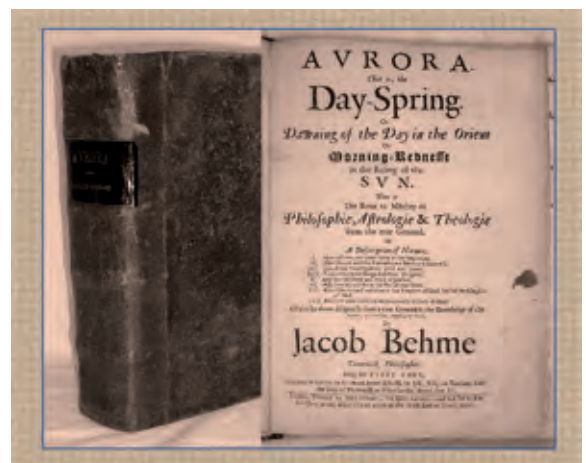
Boehme was a practical man, interested in metaphysical knowledge only as a way of waking humanity to an understanding of its true status as a 'child of eternity'.

One of Boehme's major contributions was to take the 'dark' energies in creation and rehabilitate them. They became the burning fire from which the light of life emerges and without which there would be no existence. In eternal nature, these dark energies are not evil. In Boehme's universe nothing in itself is evil; everything takes its character from the position it occupies in relation to everything else. He therefore had no need for a Christian dualism. Nothing was to be excluded but simply transformed, realigned, put back into harmony; he sought to unify existence without destroying its essential polarity. It was a brilliant achievement.

Boehme was a practical man, interested in metaphysical knowledge only as a way of waking humanity to an understanding of its true status as a 'child of eternity'. He thought that eternal nature was of vital importance in this respect, because it made up the superior part of the human constitution. Before the biblical fall of Adam, he says, the primeval first man had known his origins, and his life had embodied the bliss of eternal nature. He had enjoyed perfect health and happiness and would have continued to do so had his vision not become so clouded by ignorance. Sickness and death arose only when he chose to focus his mind on the fragmentary nature of the material world, rather than the wholeness of eternity. This upset the balance of the 'properties' in his own constitution. His fall was a consequence of this loss of internal equilibrium and it resulted in a narrowing of his perceptual abilities.

connect all the signatures in one enlightened perception is to see everything taking its place in an ordered pattern of influences and relationships which make up the subtle texture of creation.

Related to this is Boehme's Hermetic idea that "*all is in all*"; every part of creation contains the totality. It is this vision which enables him to see, like the English poet Blake: "*...a world in a grain of sand*." For Boehme, it is an especially important concept, for all people contain



'Die Morgenröte im Anfang, which we know today as Aurora, a title that reflects his vision of a dynamic harmony of fire and light at the very heart of existence, was his first book dating from 1612. Although ultimately it remained unfinished it is a work that uniquely introduces many of his ideas, and some of his explanations about nature. Pictured here is the 1st English edition printed in 1656.





The frontispiece of *Aurora* 1612

the universe within themselves. The human mind always remains linked to its transcendent source in which the totality of knowledge is contained. By knowing ourselves, we can know everything in the universe, and Boehme means this quite literally. He envisages a mode of knowing through direct cognition, something he calls *Verstand* (understanding). *Verstand* grasps the totality of existence and can intuit both the fundamental laws and specific details which structure the physical world. This is in contrast to *Vernunft* (reason) which sees only in part and cannot penetrate the deeper layers of creation.

Such, in brief, is a small part of the contribution of the shoemaker of Görlitz to human enlightenment. Boehme was a deep thinker and a majestic seer. It was not always easy for him though and he often suffered abuse from the defenders of religious orthodoxy; but he bore

Boehme was acutely aware of the problem of communication, especially regarding the non-verbal 'mystical' experiences he had: he remarked in his book *Aurora*: "If I had the Tongue of an Angel, and thou hadst an angelical Understanding, we might very finely discourse of it."

it patiently always. When he was forced to leave town for example, he said quietly: "*Seeing it cannot be otherwise, I am content.*" Sometimes he gave a more spirited response. When one of his opponents sneered: "*What ails the fool, when will he be done with his dreaming?*" Boehme replied defiantly: "*Well, well, we shall see what kind of a dream this turns out to be!*" He thought that his writings would fall into neglect after his death, but said that they would blossom again in "*the time of the lily*", the lily being his frequent symbol of spiritual purity.

Impact of Boehme's Philosophy Today

Today, Jacob Boehme's time may finally have arrived, for there are so many signs about that we are moving away from what the Irish poet Yeats described as the 'three provincial centuries' of scientific rationalism, towards a rediscovery of a holistic philosophy emphasising the infinite potential of human consciousness. Boehme is an inspiring guide and model for this transition.

Perhaps the trend can most clearly be seen in physics, in which previously absolute distinctions between subject and object, knower and known, have broken down, and human consciousness is understood to be intimately involved in shaping the way we see the world. Particularly interesting is the inexorable drive towards the

The human mind always remains linked to its transcendent source in which the totality of knowledge is contained. By knowing ourselves, we can know everything in the universe.

fulfilment of Einstein's dream of a unified field theory. The discovery of a state called supersymmetry, in which opposing elements in creation such as force and matter fields coexist in a 'superfield' of unimaginable energy and dynamism, represents a major

step forward in this quest.

Some physicists suggest that this unified superfield is the field of human consciousness itself, in its most simple and powerful state, which would make it an extraordinary parallel to Boehme's description of the coexistence of all opposites in 'eternal nature'. Both perspectives give to human consciousness an awe-inspiring creative power.



