

Rosicrucian Heritage



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Memories from the Calabar 2017 Convention



Rosicrucian Heritage

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Cover spread

A Dawn of Hope





Humanity

*by Christian Bernard
Imperator of AMORC*

OUR VISION of the world is very often communitarian and too narrow. We call ourselves Europeans, Africans, Americans, Asians, etc., while we are all members of the same humanity. This notion of humanity has always been an abstract concept. According to history, it is referred to as the gathering of all humans. Victor Hugo imagined it as “radiant and reconciled.”

This awareness has gradually emerged during the last few centuries, but it was particularly in the 20th Century that a real opening on the principle of humanity developed. There is no humanity without human beings and the concept of “human rights” is today commonly understood by all humankind. To this idea of human rights must be added the corollary of human duties as well, something that the Rosicrucian Order made official a few years ago with the publication of the “Declaration of Human Duties.” I am proud to see how this notion of human duties has become very popular because not a day goes by in the world without a politician, an artist or journalists addressing this question.

The idea of human rights comes naturally to humankind, and there can be no justifiable cultural

excuses, or references to old taboo or so-called traditions that would hinder the application of these rights. In the divine order, there are no inferior beings and all beings capable of reasoning are part of the same humanity. An insult made to one person is an insult to humanity as a whole, just as a wound inflicted on our immediate environment is also a wound inflicted on our planet earth.

Toward a Global Community

Our world is rather cramped today, and we can no longer continue ignoring our fellow human being. The fact that so many are today striving for the establishment of a single global community, strengthens peace..., and peace after all, is the only fundamental choice we can and must demand for the good of humanity. Universalism is the cradle of peace. Peace is universal and humanity is the life force behind it. Peace will not be possible unless there is some humanistic change and for this to take place, the utopian forces must mobilise their resources.

Let us endeavour to understand this world and ourselves rather than seeing the world as confused and too full of mysteries. Let us no longer see humans as a



danger for themselves and the planet. This is the only way we will be able to act and accomplish some good. To act in a beneficial manner, we must be strong, and we need others to gain that strength. On the other hand it is only when we are strong that we are able to turn towards others.

We must therefore get acquainted with this paradox in order to understand and to love humanity, this humanity whose history has been in a constant conflict with God. What if it were not God who made man to his own image, but man who created God to his image, seeing in God the reflection of his own nature?

God is not Separate from Man

Whether worshiped or denied however, God is still present in man's heart. Personally, I cannot separate God from mankind. Believing in humanity does not hinder believing in God or some cosmic force. And yet today it often seems as though mankind only believes in itself; blinded by ego, it moves along without paying attention to the Creator. Some think they have freed themselves from God; others think they are walking towards their fall.

As innocent children we believed that the world was about good and evil. Later in life though, we realised that things were not always cast in black and white. The principle of Yin-Yang is always present and manifests itself everywhere; but the thin line separating good from evil is ever present, whether visible or not. Too many people walk on that razor-edge without being able to take a step to the good side. There is always some mistrust, some hesitation and some doubt!

Love Our Fellow Humans

As I pointed out before, we must strive to understand, and be acquainted with our world in order to estimate ourselves at our true value as human beings. Isn't the humanism of human beings gauged more by the love that they give than by the love that they receive? As this has been advised to us before, let us love our fellow humans; let us accept them as they are, even though they may be different from us.

Let us accept the fact that they can become part of a land or a history even if it is not the one that they or their ancestors were originally born in. One belongs to the place one loves and where one feels accepted. Let us accept the hand that is extended to us and let us learn how to extend ours to others so they may be friends and not enemies. Understanding and accepting others also means understanding and accepting ourselves, and vice versa. Let us accept our condition as humans with confidence and not allow fear about the future to add to the problems of

the present time. And finally, let us take time to discover where the streams come from and where the river flows to.

The nobleness of human beings is to hope and work for the realisation of a project that they will not see completed and that they will not be able to live long enough to enjoy. But far from being discouraging, this thought should help us to build a better world without thinking of the time it will take for this to happen.

Sense of Purpose

Should we trust the things that are easy to accomplish? Difficulty is often a sign of good accomplishment and eternity it is said, is timeless. Therefore, let us act as builders and when we leave behind this time-ruled life and join eternity where the spirit of nothingness and the infinite rule, and where we will be accompanied by the Great Watchmakers, the Masters of the hourglass, who tirelessly guide the path of humans from birth to death and death to birth, we will leave this plane with complete peace of mind and with the feeling of having been useful.

