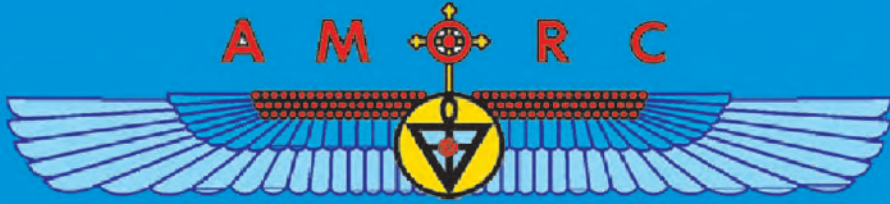


Rosicrucian Heritage



March 2017 - Vol 24, No 1



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Rosicrucian Heritage

March 2017 - Volume 24, No 1

CONTENTS

- 2 **Secularity and Spirituality** - by Christian Bernard
- 3 **Wisdom** - by Christian Bernard
- 4 **Sanctum Musings: Our Obligations to Light, Life and Love** - by Kenneth U Idiodi
- 8 **Examine Your Intent - True? Necessary? Kind?**
- by Sven Johansson
- 9 **From the Tao Te Ching**
- 10 **Plato's Doctrine of Ideas** - by Bill Farley
- 13 **A Bit of Eternity** - by Blanche Jefferson
- 14 **Immortality and the Afterlife** - by Paul Goodall
- 19 **A Smile** - from The Dentist
- 20 **Tai Chi Meditation** - by Charles Tease
- 22 **An Enquiry into Consciousness** - by Ralph M Lewis
- 25 **Navajo Sandpainting: Sacred Healing** - by Pensator
- 29 **Socrates** - by Jean Ewing
- 32 **The Mountain of Initiation** - by Nobilis
- 35 **The Glories of Norman Sicily** - by Betty Main
- 40 **Symbolism, Esotericism and the Salon de Rose Croix in Late 19th Century Art** - by Rick Cobban
- 46 **Inner Light** - by Albert van Wyk
- 47 **Don't Come Second in the Race Against Time**
- by Shirley Elsby
- 51 **Best of Friends** - by Doreen Eustice

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Cover spread

My beloved, my children of Africa.



Secularity & Spirituality

*by Christian Bernard
Imperator of AMORC*

SOME SUBJECTS are always delicate to deal with. But in these troubled times when certain values are being called into question throughout the world, and all manner of ideas are streaming out everywhere on the Internet, I would like to put forward a few considerations concerning secularity and its relationship with spirituality. It must be clear to all of us that while the slide into religious extremism is in full flow and practically out of control, a slide into secularism is also taking place.

What we see occurring is that, in certain countries, religious fundamentalism has driven some political leaders and institutions into adopting an increasingly robust stance that supports secularity. In the circumstances, this is healthy, because what must absolutely be avoided is a situation where that which belongs to the field of religion comes to replace the laws which govern the public arena. However, such concerns must not foster the belittling of religious beliefs, let alone of spirituality in general.

For some time now, we have witnessed the rise in influence of a non-religious or secular fundamentalism bordering on secularism, whose object seems to be the setting of moral values on an atheistic footing, and

the promoting of rationalism as much as rationalness. However, as the most inspired philosophers of the past have demonstrated so admirably, secularity and spirituality do not in any way conflict with one another, and can harmoniously co-exist.

This is certainly not a new phenomenon. For example, it was widespread during the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, as well as many others over the last few centuries. And it was supported by certain movements, including political ones, and continues to oppose all forms of spirituality.

Spirituality arose in the human consciousness at Humanity's very beginnings, and has gone hand in hand with the development of art, literature, architecture and other fields that are an integral part of history, culture and tradition. Secularity, in the sense given to it nowadays, is really a relatively recent socio-political precept, and not universal in nature. Be that as it may, spirituality and secularity have become inseparable, and need to have mutual respect for each other. For this reason, even if they have no spiritual inclinations, atheists ought to show that they are just as open-minded as those who are spiritually-inclined but have no religion.



Set out as 12 points that might be described as “Rosicrucian”, the following are some thoughts on this subject:

1. If religious fundamentalism is reprehensible, then so too is secular, or non-religious, fundamentalism; for it also leads to intolerance, discrimination and oppression.
2. There should be no laws or civil dictates to prevent a person from freely living their faith, as long as they respect public legislation and their fellow citizens while doing so.
3. All religions deserve respect in terms of the best they offer their followers for peacefully living their faith, and making a positive contribution to living together in harmony.
4. Spirituality is broader than religiousness, in the sense that a person can be spiritually-inclined without having a religion or following a religious creed.
5. No religion holds a monopoly on faith or truth, and no religion is meant to dominate the entire world.
6. The best service that a follower can perform on behalf of their religion is to openly condemn any fundamentalist or fanatical behaviour that claims to be carried out in its name: a failure to do so amounts to encouraging and supporting the worst that religiosity can give rise to.
7. It is true that religion has caused clashes, conflicts and wars over the ages: yet politics has caused even more; and it is in religious and mystical writings that the most ardent calls for fraternity and peace can be found.
8. Paradoxical though it may seem, civil society should encourage dialogue between the religions; for this is a way for believers, who are members of society as well, to give special attention to mutual tolerance, not to mention goodwill.
9. Given that it is impossible to prove either the existence or non-existence of God, those who believe should have respect for atheists, just as atheists should have respect for those who believe.
10. Even though politics and religion, like rationality and faith, are two separate and distinct fields, they should not be set against one another, but applied jointly to serving the common good.
11. Since every human being has a soul, spirituality is an integral part of everyone’s nature and a vital requirement which cannot be fulfilled by either atheism or materialism.
12. Although secularity is necessary in order to ensure that a society does not slide into theocracy, spirituality should be a source of inspiration for all of its members, both those who govern and those who are governed.

.....
I am pleased to have been able to share with you these thoughts, which are intended to be universal rather than personal in nature. May wisdom enlighten minds and the whole world!

WISDOM



*from the book “Rosicrucian Reflections”
by Christian Bernard*

A truly wise person is not one who speaks well about wisdom, but one who is favourably spoken of because of the wisdom of his or her actions.

Showing wisdom does not mean wanting absolutely to reform the evil we believe we see in others, but harmonising with the good we are certain we perceive within them.

The mission of wisdom is to preserve harmony where it exists and to do everything possible to put it where it is not.





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*

Our Obligations to Light, Life and Love

ROSICRUCIAN philosophy, literature and tradition are filled with references to light, life and love. While these words are common place, their use in the Rosicrucian tradition may appear a little abstract to some. However, with a little reflection on this profound trinity of forces, much is revealed that is of great practical value to our lives. Abstract subjects are made easy to assimilate when they are introduced as allegories or parables. And the following allegory introduces us to the higher concepts of light, life, and love in a simple down to earth manner.

Triple Blessing Allegory

Aspero was quite a fortunate young lad by any standards. He had three special blessings. He was blessed with a very sturdy physical constitution and was hardly ever ill. He also had a sharp inquiring mind and could easily mentally grasp issues that most people found complex or confusing. To crown it all,

he had a mild and charming disposition that made him endearing to almost everyone he interacted with. Aspero was well aware of his qualities. However, he was a little disconcerted with his observation that many persons in society were accorded greater status than him despite having far lesser abilities than he had.

This disconcertedness took root in his heart and began to grow until he became obsessed with the desire to gain a greater status in society than these “usurpers.” He was ready to do this at any cost. In a decisive act of desperation, Aspero turned to his Creator and petitioned fervently that he be accorded the status he felt he deserved, adding that he was ready to trade in a portion of any of his blessings in compensation; after all those who enjoyed a higher status in society did not seem to need as much blessings as he enjoyed.

The Creator agreed to the ‘deal’ which led to Aspero agreeing to suffer a loss in the level of his physical vitality. But as soon as this was done, the weakness of body he experienced was intolerable.



So he quickly appealed to rather have his mental faculties diminished. This was granted, but the resulting confusion and fear he experienced made him quickly ask for a restoration. Finally he requested for a reduction of his charm and connection with others. This was granted but the loneliness that descended on him was unbearable. It immediately became very clear to him that societal status was of far lesser value than the three blessings he was already enjoying. Aspero became contrite and asked the Creator for forgiveness which was of course granted freely. However, when Aspero went back to his normal life, he found that his blessings had all increased. His vitality had increased dramatically.

...we can only be successful when we avoid trying to be someone else and rather strive to be who we really are by appreciating and applying our God-given talents.

His wisdom and understanding had reached sage-like proportions. And his greater charm and connection with all things made him a shining star. As he applied his talents in service to humanity, he soon became a revered consultant to the high and mighty of the land which naturally accorded him a high ranking status in the society. The status he had earlier craved for was far less than the one he now had. With more than a slight feeling of being unworthy of his attainments, he turned to the Creator with thankfulness and to enquire why he was granted such an increase in his blessings in spite of the fact that he had earlier shown ingratitude.

The Creator informed him that his earlier ingratitude had given way to an increased appreciation for his blessings in the face of the threat of their being diminished. And it was in fact his greater appreciation of the three special blessings of Light, Life, and Love that brought about their increase; not as a grant but in fulfilment of cosmic law.

Of the many lessons he gained from his experiences, perhaps one of the most cherished by Aspero was the fact that we can only be successful when we avoid trying to be someone else and rather strive to be who we really are by appreciating and applying our God-given talents.

Striving to Be

There is an arcane saying that Being eternally strives to be. This implies that a certain amount of effort is

required for anything to be maintained in existence. This is easily demonstrated in living things. The effort of the reproductive process is required to bring a new living thing into existence. And staying alive or in existence requires constant striving or effort. This may not be so obvious in the case of non-living or inanimate things. However, when we consider the scientific fact that all things are in constant motion internally even when appearing to be motionless, we will realise that an inanimate object requires a force to hold its component particles together. This force is like an effort to remain in existence or an effort to be.

It is certainly expedient to classify things into living and non-living. As we have been taught in elementary biology; movement, respiration, sensitivity, growth, reproduction, excretion, and nutrition are the differentiating characteristics of living things. However, below the molecular level of the living thing we find atoms similar to what we find in the inanimate objects. As we go to deeper subatomic levels we come to the vibrations of energy fundamental to all existence. This energy which underlies all phenomena is certainly a living force. In this regard, we can say that living things are one form of life while non-living things are another form of life.

Along with the gift of life, humanity is the beneficiary of many gifts from the Cosmic. A gift is typically defined as something acquired without compensation. In other words, a gift is something given unconditionally. However, in Nature, the Law of Balance demands an equal and opposite reaction for every action. For every gift we receive from the Cosmic there is a demand to work for its continued expression or development.

It is said that Nature abhors a vacuum or a space devoid of matter. A vacuum is immediately challenged by nature's forces by bearing upon it from all directions until it is closed up. An excellent example of this occurs in the atmosphere when a streak of lightening cuts across the skies. Lightening, which is a natural discharge of electrostatic energy creates a vacuum in its path which the surrounding air rushes to close up giving a resounding clap of thunder from the forceful collusion of air. The frightening sound of the thunder clap could be taken metaphorically as a loud protest by Nature over its dislike of vacuums. It is perhaps the inactivity in the vacuum that Nature abhors because any form of dormancy is penalised by the forces of nature.

The penalty for inactivity is degeneration. Take the example of the cultivation of a beautiful garden of flowers which requires a lot of activity in terms of watering, pruning, weeding, keeping out pests, etc. If



the activities of gardening are suspended, the forces of nature will quickly take the garden out of existence, turning it into an overgrown bush.

A further example can be found in the atrophy of the muscles of our physical body when they are not put to active use. By failing to use the muscles, the natural process of their elimination is instigated as Nature has zero tolerance for inactivity. Our mental faculties are also affected by the same principle. Any of our mental faculties not put into regular use for extended periods of time will begin to become less and less effective. A careful consideration of these facts will logically bring us to the conclusion that we must either actively work with the forces of Nature or be consumed by them.

Rosicrucian philosophy lays emphasis on three fundamental cosmic gifts and these are the gifts of Life, Light, and Love. Understanding these cosmic gifts and our obligations or responsibilities towards their sustenance and growth is necessary for our personal development and wellbeing.

The Gift of Life

The gift of life for us as human beings is closely associated with our consciousness of self and the world around us. Our objective consciousness began with our first breath as we came into the world. Carried in the air that we breathe is the mysterious life force which gives us self-consciousness and our personality. In Rosicrucian philosophy, this mysterious life force is referred to as the Vital Life Force. The expression and balance of the life-force in us depends on the conditions we establish in our beings. We can facilitate or hamper the expression of our life force by our lifestyles and how we express ourselves in our thoughts and conduct. When we fall ill, it is an indication that the life force is functioning below its optimum level of activity because of the poor conditions in which it has to operate. When the conditions of the body or mind are no longer conducive for the expression of the life force, transition occurs.

Voltaire once said:

God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well.

The physical body needs to be properly exercised and fed with a diet that will provide the required nutrition for its proper metabolism. Our thoughts should be positive and uplifting to strengthen the whole being and support the harmony that naturally exists between



The knowledge behind the construction of the great pyramids of Ancient Egypt is to a large extent lost to the present generation.

our cells, organs, and body system. The vital life force will then come into full expression and we will begin to experience the finer things of life as our higher faculties unfold.

It is evident that a healthy body and healthy mind are essential for the enjoyment of life and make us more effective in contributing to the wellbeing of others. It is unfortunate, that most people pick up lifestyle habits that are detrimental to healthy living. We find that ailments like hypertension, diabetes, and cancer formerly found mainly among older adults are now increasingly affecting the young. This should be a wakeup call for everyone to take healthy living as an obligation to the gift of life.

The Gift of Light

Here we refer not to physical light but the symbolic light of knowledge and understanding. It was in this sense that Ralph Waldo Emerson said:

A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within.

The world that we have created for ourselves is largely influenced by our level of knowledge and understanding. The advances that we have made into the laws of Nature are from the inspiration granted by the Cosmic. However, the knowledge acquired and mastered in any era can still be lost to future generations without having in place an active system or institution designed for its preservation and development. For example, the knowledge behind the construction of the great pyramids of Ancient Egypt is to a large extent lost to the present generation.



Modern day scientists are yet to understand how such immense structures could have been erected with such precision. Fortunately, some of the fundamental principles of knowledge that enabled the Ancient Egyptians carry out such amazing feats have been perpetuated by authentic esoteric organisations such as the Rosicrucian Order. The light of knowledge and understanding must be sought after and applied in our daily endeavours. The practical application of knowledge to the challenges of life is what actually gives knowledge its reality and value. As we use the knowledge we have to overcome the difficulties faced by humanity in the world, darkness will recede and the light of happiness, peace, and love will expand.

The Gift of Love

Love is perhaps the most sublime of the gifts that humanity receives from the Cosmic. Universal love is a strong feeling of connection and identity with all things to the point of being easily affected by what happens to them. In universal love, a sense of unity is established with everything. In every other type of love, only aspects of creation become targets of our attention and connection; this may pertain to some individuals around us or some things we cherish. However, regardless of any limits of expression, love has an uplifting and empowering effect when experienced. It is under the nurturing influence of love that babies grow up to be adults with healthy bodies and minds.

The absence of love leads to severe psychological depravity in persons who are unfortunate to suffer this. Such persons easily grow up to become hardened criminals or societal misfits and are more likely to suffer serious health challenges. Love is often described as an emotion that comes over us spontaneously and uncontrollably. This idea is captured in the legend of Cupid, Roman god of Love, often depicted as a mischievous, winged child invisible to human eyes whose arrows pierce the hearts of couples, causing them to fall in love.

According to the legend, the arrows of Cupid are of two types: the Gold Arrow, which awakens true love, and the Lead Arrow, which invokes passion. However, the love that takes hold of us without our permission may also disappear on its own accord unless we make a

conscious decision to continue to love unconditionally. John Lennon once said:

We've got this gift of love, but love is like a precious plant. You can't just accept it and leave it in the cupboard or just think it's going to get on by itself. You've got to keep watering it. You've got to really look after it and nurture it.

In other words, for love to be sustained and developed, a conscious decision must be taken to offer our love steadfastly. In this way, our emotional and mental forces become synchronised in a manner that is mutually energising and productive. The power of love then becomes permanent and constantly at our disposal, enriching our lives.