Boehme insists that we create our own reality according to our impulses, thoughts and desires. And what we have power to create, we have power to change.

Perhaps the next evolutionary step for humanity is to shift the focus of human consciousness from ‘temporal nature’, made up as it is of irreconcilable contradictions and limitations, to the perfection of ‘eternal nature’, in which the world is experienced in its full value as a myriad of ‘signatures’, a true “*triumphing joyfulness*.” Such a leap, in which millions throughout the world would attain their full stature and power, would represent the fulfilment of Boehme’s inspired vision.

“For according to the outward man, we are in this world, and according to the inward man, we are in the inward world.... Since then we are generated out of both worlds, we speak in two languages, and we must be understood also by two languages.”

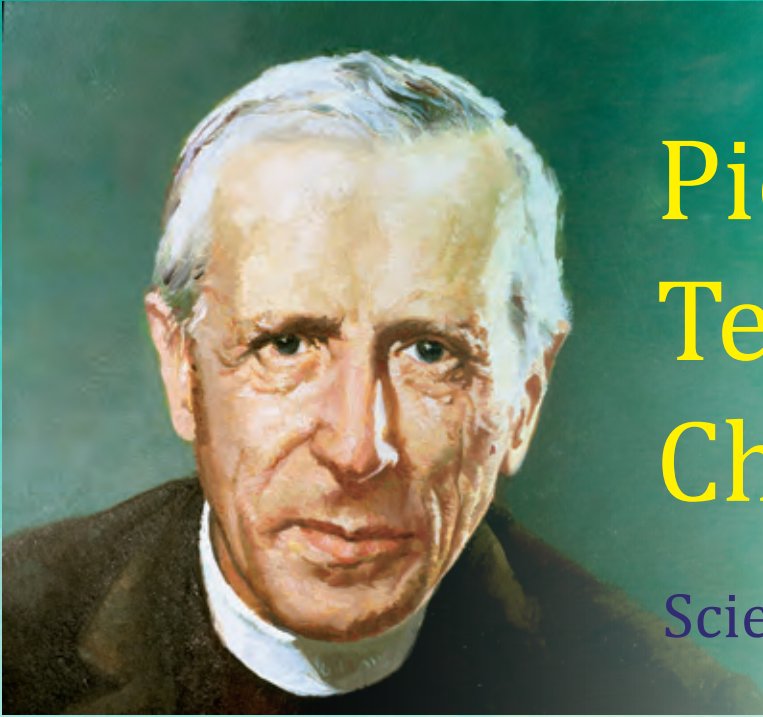
Jacob Boehme



A selection of diagrams and emblems produced by Boehme to illustrate his ideas on the divine aspect of existence and its relationship to the soul and man.

(Hand painted images by Adam McLean at http://www.alchemywebsite.com/amcl_boehme.html)





Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Scientist and Mystic

by Joseph Parko

PIERRE Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) the world-famous geologist and paleontologist, theologian and philosopher, was one of the most original mystical thinkers of the 20th century. He was born at Sarcenat in southern France, the fourth child among eleven in a devout, well-to-do family. Teilhard entered the Jesuit Order when he was eighteen and because of his life-long fascination with rocks, he combined the study of theology with a passion for geology. Upon completion of his studies, interspersed with numerous geological field trips, he was ordained a priest in 1912. After service in World War 1 as a stretcher-bearer (where he received the Legion of Honour for his courage), he completed his studies for a doctorate in geology.

In 1923, Teilhard made the first of his many paleontological expeditions to China. He was involved in the famous discovery of Peking man's skull and greatly enlarged our knowledge of Palaeolithic cultures in China. During this period Teilhard's scientific training and mystical insights into the processes of evolution combined to produce his magnum opus, *The Phenomenon of Man*, in which he unveiled a new 'hyperphysics' which bridges the gap between physical evolution and the evolution of the spirit. Teilhard's study of evolution had convinced him that underlying the process was a mechanism designed to increase and collect the psychic energy of the universe.

In his book, he contends that evolution is not a

random physical process arising out of the probabilities of large numbers but is, instead, an intentional psychical process which is converging toward an eventual cosmic apotheosis. The aim of evolution, according to Teilhard, is to generate increasingly complex forms of consciousness which ultimately converge upon an 'Omega point' which fuses and consumes them within itself. The *Omega* point represents the unity toward which all levels of existence converge through the design of: "...a distinct *Centre radiating at the core of a system of centres.*" Human consciousness is thus seen as:

...gravitating against the tide of probability towards a divine focus of mind which draws it onward. Thus something in the cosmos escapes from entropy and does so more and more.

Cosmic Evolution

In Teilhard's concept of cosmic evolution we are not simply face to face with change in the world but with *genesis*, which is something quite different. From now on, he contends, the evolutionary process continues its development not so much in the sphere of life, the 'biosphere', as in the sphere of mind and spirit, the 'noosphere' or 'thinking layer', which since its germination in the Tertiary period has spread over and



above the physical world. Mankind, he says, is now in the 'psychozoic' era. To extraterrestrial beings that were:

...capable of analysing sidereal radiations psychically no less than physically, the first characteristic of our planet would be, not the blue of the sky or the green of the forests but the phosphorescence of thought.

According to Teilhard, evolution to this point is seen as essentially an ascent towards man and reflective consciousness. The formation of the *noosphere* continues this advance toward *Omega*, the ultimate manifestation of the Divine Mind's tendency to gather consciousness into itself. But, warns Teilhard, this process of cosmic evolution is not deterministic. The rise of consciousness also creates the freedom to choose between either convergence with or divergence from the psychic energy flow moving towards Omega.