This sense of purpose, perhaps a bit too practical, came to me just by accident one day when I was taking a walk. My eyes fell on an epitaph on which was inscribed the following: "*The one left here, under these leaves, has been useful.*" This "encounter" led me to reflect on the feeling of being useful that every human being carries inside. How often do we hear people saying the following: "*I'm worthless, I am useless to my family and society, etc...*" This feeling of failure, weakness and regret (often unjustified and unfounded) is proof that human beings have a natural desire to build and to be useful to their fellow humans. We can be useful, so let us be the light and let us be a voice in the service of humanity!

As one, let us accept our human condition, and when the time comes for us to leave this plane, let us not deny our humanity. Let us not leave dissatisfied with life, and let us make it in such a way that our last glance is directed toward happy, smiling faces. As this message has been about humanity, I would like to end it with a passage written by Jacques Brel, an artist and humanist who enjoyed defying God with his tender look on humankind.

*You, you if you were the good Lord
You would light up parties for the beggars.*

*You, you if you were the good Lord
You would be more giving of blue skies.*

*But you are not the good Lord
You, you are better than that,
You are a man!*





by *Kenneth U Idiodi*

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Sanctum Musings

The Mystical Attitude to Change

*Excerpt from a presentation at the San Jose, California
AMORC Centennial Convention, August 2015.*

MANY PEOPLE become discouraged and depressed as they look at the world about them. They see poverty, disease and war. They read stories in the news which seem to constantly tell of terrorism, violence, crimes and every kind of negative situation. They perceive in society an emphasis on materialistic values and the development of technology at the expense of common consideration, humanity and mystical idealism.

As individuals, we can become so wrapped up in the negative conditions we may perceive around us that we feel trapped and even helpless. We can become so attuned to misery and suffering and the many things in our world which need improvement that we may fail to see the bigger picture. We can become so focused on the more unpleasant aspects of life that we look into them and fail to see the immense Cosmic actuality behind our rather finite problems.

Constructive Nature of the Cosmic

The fact of the matter is that the Cosmic is constructive in nature. In its expression, the Cosmic is vibratory. It is constantly in motion and constantly seeking or achieving balance. Since the Cosmic is ever constructive, it is therefore good, in the human conception of the word. Thus, in any of our seemingly negative situations in life, the good must ultimately win and balance must be the result.

We could, in this light, consider the example of an earthquake or floods or other natural disasters such as a volcanic eruption. We tend to look upon such occurrences as bad or destructive because of their effects in terms of material damage. But in the Cosmic sense, there is no good or bad. There is only the undulating motion of being. Good and bad are human concepts. They are labels that we assign to things which please or displease us!

The earthquake, the floods generated by heavy





The pent up energies and forces which result in volcanic action or earthquakes actively achieve balance in expression.

downpour of rain and volcanic eruptions are in a very real sense good occurrences. The pent up energies and forces which result in volcanic action or earthquakes actively achieve balance in expression. If these energies and forces were prevented from being expressed, harmony would be disrupted much further and the resultant damage would be considerably greater.

Ever so often a member complains to us that when he embarked upon the Rosicrucian mystical path, he expected his life to become peaceful and to run smoothly but regretfully is experiencing upheavals and changes taking place! He then wonders what he is doing wrong!!

Submitting to Change

The experience of change and upheaval is not necessarily an indication of something that one is doing wrong, for when we have made a commitment to the Rosicrucian Path, we have committed ourselves, once and for all to change. Change can be frightening, especially if we think we have something to lose, like power, position or possessions. Yet, even so, as Rosicrucians following the directions of our inner selves, we commit ourselves, first of all, by allowing ourselves to be changed from separate personalities to participants in a Cosmic unity and oneness and then to being an agent for such a changed reality to also occur in the world around us. Pretending to commit ourselves to inner evolution when we are not, in fact, prepared to accept the changes which inevitably come with it, gives us no happiness, peace or joy. Putting one foot on the path and leaving the other on the old road results in frustration, bitterness and pain.