Interrelationship of Light, Life, And Love

Very fortunately, light, life, and love are so interrelated that working on any one affects the other two. As we strive to improve the flow of the life force in us, our general awareness becomes heightened predisposing us to a better understanding and also improving our capacity to connect with all things.

As we gain a better understanding of self and the universe, we will be motivated to adopt a lifestyle that promotes good health and vitality. We will also better appreciate our connection with all things and direct our lives accordingly. When love dominates our consciousness it has an invigorating tonic effect on our physical body, and a soothing effect on our emotions that frees the intellect of many constraints.

A symbol that accurately depicts the interrelationship of light, life, and love can be formed by visualising a triangle and placing the word light at the first point, life at the second point, and love at the third point.

In our sanctum musings, if we desire an existence that will be fulfilling and rewarding, it is imperative that we endeavour to constantly nurture and develop the three fundamental cosmic gifts of Light, Life, and Love. May we ever be worthy of these wonderful blessings from the Divine as we express and share them with others through service.



Cupid, Roman god of Love.





Examine Your Intent

Is it True?
Is it Necessary?
Is it Kind?

*by Sven Johansson
Grand Master*

THERE IS A brief saying attributed to the Buddha and it goes something like this: *“Before you speak, your intentions must pass through portals three, one of each kind in letters bold to see: Is it True? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?”*

Although claimed by some as being one of the sayings of the Buddha, there is no documentary evidence to support this. There have also been claims that it was first formulated by the 13th Century Persian mystic Rumi, but that is highly unlikely, given the very different style of his writings and lack of documentary evidence. And then there is the litany of many others, from Abraham Lincoln

to Eleanor Roosevelt, William “the bard” Shakespeare to William “the mad” Blake, from Confucius to Sai Baba, from Lao Tzu to Queen Victoria herself. But none are credible sources of this gem of wise advice and none have left any documentary evidence of having said anything of the sort.

So, from the world of written evidence, let us settle on the person who popularised it the most and may well have been its original author. In 1872, Mary Ann Pietzker published in her book “Miscellaneous Poems” (still easily available) a beautiful short poem entitled “Is It True? Is It Necessary? Is It Kind?” and here it is:



Is It True? Is It Necessary? Is It Kind?

by *Mary Ann Pietzker*

Oh! Stay, dear child, one moment stay,
Before a word you speak,
That can do harm in any way
To the poor, or to the weak;
And never say of any one
What you'd not have said of you,
Ere you ask yourself the question,
"Is the accusation true?"

And if 'tis true, for I suppose
You would not tell a lie;
Before the failings you expose
Of friend or enemy:
Yet even then be careful, very;
Pause and your words well weigh,
And ask if it be necessary,
What you're about to say.

And should it necessary be,
At least you deem it so,
Yet speak not unadvisedly
Of friend or even foe,
Till in your secret soul you seek
For some excuse to find;
And ere the thoughtless word you speak,
Ask yourself, "Is it kind?"

When you have ask'd these questions three,
True — Necessary — Kind,
Ask'd them in all sincerity,
I think that you will find,
It is not hardship to obey
The command of our Blessed Lord,
No ill of any man to say,
No, not a single word.



From the Tao Te Ching

Do without doing.
Work without forcing.
Taste without seasonings.
Recognise the Great in the small,
And the many in the few.

Repay hatred with kindness.

Deal with the difficult while it is easy.
Begin great works while they are small.
Certainly the Earth does difficult work with ease,
And accomplishes great affairs from small beginnings.

So, the Sage, by not striving for greatness, achieves greatness.

If you think everything is easy,
You will find only difficulty.
That is why the Sage considers all things difficult,
And finds nothing too difficult in the end.





Plato's Doctrine of Ideas

by *Bill Farley*

AS COGNISANT, thinking beings, we are a vibrant units of energy occupied largely with percepts¹ and concepts regarding our environment, our place in the universe and the Ultimate Reality or great First Cause. This “mind-energy” is constantly weighing, comparing and making judgments, whether consciously or unconsciously. And on these judgments depend the resulting decisions involving our Will and the Action resulting from it. The philosopher Immanuel Kant once wrote:

Objects of the senses are perceptible by us only as they appear and not as they really are. In the same way, objects which are beyond our apperception are not objects as far as our theoretical knowledge is concerned.

[...] All attempts to obtain a comprehension of the transcendental by means of the reason be definitely renounced. Agnosticism denies



any possibility of attaining transcendental truth by means of reason *[alone]*.

How then can we attain to the transcendental, the super-physical, the real, what lies behind or above the changing phenomena of the material world? How can we sense the noumenon behind the many manifestations of the physical world? To advanced thinkers and mystics like Socrates, Plato and Jacob Boehme, cognition of the real is immediate. Through Cosmic attunement a person can pass beyond the veil which separates the “uninitiated” from the world of Reality. As Boehme wrote after his last Illumination:

In a quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a University, for I saw and knew the Being of all things, the Abyss and the Byss [sic], so that I did not only wonder but exceedingly rejoice.

[...] The Buddha knew by direct cognition the laws behind the phenomena revealed by the senses. He perceived an ordered Universe, the smallest movement definitely caused and itself the cause of action, and he perceived that when these are understood, power follows as a necessity.

The Buddha knew by direct cognition the laws behind the phenomena revealed by the senses.

Becoming

In the higher interpretation of a mystic, facts which heretofore seemed dull and lifeless take on an added lustre of wonder and achievement..., a living reality. Thought is vital and progressive, and consists of a continuous series of judgments, a constant tearing-down and building-up in the light of newer knowledge and experiences, as Hegel so ably demonstrated in his famous doctrine of “Becoming.” All scientific disciplines are simply segments of the great circle of the knowable universe, and scientists everywhere are devotedly toiling to reveal hidden treasures of knowledge..., what mystics consider to be the very laws that uphold the universe..., laws that proceed from a primary and ultimate “First Cause.” As the philosopher Baruch Spinoza wrote...



The philosophers Baruch Spinoza and Henri Bergson.

We do not see the law of inverse squares, but it is there and everywhere. It was there before anything began, and will survive when all the world of things is a finished tale.

And from the great French philosopher Henri Bergson we read: “...*reality is fundamentally a spiritual activity.*” For those who have committed themselves to lives of inner spiritual discovery, how well they understand this definition! It is, to use one of Plato’s phrases, “*a priceless pearl of philosophy.*” As opposed to the purely mental processes of thought, the mystic’s immediate cognition of realities is inspiring and illuminating. And as [the writer] Clifford Bax says:

the purpose of the mystic is the mightiest and most solemn that can ever be...; for the central aim of all mysticism is to soar out of separate personality up to the very consciousness of God.

In our journey toward the heights of Illumination there are many milestones; and we who are endeavouring to travel along that pathway, have realised many marvellous manifestations of psychic phenomena hitherto hidden and unsuspected. When one is able to perceive super-physical phenomena, one knows that one has made at least some progress on the Path. And this knowledge, however slight, motivates further development which will open a doorway of infinite possibilities, and may lead to the very footstool of Divinity.

Cosmic Attunement

Plato we are told, attained that greatest of human attainments, a state of being known to modern mystics simply as “Cosmic Consciousness.” To him, ideas were real, and many who have worked through their



Rosicrucian mystical studies have realised the validity of Plato's "*Doctrine of Ideas*." Up to this time, for most of us, this doctrine may have been only an interesting hypothesis, an unproven theory. But if experience is knowledge, then the experiences we have had in mounting the first steps of the Rosicrucian path have given us a clearer conception of Plato's meaning than years of book study and philosophical speculation could otherwise have done.

Through Cosmic attunement, all the subtle forces impinging on the sensitive nerve centres of the human organism give us varied and multitudinous visions of the land-beyond-the-veil, the veil which separates our objective consciousness from our subjective consciousness. Who, for example, that has been privileged to enter the Cosmic Garden can doubt that it is the archetype of all the particular manifestations of gardens on the physical plane? In that luminous garden, vibrant with architectonic and prismatic harmonies "*a light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread..., the soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers near,*" and one senses part of the divine plan of the great Cosmic Mind of the Universe.

With Cosmic attunement we are enabled to penetrate beyond the veil and sense the Ideal as opposed to the Real, which manifests on the earth plane as Actuality, or the objective phenomena of the physical world. The Idea of the Supreme Mind is creative and manifests first on the super-physical plane as thought-forms or, as Plato calls them, Ideas; and later, on the physical plane, as the objective phenomena of all the outward manifestations of nature.

The Cosmic Mind

Plato's *Idea* is the eternal, the ideal, the universal, the prototype, the noumenon..., and all physical phenomena are but the temporal and particular. "*As above, so below,*" thought is creative. Let us take a portrait painted as a concrete example of the creative power of the human mind. What is the power behind this picture? Surely not the pigment, not the canvas, not the brush..., these are but instruments in the guiding hand of the artist who brings to fruition his Idea, his idea of colour, form, proportion and harmony, plus the personality of the sitter.

In the realm of abstract qualities or activities of the Soul such as goodness, justice, temperance, beauty, truth and so on..., for this seer of the invisible, there is a norm or pattern inherent in the human mind and

deriving from the Universal Mind, against which, and with which, one judges all particular manifestations of these qualities.

These transcendental Realities or Ideas are eternal conceptions in the Cosmic Mind. And it is only by refining, by a constant process of dialectical inclusion and exclusion of definition, that we may hope to attain to an approximate comprehension thereof. This inward dialectic is the birthright of every individual, and its spokespersons are the two inner voices which are never silent, but are constantly defining, analysing, weighing, judging, accepting or rejecting, by the power of reason vouchsafed to us by the Divine Mind.

Are we not all sparks of the Divine Fire? Are we not individual souls depending upon, and drawing inspiration from, the great Oversoul of the Universe?

The Human Mind

Are we not all sparks of the Divine Fire? Are we not individual souls depending upon, and drawing inspiration from, the great Oversoul of the Universe? And can we not by loving search, partake in some measure of the ineffable wisdom, and approach in thought to the intellectual beauty of perfect justice, perfect truth, and the other virtues?

In his Dialogues, Plato makes his beloved Master, Socrates, "*that old gadfly who brings souls to birth,*" the arbiter and judge of all the definitions of abstract qualities brought forward by his listeners. For Socrates, the human mind and reason are much more worthy of study than the physical world around us, and this is expressed in his famous dictum, "*Know Thyself.*" He himself professes to know nothing, but only to be a lover of wisdom. And he occupies himself with the eternal verities, those Ideas of all the intellectual abstractions which form the subject-matter of Plato's Dialogues. For Plato, as for Socrates, the supreme Idea is the Idea of the Absolute Good, or God, the essential unity in-variety of all that IS.

Endnotes

Percept: The representation of what is perceived; a basic component in the formation of a concept.

Noumenon: The intellectual conception of a thing as it is in itself, not as it is known through perception.



A Bit of Eternity

by *Blanche Jefferson*



AS I WALK along the edge of the sea, a wave moves forward and washes over my feet. I feel its cooling balm and wonder where this life-giving water has been before it came to me. How many thousands upon thousands of miles has it travelled? How many turbulences has it been a part of and why now so serene and demure?

I think about the people on other shores in faraway places and try to imagine how many generations, dynasties, through how many civilisations this water has continued the sequences planned for it..., and wonder also how lives have been affected by its coming and going. I realise how eternal this water is, changing forms, leaving its ancient and final home in the moving oceans to rise slowly, lightly, invisibly toward the Sun...,

then rolling, floating there in clouds, forming small drops, masses of them, that fall to the earth, cleansing, moistening, refreshing.

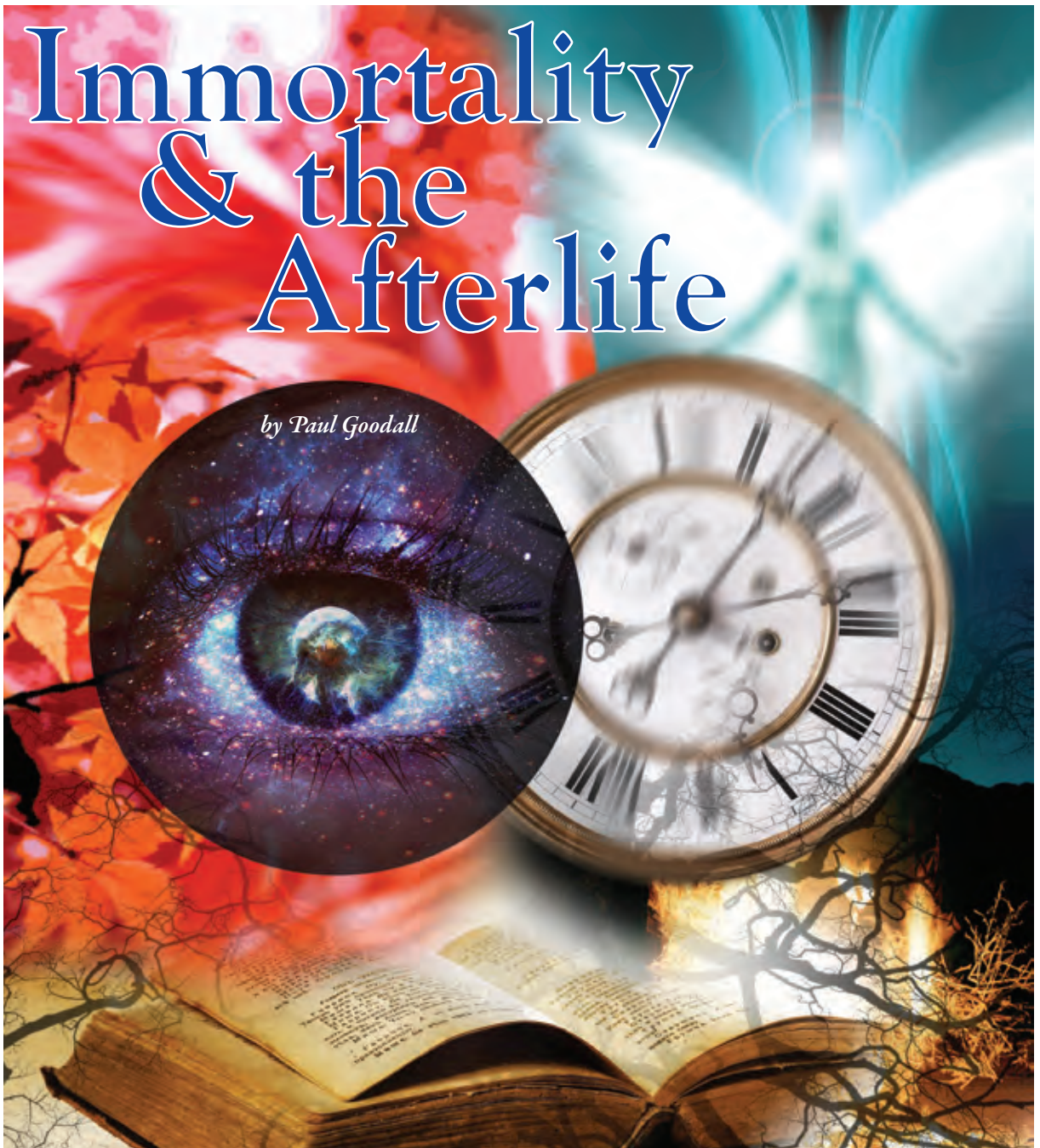
Shyly finding its way over the earth it joins small rivulets, then larger and still larger waters until finally and eagerly it rushes toward home: home to the sea from whence it came to again and yet again begin its small whispy life, again growing and returning to the sea.

Here now with me this caressing water that brushes over my tired feet is soon gone, snatched back into the deep. I watch it go, knowing full well that it will come back again in quiet patience or in turbulent storm to repeat its cycle and wear away the rocks I pass along the beach, erode the very beach itself, and carry the sands to other places, living its life, doing its work, and changing eventually the very shape of the lands themselves..., this gentle water washing over my feet.