The Power of Love

For Teilhard, *love* is the only form of psychic energy capable of moving humanity forward toward convergence with the Supreme Consciousness. Love alone unites human beings in such a way as to complete and fulfil them, for it alone joins them to what is deepest in themselves. In order, therefore, for humanity to continue to evolve towards that psychic unity which is its highest destiny, the power of love must gradually develop until it is capable of embracing the whole of mankind.

A common objection against such an idea is that man's capacity to love does not carry beyond the radius of a select few, that to love all is contradictory, a false gesture which will lead in the end to loving no one. Teilhard responds:

To this I would answer that if, as you claim, a universal love is impossible, how can we account for that irresistible instinct in our hearts which leads us to unity whenever and in whatever direction our passions are stirred? A sense of the universe, a sense of the all..., these seem to be an expectation of a Great Presence. A universal love is not only psychologically possible, it is the only complete and final way in which we are able to love.

Love, contends Teilhard, is therefore the key to the whole cosmic order; it is the fundamental energy which binds the universe together. In a universe undergoing spiritual evolution, the supreme law of morality is that



Teilhard (right) at the Colloque de Paléontologie, 1947

evil consists of a limitation of this love energy.

Love in all its subtleties is nothing more and nothing less, than the direct trace marked on the heart of the element by the psychical convergence of the universe upon itself.

Planetary Maturation

When Teilhard speaks of 'the planetary maturation of mankind', he means the psychic growth resulting from the pressure of man's tighter contraction around the surface of the earth. What the pessimist perceives as increasing international tension and an approaching apocalypse, Teilhard sees as the necessary crisis of growth in the evolution of humanity. What we have been experiencing for some time now, without our being aware of it, is the beginning of a new phase of *noogenesis*, the phase of contraction in which humanity is coiling itself up around the globe into a single inter-thinking group in which man will so far transcend himself as to demand some new appellation. Physical interdependence is the necessary first step towards psychic interpenetration.

Through technology we are impelled toward a more complex exterior organisation of humanity, a kind of 'mega-synthesis', while at the same time producing a correlative intensification of the psychic temperature of the *noosphere*.

Are we not experiencing the first symptoms of an aggregation of a still higher order, the birth of some single centre from the convergent beams of millions of elementary centres dispersed over the surface of the thinking earth?



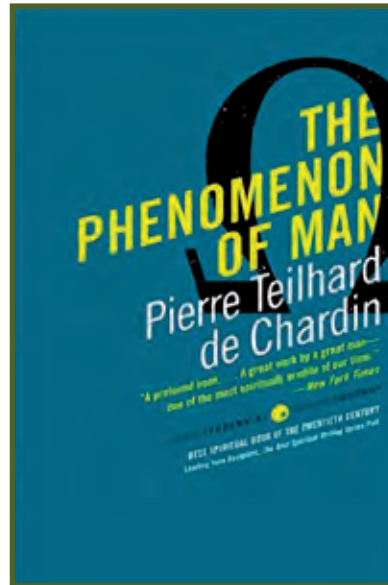
Teilhard's assurance to modern man is to point to the pattern he has uncovered through his generalised physics of evolution. Time, space, matter and mind are terrifying only if they are thought to be random and blind; they immediately become understandable as soon as a definite movement appears which shows them to be part of a developing whole. He says:

Man is not the centre of the universe as we once thought in our simplicity but something much more wonderful, the arrow pointing the way to the final unification of the world in terms of life.

The entire ascent towards life, that of life towards spirit and of spirit towards *Omega*, this whole movement is not due to some mindless mechanical thrust from below but to an attraction from above. It is, according to Teilhard, an inverse form of gravitation.

For Teilhard then, the ultimate explanation of evolution is that *the universe is converging upon a pre-existent cosmic centre*. The Divine Mind is therefore to be found at both the beginning and end of the universe as well as interpenetrating all that lies between. But each person must still exercise his or her freedom towards alignment with the Divine Mind.

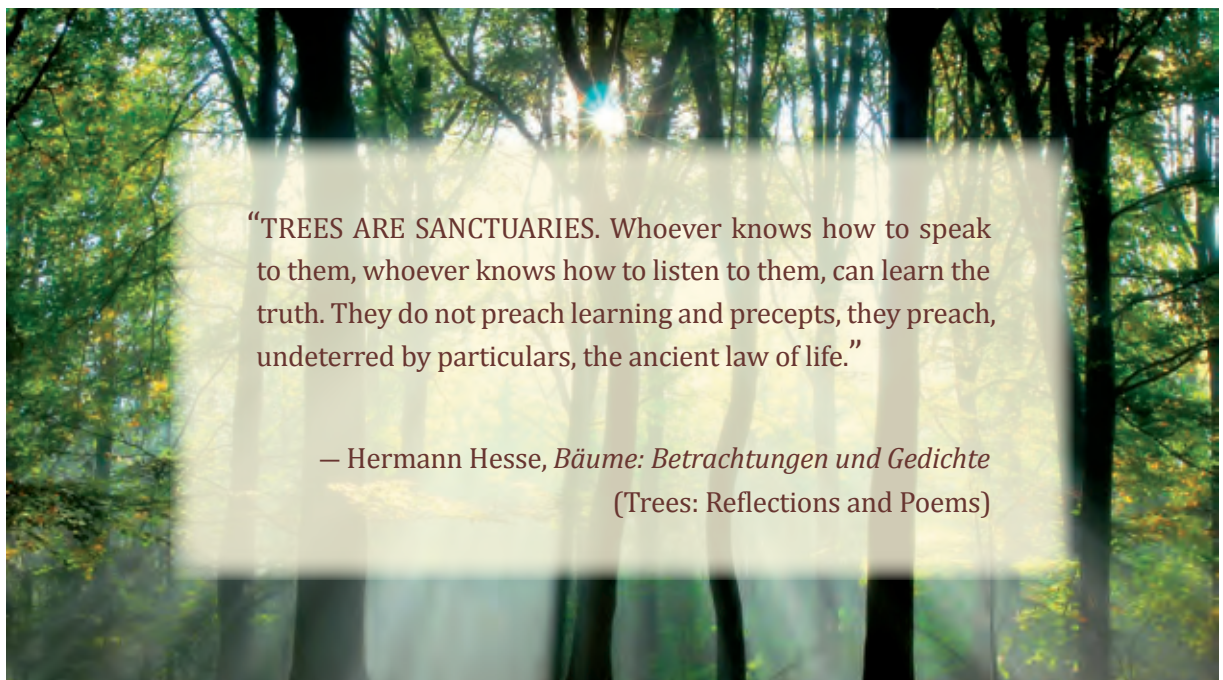
Universal love would only vivify and detach finally a fraction of the noosphere so as to consummate it, the part which decided to 'cross the threshold', to get outside itself into the other.