A commitment to the path of service means we have become channels for change in the cosmically correct direction. This principle is amply illustrated in nature. Without the cycles of change, the planet could not live and support our life. Because of change and therefore, through compassion, life is able to exist. Each season gives way to another season. The seasons do not fight change, but give way, bowing to the next stage, welcoming each home. Spring gives way to summer, summer to autumn, autumn to winter, winter to spring. Dry season to rainy season in the tropics etc etc. As the cycle goes on and on, year after year, generation after generation, the seasons offer us time and again the possibility for experiencing and learning to embrace change and take it within our stride to maintain wellbeing and harmonium.

Moving away from the abstract example of the forces of nature, we can see the same principle manifesting in the historical accounts of great dictators. Hitler's rise to power in Nazi Germany and subsequent actions created tremendous disruption. However, the end result was their defeat and the disintegration of their objectives. Balance was once again restored. There have been numerous individuals throughout history who have sought absolute power and who have envisioned world domination. We have experienced enough in Africa and Nigeria from adventurers in the arena of political power, religious domination, social discrimination and economic monopoly. In each case, their plans, regardless of how far they were allowed to progress, have always met with defeat. Balance must be the result. The Cosmic is all, and its nature is constructive, it cannot support that which is out of harmony with its nature. The good must always ultimately win.



It is up to us to learn from the things we experience and to grow from the negativity we may perceive about us. It is up to us to harmonize with nature--to harmonize with the creative forces of the Cosmic. This is not, of course, always the easiest thing to do. It requires effort to step outside of one's problem and to see things from a vaster, more Cosmic perspective. However, it can be done, and we are aided in our efforts by the regular practice of prayer, meditation and visualization which help to expand our realities and open our vistas to a much larger world. It is this expansion of consciousness that facilitates our adaptation to change as well as offer us the opportunities to create desirable changes.

We have each gone through difficult times in our life experience. We have experienced things which have been most unpleasant. Sometimes we have doubted whether we would survive the difficult times and perhaps wondered, in periods of great unhappiness, whether we would ever be happy. Yet, it is a part of the nature of life that things change. Even our unhappy times give way to happier times. We are pushed by the forces of Being, sometimes by our very inner self, to survive, to adapt and to grow from experience. We are continually urged from within, if we take the time to listen to our inner nature, to move toward those actions which will bring us into harmony with the natural forces and thus the Cosmic itself.

Overcoming Challenges

We may prefer, in our dealings with life, to have our life-work proceed smoothly and without much trouble, perhaps like the symphonies of Mozart which effortlessly sprang forth from his pen virtually complete and requiring little revision. But, more often, our life experience is more akin to that of Beethoven who toiled and wrestled with the themes in his symphonies and struggled with revision after revision until he could finally express the inner truth he experienced. His triumph over the adversity he experienced is well known and serves to underscore his refusal to be overwhelmed by his negative situation. Instead, he focused his attunement on the beauty of a more expansive and inner world and our civilization is all the richer for his efforts.

Negativity, adversity, depressing situations and obstacles are a necessary part of life. They stimulate our creativity. They challenge our awareness. They motivate us to move into necessary areas which our complacency has kept us from. They enrich and enliven our experiences. They cause us to grow. They are changes to which we must adapt and adjust to be triumphant. Changes that upset us emotionally, mentally

and physically. Changes that frustrate us. Changes that prepare us for the sustainability of well-being through the storms of life.

Throughout life, we meet with people who fear change, who resist change either because change may involve additional responsibilities or an interaction with unknown or unfamiliar factors. I recall at this time a junior colleague of my aviation profession many years ago who resisted a transfer from our headquarters in the metropolitan city of Lagos to a branch office in Ibadan. The more we persuaded him to accept the transfer the more he cursed us and affirmed that he knew we did not want him to progress in his career. After many discussions and incentives, we eventually had to resort to the "big stick" and told him that if he insisted on remaining in Lagos, which to him was the best city in the world, he would lose his job.

Negativity, adversity, depressing situations and obstacles are a necessary part of life.

Reluctantly he proceeded to Ibadan only to be received by his subordinates and ushered into his official quarters with an Olympic size bedroom and a service quarters surrounded by flower gardens. This was a sharp contrast to Lagos where he had lived with his wife and six children "only" in a one bedroom apartment for nearly ten years! In a matter of a few days, he came to us in Lagos with his wife to thank us for the transfer, the change which had given his family much better shelter (with the backyard for vegetables and poultry farming) and that he had now settled for good. He was so overwhelmed with the serenity and relaxed pace in Ibadan which, also became to him,



Life is not a bed of roses; and even if it were, there are no roses without thorns!



the latest best place in the world, that when the idea was promoted three years later of his official retransfer to Lagos, even on a promotion basis, he immediately again threatened to resign his appointment.