Immortality & the Afterlife

by Paul Goodall

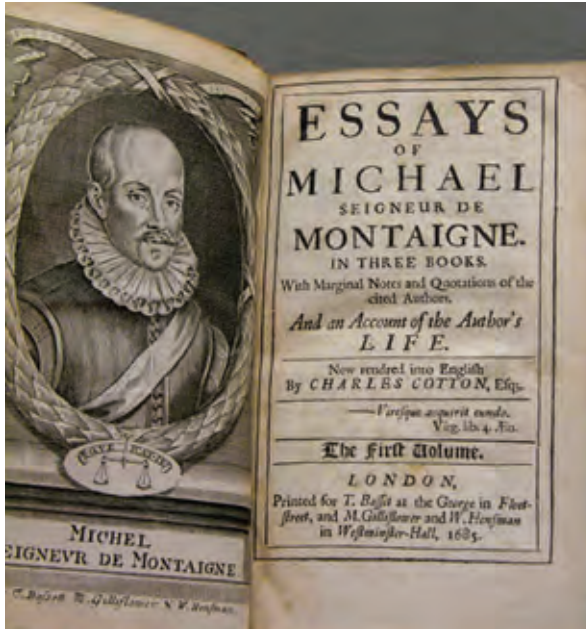


IF THERE IS one question that dominates our thinking over all others, it is that of our own mortality. It always seems to be there at the back of our minds ready to announce itself at any time. Although the self awareness of our physical being is so deep-seated that it allows us much of the time to ignore the eventual demise of our physical body, it is only when we are reminded of it through a life threatening experience - the death of a loved one or through the social media, television and books -

that it asserts itself once more. We simply cannot escape its insistence and are drawn to ponder the mystery of life and death, whether for a fleeting moment or by prolonged personal research and contemplation.

The first known written record of man's discovery of death is contained within the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the earliest known literary work from Babylon (c.2500 BCE) where its general themes are the same as now, following the idea that we must continue existing





The French essayist Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592).

in some form after we die. Indeed, so strong are we attached to living that the idea of a continuation of life after death is an agreeable proposition and has been so for millennia. Given the particularly difficult day to day living of those in the past and the fear that such suffering might continue after death, the speculations of ancient philosophers concerning the soul's ultimate blissful immortality would have been very comforting.

Fear of Death

A pessimistic outlook on life can be seen as one remedy to conquer the fear of death although Seneca (c.4-65 CE), the Roman philosopher and statesman, advocated taking one's place, wherever it is assigned by nature or God, and exiting quietly and gracefully. Seneca's demise was not particularly graceful however; he was ordered by Nero to take his own life after being implicated in a plot to assassinate the emperor and it appears that his suicide was a rather botched affair and resulting in a painful end according to the historian Tacitus (c.56-117 CE) in his *Annals of Imperial Rome*.

The French essayist Michel de Montaigne in his *Essays* (1580) says that "...if we have known how to live properly and calmly, we will know how to die in the same manner", which reflects the attitude of those who were in a position to appreciate the Renaissance spirit and the world of which they were a part. The idea that life could be enjoyed was a far cry from the Christian custom of living in the fear of death.

Immortality and the Soul

An effective defence against the fear of death was the idea of some kind of immortality after one's life was over. Having the belief that we are reunited with our loved ones who have already died adds a personal dimension to an afterlife, and one that is also pleasant. Given this, it becomes important to find arguments that will support the notion of immortality, and this has been one of the most discussed subjects in philosophy. It is quite naturally centred on the nature and function of the soul since the physical body cannot survive once the vital life force has left it. Past Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, Ralph M Lewis describes it as follows:

The decay and dissolution of the material body were evident even to the people of early cultures. Consequently, survival was attributed to the intangible realities of our being. That which was thought to keep on living was the spirit or energy that animates the body.

It was reasonable to believe that that which appeared to enter the body and to depart from it at will was not destroyed with it. The spirit then, was conceived to be as indestructible as the air breathed by the living. Thus the continuity of life after death was assumed. That which cannot be destroyed is manifestly assumed to have a continuation of existence.¹

Plato (c.428-348 BCE) advanced a number of arguments to support the possibility of an immortal soul such as...

- Our intuitive knowledge of certain a-priori truths implying that the soul exists before the body is formed.
- The soul is the principle of life, bearing within it the life essence and is therefore eternal.
- The soul is self-moving, and being always in motion and being the source of that movement and of life itself, it can have no beginning or end and must therefore be immortal.
- Since the soul is of an incorporeal substance, it must be incorruptible and incapable of dissolution.²

Aristotle on the other hand, proposed that the 'active intellect' or mind, which he considered of divine





Past Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, Ralph M. Lewis.

origin, was the eternal part of man's nature, denying that the whole soul was indestructible with certain parts of it being inseparable from its body.³ Since the foundation of Western learning (scholasticism) relied on Aristotelian principles, the universally accepted Platonic ideas of immortality were undermined and it wasn't until the Renaissance and the resurrection of hermetic texts that the idea of an immortal soul was extant again.

The French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) writes in his *Discourse on Method*, Part V (1637):-

Next to the error of those who deny God..., there is none which is more effectual in leading feeble minds from the straight path of virtue than to imagine that..., after this life we have nothing to fear or to hope for, any more than the flies or the ants.

Descartes further asserted that our soul is quite naturally independent of our body and therefore not liable to die with it. The very fact that man can think, sets us apart from machines and the rest of the animal kingdom. He concludes from his argument "*cogito, ergo sum*" (I think, therefore I am [namely, I exist]), that it is the soul

that by nature thinks, and that this essence of ourselves actually requires no physical body in which to exist since the soul is incorporeal and entirely distinct from the body.

Resurrection

Arguments and religious doctrines abound that define or explore the possibility of immortality. One that is professed by Christianity is that of resurrection. This follows the idea that there will be a universal reappearance of the dead (both the *just* and *unjust*, so called) in physical form at the 'end of time'. This does not follow the Platonic view on the immortality of the soul which, as we have discussed, sees it as leaving the physical body behind.

But the idea of resurrection is not unique to Christianity. It is also an inherent part of the Zoroastrian philosophy, and Muslims and Jews also share similar beliefs. The Jewish belief in bodily resurrection is enshrined in the last of the 13 principles of faith proposed by Maimonides (1135-1204 CE), the Jewish rabbi, physician and philosopher:-

I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator.

It has to be said though, that there is division concerning the nature of resurrection between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism.

The appeal of reincarnation can be linked to the fact that most would prefer to keep coming back to this earthly existence.

Reincarnation

Acceptance of the idea of reincarnation, particularly as opposed to *resurrection*, has in modern society been gaining ground over the last one hundred years or so. This has been mainly due to closer contact with other cultures around the world as horizons have expanded. But perhaps in today's world it has gained more credence because of the modern media of television and the internet. The appeal of reincarnation (in theory at least) to a modern, hedonistic and largely atheistic society, can probably be linked to the fact that most would prefer to keep coming back to this earthly existence rather than spending an eternity waiting for a final resurrection.

The Greeks gained their ideas about reincarnation from the Egyptians according to the Greek historian





Plato with his finger pointing upwards and Aristotle holding his palm downward, depicting the differences in thought of these two philosophers. -- from The School of Athens by Raphael, 1509.

Herodotus (c.484-425 BCE). It appears that Pythagoras (c.570-490 BCE) was the first to teach the doctrine of reincarnation to the West although his ideas were further refined by later Greek philosophers. A famous fragment of the contemporary philosopher and poet Xenophanes (c.570-475 BCE) provides some insight into what Pythagoras thought happened to the soul after death.

Once, when he [Pythagoras] was present at the beating of a puppy, he pitied it and said: "Stop! Don't keep hitting him, for it is the soul of a man who is dear to me, which I recognised when I heard it yelping."⁴

If one thing was consistent in his thinking, it was the idea of the immortality of the soul.

Popular ideas about reincarnation in the West stem primarily from Hinduism as a result of being frequently exposed to this religion. The Hindus believe that at the heart of every person is the divine soul which they call *atman* and which also experiences multiple incarnations. The contemporary Indian philosopher S. Radhakrishnan gives the following argument in support of it:-

Immortality is the concept of the continuance of the manifestation of a force of which we are now consciously aware.

existence, mental activity and a degree of adaptation to the environment. That these forces will continue is hard to doubt. But in order to support and perhaps illustrate the foregoing, here is an analogy of that permanency:

We know that life can be contained in a very

Since souls are eternal, and since their normal condition is to be associated with a body which is perishable, it is plausible to assume that in order for the soul to remain in its normal condition, it must inhabit an unending succession of bodies.⁵

Immortality: The Mystical Viewpoint

As a mystical organisation with a long lineage and legacy of knowledge from the past, the Rosicrucian Order has its own teachings regarding immortality and the nature of the soul. With the increasing public interest in subjects such as this and the proliferation of media material advertising the same, it can be difficult for the earnest seeker to arrive at a satisfactory philosophical outlook without being swayed this way and that.

To the Rosicrucian, life is a manifestation of *energy*. Although we can't define in objective terms the origin of this energy or its eventual culmination, we do receive intimations in other areas that this energy is infinite. Even in the field of physics, the law of conservation of mass and energy has long been an accepted premise. This law states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. In a chemical process, matter may change its appearance, but the total energy and mass content will remain the same. The sum total of mass and energy in the universe must therefore remain constant. Mass can be converted into energy and energy can be converted into mass, but the loss of one will be exactly balanced by the creation of the other.

In other words, matter, regardless of how it may be changed or modified by heat, pressure or some other force exerted upon it, still exists in gaseous or other forms. It might be reasonable to accept that this attribute of permanency of matter and energy must also exist in the nonphysical world with different nonphysical characteristics.⁶

So, immortality then is the concept of the continuance of the manifestation of a force of which we are now consciously aware. This force pulsates through us in the form of life and expresses itself in physical





René Descartes (1596-1650).

small area. Imagine a tiny seed waiting for the right conditions to prevail in order to begin its growth. It is known that seeds have often lain under conditions unfavourable for growth for years and even centuries. When exposed to soil and moisture however, they have

It is known that seeds have often lain under conditions unfavourable for growth for years and even centuries.

successfully germinated and life in the form of a plant began again. Surely then we can make the assumption that if a seed having lain for long dormant periods can preserve the essence of life, then the life or soul that is within the human body will also survive and manifest in some form when our physical bodies can no longer serve life's purpose.

Immortality is no more than the state of total existence. We are immortal in that we live. Immortality is not ahead; it is here and now. Life is an energy that sweeps on through all time and space. As matter and energy are modified in their use, so life may be modified in its cosmic use. But that it will continue to endure, that is an obvious conclusion from the fact of its existence.

With this in mind it is appropriate that we end with the words of Ralph M. Lewis:

The word 'transition' as used by Rosicrucians, alludes to death not as a cessation of the human self, but rather as a change to another transcendent existence.⁷

Endnotes

1. Lewis, Ralph M., *The Conscious Interlude*, AMORC, 1982, pp. 228-229.
2. Plato, *Phaedrus*, c.370 BCE. This work was set as a dialogue between the characters of Socrates and Phaedrus through which Plato presents his philosophy.
3. Aristotle, *On the Soul* I 1, II 1., being a treatise outlining his philosophical views on the nature of living things.
4. Quoted in Huffman, Carl, "Pythagoras", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/pythagoras/>.
5. Quote from Choron, Jacques, "Death and Immortality", in *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, edited by Philip P. Wiener, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1973-74, Vol.1, p. 646. (Online edition)
6. See also William Hand's series of articles in nine parts entitled "Scientific Mysticism", that appeared in the *Rosicrucian Beacon*, spanning a period from 2004-2008 which have some relevance to the subject of this article.
7. Lewis, Ralph M., *Mental Alchemy*, AMORC, 1979, p. 258.



Pythagoras -- from The School of Athens by Raphael, 1509.





A Smile

from The Dentist

*A smile costs nothing but gives much;
It enriches those who receive,
without making poorer those who give.
It takes but a moment, but the
memory of it sometimes lasts forever.*

*None is so rich or mighty that he
can get along without it.
And none is so poor but that
he can be made rich by it.*

*A smile creates happiness in the home,
fosters goodwill in business, and
is the countersign of friendship.*

*It brings rest to the weary,
cheer to the discouraged,
sunshine to the sad, and
it is nature's best antidote for trouble.*

*Yet it can't be bought, begged, borrowed
or stolen,
for it is of no value to anyone until
it is given.*

*Some people are too tired to give you a smile.
So give them one of yours;
for no one needs a smile as much as
he who has no more to give.*



Tai Chi Meditation

by Charles Tease



TÀIJÍQUÁN, also known as *Tai Chi Chuan*, is not historically of great age although its origins lie in concepts, movements and exercises which have a written history of almost 5,000 years. Two texts of the *Nèijīng* survive, the earliest extant works of Chinese health and medicine, credited to the reign of the Yellow Emperor, Huángdì, said to have lived 2697 – 2597 BCE. To quote:

The means whereby man is created, the means whereby diseases occur, the means whereby man is cured: the twelve meridians are the basis for all theory and treatment. The meridian is that which decides over life and death.

Philosophers practising meditation and natural living, created systems of exercises which linked to their understanding of health maintenance and medical treatments. That such systems have survived millennia

suggests they have value in our modern age.

The Yellow Emperor is also given credit for establishing martial arts which follow similar principles. At its most basic, *Tàijíquán* means Tai Chi boxing, and is a form of martial art although mostly performed for health and exercise. In the present age “Tai Chi” is also promoted as a method for the elderly and infirm to reclaim the natural vigour of youth.

Qì

Although literally meaning air or breath, *Qì* or “Chi” is the vital energy which we breathe in. *Qìgōng*, working with Qì, is a 3,000–year old system of exercises, proper breathing and awareness of power points on meridians. Through specific movements, the flow of energy is directed around the body, ensuring that blockages are freed. Flow, no pain: Pain, no flow!



Tàijíquán utilises Qìgōng exercises for the same purpose, and positive results are felt fairly quickly. At this stage Tàijíquán means working with the universal energy. There is a Daoist practice expressed as *Jīng Qì Shén Wú Dào*. *Jīng* is the life force which gives rise to *Qì*; *Qì* is vital energy which leads to *Shén*; *Shén* is spirit which achieves *Wú*; *Wú* is emptiness which leads to *Dào*; *Dào* is the root of all things. These statements may seem empty and circular, but they allude to deep, indeed profound, concepts.

Dàodéjīng

One of the greatest and best known of ancient Chinese texts is the *Dàodéjīng* or “*Tao Te Ching*,” the book of *Dào*, said to have been written by *Lǎozǐ* (Lao Tze) whose date of birth is traditionally given as 604 BCE. This sage concluded that behind all the many workings of nature there exists an Ultimate Reality which is unknowable, but which manifests in perpetual laws such as those which cause the sun to rise and set, those that allow human beings to live and die, etc. Having no name for it, he called it the *Dào*.

There is a view that the *Dàodéjīng* was written as a handbook for initiates. The Chinese character for *Dào* (Tao) translates as “Way” or “Path,” and seems to carry the same meaning as *Dharma* in Buddhism..., the Path of Awakening or Ultimate Truth beyond worldly things. This would make sense, given that a Chinese legend states that *Lǎozǐ*, as an old man, travelled to India where he became a teacher of *Gautama* who, on enlightenment, became the Buddha. *Dé* (Te) is a fascinating word with at least twenty meanings. But in this context it seems to refer to the force which maintains what *Tao* has created. *Jīng* (Ching) in this context refers to a classic work or, as was adumbrated above, the life force leading through *Qì* to *Shén* or spirit..., also meaning mind, consciousness or concentrated attention.

Wuji

The practitioner of *Tai Chi* commences in the position known as *Wuji* (Wu Chi), the empty circle. He then moves to *Tai Chi*, the circle with a dot in it, or more commonly, the Yin – Yang shape. Teachers say frequently that all one ever needs to know about *Tai Chi* is contained in that one movement, and philosophically speaking this is correct, as it contains the great mystery of the move from “No Thing” to “All Things Possible.” The Limitless (*Wuji*) produces the Delimited or Absolute (*Tai Chi*) which in its turn produces Yin and Yang, and so on to *bā guà*, the eight trigrams, thence to the 64 hexagrams of the *Yi Jīng* (I Ching).

Wuji also means the primordial universe prior to *Tai Chi*, the Absolute or the Supreme Ultimate. Thus *Tàijíquán* also comes to mean the search for the Supreme Ultimate; perhaps the aim of all meditation. It is interesting to compare this with the Rosicrucian definition of Cosmic Consciousness, which is the ability to have an awareness of the whole of reality; to be One with the Absolute, to achieve union with the essence out of which the multitude of forms arise. Taoists maintain there is a major difference between the eastern Supreme Ultimate and the western notion of a Supreme Being. But this may depend on one’s definition of what “Being” is.