Teilhard's study of evolution had convinced him that underlying the process was a mechanism designed to increase and collect the psychic energy of the universe.

Ultimately, then, the end of the world is to come about not through some cataclysm in the physical realm but through a paroxysm of joy in the psychic realm. In the end, concludes Teilhard:

Being shall engulf beings. In the midst of a becalmed Ocean whose every drop of consciousness shall be aware of both itself and the Infinite Other, the extraordinary adventure of the world shall reach its climax. The dream of every mystic shall have become the final reality.



In Quest of the Alchemist's Secret



An Example of Laboratory Work in the Early History of Chemistry

*by Alberto I LaCava
(former director of the English Grand Lodge for the Americas)*

WE USUALLY take for granted that chemistry is a science characterised by well-established principles and subdivided into logical disciplines. Chemistry is after all at the forefront of our understanding of the nature of matter and its structure, and chemical research workers truly are wizards of modern science. Working in well-equipped laboratories, assisted by the latest in current technology, they are in prime positions to pry open the secrets of nature, in particular the nature of chemical bonds and the structure of matter. And those secrets are being revealed with breathtaking complexity and beauty, ever faster with each year that passes. As we know, chemistry was of course not always a science; so how did it all begin?

Some scholars, like Mircea Eliade (1907–86), the Romanian philosopher and historian of religion, and a famous authority on the history of alchemy, believed it all started with metallurgy. Early civilisations learned how to mine minerals and convert them into metals. Homer's 'five ages of man' was based on the discovery of different metals and their use by different 'races' or civilisations. And so, according to this idea, there were the civilisations or ages of Gold, Silver, Copper, Bronze and Iron.

As soon as gold was found desirable as a metal for jewellery and ornamentation, being appreciated for its beauty, durability and resistance to chemical attack, someone came up with the idea of making false gold. Metal workers were quite likely the first to make false



Figure 1: The "filter distillation" equipment of the alchemists: By capillarity, clear liquid drops from the top to the bottom vessel. Particles and large organic molecules are not transferred, producing a purification of sorts.



gold out of cheaper metals, by making alloys that looked like the real thing.

In the ancient world, the Egyptians achieved a high level of craftsmanship in the manufacture of alloys and metals, as well as in construction techniques. They possessed knowledge about the chemicals required for embalming mummies and chemicals necessary to produce dyes, inks and paints that have survived to our present time on papyri and paintings. The Egyptians discovered their knowledge empirically, i.e., by the trial and error of experimentation, and passed the knowledge of their arts down to future generations. While they did not reach a high level of philosophical inquiry into the theoretical causes of their arts, their level of skill in the arts themselves was quite high and worthy of admiration.

The ancient Greeks, on the other hand, were famous for their tendency to build theories and philosophise about everything they observed. But once they reached their conclusions, they were less likely to closely examine or study in an empirical manner their theories, their arts, or the natural world surrounding them. In fact, their philosophers did not appreciate the experimental process or learning by trial and error. Once they reached a conclusion about something through the process of good reasoning, they were satisfied. To them that was the Truth!

Birth of Alchemy

These two streams of thought, Egyptian and Greek, finally met in Alexandria, Egypt, and a few other centres of learning. The result was a powerful surge of new ideas which gave rise to the creation of new schools of thought, including Hermeticism, Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. In this rich confrontation of ideas during the latter days of the ancient world and decline of the Roman empire, alchemy was born.

Figure 2: Preparation of the 'alkali' salt in three stages, where fractions of different levels of purity were separated by settling.



Although the popular stereotype portrays alchemists as ambitious, dark characters, hungry in their quest for gold and wealth, an historical revision has been gaining momentum over the last couple of decades to re-evaluate their roles and motives. Alchemists were primitive scientists in that they were trying to prove philosophical principles in the laboratory, in the same way that today's chemists or chemical engineers test the conclusion of their creative ideas (obtained on a basis of scientific principles and logical reasoning) with laboratory or pilot plant experiments.

The real quest of the alchemist was to prove in a tangible manner in the laboratory, the conclusions of the philosophers, the theoretical scientists of the time. As such, they were the first to become deeply involved with experimental reality. And that is where the development of chemistry really began. This 'theory tested by experiments' concept was too advanced for the dogmatic view of the leaders of some of the religions of the time, and in many cases alchemists were persecuted. It was only in the 17th century, through the efforts of Francis Bacon and other philosophers, that the grip of dogmatic ideas of religion and medieval scholasticism on science was finally broken, and the scientific method, based on the experimental verification of ideas was firmly established.