Pursuit of Wisdom

For those of us not brought up in Chinese culture, it is necessary to spend some time studying unfamiliar concepts, though without losing sight of a key teaching of the *Dàodéjīng*:

In the pursuit of learning, every day something is acquired. In the pursuit of Tao, every day something is dropped. Less and less is done until non-action is achieved. -- Tao Te Ching XL VIII

The final stage of the Taoist system is the awakening of the inner eye when the practitioner becomes *Xiān* (Hsien), a wise and immortal person, “one who knows the secrets of the universe by being in complete union with the *Tao*, or *God*.”¹

Tai Chi meditation is often performed standing in *Wuji* position with the hands addressing one of the three *Dāntián* (Tan Tien) centres. The lower point, at the solar plexus area, is said to be the physical centre of gravity and the seat of internal energy. The middle by the heart corresponds to the thymus gland, and the upper at forehead level, the third eye, corresponds to the pituitary gland. These are important points for internal meditative techniques.

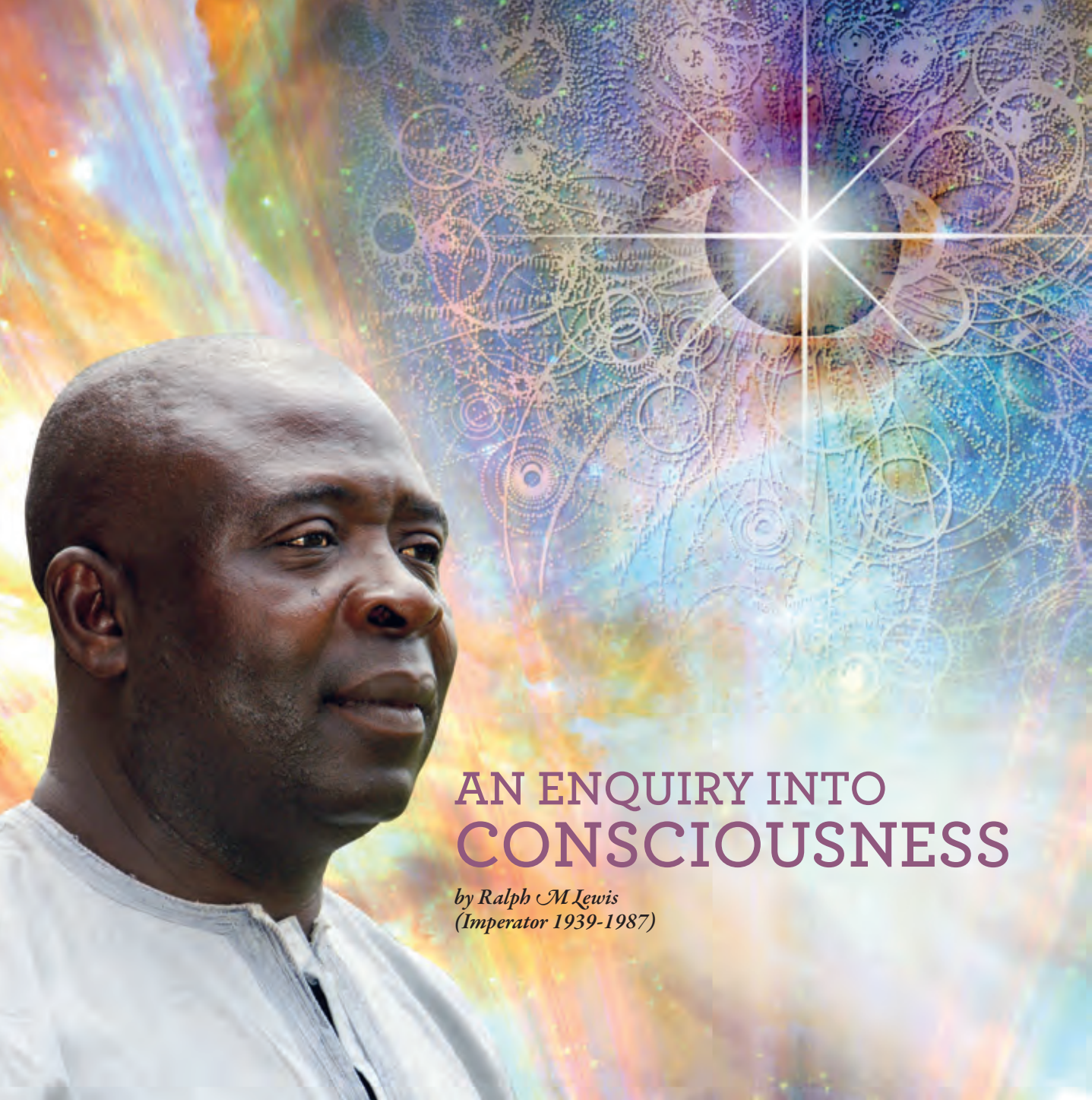
There are many texts written by *Tai Chi* masters over the last three centuries which aid inspiration. One which is well suited to meditation is by *Wang Zongyue* who lived in the 18th century:-

In the practice of Tàijíquán, Yin and Yang must be understood. To know Yin and Yang you must know *Tai Chi*. To know *Tai Chi*, you need to comprehend the *Tao*.

Endnote

Stephen Chang, Chinese Yoga (1983).





AN ENQUIRY INTO CONSCIOUSNESS

by *Ralph M Lewis*
(*Imperator 1939-1987*)

WHAT DO WE mean when we say “*I am conscious?*” Ordinarily, we mean that we are aware. But this surely is insufficient as an explanation, for are we not merely substituting one word for another? There is a duality in every state of consciousness: first, that which is conscious and second, that of which consciousness is aware; namely, that which thinks, and that which is thought about.

Consciousness is not an isolated state, a separate condition. In other words, we cannot be conscious without being conscious of something. Simply,

consciousness is not a thing in itself. Consciousness is not causal; rather, it is a function, which arises out of other conditions. Arthur Schopenhauer, a 19th Century philosopher, said: “*The world is my idea.*” The sun, the earth, the world around us, he said, are but ideas. And the ideas are related to consciousness, which is humankind itself. If we had different organs of perception, our ideas of the world would be quite different. In the words of a prominent neurologist, “*Where even the simplest ideas are not, there can be no consciousness.*”



This statement would seem to limit consciousness only to the ideas which we have. What of sensations such as pain and various forms of pleasure? Why, for example, is an idea different from the feeling of hot and cold? It is because an idea is a point of knowledge, and has such attributes as time, space, and quality. Every one of our ideas exists to us in a period of time. It is either a recollection of a past, or an apparent now, or an imagined future. Every idea also has, to us, the attribute of space. It has either dimension and form, or has an apparent non-existence of space. So, with an abstract idea such as justice, we admit the existence of space by not relating justice to it. Every idea, as a point of knowledge, also has the attribute of quality, and it is this quality which is the impact, the intensity that the idea has upon us.

There can be no consciousness without it manifesting as an idea. It is necessary that we distinguish between true consciousness and nerve energy response.

Let us use an example to understand these attributes of an idea. We see what appears to be a tree. The experience has the time factor of now, the present. But the idea also has dimension; it suggests space, in which it has form, colour and texture. Furthermore, the idea of a tree has the attribute of quality; it is an intensity which relates it to other ideas. The idea then, the experience of perceiving the tree, is consciousness. It is consciousness because it is a point of knowledge.

What Is Consciousness?

Can we be aware and yet have no idea, no ideation? Awareness is consciousness. There can be no consciousness without it manifesting as an idea. It is necessary that we distinguish between true consciousness and nerve energy response. Consciousness is the identity which is conferred on the sensations experienced. On the other hand, the energy of nerve response is of a lower order of phenomena. The nervous systems and organs are conditioned to respond in a specific way to certain stimuli. For instance, a nervous system is the equivalent of an electrical device, having been constructed to respond to particular impulses. Most of the energy responses produce no sensations. Since we have no personal consciousness of what is sensed, we have no intimate idea of them.

But why do these biological processes function in



this way? What causes them to be activated by stimuli? We know that every mechanical device built to perform a certain function is responding to a Mind Cause. Even when such devices are constructed to respond to the forces of nature, it was Mind that established the relationship between them.

Therefore, every cell of an organism has its Vital Life Force, the seed of an implanted intelligence. This intelligence is the nature of its function. It is an innate sensitivity, but not consciousness; it is not self-realisation.

Certain insects are conditioned by their nature to turn and move toward light. But these insects have neither the idea of themselves nor of the light to which they respond. Therefore, since they have no ideation, they have no true consciousness in the sense that we understand it. Such responses are but the elementary beginnings of consciousness.

...it is a stream of energy, cosmically motivated by an impelling drive. This drive is to be, to be what it is. It is the persistence of the phenomenon of life.

We commonly refer to consciousness as a stream. But such is not consciousness as we are now considering it. Rather, it is a stream of energy, cosmically motivated by an impelling drive. This drive is to be, to be what it is. It is the persistence of the phenomenon of life. When this vital energy impregnates matter, it builds a structure for itself, that structure being the living organism. The different systems and organs are but mechanisms, and are only necessary for the functioning of the vital energy.

In the process of evolution, the mechanism becomes more complex. This complexity then makes



possible other manifestations of life force. This vital energy, the life force, does not evolve; rather, it is the physical organism, the body, which evolves. In doing so, the body is then able to give greater expression to the phenomenon of life.

This consciousness of the Great Oneness is Cosmic Consciousness. Only a part of the brain and certain glands engender this higher response, this true consciousness.

Let us use a simple example to explain this point. Imagine a lamp being inside a box. Its light, we shall say, depicts the vital energy. The light, as vital energy, is changeless. The box represents a living organism. The box has a small hole in it. Only a little light is emitted from that small hole, but with time and changing conditions the hole in the box becomes larger. Then, the light emitted from the hole becomes greater. Only the aperture, the hole, of the box has changed in that it has allowed more of the unchanging light to be emitted. So too, our Vital Life Force has the potential of creating ever more complex organisms to express itself.

Each system and organ of a living entity responds in a particular way to the requirements of the Vital Life Force. The system's activity is limited to a specific function. It has no realisation of the other parts with which it works in harmony. There is, however, one grand exception to this process. In one area of the brain a dichotomy, a state of duality, exists. In this portion of the brain the Vital Life Force realises itself, as well as realising the sense impressions.

Simply, there is both an awareness of self and of that which seems not-self. This mental phenomenon is an idea, a point of knowledge. It is true consciousness, the highest manifestation of the life energy. This consciousness, however, can only exist, as already explained, where the Vital Life Force has developed an organism capable of expressing it.

Cosmic Consciousness

But is this consciousness limited to just realising itself and externality? What relation has Cosmic Consciousness to it? Is Cosmic Consciousness a "split off" from the consciousness of humanity? Being, the

Cosmos, cannot be other than it is. It is ubiquitous, existing everywhere, for it is all there is. It is universal in essence and varies only in its manifestations. The vital energy in all animate things is but one of the infinite actions of the universal essence. Therefore, this Vital Life Force is a human link with the whole of the Absolute, the Cosmos.

However, only that phase of consciousness which is capable of ideas, of self-realisation, can be aware of the Cosmos. This consciousness of the Great Oneness is Cosmic Consciousness. Only a part of the brain and certain glands engender this higher response, this true consciousness. For better understanding, we can symbolise this phenomenon. Think of a dot being the totality of the Cosmos. Now think of that dot extending itself in a circular motion. This extension of the Cosmos, as it moves on, creates the various phenomena of the universe; animate matter being but one phase. The human consciousness, with its faculty of reflection, is yet a higher phase, as this extension of the dot moves on. The dot continues its circular motion, returning to its source.

When, in humanity, a consciousness of the Cosmic, the One, is produced, the cycle is then complete and the Cosmic is then conscious of Itself. Consciousness is humanity's greatest possession, for it is the mirror of all experience.



Navajo Sand Paintings

Sacred Healing

by Pensator



IN THE “FOUR CORNERS” region of the Southwestern United States, where Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado meet, is the Navajo Indian Reservation, the largest in the country. The Navajo or *Diné* call it *Dinéhtah*. It is strikingly beautiful country, and was the home of one of the ancient civilisations of North America.

The Navajo tell stories about Rain Boy, a gambler who lost all of his family’s possessions. Fleeing his angry

relatives, he arrived at the house of a beautiful woman. Her jealous husband shattered him with hailstones. Some Holy People from the spiritual world took pity on him and restored him. After further adventures, he returned to his own people, bringing with him the healing ceremonies he learned from the Holy People. It is now thought that these ceremonies and the paintings associated with them were originally learned from the Pueblo tribes of the Rio Grande valley, the descendants



of the Anasazi civilisation. Among the Navajo, who came later to this land, the ceremonies evolved a more complex and important role, emphasising their innate sense of “oneness.”

The Navajo concept of the universe is an ideal one, an all-inclusive unity, delicately balanced, full of enormously powerful forces with potential for both good and evil, in which all parts are maintained in interrelated harmony. Only humans can upset this balance. Illness, physical and mental, is seen as the result of upsetting this harmony. It is for the preservation or restoration of this harmony, that Navajo religious ceremonies are performed. During the complex series of healing ceremonies or chants, designed to restore harmony to the patients, the Navajo create pictures on a one to three inch bed of sand, some as small as a foot square, while others can be as much as twenty feet across. Most average about six feet. The drypaintings, perhaps a more accurate term than sandpaintings, are made with pigments obtained from pulverised gypsum, yellow ochre, red sand, charcoal, pollen, cornmeal and crushed flowers. The colours may vary, but the four principal colours: white, blue, yellow and black are always present, reflecting the four directions. They are intricate, highly stylised, and beautiful. These sandpainting designs duplicate the images that the Holy People used in their rituals, and are a type of mandala.

The images depict the legendary supernatural heroes and heroines (or gods) known as the Holy People. This vast pantheon includes First Man and First Woman; Spider Woman, who taught women to weave; Big Fly, who conveys messages between the Navajo and the Holy People; and others like the Mountain People, the Snake People, and the Corn People. Especially revered is Changing Woman, the mother of the Hero

Twins, the sons of the Sun, called Monster Slayer and Born For Water. They made the world a safer place for the Navajo by slaying many threatening creatures.

The Navajo term for sandpainting is *íikááh*, “the place where the gods come and go.” Summoned by a singer or *hataáalii*, (a medicine man or woman), the Holy People enter a sandpainting, infusing it with their healing power. By sitting in the middle of the painting, the patient is able to attune with and absorb this healing power. Such sandpaintings are considered gifts from the Holy People and must be started at sunrise and be completed by sunset.

The Navajo concept of the universe is an ideal one, an all-inclusive unity, delicately balanced, full of enormously powerful forces with potential for both good and evil, in which all parts are maintained in interrelated harmony.

Typically, the sandpaintings are used in night rituals conducted inside an eight-sided log Hogan or Navajo house. The Hogan is a gift of the Holy People, and as such it occupies a place in the sacred world. Its door faces the east, so that the first thing a Navajo family sees in the morning is the rising sun. The sandpaintings in the Hogan cannot be made by just anyone. The singer who supervises the construction is a specialist whose apprenticeship to another medicine-person, sometimes lasting many years, initiates him as a practitioner of a ceremony known as a “Way.” Each “Way” is named for the forces addressed by its songs, chants, prayers and sandpaintings: among which are the “Blessingway”, performed for general well-being, and to ensure that one may “walk in beauty”, “Mountainway”, “Nightway” and “Windway.” The cause of the sickness determines the ceremony needed to effect a cure.

Some “Ways” may last as long as nine days and nights.

A “Way” may have as many as a hundred sandpaintings associated with it, and over five hundred different sandpaintings have been recorded. Although the “Ways” may differ in length of ceremonies, number of sandpaintings and forces toward which prayers are directed, all share a common goal: the restoration of *hózhó*.

Hózhó has no English equivalent. It can be grasped by blending concepts such as “sacred”, “holy”, “blessed”, “balance” and “harmony.” It has also been referred to as “beauty” and is the equivalent of the Ancient



Navajo sandpainting (1907).





Navajo Chief and woman with child.

Egyptian concept of Maat. To the Navajo, *hózhó* is fragile and easily disrupted by the forces of chaos.

When life tips out of balance, disorder ensues. Someone in need of, for example, “Mountainway” can suffer from a range of ailments including arthritis, rheumatism, fainting, nerves or stomach disorders. By contacting the elemental forces of the cosmos through chanting ceremonies, the singer tries to alleviate the suffering. Through the sandpaintings and ceremonies, the singer appeals to the Holy People, summoning them to heal the patient by reinstating *hózhó*.

The designs were an integral part of the religious ceremonies of the Holy People themselves, recounting the lessons of life. The construction of each sandpainting follows a prescribed formula. If it is not made correctly, the Holy People will not come. Properly constructed, it functions as a beacon the Holy People cannot ignore. Sandpaintings face east, which is always at the top of the painting, and open to let in the dawn’s light. The east is the direction from which the Holy People enter. It is sacred and one from which no harm or evil can enter. The painting must then be ceremoniously destroyed before dawn.

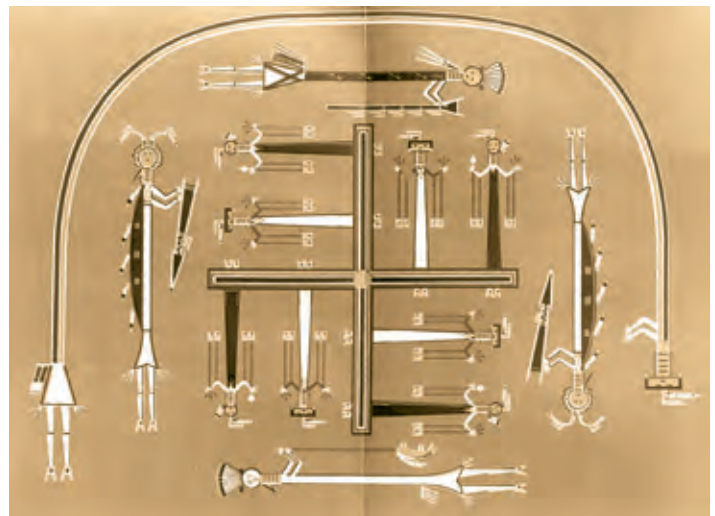
Sandpaintings convey complex and symbolic messages. The principal colours white, blue, yellow and black link the four sacred mountains rising up at the farthest borders of *Dinéhtah*, within the boundaries of which they believe the Creator placed them. White, the dominant colour in the eastern part of the sandpainting, represents the dawn and *Tsisnaasjini* or White Shell Mountain, the

Sacred Mountain of the East (Sierra Blanca peak in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Alamosa, Colorado). Blue represents *Tsoodzil* or Turquoise Mountain, the Sacred Mountain of the South (Mount Taylor in the San Mateo Range near Grant, New Mexico), and represents the sky. The western part is yellow and represents *Doko’ó’osliid*, the Abalone Shell Mountain, the Sacred Mountain of the West, (Humphreys Peak in the San Francisco Mountains north of Flagstaff, Arizona). It represents the twilight. Black represents the north, associated with *Dibé Nítsaa* or Obsidian Mountain, the Sacred Mountain of the North (Mount Hesperus in the La Plata range near Durango, Colorado), and represents darkness. Within the area encompassed by these four were another three sacred mountains.

The first part of any chant is devoted to purification, achieved through the use of emetics, herbal treatments or sweat baths. After this, during the second part of the ceremony comes the attempt to attract the Holy People to restore balance or *hózhó*. This is when the sandpaintings are made.

Sandpaintings convey complex and symbolic messages.

The Singer, patient, friends and relatives sit around the sandpainting joined in common purpose by the singer’s prayers, a melodic recitation of repeated refrains



Navajo sandpainting.



reflecting the universal need for meaningful ritual. The ceremony reaches its climax as the singer escorts the patient into the sandpainting itself, which is a centre of transformation. The patient sits facing the east, the direction from which the Holy People will arrive. For a few moments, as the singer rubs pigment from the sand painting onto the patient's body, one part at a time, the Holy People, sandpainting and patient merge into one. During this physical contact a pathway between the patient and the gods is established, allowing healing to begin. The patient then rises to "walk in beauty" once again.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the participants destroy the sandpainting. It is swept on to a blanket and taken outside to be disposed of, to the north of the Hogan. If it was left in place, the Holy People, having no choice but to revisit it, would discover no ceremony under way, no patient, no singer, none of the honour they expect and which is their due. Their displeasure could manifest itself in the patient's loss of *hózhó* just restored by the ceremony.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the participants destroy the sandpainting.

If a patient has confidence in a singer, then he can be cured. Exactly what happens during a sandpainting ceremony is a mystery to Western understanding, but the Navajo maintain that the sandpaintings work because they are gifts from the Holy People. Given attention and surrounded by people who care, the patient follows a trusted singer along the healing pathway. The spectators also share in the blessings



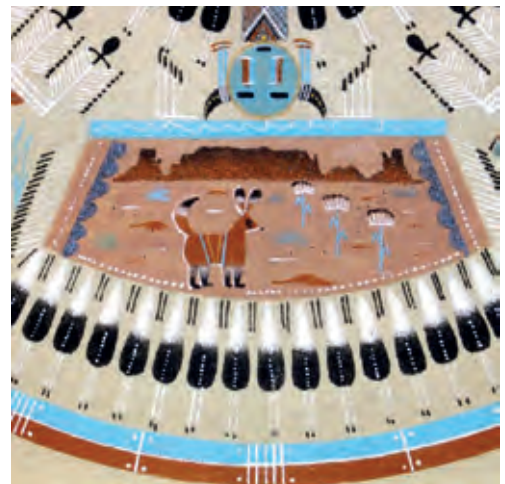
derived from attending the ceremonies, and in the feast afterwards.

The above is all reminiscent of the symbolism in our own Lodges, Chapters, Pronaoi and Atrium Groups. Nowadays, it is possible to buy sand painting designs on textiles, pictures or miniature "sandpaintings." But precautions are taken. Perhaps different colours are used or figures are omitted or included in a scene, to render the designs harmless.

As Rosicrucians, we learn in our studies that when we are ready, the Master will appear. While the tradition of sandpainting may not have the same connotation as the Rosicrucian axiom, we know that for patients it is necessary to be ready, to prepare themselves with the correct inner mental attitude for the Holy People and the healing to manifest. After all, all forms of healing simply augment the body's own natural healing abilities. Medical staff now acknowledge that for many traditional Navajo patients, successful treatment will be done in conjunction with a *hatáálii*, a holistic concept long known to the native peoples of the Americas, but only now being rediscovered by Western medicine.



Navajo sandpainting, "The wind people."



Navajo sandpainting.



SOCRATES

by Jean Ewing

*“The
unexamined
life is not worth
living.”*

Michelangelo said to the young sculptor: *“Don’t trouble yourself too much about the light on your statue, the light of the public square will test its value.”* Truth comes forth to speak for herself; finding no audience in the masses, she stands eternally, waiting to be recognised by the few. So it is with the truth of Socrates.

The Enigma

Most of what we know about Socrates and his quotations that we read comes from the dialogues of Plato. These dialogues resemble plays, with Socrates featured as the

main character. Through his conversations with others, Socrates comes to life, a mystic engaged in a mission given to him by the Greek god Apollo.

Socrates (Σωκράτης) c. 469-399 BCE was a classical Greek philosopher, who is credited as one of the founders of Western philosophy. He is an enigmatic figure, known not through his own writings, but through those of his pupils Plato and Xenophon, and through Plato’s pupil Aristotle but also through sideswipes from the comic dramatist Aristophanes. According to Plato, Socrates’ father was Sophroniskos and his mother Phainarete. Though said to be unattractive in appearance and



short in stature, Socrates married Xanthippe, who was much younger than he was. She bore him three sons, Lamprokles, Sophroniskos and Menexenos.

He lived during a time of transition from the height of the Athenian hegemony to its decline with the defeat by Sparta and its allies in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE). At a time when Athens sought to stabilise and recover from its humiliating defeat, the Athenian public may have been entertaining doubts about democracy as an efficient form of government. Socrates appears to have been a critic of Athenian democracy, and some scholars interpret his trial as an expression of political infighting.

I am better off than he is, for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know."

Dialectic

In the dialogue entitled *Ἀπολογία* (Apology), Socrates tells the court that at first he was puzzled because the oracle of Apollo at Delphi said that no one was wiser than he. "*What can the god mean, for I know I have no wisdom*" he said. "*Yet he is a god, and cannot lie.*" Socrates set out to find someone wiser than he, but finding none concluded about each one he talked with, "*I am better off than he is, for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know.*" The truth of the riddle is revealed in the following quote:

The god only is wise. The god is only using my name by way of illustration, as if he said, "He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing."

And so, I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of anyone who appears to be wise. And if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle, I show him he is not wise.

Socrates demonstrated through his dialectic method of teaching that people were not wise. *Dialectic* is defined as the art or practice of examining statements logically, as by question and answer, to establish validity; but in the dialectic of Socrates much more can be seen. He comes across as a man with a good sense of humour who knows much, pretends to know nothing, and uses wit and irony to their fullest.

When someone enquires as to the nature of something, Socrates pretends to know nothing about it; he replies with a question. Thus he continues until, with his clever enquiries, he has led the other person to answer his own question. When Socrates sees someone showing off, pretending wisdom, he points out the folly of his words, again, using questions. He blatantly leads the pretender to what's true by showing him what's not true. He called himself an intellectual midwife, and said that anxieties are labour pains. He didn't have the ideas, he said, he helped others have them, or find them.

To Know Truth

Socrates believed absolute truth, knowledge, beauty and goodness exist eternally, and that we know and recognise these qualities on Earth because we remember them from a previous existence in which we dwelt with them. In another dialogue, *Φαίδων* (Phaedo), he says:

After descent to earth, the soul has its reminders of the world of true being. Our learning is often remembering what we once knew in another life.

With his questions, Socrates helped the enquirer remember his answers. His two most famous quotes are probably "*Know thyself!*" and "*The unexamined life is not worth living.*" His major concern was "*the good life.*" Before him, philosophers had been mainly concerned with the nature of the heavens and earth, but Socrates said he wasn't concerned with how or of what the universe was made, but *why* it was made as it was. He focused his attention on the inner self and on the acquisition of happiness. Believing that true goodness and happiness are one and the same, he believed that we can become rational, and that through a process of *ἀρετή* (arete: moral excellence or virtue, or just becoming expert at something) we can find fulfilment. Everyone, he thought, should live up to his or her full innate potential.

The *absolutes* spoken of by Socrates are essences, forms or ideas remaining after the thing that represents them has departed. He believed that we are able to partake of these absolutes because we remember them. An example is the idea of beauty that remains after the flower we thought beautiful has wilted. This idea of beauty is also the flower's true nature, and knowing its nature, one can also know its purpose. It is no accident that there is such variety in the universe, thought Socrates; everything has its purpose in relation to the whole. There is one function that each person or thing performs better than any other person or thing..., and that function is its purpose, its reason for being.



Knowledge is a Virtue

If we seek knowledge and learn what is truly good, we will act in our own best interest. Socrates believed that knowledge breeds understanding leading to goodness and a good life. Mistakes are made because of a lack of information. If one knows what is best, one will do what is best. No person harms him or herself intentionally. Consider a woman who steals. She must believe that the acquisition of the thing she steals will bring her happiness. Does a man who kills not believe that either he or the world will somehow be better off without his victim? *“Knowledge is virtue,”* said Socrates.

Our true nature is good. We have a built-in safety mechanism that gets us back in the flow when we leave it. No person or group can continue indefinitely behaving in a manner that is harmful to his or her personal interests, or for that matter the interests of others. If one tries it, things do not turn out right. So, to find true happiness, one must find true goodness.

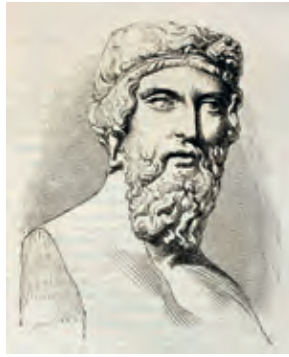
Trial by the People

As with many of the great teachers throughout history, Socrates was unpopular with the masses. His life ended in Athens in 399 BCE, the same place it had begun 70 years before. He was ordered by the court to drink the poison hemlock after being found guilty of not worshiping the state gods, of introducing new and unfamiliar religious practices, and of corrupting the youth of the city.

At his trial, he was given the opportunity of changing his ways, but he would not. He said he believed his trial and its results were in his best interests. Speaking of his δαίμων (daimon or inner companion), he says:



Socrates was ordered to drink the poison hemlock after being found guilty at his trial.



Plato

This sign, which is a kind of voice, first came to me when I was a child; it always forbids but never commands me to do anything that I am going to do. Hitherto the divine faculty, of which the internal oracle is the source, has constantly been in the habit of opposing me, even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now, as you see, there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is good, and that those of us who think death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Enter Plato

The concept that life necessarily follows death, because opposites spring from opposites, is believed to be that of Plato, although Plato attributes it to Socrates. Many believe it is impossible to truly separate Plato's philosophy from the philosophy of Socrates in the dialogues. In many instances it is believed that Plato used Socrates as a mouthpiece through which he expressed his own views. What does it matter? Is the message not the important thing? How often do you hear a quote that you think wise, and in time remember the quote but not who said it? Truth does indeed speak for herself.

Perhaps Plato had a purpose for mixing his ideas with those of Socrates so as to render them indistinguishable. Somehow this seems to reinforce the philosophy of Socrates, namely, that it is a waste of time arguing over things all wise people disagree about, whilst searching for a knowledge that would do us no good if we had it. What good would it do us if we knew? It also protects us from the trap of respecting the teacher, but not the message. After all, if Plato wanted the credit, all he had to do was claim it. Plato loved Socrates like a father, who had been his teacher for twenty years. The dialogues were written after the death of Socrates.

Could it be that Plato merely recognised truth standing, and wished to preserve her because Socrates, his beloved teacher, never wrote a line? Preserve her he did; she stands, still waiting. The light of the public square has not found her wanting.





The Mountain of Initiation

by *Nobilis*

BETWEEN 1785 and 1788 there was published at Altona, Germany, a work in Latin and German entitled *The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians of the 16th and 17th Centuries*, a colour version of which is still available from the Grand Lodge. It was published in two parts, its content coming from 17th century alchemical sources such as Adrian von Mynsicht, with mystical pieces from Valentin Weigel, and Abraham von Franckenberg's works on Jacob Boehme. It was an important and influential work of Rosicrucian ideas, although filtered through an 18th century perspective. In the preface to the edition published by AMORC in 1935, past Emperor Harvey Spencer Lewis wrote:

I cannot recommend too strongly that each Frater and Soror of the advanced, esoteric grades of the Fraternity see to it that one copy of this rare old work be placed in the archives of each Lodge or Chapter of the Rosy Cross for future reference by the followers who from year to year 'Cross the Threshold.'

Among the many plates contained therein was one that has become particularly well known; *Mons Philosophorum* or "*Mountain of the Philosophers*." It will benefit the reader if frequent reference to the accompanying illustration is made throughout the rest of this article from now on. A more descriptive title might be *The Mountain of Initiation* for this is what it represents. Initially, this picture appears more straightforward compared to the seemingly complex emblems that accompany it throughout the rest of the work. It is an image that we can feel more comfortable about without having to ponder unduly over the geometric arrangement of its symbolism that characterise the others.

An Inner Journey

At first glance one can see that the whole plate is dominated by the subject of the title; namely, a single mountain upon which is arrayed a number of objects or symbols of an alchemical nature. It is surrounded



at its base by a buttressed brick wall with just one entrance-point that forms an arched opening into the interior of the mountain. Three figures can be seen approaching this entrance in the centre of which sits the *Guardian of the Threshold*. An indication of the way forward is given by the action of the hare or rabbit in the foreground bolting into a burrow. This is of some significance. The aspirant must first sacrifice self by entering the earth and in a sense dying before becoming spiritually reformed. He experiences an inner journey, which is summed up in the alchemical acrostic Vitriol: *Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem*, meaning “*Visit the interior of the Earth. In purifying, you discover the hidden stone.*”

Returning to these three figures, the one on the extreme left is blindfolded and appears to be having difficulty finding the way forward. The second figure can be seen on one knee, seemingly weighed down by a heavy purse and the plumed hat having fallen over the eyes. The third figure on the right, however, appears joyful and amazed at having discovered the entrance. The date, 1604, beneath this figure is an allusion to the allegory of the founding of the tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz. Not everyone is permitted to go to Corinth, as the saying goes in Horace’s epistles and it is certain that the first two figures are not ready to enter the *Portal of Illumination*. This idea is reinforced by the first Guardian looking only toward the third figure on the right.