Figure 3: An alchemist putting a vessel in a furnace. This was part of the process of purification by sublimation, i.e. a process where a solid is volatilised to be solidified again, in a more purified stage.



The writings of the alchemists have now been virtually forgotten, as they have been largely superseded by the findings of modern chemists. Yet the alchemists had much to offer, and fortunately their ideas are still to be found in various libraries throughout the world, though principally in Europe.

An Old Alchemical Manuscript

I have had the opportunity over the years to visit some of these libraries which keep many valuable alchemical manuscripts written by alchemists, the 'Chemists of Old', and in this way I have obtained firsthand knowledge of these ancient texts. The three figures that appear in this article are from a rare anonymous manuscript, in old Spanish. The manuscript dates most probably from the 17th century and is a translation of a Latin manuscript written by the 13th and 14th century alchemist Arnoldus De Villanova, professor at the University of Montpellier in France, who was credited with the discovery of sulphuric acid.

The manuscript begins: "This is the *Rosary of the very excellent doctor Master Arnoldus de Villanova on the Philosopher's Stone, translated from the Latin into the Castilian¹ tongue.*"

In this manuscript, Arnoldus laments that the older philosophers (in the language of the time, a philosopher was an alchemist) such as Rasis, Hermes and Aristotle had issued so many severe warnings about the secret of the alchemists that many seekers had become fearful. As such, they lacked the encouragement or the drive to achieve 'the Joy of the Alchemists'. To remedy this unfortunate situation, Arnoldus composed a 'brief treatise' in which he promised to teach a 'very straight path' to those who wish to work hard and within the doctrine, so that they could achieve the 'supreme and secret intention of the Secrets'. He called his book *Rosarium Philosophorum* ("Rosary of the Philosophers: On the preparation of the Spirits and the Medicines and also of the Metallic Bodies"), which he claimed to have obtained from the 'secret books of the philosophers'.

The real quest of the alchemist was to prove in a tangible manner in the laboratory, the conclusions of the philosophers, the theoretical scientists of the time.

What follows in the book is a comprehensive 'laboratory course' in alchemy, in which Amoldus explains how to prepare each of the ingredients required for the Great Work of the alchemists. For a modern chemist, it is fascinating to follow the old recipes used to prepare the different salts, the different waters, step by step and aided by illustrations. Many of the techniques recommended in the 13th and 14th centuries are still essentially in use today when purifying and preparing some basic chemicals. However, other techniques he specifies are now forgotten. For instance, the 'filter distillation' in the manuscript is really a slow capillary filtration method which I have not seen used before in my chemical laboratory experience (see Figure 1).

The manuscript, comprising more than 300 pages, later belonged to another alchemist. This later chemist seems to have had more laboratory experience than the translator of the Arnoldus book. The second owner did not agree with some of the drawings placed in the manuscript by the original translator, and crossed out irrelevant equipment (placed in the manuscript only to embellish it) and corrected mistakes in the drawing of some of the laboratory equipment. His lively notes, agreeing or disagreeing with the manuscript, can be found in several parts of the text.

The three drawings accompanying this article are taken from the original manuscript. In one of them (Figure 2) the alchemist is purifying the 'alkali salt' in a series of three operations, which indicates three fractions decanted. The impure fraction is discarded and the pure solution is evaporated to obtain the purified salt. In Figure 3, the alchemist is placing a vessel into a furnace for the sublimation of another compound, the azogre



(quicksilver or mercury) to convert it into *solyman*, or a purified form. The alchemists used mythical names for the chemical components they worked with, and *solyman* (perhaps a 'solar man') is one of these names.

We should keep in mind that these alchemists, in contrast to modern chemists, were rarely paid a salary to do their experimental work. They had to spend a lot of their own money to set up a laboratory and buy the necessary chemicals. This of course excludes any false alchemists who would try to find a wealthy victim to support them under the promise of vast amounts of gold. But the true early chemists certainly loved and venerated their 'art', as can be easily witnessed through their lovingly written and painted laboratory books and diaries of the time. And I have little doubt that in their ranks were some of the deepest and most accomplished mystical thinkers of their times.

'Physical' chemistry, important as it was, and especially so for the modern science of chemistry that

emerged from alchemical investigations..., was in the end secondary to the inner alchemical work that some of these pioneer scientists engaged in. It would be fair to say that all modern mystical work in some way at least owes a debt of gratitude to the medieval alchemists for the spiritual insights they encoded in their lengthy and sometimes bewilderingly complex treatises.

"We are unraveling our navels so that we may ingest the sun. We are not afraid of the darkness. We trust that the moon shall guide us. We are determining the future at this very moment. We know that the heart is the philosopher's stone. Our music is our alchemy."





LOVE YOURSELF

by Evelyn Hall Smith

WATCHING children playing on a see-saw, makes us smile approvingly even though we may be a little puzzled over why they enjoy something so simple. The see-saw may be a child's toy, but its symbolism is apparent in life's conditions: up and down, balance and imbalance, all depending upon the operators' whims. Of course, the principles in operation are those of the law of balance.

In a see-saw process, the progress of time often changes attitudes, conditions and methods. For example, the great rush to insulate buildings in order to retain heat. At the same time, for the sake of our health, during the winter when the heat was on, because our modern central heating can dry out the room, we were urged to use bowls of water or something else to bring moisture to the room. So the houses were sealed. As a result, balance was lost and the law of balance was disturbed.

This law of balance also plays an important role in the life of human beings. I believe that diseases become prevalent when there's an imbalance in the body, often due to insufficient love. We human beings produce negative thoughts of fear, anxiety, grief, resentment and jealousy. We neglect to counteract or balance these with a positive force: *love*. We bottle up the moisture of stagnant darkness within ourselves, which has a injurious

effect on our system, and allows no balancing currents of love or its counterpart, light, to enter. The result is too much pollution in the cells of our body caused by those *negative thoughts* within, not only toward others, but toward ourselves too.

Today's problems have produced another see-saw viewpoint, namely, in the matter of love direction. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' is a vital attitude today, because it was advocated by one of the great Cosmic teachers some 2,000 years ago. I suspect someone of such transcendent wisdom such as he would have said: "*Love thy neighbour, and also love thyself.*" So much stress has been placed on our love for others as against selfishness that young people often experience a sense of guilt if they love themselves.

There is extensive unrest and mental illness today, essentially because people just don't like themselves. Finding their own solitary company unbearable, they constantly run from it. For fear of being alone to face their thoughts, people try to remain around others. They take up hobbies such as football, golf or bingo. They join various clubs, and many choose to work long hours to build up their own business. In case of enforced solitude, they turn on their television or log into social networking sites on their computer.





The law of balance plays an important role in the life of human beings. If we neglect to counterbalance positive and negative thoughts due to insufficient love there is an injurious effect on our system.

and superconscious minds have much to offer you as your skill in contacting them grows. And in time you'll be able to acknowledge the command of the ages: Know thyself! You'll unearth intriguing facets of your consciousness and seek your own company more often.

This experimental, intimate contact with your inner self should help you develop a love for yourself. And why not? We are told that God is love; so giving his love to your own self should not be confused with selfishness. The story of Narcissus from Greek mythology had to do with vanity, not with love of self.

A Direct Approach

It is next to impossible to reach someone on the phone: either the line is busy or you get the omnipresent voicemail. Leave a message and talk to yourself! No wonder our nerves get jangled when we continuously subject them to the vibrations of the harassment and frustration of others as well as our own. No one is immune from the cross-currents of thought encountered daily without an insulation built up by means of periodical, quiet solitude.

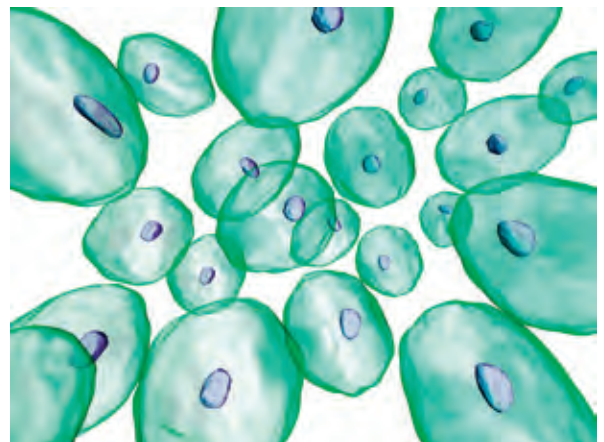
Solitude is a Tonic

We all have been told the potency of the biblical command: *"Be still and know that I am God."* Practise the act of being still, even if just for a few minutes, and discover the thrill of communion with the Cosmic, and surprisingly you will no longer be bored with yourself.

Dare to be alone and hook up with the interesting and infinite knowledge and wisdom from within. For it is available to anyone who is willing to stop their merry-go-round for a moment, withdraw from the noise and crowds and tune in to the Cosmic Mind. After giving it a serious go, you'll find that this is far more rewarding than a book, TV, bingo, parties, golf, work, your beloved Facebook, and so many other things. Your subconscious

We have potential universes within us similar to the one in which we live. If God loves his universe, every part of it, we should, in the same manner, love our embryonic universe, the *Microcosm*. We must be a source of love for ourselves, as the Cosmic is the source of love for the universe, both as a whole and individually, including each of us. Loving oneself initiates a reaction within the Microcosm as does the sun shining on a plant. Each process induces a blossoming into a full glory and capacity. Loving ourselves also gives the realisation of God's love within the self. This realisation gives us power.

What is so important about loving oneself? Every cell of the body is centred with a divine spark, or part of the Supreme Mind, surrounded with flesh. Cells are intelligent and retain the wisdom acquired. They have independent memories and repeat in their reparation the



Every cell of the body is centred with a divine spark, or part of the Supreme Mind, surrounded with flesh. Cells are intelligent and retain the wisdom acquired.



Love activates the cells by accelerating their vibratory motion and causing them to expand, and thus love heals by eliminating congestion; the lower the rate of vibration, the less vitality of the body.

exact pattern of the original. Each does its own peculiar work, and its wisdom is a component part of the subconscious mind. We should love and praise these cells for their fine work of constant repair.

We should also praise the organs, which never cease to operate intelligently for the upkeep and repair of the body. They give us a healthy body to use, a well-ordered temple for the soul, for we can receive from the Cosmic or be a channel for the divine purpose only in a degree commensurate with the robustness of the temple or body. To progress into the Light, we must first properly love the body and care for this instrument which, like a radio, is a receiving apparatus and brings us Cosmic messages, inspiration and intuition.

Love is a universal and cohesive force which holds things together, keeping them in right relationship to their source. Through it flow law, order and harmony in the universe and similarly in the body, the duplicate of the universe. Observe the hermetic axiom: "*As above, so below.*" This cohesion protects life by keeping it well-ordered and secure.

Loving the body also heals it. Illness of the body is a state of congestion and stagnation.