The initiate now approaches the Portal and must satisfy the Guardian that he or she is sincere in their aspirations. At this juncture there are two symbols flanking the entrance. On the left can be seen a rabbit or hare, whilst on the right a hen sits brooding on her nest. These represent the two ways in which the initiate can approach the alchemical process of inner transformation; by the active and fleeting thoughts pictured by the hare or the slow and patient brooding of the hen. A sexual polarity also exists between these two facets of human nature. The initiate must experience an awareness of these two polarities and then begin the important work of integrating these two aspects of his or her being.

Once this part of the work is achieved, the initiate is allowed to continue by the gatekeeper and passes through the darkness of the passage to emerge at the piled up rocks where the second Guardian awaits. This is in the form of a fiery dragon, the representative of the unleashed instincts and desires of the aspirant. Once these aspects of the initiate’s nature are conquered, he continues and finds himself on the central plateau of the mountain. The initiate is well on the way now but there is still much to achieve.

On this plateau the third Guardian is encountered. Before the initiate there now stands an aggressive looking lion that represents the egoism and false spiritual pride that can afflict the aspirant at this point. Many aspects of the inner being need to be integrated before progress is made here. Having passed this third Guardian, the aspirant stands before the opening or door of the inner citadel. This is flanked by a black crow and a white eagle over the arch. These two symbols represent the experience of both sides of human nature. Whilst the black crow allows an encounter with the dark and primeval aspects of the initiate’s being, the white eagle tempers this with the experiences of spiritual wisdom he has developed.

Balancing precariously on the left and right side of the mountain is a wooden container housing the Sun and Moon and a distillery with a billowing cloud of smoke or steam issuing from its chimney. The wooden tub is demonstrating a purification of the lunar (female) and solar (male) facets of human nature through a



washing process. Equally, this process of purification is being performed through distillation on the right. This symbolic washing is an important part of the initiatory path representing as it does the purification and separating from outer dross that clings to one.

The initiate now proceeds through the door or inner portal and finds himself within the citadel, standing on the rampart. On the right is an old man in the act of planting a tree into the wooden tub below. This action allows the tree to extract the solar and lunar essences from below and produce the seven-pointed star (the seven planetary aspects unified) and flask (the Philosopher's Stone or Quintessence) that can be seen within the canopy. On the left stands a tree that is bare of foliage and leaning over the battlements absorbing the smoke from the distillery in which a flask can also be seen. Adorning this featureless tree are three six-pointed stars representing the principles of salt, sulphur and mercury, a further strengthening of the idea of spiritual integration of the elements of the initiate's inner self.

It is clear that this whole image is an allegory of the inner journey of the initiatory process. Throughout the different stages can be seen a reflection of what is happening within the Seeker of Light

Looking higher up, a house is perched near the summit. This is the house of the Holy Spirit from where the advanced initiate might look out upon the world but with the light of spiritual knowledge attained thus far. Finally, on the peak of this mountain of initiation, is the goal of the spiritual journey that has been undertaken. It is an orb with the sign of *Vitriol* upon it, the final achievement of those who accomplish this inner exploration. This is reinforced by the symbol of the Crown suspended in the air above it signifying spiritual attainment.

Sevenfold Aspect

There is a sevenfold nature to this image. This can be seen in the seven stages that the initiate has to pass, each of which corresponds to one of the seven planetary aspects of the initiate's inner being. These stages are in turn: the Gatekeeper or Guardian of the Threshold with the polarities of the hare and hen (Venus), the Dragon or second Guardian (Saturn), the Lion or third Guardian together with the polarities of the black crow

and white eagle (Sun), the dual aspects of purification through washing represented by the sun and moon in the tub and the distillery (Moon), the old man planting the tree and the tree bearing the three principles of salt, sulphur and mercury (Mars), the House of the Holy Spirit (Mercury), the Orb of nitre with its *Vitriol* sign (Jupiter). Seven key stages, and if we include the Crown (Venus again), this forms an octave.

The use of a mountain to represent the upward journey toward attainment tends to be universal throughout history. The *Divine Comedy* of Dante, for example, was a great initiatory drama of the Middle Ages that incorporated this element in the form of Mount Purgatory. This also consisted of seven stages or steps, each corresponding to one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Function and Use

It is clear that this whole image is an allegory of the inner journey of the initiatory process. Throughout the different stages can be seen a reflection of what is happening within the Seeker of Light. Thus by its nature this emblem can make a rewarding meditative or contemplative object, and this was the original intention of its creator. When an alchemical emblem was constructed it was the intention for it to be read by those who were knowledgeable or worthy enough to do this. Following on then, modern Rosicrucians

may find it beneficial to engage images such as these. The method is to begin by observing the image for some time and impressing it upon the memory. Once this is accomplished to a degree, reflect on the different stages of the journey. The next step would be to enter the Celestial Sanctum in the manner that you are familiar with and make a visualised ascent of the Mountain of Initiation. You can begin by imagining yourself before the first portal and ready to encounter the Guardian of the Threshold.

Postscript

Emblems such as this one can never lose their value for they are imbued with centuries of esoteric wisdom and as such are timeless and worthy of the modern aspirant's attention.

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The Glories of Norman Sicily

by *Betty Main*

AS ROSICRUCIANS, we are taught to be tolerant of others' views and beliefs. We have brothers and sisters of like mind throughout the world, of every race and religion. The history of humankind has often demonstrated the worst human aspects, but from time to time, in what seemed like a sea of barbarism, there appeared periods of calm and civilisation. The era we call the Dark Ages in Europe, was not quite as "dark" as may be imagined. There were some parts of the Western world where the light shone like a beacon. This is the story of one of them.

It all started in the year 1016, when a group of Norman pilgrims visited the shrine of St Michael on the Monte Gargano in southern Italy. After the "pilgrims" had surveyed the fertile lands of Apulia lying spread out before them, promising boundless opportunities for making their fortunes, they decided that they would start a crusade to "rescue" southern Italy from the Byzantine Empire and the Greek Orthodox Church, and restore it to the Church of Rome. As they were few in number, they decided to return to Normandy, recruit more followers, and return the following year. Thus the



Normans started to arrive in the region, which was to become the hunting ground for Norman knights and others anxious for land and booty. At first they arrived as individuals and in small groups, but soon they came flooding in as mercenaries, to indulge in warfare and brigandage. Their Viking ways had clearly not been entirely forgotten.

Robert Guiscard and Roger de Hauteville

One of them, Robert Guiscard, having established his ascendancy over the south of Italy, acquired from the papacy, the title of Duke of Naples, Apulia, Calabria and Sicily. The Papacy, caught between the Lombards and the German Holy Roman Empire to the north and the Byzantine Empire to the south, came to regard the Normans as guarantors of its independence.

Robert Guiscard, though primarily a Norman knight, was a shrewd politician and used his natural astuteness to achieve a concordat with Pope Nicholas II, whereby, in return for receiving the title of Duke of Apulia, he agreed to chase the Saracen Arabs from Sicily and restore Christianity to the island. For this purpose he summoned his half-brother Roger de Hauteville to join him from Normandy. Contemporary records describe the youth as being handsome, tall and well proportioned, as well as being strong and courageous in battle, yet always remaining friendly and cheerful.

Roger arrived in Italy in 1056, a mere 10 years before another buccaneering Norman, William of Normandy, invaded England. During his early years, Roger helped Robert Guiscard to establish his rule over southern Italy, fighting not only against the Byzantine forces, but also against dissident Norman and Lombard barons. Together they started the conquest of Sicily, but, after Robert had helped Roger to conquer Palermo, the Arab capital of Sicily, and Roger, in turn, had helped Robert to storm Bari, the Byzantine provincial capital on the Adriatic Sea, Robert remained on the mainland. This



Robert Guiscard

left Roger a free hand in Sicily. Roger recognised Robert as his overlord, and in return he was granted the title of Count of Sicily and Calabria.

Prior to the Norman *entrada* into Sicily, the Arabs had occupied the island for two and a half centuries. It was divided into three mutually antagonistic emirates. Although the majority of the population was Greek, having been a part of the Byzantine Empire for centuries, the laws and administration were Islamic. Roger appreciated that occupying Sicily would be a challenge, as well as a chance to escape from Robert's shadow. Whenever possible, he and his knights avoided military confrontation, unless they were sure of winning the battle. When they did engage in operations, their discipline and military tactics gave them the victory. Yet it was impossible to administer a country with so few Normans. The terms under which Roger accepted the surrender of Palermo laid down the principles he was to adopt in pacifying the rest of the island.

The terms under which Roger accepted the surrender of Palermo laid down the principles he was to adopt in pacifying the rest of the island.

There would be no reprisals, and he would stop looting immediately. All Arab lives and property would be respected. He sought their friendship and would ask only for their allegiance and an annual tribute. In return, he undertook not to interfere with the practice of the Muslim faith or the application of Islamic law. These terms applied to the conquest of the rest of the island, though that took him nearly 30 years to complete. The Arabs lost their independence, but for them it was the beginning of an unprecedented order such as they had never known before, under a strong central government, which enabled them to develop their artistic and intellectual talents.

Roger realised that the Muslims needed to be persuaded to voluntarily accept his regime, and to do so he had to treat them with tolerance and understanding, thereby creating an atmosphere of internal harmony and mutual respect. For this purpose he accepted the Arab bureaucracy which existed on the island, consisting of a mixture of Arabs and Greeks. He also adopted many of their titles; the Christian governor of Palermo for instance, being addressed as "Emir", while his principal minister, George of Antioch, a Greek, who was also the Admiral of his Navy, manned by Greek crews, held the title of "Emir of Emirs." Roger also established a crack force of Arab troops with Arab



officers. By maintaining their traditional fighting methods, the corps provided an outlet for the military instincts of the Muslims, while giving them pride and participation in the new Sicilian state.

Some mosques, which had originally been Christian, were reconverted, but others remained untouched. Islamic law was administered by Emirs in local courts. Arabic became an official language, along with Latin, Greek and Norman French. Where Greek Christians were resentful of these changes, he allowed them to keep their local titles and also provided material aid for the reconstruction of their churches. While encouraging the establishment of Latin cathedrals and abbeys, he himself helped to found Basilian monasteries and churches, using imported Byzantine craftsmen. Arab scientific and artistic endeavours were encouraged, and many who had fled to North Africa or Spain returned to the island. Thus he laid the foundations of a multiracial polyglot state, in which Norman, Greek and Arab, under a firmly centralised administration, followed their own cultural and religious traditions in freedom and concord.

The result was that, when the “Great Count” died in 1101, he had transformed Sicily into a nation, heterogeneous in religion and language, but united in loyalty to its Christian ruler. Sicily was well on the way

to becoming the most brilliant and prosperous state in the Mediterranean, if not in the whole of Europe.

Floreat Sicilia

His son Roger II (ruled 1101-1154) was nine years old when he succeeded as Count. His mother, a northern Italian from Liguria, acted as Regent for him. During his long minority he was educated by Greek and Arab tutors, who helped him to develop the exotic side of his nature. With dark eyes, hair and complexion, his appearance was that of a southerner. He had grown up in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect, so he was able to understand the complex system of checks and balances on which the internal stability of his country depended. Unlike his forefathers, he disliked war and preferred to use diplomacy, possibly accompanied by financial inducements. By these means, he was able to acquire the duchies of Apulia and Calabria, and so unite the south of Italy into a single dominion.

During a crisis in the Papal tenure, when two Popes were elected at the same time, he first acquired the triple Dukedom and then in 1128 was named King of Italy south of the Garigliano. By 1140, he was able to depute two of his sons, Roger of Apulia and



Christ Pantocrator fresco inside Monreale cathedral.



Alfonso of Capua, to administer his mainland territories, while he remained at Palermo. King Roger II was able to establish a corpus of laws, many of them borrowed from the codification of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian in the 6th Century. While making it clear that the existing laws of his subject peoples should continue in force, except where there was a direct clash with royal ordinances, all Greeks, Arabs, Jews, Lombards, and Normans under his rule were to continue to live according to the customs of their forebears.

Roger adopted an almost mystical view of the divinely-held power of the King. The law was the will of God, and the King was its ultimate interpreter. The feudal system which prevailed on his mainland dominions belonged to Western Europe; the civil service in the Sicilian provinces was based on Arabic institutions, but the monarchy followed Byzantine traditions, many of which went back to ancient Persian times, and can still be found in British royal ceremonial. The King also established a coinage for the whole kingdom. A small coin, worth a third of a ducat, minted in Palermo had, on the obverse a Latin inscription surrounding a Greek cross, and on the reverse, in Arabic, the date when it was struck in Palermo, using the Islamic calculations from the Hegira (departure of the Prophet Mohammed from Mecca).

Although Palermo was an Arab city, the Greeks played a part in building the new nation, respecting the balance between Muslims and Normans. In the early days, before the arrival of Latin religious and civil immigrants, they prevented the Latins from being swamped. By neatly counterbalancing the claims of the Latin Church, they gave Roger a powerful bargaining counter in his dealings with Rome.

Sicilian-Norman Art

During the 12th Century there was a flowering of Sicilian-Norman art, as illustrated in their sacred buildings, which were a fusion of Byzantine, Arab and Norman design and construction. They were actively encouraged by the clergy who, along with the Norman barons, were responsible for commissioning them. Their architecture combined various elements,



Detail of the Normans palace, Palermo, Sicily.

Muslim, Romanesque, Byzantine and Gothic, producing monuments of composite style, harmony and dignity.

Their secular buildings also reflected Muslim models, whose levels of refinement were unknown in northern Europe. Their architectural remains can be seen and admired in the cathedral of Cefalù, with its colossal mosaic figure of Christ Pantocrator (Ruler of All) holding an open book with words from the Gospel of John in Latin and Greek: *“I am the Light of the World, he who follows me will not walk in darkness.”*

At Monreale, the cathedral was one of the architectural wonders of the Middle Ages, with its aura of majesty and splendour.

In the Cappella Palatina or Palatine chapel, attached to the royal palace, the light changes constantly, highlighting the mosaics representing the Holy Spirit and the theology of light. The Martorana, also in Palermo, founded by George of Antioch, had quotations from Byzantine hymns written in Arab calligraphy around its walls. These illustrated, in their different ways, the fusion of Norman, Byzantine and Islamic art.

They are exemplified by the solidity of Norman architecture, the beauty and elegance of Greek mosaics, and the slender arches supported on twin columns, as well as the honeycombed ceilings, of a style that was purely Islamic. Moreover, in the tolerant atmosphere of Palermo, there were visible advances in style. The static figures of Byzantine iconography gave way to swirling draperies, with rhythm and movement in the drawing. Islamic artists moved away from their abhorrence of the human form to experiment with painting figures in mythical scenes.

The King himself was famous for his insatiable intellectual curiosity, as well as a profound respect for learning. He gave a permanent home in Palermo to many of the foremost scholars, scientists, doctors, philosophers and mathematicians of the Western and Arab worlds. Roger himself was very knowledgeable in mathematics, also studied by Arab scholars, in addition to medicine and astronomy. At his court, Arabic became an intellectual scientific language in its own right. He would spend much of his time in the company of these savants. Such poets as flourished in





Cefalù Cathedral, Sicily.

Palermo were nearly all Arab, but the King's preference was for science. He encouraged his geographer al-Edrisi to collect information from ships arriving in his ports, about the places, climates, conditions and peoples of the areas they had visited.

From the hard geographical facts elicited, Roger was aware that the Earth was round, with water adhering to it as seas and oceans. There were also flourishing developments in the matter of classical literature. The Norman churchmen stimulated a return to the study of Latin writings, while ancient Greek documents (many originals having been destroyed by barbarian invasions), were released from Byzantine sources, and texts which had hitherto only been known from Arab translations, were now seen in their original form.

Through Roger's enthusiasm, Sicily became the clearinghouse where, for the first time, western and oriental scholars met on an equal footing. Under his inspiration, studies were made in philosophy, mathematics, applied chemistry, medicine and astronomy, by scholars who brought learning from around the Mediterranean Sea. At that time, Roger II was probably the wealthiest ruler in Europe, and his court in Palermo the most brilliant.

Many future developments during the 12th

Century can be attributed to the influences of the court of Roger II. There was a transformation of philosophical methods. Legal studies entered a new phase. New styles of architecture were instituted, while poets composed their verses in the secular language. By reviving an interest in the writers of Roman antiquity, scholars learned to express themselves in a graceful and efficient form of Latin, in addition to studying ancient Greek traditions. In the Muslim world moreover, there was an expansion of knowledge in mathematics, science and astronomy.

The End of an Era

The centralised constitution which both Rogers established in Sicily needed a strong efficient monarch at its centre. Roger's remaining son and grandson, William I and II, lacked that capacity and, in their reigns, the pattern of government began to unravel at the seams.

With the arrival of German influence in 1194, in the person of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI Hohenstaufen, the son of Barbarossa, it caused the triumphs of Norman Sicily, except for their architectural achievements, to wither, fade, and die, till today, they are but a memory.



Symbolism, Esotericism & Salon de Rose Croix in Late 19th Century Art

by Rick Cobban



*Joséphin
Péladan*

EARLY IN 1892 a haunting poster appeared in the streets of Paris. It depicted three female figures, one of them nude and sunk into the mire of daily life, slime dripping from her finger-tips. The remaining two ascend a celestial staircase. The next female is dressed in dark clothing and occupies the middle ground. She offers a lily to a near transparent figure higher on the stairs who has left life's pollution far behind.

This latter figure represents pure idealism. In her hand she holds a smouldering heart. The steps are strewn with the flowers of Mary: roses and lilies. Masses of clouds and stars swirl about the mountain peaks at the top of the stairs. The picture is framed by a pattern of crucified roses set on altars. The bottom of the poster announced the opening of the first "Salon de la Rose-Croix."





The Salons of the Rose-Croix

This poster by Carlos Schwabe (1877-1926), the German Symbolist painter, may be familiar to many people. However, the story of esoteric and artistic ferment surrounding the “Salons of the Rose-Croix” is far less well known. Between 1892 and 1897 a remarkable individual organised the “Salons de la Rose-Croix”, a series of six celebrated art exhibitions.



The first Salon of the Rose-Croix exhibition opened on 10th March 1892 in the ‘Durand-Ruel Gallery.’

That individual was Joséphin Péladan. He was imbued with the deep mysticism of the Rosicrucians of Toulouse by his brother Adrien Péladan. Together with Papus and Stanislas de Guaita, Péladan was one of the founders of *L’Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix* (Kabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross). On 17th February 1891, he announced in a letter addressed to Papus published in the journal *L’Initiation* that he would sever his relationship with the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross. This was because of the differences in his understanding of the purpose and direction of Rosicrucian activity. Thus was founded in May 1891 his own Rosicrucian group *L’Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et esthétique du Temple et du Graal*.

This Order was divided into three grades: Equerries, Knights and Commanders. Péladan, as Grand Master, was known as Sâr Mérodack Péladan in his Rosicrucian inner circle. Wearing extravagant violet robes with his beard and hair styled in what he described as the “Assyrian” manner, Péladan became a flamboyant figure simultaneously respected, admired and ridiculed in Parisian society. His Order’s activity was based in France but it also spread into Belgium. Esoteric work was carried on simultaneously with its public artistic and literary activities. Péladan believed that art and music could uplift the soul and promote a more charitable and spiritual world. The *Manifesto of the Rose-Croix* and the *Regulation and Monitor of the Salon Rose-Croix* were published in 1891.

The first “Salon of the Rose-Croix” exhibition opened on 10th March 1892 in the famous Durand-Ruel Gallery. It was one of the most successful exhibitions of the year. Two thousand press invitations were sent out as well as special invitations to private individuals.





"I Lock the Door Upon Myself" (1891) by Fernand Khnopff.

More than 22,600 visiting cards were left. On the street outside the Salon the police were forced to control the traffic of carriages bringing visitors to the exhibition.

The doyens of Parisian high society viewed the Salon. great artists, writers and poets such as Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Émile Zola and Paul Verlaine, as well as the composer Erik Satie passed through "the great artistic show of the year" according to Remy de Gourmont in the *Mercur de France*. The most well-known symbolist artists exhibiting at the six Salons were Carlos Schwabe, Fernand Khnopff, Jean Delville, Armand Point, Félicien Rops and Alexandre Séon among the hundreds of artists who exhibited in the Salon. Naturally the standard of the works exhibited varied, but at its best, the artworks exhibited were rich in symbolic meaning.

The examination of one painting "*I Lock the Door Upon Myself*" (1891) by Fernand Khnopff will demonstrate the many levels of meaning symbolised in the art of the Rose-Croix. The audience viewing this painting received the understanding they were capable of perceiving. An androgynous figure is shown in a room. Some saw only the imagery of the popular characterisation of the femme-fatale as being both seductress and chaste. A more insightful interpretation reveals a more mystic vision of the soul personality in contemplation, turning within from the objective world. The androgynous figure symbolises the soul beyond duality and the power the Magus has gained over life and death in meditative isolation. The range of work exhibited may be seen in the painting by Jean Delville, "*Satan's Treasures*" (1895) and Armand Point's "*The Siren*" (1897) which reveals the diversity and ambitions of Salon exhibitors.

The contradictory nature of Péladan's

ambition for the art exhibited, and his need to guide the Salon through its manifesto and rules gave rise to problems for both his Order and the "Salon of the Rose-Croix." One of the more contentious issues of Péladan's elitist view of Rosicrucian activity may be found in the statement: "*Art, this initiatory rite to which only the predestined should be admitted, is being turned into a commonplace to suit the crowd.*" This attitude was demonstrated in Péladan's complex expectations and criticisms of the artists and their work that would be exhibited within his Salon. The inflexible rules of the Salon were enforced and discouraged some artists from continuing their involvement. However, other artists were inspired. Jean Delville organised Symbolist art exhibitions and Péladan's work in Belgium.

"Art, this initiatory rite to which only the predestined should be admitted, is being turned into a commonplace to suit the crowd."

Péladan's vision for the art of the Salon is summarised in his maxim: "*The work of art is a fugue: nature supplies its motif; the soul of the artist creates the rest.*" This statement in many respects could have been the guiding thought for the development of many aspects of 20th Century modernism. In fact, several artists who would later play important roles in the development of modernism exhibited in one or more of the six Salons. Georges Rouault became one of the



"The Poor Fisherman" Pierre Puvis de Chavannes.





Erik Satie composed a fanfare of harps and trumpets, *Les Sonneries de la Rose-Croix*, for the Salon's opening ceremony at the first exhibition in the spring of 1892.

great independent painters of Fauvism; Émile Bernard a light of the Nabis; Antoine Bourdelle a romantically expressive sculptor and Ferdinand Hodler developed into Expressionism. Jan Toorop became a leading painter of Art Nouveau while Félix Vallotton devised his version of objective realism.

The Symbolists

Symbolism began as a literary movement in the novels *Là-bas* ("Down There" or "The Damned") and *À rebours* ("Against the Grain" or "Against Nature") by Joris-Karl Huysmans with their themes of decadence, dandyism and occultism. This should be contrasted with Péladan's symbolist novel *Le Vice suprême*. The hero of this novel is a mystic Magus who uses his abilities in the service of the highest ideals. The poet Jean Moréas formalised the Symbolist movement in a manifesto in the newspaper *Le Figaro* in 1886. Albert Aurier defined it as the painting of ideas to symbolise the intangible and unseen. Symbolism was a reaction against the excesses of Romanticism and the materialism of Realism and Impressionism.

The symbolist painters Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon were invited to join the Salon, but both declined, preferring their reclusive ways. Moreau's symbolist painting inspired by myth and biblical events represented the *fin-de-siècle* mood of late 19th Century France. In his paintings "*Salomé*" and "*Voice of Evening*", jewelled visions entrance the viewer with the evocative power of the symbol while pointing toward a veiled reality. Moreau's teaching and art inspired artists such as Gauguin and Matisse to achieve a new synthesis in their art.

The great muralist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes was not interested in imitating nature. He captured a universal symbolic mood in each work by depicting a particular event. Through static scenes of large-scale carefully muted decorative serene colour schemes he

created paintings of monumental power. One giant study for such a mural "*Saint Genevieve Provisioning Paris under Siege*" (1897-98) may be viewed in the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne. We see in the painting "*The Poor Fisherman*" (1881) the contemplative mood evoked by the subtle colour, the awkward diagonal composition and the fisherman's state of supplication. All of this brings the viewer into a state of psychological identification with the spirituality of the scene. The metaphysical silence found within the art of Puvis de Chavannes quietly gained him both the respect and influence upon all painters interested in evoking the spiritual in their art. The power of that silence would not be found again until the metaphysical paintings of the Italian pioneer of Surrealism, Giorgio de Chirico.

Composers such as Erik Satie and Claude Debussy were involved in a parallel symbolist enterprise of creating a more spiritual music. Satie composed a fanfare of harps and trumpets, *Les Sonneries de la Rose-Croix*, for the Salon's opening ceremony at the first exhibition in the spring of 1892. However, his best known works are *Trois Gymnopédies* and *Gnossiennes*. Erik Satie's influence continues today in the work of modern "minimalist" composers such as Philip Glass and Michael Nyman. The prints, paintings and drawings of Odilon Redon find their inspiration



The Eye floats towards Infinity like some 'Weird Balloon'
(1882) Odilon Redon.



in the imagery of dreams and the unconscious. In his work, as in much symbolist art and poetry, the viewer's engagement in the process of interpretation and intuition of meaning of each work is the most important element. In this way the viewer also enters into the mystical and the visionary experience.

Often Redon would add a title which is like a small poem running parallel to the visual impact. The lithographic print *"The Eye floats towards Infinity like some Weird Balloon"* (1882) attests to such a visionary experience. In his painting *"Silence"* (1911) Redon depicts Harpocrates, the god of mystical silence, with the gesture of the forefinger pressed against the lips that is familiar to Rosicrucian mystics. He reminds us that, ultimately, the greatest mystery cannot be spoken. It is beyond the intellect and all symbolic representation.

The Nabis

After 1898 the Nabis (Nabi is the Hebrew and Arabic word for "prophet") became the main proponents of Symbolism while the "Salon of the Rose-Croix" began to fade into history. Leading artists of the Nabis were Émile Bernard, Maurice Denis, Paul Sérusier, Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, and Paul Ranson. They were a group of artists with diverse styles and beliefs united in their interest in creating a new modern spiritualised art. They met wearing costumes in their homes and studios to share meals and discuss art, philosophy, religion and mysticism. They regarded the quintessence of the creative act as spiritually uplifting for them and all who viewed their art. The theories and art created by the Nabis using sacred geometry



"Silence" (1911) Odilon Redon.

and abstraction of perceived reality truly made them prophets of the explosion of modernism in the 20th Century. However, Robert Pincus-Witten points out that echoes of the Salon could still be heard.

In 1899, after the Nabis exhibition, *"Homage to Odilon Redon"* proved successful at Durand-Ruel's gallery. Maurice Denis wrote to Gauguin in Tahiti asking him to join an exhibition of *"Symbolist, Pointillist and Rose-Croix painters"* to be held the following year. Unfortunately, by this time many artists had moved on in their styles and associations with other art dealers in Paris. The exhibition never took place.

The Nabis rallied around Gauguin as the greatest representative of their ideals. In the body of work that reveals the genius of Paul Gauguin it is his largest masterpiece *"D'Où Venons Nous? Que Sommes Nous? Où Allons Nous?"* (1897), which best portrays his mystical understanding of the human condition. Known in English as *"Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?"* he drew his inspiration from the unspoiled vision of the indigenous people of Tahiti. In this painting Gauguin wanted the audience to feel *"emotions first and understanding afterwards!"* It depicts the cycle of incarnation from birth to death. All the spectrum of human activity, aspirations, delights and fears are depicted from the new



Poster for the 5th Salon de Rose Croix (1896) by Armand Point and Léonard Sarluis.





D'Où Venons Nous? Que Sommes Nous? Où Allons Nous? (1897), Paul Gauguin.
Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?

born baby on the right to the careworn old woman who meditates on the past on the left. A statue symbolising the presence of God stares back at the audience while an androgynous figure perhaps symbolising the soul reaches for the fruit of experience: knowledge and wisdom. It asks the fundamental questions of the origin and purpose of all people, cultures and life itself. Each viewer's life will inform their appreciation of this profound painting and bring meaning to it.

Gauguin evokes associative meaning rather than merely wanting to explain or illustrate. *"I have put all of my energy into it one more time before I die"*, he wrote, *"so painful a passion in such dreadful circumstances, so clear and accurate a vision, that there is no trace of precociousness and life blossoms forth from it."* Gauguin wanted this work to *"be comparable with the gospels."* He achieved the ideal of the Nabis: the complete fusion of content and meaning with aesthetic form. Meditating upon this painting will repay the viewer many times over, for in this work Gauguin was interpreting the great mystery of life.

Legacy of the Salons of the Rose-Croix

Returning to the life of Joséphin Péladan, he continued to do his utmost to convince the public of the value of a mystically oriented symbolic art. He still wore his violet

coloured robes and his beard and hair were styled in the "Assyrian" manner. These deliberately eccentric clothing choices which he made into the science of *Kaloprosopie* were caricatured by journalists. However, by the end of the 19th Century many artists, especially the Nabis, enjoyed wearing extravagant clothing to signify their rejection of conventional bourgeois society.

Until his death in 1918, Péladan continued his esoteric and literary activity, which included ninety volumes comprising novels, plays and studies on art or esotericism. Sâr Péladan's life was a work of art. Indeed, later in the 20th Century, Péladan's mysticism of the *Ordre de la Rose-Croix du Temple et du Graal* in Belgium would be one of the initiatic connections of Émile Dantinne. Using the *nom mysticum* of Sâr Hieronymous, Émile Dantinne would play an important role strengthening and uniting Rosicrucians as one of the three Imperators of the FUDOSI.

If you look carefully at modern art, with eyes that can see, you may perceive a mystical current that is the aesthetic legacy of Symbolism and the Salon of the Rose-Croix. In the 21st Century the Rosicrucian tradition of promoting music and art continues through performances and exhibitions in AMORC Cultural Centres such as the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San José and the Rosicrucian Cultural Centre in Paris.



Portrait of Joséphin Péladan by Marcellin Desboutin.



Inner Light

by *Albert van Wyk*



Underlying all nature is a hidden world of spiritual light. Unlike sunlight, it is so intensely radiant that it cannot be perceived by mortal eyes. Sunlight is the visual aspect of this “greater light”, and is but a shadow of the radiance of the true light. This spiritual light exists in every part of the universe and manifests both spiritually and physically. It is an unseen universal force giving life to plants, animals and humans, and giving molecular and atomic order to all inanimate objects. Nature is the living, visible garment of the Divine, and for those who can see it, the spiritual force of Life, is visible as a radiant Light, emanating from all things, even the inanimate.

This all-embracing essence contains the potentiality of every plant even before it emerges from seed, every flower, bush and tree. Although plants contain immaterial qualities, they also require substances of the earth, such as soil and water. These terrestrial substances are the physical building blocks of the plant, but immaterial qualities are also there, and these qualities are responsible for its life and continuity.

As living matter within a seed develops, it follows the growth pattern of the characteristics of the plant it will become. The DNA of every living thing ensures this, and the Life force ensures the DNA carries out its mission of replication with accuracy. For example, a geranium seed sprouts and grows into a plant of exquisite beauty, filling hearts with happiness at the perfection

found in nature. Through the individuality of its species encoded in its DNA, the geranium differs from every other flower by its special characteristics of colour, form, fragrance and growth cycles. This can be regarded as the plant’s personality, and such can be said of each species of plant. This primitive awareness, which exists in all plant life and distinguishes one flower from another, one vegetable from another, one tree from another, and so on, ad infinitum, is the intangible expression of consciousness made possible by the Life force operating through the DNA of the species.