Love activates the cells by accelerating their vibratory motion and causing them to expand, and thus love heals by eliminating congestion; the lower the rate of vibration, the less vitality of the body. Truly, we heal ourselves. The psychiatrist knows this fact and guides those with mental health problems into channels of self-restoration. The medical doctor also realises this fact and gives psychosomatic treatment to the ill. We must love the body to give it beauty and health, for love constitutes healing. In that healing there is harmony in our hearts, lungs, digestive system and nervous system.

Mental Harmony

We also become more fully attuned to the Cosmic and thereby receive the great spiritual truths or wisdom of the ages by loving and praising our minds. In our state



of mental harmony we can learn the attributes of the Creator and know the ecstasy of the contact with the Infinite. In these experiences, we learn to love our very own soul, bringing about the balance of emotions and consequently, peace.

Through this newly-found love of and harmony within our self, we become aware that our purpose in life is to serve our fellow human beings, and not to use them merely as buffers against a solitary state. It's only after we fill our own universe with love that we can offer love and service to someone else.

Love is a universal and cohesive force which holds things together, keeping them in right relationship to their source.

When we've made our mind and body harmonious and vigorous through love, and as a result prepared ourselves to be a channel for Cosmic love and enlightenment, we can then render great service in the Divine Plan by teaching

others the methods toward perfection, harmony, peace and happiness. For each of us progresses in Cosmic illumination only by means of the Light through another.

So it becomes a joy and rewarding achievement, as well as a necessity, to love thyself, as well as thy neighbour. Only in this dual process is there true balance and progress of the soul within us.

"You don't love someone because they're perfect, you love them in spite of the fact that they're not."

— Jodi Picoult





Leonardo da Vinci

by Adrian Ford

WHAT GIVES a person vision? What is the source of genius? Throughout history there have been a few men who have had the capacity to look far beyond the times and circumstances in which they lived, and envision innovations which would remain valid for hundreds of years. Such a man was Leonardo da Vinci.

Da Vinci was born in 1452 in a small town near Florence, Italy, and died in 1519. While he is recognised principally as an outstanding painter, sculptor and architect, he was also a brilliant natural scientist, physicist, engineer, musician and philosopher. His sixty-seven years were strewn with multifaceted accomplishments. He wrote a book describing problems of hydraulics, dynamics and statics, and is, in fact, acknowledged as the greatest natural scientist of the fifteenth century. As a philosopher and scientist, he was a forerunner of Galileo, Bacon and Descartes.

The maps he drew are among the earliest examples of modern cartography. As a war engineer Da Vinci devised military strategies. After studying air currents and the flight of birds, he drew designs for constructing an aircraft almost four hundred years before any aircraft ever flew. He also sketched a bicycle very similar to the first bicycle ever built over 300 years later.

Da Vinci investigated the origin of fossils, completed numerous biological studies which included scientific illustrations, and wrote a treatise on human anatomy. He conceived the idea for a bridge spanning the Bosphorus, twelve thousand feet in length over the sea and a further six hundred feet over land. In 1973 such a bridge was completed and put into use near modern Istanbul. He also designed a gyroscopic system like the one developed by Sperry Rand for 'blind flying' in 1920.

What enables a person to excel in so many fields? What causes them to conceive new inventions and discoveries? What gives them such keen insight? Are such talents gifts from God? Are they inherited? Are they developed through education and experience? Modern psychology tells us that genius is the product of both heredity and environment; that what we are born with gives us the *capacity* for learning and that capacity is the agency which determines what we will become. However *inspiration*, that tool of the genius, is of a Cosmic origin; and while God might give us the raw materials, we must put them to use in order to cultivate out latent talents.

We have heard many times that the average person uses only about ten percent of their brain capacity. Could it be that the genius quite simply uses more of that capacity? We might well ask, could it be that we all have the potential for genius?





The Emir's Promissory Note

by Amelia

A MAN STOOD on a corner in a bazaar next to a busy intersection. Shoppers and traders were coming and going, pursuing their lives without the slightest interest in him or the blind beggar sitting against a wall a few feet from him. Suddenly he pulled out a high value promissory note with the Emir's seal upon it, and waving it in the air shouted loudly to the passers-by: "*Does anyone wish to receive from me this promissory note from our beloved Emir?*"

People stopped and eagerly pressed around him. "*What did he say?*" some murmured, so he said it again:

"Does anyone want this promissory note from our beloved Emir?" Suddenly, people in the crowd shouted and rushed forward, for they immediately knew what a fortune a promissory note underwritten by the Emir was worth: "*I'll take it my friend;*" "*me, me, me;*" "*let me help you sir...*" for everyone was suddenly eager to be his friend.

Pushing and shoving they reached for his hand which was held high above them and would probably have taken the promissory note from him by force had he not shouted loudly and forcefully "*Stop!*" There was immediate silence and as he looked around at the crowd; he slowly crumpled the note in his hands held above his head so everyone could see. There was an audible sigh and then a loud groan of disgust from the crowd. But when he said: "*who still wants it?*" they were all as eager as before, shouting, pressing forward and trying to attract his attention.

Fortunately he was a big man and could easily hold everyone at bay, and clearing the crowd away a bit, he placed the crumpled note on the ground and started stamping on it, tearing and crushing it with his foot. Finally he held up the tattered though intact note, still



with the Emir's promise and seal clearly visible, and said again: "Who still wants it?" to which the crowd again responded with enthusiasm.