Every plant, even the “lowly” weed, exists for some purpose. After it has served its purpose, or if its growth cycle is terminated before fruition, the unseen Life force with its distinguishable awareness, is neither lost nor destroyed. In principle, as a potential, it remains to bring life into newly created earthly counterparts. It is a common everyday occurrence, and has existed from the dawn of creation.

An infinite guiding intelligence dwells not only in the higher creatures, but also in fields of wheat, in forests of trees on land and forests of kelp in the sea. It is an intelligence which humankind in its infancy has called God, the Great Eagle, the Protector, Divine Light and many other things. Whatever terms have been used over the millennia, it remains the same indwelling force of creation, the same God of our deepest understanding.





Don't Come Second in the Race Against Time

by Shirley Elsby

PROCRASTINATION has famously been dubbed the “*thief of time.*” Not only is it a thief, but also a more serious villain, a merciless vampire bloating itself on the purpose and fulfilment of a human life and leaving behind a stultifying legacy of regret and frustration.

Rosicrucians are urged early in their studies to “...*defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.*” It is sage advice, but the demon

Procrastination is expert in diverting good intentions straight down the road to living Hell..., and the realisation that it has become too late to rescue the intended outcomes..., at least in this lifetime! The English poet and dramatist Edward Young, who identified and saw off the thief during his immensely productive lifetime from 1683 to 1765, penned the following words:¹



At thirty, man suspects himself a fool, knows it at forty, and reforms his plan. At fifty he chides his infamous delay, and pushes his prudent purpose to resolve. In all the magnanimity of thought he resolves, and re-resolves: but he dies the same.

Edward Young unmasked the villainous saboteur of the purposeful life and some of its dastardly tactics. Having seen that Procrastination wantonly steals our minutes and hours, bagging them into precious and irreplaceable days, months and years, we of the 21st century can now use Young's 20:20 hindsight to identify and thwart the slow bleed and set ourselves back on our rightful paths to fulfilment and purpose. Or can we?

Procrastination and I are old friends. Note that I say old friends, not good friends, because this is the kind of friend who satisfies his own need for diversionary activities at the expense of his companion's need to get things done, and creates a richly original agenda of ways and means to distract them even when they are starting to feel desperate for a positive result. And having been a long term victim of the invisible thief cum bloodsucker, I can tell you that the major symptom of its presence is faffing.

Faffing is the art of not getting done the things you want to get done while studiously accomplishing endless other things that maybe you did want to get done but didn't need to, at least not urgently. I have a friend who describes it as 'metaphorical toilet cleaning', as in cleaning the toilet when it is gleaming. Examples might be:

- Checking that all the bird feeders are full right to the very top, even though you filled them to the brim yesterday.
- Attending to the more whimsical needs of an elderly relative like shopping for brain training gadgets, trimming shrubs or emptying sheds.
- Catching up with friendship calls and correspondence to people you haven't seen in years.
- Positively welcoming unexpected requests to childmind, house sit, give lifts or accept invitations to lunch.

Faffing is a diverse activity which takes many forms depending on the person doing it. Business types may concoct new systems for dealing with email or put networking ahead of product development. Home



The English poet and dramatist Edward Young.

makers may embark on ambitious culinary projects rather than tackle the decorating. Rosicrucians may find their important work demands stop them from attending convocations or focusing on their studies.

I sometimes faff myself into a state of virtual paralysis. Like the immovable object meeting an irresistible force, my wish to do something meets my reluctance to make the effort and they cancel each other out so comprehensively that nothing happens, sometimes for months on end. The key to telling a faff from a fruitful pursuit lies in recognising that you are choosing an 'any time' task over a priority.

Here is an example of how I do it. I assign myself two priorities for the month ahead. One is to keep on with my market research interviewing job, in which I can pick my working days as long as I complete the requisite 13 interviews a week. The other is to write this article for the Beacon. Despite ring fencing ample time for both, I find I have faffed away the time with frequent visits to Mum around the premium interviewing times, for such urgent purposes as taking her shopping for orthodontics and commiserating on the death of Baroness Thatcher. When absolutely forced to confront the mission, instead of parking up and getting on with it, I have driven around the allocated area several times from each direction, checked out the irresistible shops in the locality, marvelled at the immensity of the local wind turbines and the charm of new-born lambs and found it necessary to return home for anything from



coffee breaks to cat feeding duties.

Tackling the article has seen me needing to log into my email account and answer every arrival, even a questionnaire about how I like my new TV package. It is, of course, imperative to check my horoscopes, conduct a new Tarot reading and check the most up-to-date news on 16 websites before launching Word. Procrastination then appears in the form of friends turning up with bottles of wine and cheery news, must-see documentaries on television and the startlingly unexpected appearance of sunshine..., several times..., making it imperative to make the best of it by taking leisure drives to distant towns and long walks in woodland.

Addicts of procrastination may engross themselves in re-evaluating their priorities in the form of new resolutions, whatever the time of year. My own have been studiously reworked on or around the first of each month, not to mention at the autumn equinox, Christmas, traditional New Year, Rosicrucian New Year and my birthday..., with very little progress being achieved towards any of them.

Procrastination certainly makes for pleasant company and interesting activity but he also leaves unmistakable hallmarks where he has sunk his fangs, in the form of gut wrenching feelings of despair, panic and worthlessness; and, of course, the sense of time inevitably and irretrievably running out. He is not the friend he pretends but the enemy of all who would attain self-mastery in the tradition of the Rosicrucians.



Motivational writer Paul McGee writes in his insightful volume *S.U.M.O.*: (Shut Up, Move On) that there is as yet no self-help support group such as Procrastinators

Anonymous because even though many people have thought about forming one, none has yet gotten around to it. He however offers some straightforward advice to help put the vampire back in his coffin. First is:

- Make a start. He does mean on that priority task that you have identified and not whatever pastime you have alighted on to avoid it. The act of starting something frequently does release a surge of purposefulness and maybe actual enthusiasm for the task in hand. It can be quite invigorating! McGee cautions us not to get hung up on how long the overall task might take but to make progress with it, however slender.

- Imagine vividly how it will feel to finish. The satisfaction of a job well done has few equals. Even the satisfaction of a job done at all feels pretty good to someone who has habitually succumbed to the thief of time, as I have found. The Rosicrucian techniques of visualisation may be put to excellent use in picturing..., with movement and full colour..., the sensations of completing the allotted task and especially lingering on the positive emotions to be experienced from the achievement, no matter whether it is a magazine article, a full scale educational course or writing that best-selling book.
- Tackle the worst activities, the most frightening and difficult first. So many of us put off the tasks that feel uncomfortable, unpleasant or downright scary. The fact is, the longer we put them off, the longer we feel the horrible inner effects. Taking action to deal with those items first has the merit that at least it puts them out of the way so you can move on. Seriously, it is a no brainer.
- Reward progress. Do not reward lack of progress. In the past when Procrastination has had less of a hold on me I have thwarted him by telling myself I will not eat until I have finished such-and-such a job and cannot uncork the wine until a certain milestone has been reached. Make sure you genuinely feel you merit a reward and that the reward is proportionate. One sentence in the writing task does not earn you a trip abroad.
- Find a companion to share your experience of Procrastination and success in fighting him off. Just like Alcoholics Anonymous assigning members a 'buddy' to help combat the demon drink, an ally - perhaps from the Rosicrucian fraternity - can be a formidable asset in getting your life back on a purposeful track.

It may also be helpful to identify the factors which feed your faffing. What stops you from doing what you want to do? There are many factors which Procrastination uses as barriers, from fear of failure to the idea that there is plenty of time when really there isn't. Many people feel they are always too busy to do what they intend, but that is invariably a myth. If you were purposefully busy you would be meeting your priorities. Does the task feel too big? Break it down into bite-sized pieces. Do you need new skills? Go on then, learn them! Are you worried about looking





Tackle the worst activities, the most frightening and difficult first. So many of us put off the tasks that feel uncomfortable, unpleasant or downright scary.

inadequate or failing to deliver what was expected? You certainly will if you don't do anything! The fact is that even if you fall short of your aspirations, if you have produced something then other people will have that something to work with, a starting point, and if you have produced nothing, they won't.

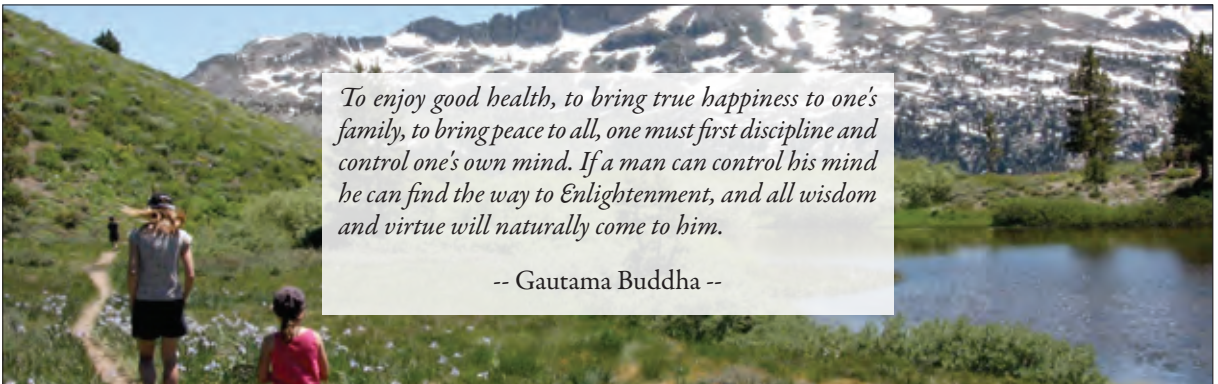
Another tip is to take responsibility for your own actions, or inactions. Recognise that you are the one and only author of your life and that whatever other people or duties appear to detract from your priorities you have the power and wherewithal to stay on purpose, if that is what you decide to do. Set aside the time and guard it against all intruders, Procrastination included. Disconnect the phone, invite visitors to call another time and clear your diary, your desk and your clutter to make way for the work about to be in progress.

It is a beneficial exercise for everyone to write down what they hope to achieve in their lives, and then imagine what it would feel like to reach that goal. Whatever appears on the list, from experiencing enlightenment to becoming the world's richest person, if you delve deeply enough you will find that the real desire is for a feeling or set of feelings. People

want money because of the feelings of freedom, choice and security that they believe it would bring them, or perhaps power and status. They want enlightenment because they want to feel close to God or to feel certainty about their purpose for living or their place in the Cosmic grid. People's real desires are for emotions, not things; for the feeling of belonging, of being loved, worthy, purposeful and at peace. Procrastination brings none of these feelings to fruition. It stands in the way of them all, beckoning us to a miserable end. Do not give in to it! Fight the villain with positive steps, even if they are baby steps and call upon the God of your Heart to recognise and overcome. And if you catch the thief Procrastination anywhere near your priority list, lock him in a cell until your next holiday.

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Best of Friends

by Doreen Eustice



TRUE FRIENDSHIPS are wonderful treasures to be found on Life's highways and byways, nuggets to be nurtured and valued for the richness they bring to our souls. Unfortunately, few of us are perfect at tending them properly and giving them the time they need to flourish and thrive. They frequently wither from neglect as we set them aside to shoulder the sundry responsibilities and pressures which beset people of all

generations, especially family commitments and careers.

One of the chief reasons many good friendships wilt is the appearance of a 'life partner', possibly a 'soul mate' but definitely a distraction. When that happens, many of us succumb to the charms and put them first, last and throughout the middle of who we want to spend time with. And those who have been faithful companions, the ones we can gossip to on the phone or book a three



coffee lunch, are abandoned to the new 'Great One' in our lives. It was a great piece of advice from the author of a book on Celtic Runes, Ralph Blum, to "let the winds of heaven dance between you." Unfortunately the newly besotted rarely do!

A while ago an old friend I had long since shelved came to my door with a covered bowl and announced she was presenting me with a friendship cake; a German friendship cake who goes by the name of Herman and has been circling the globe much like a chain letter since..., probably not long after time began. The bowl contained a hunk of dough and a handwritten list of instructions for Herman's future welfare, to be carried out over the ensuing 10 days.

We giggled as I read out the sheet beginning with the warning: "My name is Herman. I am a sour dough cake and I need to be kept on your worktop for 10 days without a lid on. I will die if you put me in the fridge! I will die if I stop bubbling." The rules demand Herman should be placed in a two litre bowl and covered with a tea towel. He needs stirring well on days two and three, and must be fed specific amounts of flour, sugar and milk before being stirred senseless and put back to sleep again under his tea towel blanket.

In a heartless moment of resolute decision I tossed Herman mercilessly into the bin along with the contents of the vacuum cleaner.

Days five, six, seven and eight requires more vigorous mixing to keep the dough alive and sticking. On day nine he gets hungry again and requires more flour, sugar and milk to curb his appetite. At this point you divide the goo into four equal portions, give three away to friends with copies of the instructions and add to the portion you keep an array of cake contents including eggs, spices, oil, chopped apples, nuts and raisins before baking him out of his old life and serving him up in the new, adorned with fresh cream.

For the first two days I was charmed, but on day three I forgot him entirely and on the fourth day found myself rescuing him from a dying breath at the 11th hour, literally 11pm, with the top up ingredients. Cutting a 10 day story by half, I decided I didn't like Herman much at all. It was like being in charge of a tyrannical virtual pet, like a Tamagotchi of the sort that were frequently banned from 1990s British classrooms because frustrated teachers were having their lessons disrupted by students



feeding and exercising their electronic wards. I didn't like the responsibility of looking after him, pandering to his needs or the space that he was taking up in my modest kitchen.

I might have wanted to hang him – out for the birds, possibly – but did I really want to draw and quarter Herman and distribute him to my friends? And did I later want to add

a tenner's worth of ingredients to his slobby, mish-mash, squish-squash body for a dish days hence, marginally less appealing than tripe with custard? Before you answer, bear in mind that the last time I cooked a cake I had pigtailed and a school uniform and I'm now drawing a pension.

In a heartless moment of resolute decision I tossed Herman mercilessly into the bin along with the contents of the vacuum cleaner. Herman bit the dust, his final bubbles were burst. But Herman lives on in the kitchens of countless victims of unfulfilled friendship, and online too at the touch of a search engine. Look him up if you'd like to make his acquaintance. I won't be responsible for his actions by giving you the recipe.

Friends, readers, I can tell you from experience: if you like someone and value them, then give what really shows what they bring to your life. Give them time, a conversation, a listening ear or a gift that comes with no responsibilities and no guilt trip attached. Give them a call, write them a letter, send a card. Ask them out to lunch. Invite them to share a convivial bottle of wine, and debate enthusiastically the things that matter in life, or the things that don't, particularly! Share an outing, share a meditation journey, share whatever you've got in your pantry that cooks in 20 minutes and disappears with the washing up. But whatever you decide to do to foster this amazing faculty we call friendship, don't give them a *Friendship Cake!*





Find the Deeper You

FOR THOUSANDS of years, philosophers and spiritual leaders have known of the existence of a kernel of perfection residing in every person; manifesting as an 'alter-ego' with supreme confidence, calmness, maturity and wisdom. Rosicrucians call it the 'Inner Master', for it has in abundance all the qualities of refinement, high purpose and spiritual maturity that we would expect of any true Master of life.

You can discover how to access this level of achievement and embark upon the definitive, true direction of your life simply by learning how to contact and regularly commune with your Inner Master. If you are searching for a way of

accomplishing the most fulfilling and rewarding there is, and happiness, peace and justice for all is what you yearn to see in the world, then learn to attune with the Deeper You and learn from its infallible wisdom.

To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order and how it can help you to achieve your most treasured goals, visit our website or contact us for a copy of our introductory booklet "The Mastery of Life."

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Through impenetrable ages I have watched over you;
through eyes of all creatures I have nourished
and fed, nurtured and bled: you, my beloved,
my children of Africa.

Through sadness and joy, satiation and deprivation, I
have loved you as only a true parent can. Through
happiness and fulfilment, through grief and loss,
I have watched with caring, I have loved without
ending: you, my beloved, my children of Africa.

Ancient descendants of all people, see how your children
have grown. From small families to wanderers,
discoverers, great tribes, you have founded all
nations, all people worldwide: you, my beloved,
my children of Africa.

So take your place first family of mankind, elders of all
elders, first cousins, first tribe: you, my beloved,
my children of Africa, ever with you, great spirit
of humankind.