"My friends," he said as he stooped and placed the note in the blind beggar's hand, "let us take a lesson from this. You wanted the Emir's note of promise of fortune when it was crisp and new. You wanted it just as much when it was crumpled. And you want it still, now that it is tattered and torn. For you knew that our noble Emir would honour his promise no matter how tattered and torn his note had become."

There was complete silence, for everyone by now were wondering who this man could be who spoke with such authority and treated one of the Emir's highly valued promissory notes with such disrespect.

"No matter what I did to the note," he went on in a kind voice, "you wanted it just as much because it did not decrease in value. My dear brothers, there are some people who many times in their lives have been dropped, crumpled and ground into the dirt by wrong decisions they made and by circumstances that Allah alone can fully know."

The bazaar was now at a complete standstill as everyone stood silently and listened in awe.

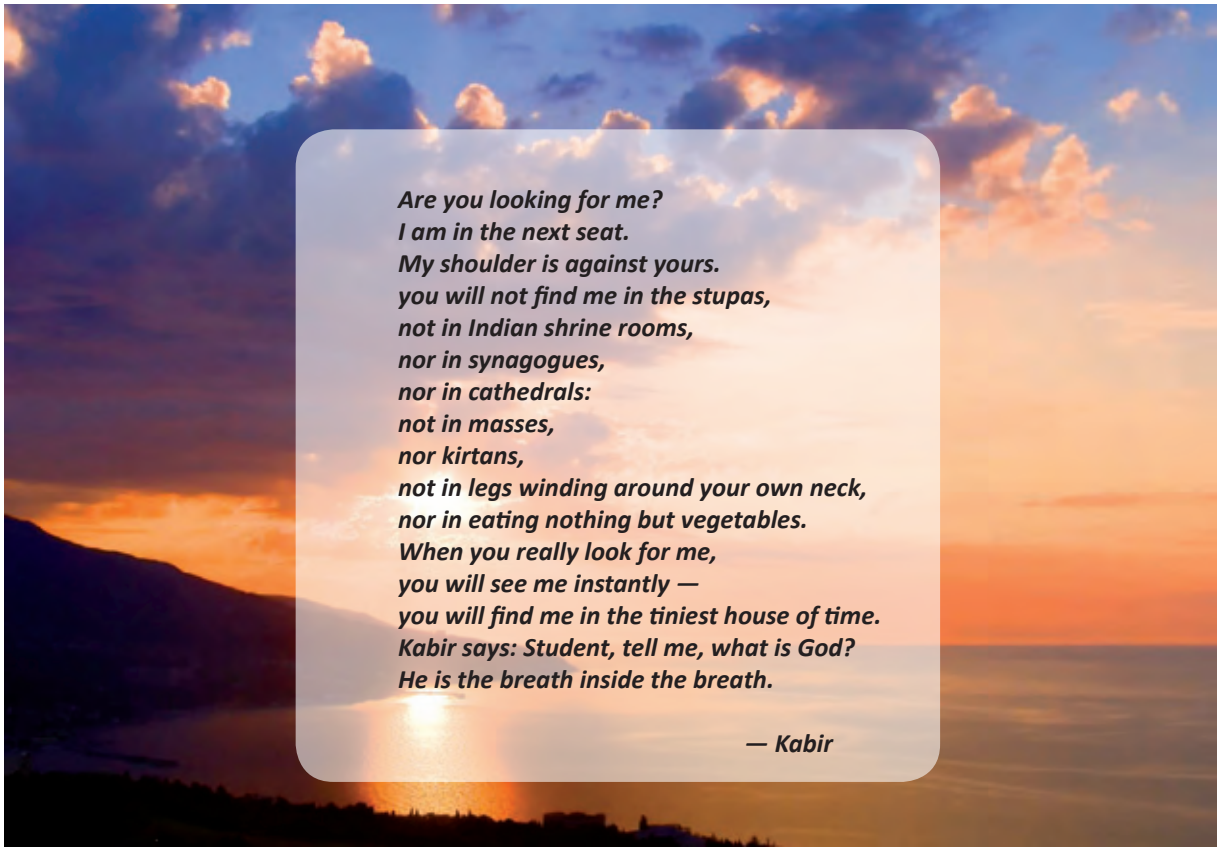
"And at such times," he went on, "these cousins of

ours feel as though they are worthless and indeed are treated as worthless by all who would judge them, just as this blind beggar at your feet, has been ignored and left to starve for years before your eyes which were all blessed with sight.

"Yet, dear cousins, no matter what has happened in the past or what will happen to each of you in the future, by the will of Allah, you will never lose your value to Him. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to the One who loves you most. The worth of your lives comes not from what you do or whom you know, but by who you are. You are all special in the eyes of Allah, just as this blind beggar should be special to you today and every day."

Tears welled up in the eyes of even the strongest of men in the crowd as he went on. "Don't ever forget this lesson and pass it on to whoever has a willing ear to hear. For you may never know the lives it touches, the hurting hearts it will heal, or the hope it will bring to the downtrodden. Count your blessings, not your troubles, and give praise alone to Allah."

Some people stood and stared a while longer while others shuffled away in silence. Incredibly though, no one noticed as the teacher of hearts, the legendary Mustafa the wise of Córdoba, slipped silently through a doorway never again to be seen.



**Are you looking for me?
I am in the next seat.
My shoulder is against yours.
you will not find me in the stupas,
not in Indian shrine rooms,
nor in synagogues,
nor in cathedrals:
not in masses,
nor kirtans,
not in legs winding around your own neck,
nor in eating nothing but vegetables.
When you really look for me,
you will see me instantly —
you will find me in the tiniest house of time.
Kabir says: Student, tell me, what is God?
He is the breath inside the breath.**

— Kabir