It is sad to observe that even some of our Rosicrucian members, in spite of years of affiliation with assumed study of our philosophical and spiritual teachings behave similarly and even timidly in their reaction to changes or variegated experiences in life. It is true that our Monographs contain teachings, techniques and exercises which when practically applied could and should bring positive changes and transformations in our various situations in life. But life, brothers and sisters, has the ups and downs in accordance with the law of cycles, the positive and negative in accordance with the law of polarity. As I always say: Life is not a bed of roses; and even if it were, there are no roses without thorns!!

What should we do, if after applying all the principles we know to the best of our ability, things still happen to us and around us contrary to our expectations? What should be our mental and emotional attitude if after all the concentration, creative visualization, meditation or prayers we fail woefully to achieve the desired results or even experience manifestations or changes directly opposite to what we bargained for in our thought projections? But how do we know precisely what is even good or best for us for the time being? How do we even know that the outcome of our attunement is bad if in the overall Cosmic picture we need to experience the so-called “bad” first of all in order to better appreciate the so-called “good”?

Are we not the ones who close our attunement sessions with the words if it pleases the Cosmic or if it pleases the masters, it is done! What, if what we think is good may not from a cosmic view point be best for us for the time being? Should we claim to know more than the Supreme Intelligence any more than a drop of water in the ocean may claim to have more water than the entire ocean?

Good and Bad

The definition and determination of an absolute good or bad seems to be questionable since the “good or bad” aspect can change with the circumstances or context or by our own perceptions of the events. Permit me to share with you an old story that illustrates this wisdom. There was an old man who lived in a very small and poor village. He lived a very meager life as a farmer, but he owned a horse which made his work easier. His neighbours regarded him as a very fortunate man.

One day the horse ran away and his neighbours cried, “How unlucky you are to have lost such a valuable possession!” But the old man replied, “maybe it’s good,

maybe it’s bad”.

A few days later the horse returned to the farmer, bringing with it two wild horses. The neighbours came and proclaimed, “How wonderful, to have three horses. You are truly a rich man”, But the old man replied, “maybe it’s good, maybe it’s bad. Soon, the old man’s son decided to train the new wild horses and in the process broke his leg. Now there were three horses to feed and his son would be unable to work for months.

Once again the neighbours came to lament the misfortune of the old man. But again all he answered was, “maybe it’s good, maybe it’s bad”.

As it happened, the following week, conscription officers from the local army came and drafted all the young men in the village except for the young man with broken leg. But when all the neighbours came to remind the old man how lucky he was, he shook his head and said “maybe it’s good, maybe it’s bad”. It is obvious that the old man of our story is a wise man indeed. He knew that in every good there is some bad and in every bad there is some good. And the good and bad depend upon the circumstances. If we know this we will adapt to all the changes we experience in life. Maybe it’s good; maybe it’s bad may thus be seen as the attitudinal formula for embracing change.

As Rosicrucian students, we must learn to develop

He knew that in every good there is some bad and in every bad there is some good.

the positive mental attitude to embrace change with the realization that we are in a learning environment and that whatever happens to us in the school of life must be for our ultimate good. If we are good students, we must realize that even the negative experiences in our lives are special monographs which we should review surprisingly sometimes with some sense of relish!!

Indeed what matters in life is not what happens to us but how we react to the experience or change, how we handle it, how we administer it and how we manage it. Change is a basic law of the manifest universe and we dwell and function in a world of dynamic constant change.

Remember that what goes around moves around and this law of nature which states that everything is in motion becoming something else is the basis for my affirmation that we should learn individually and collectively to embrace change since change is an inevitable result of motion.

Let us make a habit of regular attunement for us to receive cosmic inspiration and direction from the God of our Hearts through our inner self as to how best to adjust to change or adapt to change or better still embrace change!



Initiating Change

If we forget everything else in this discourse, please let us remember that in all our Home sanctum initiations and throughout our various temple degree initiations which are basic to our comprehension of a higher world, the key to true initiation is the inner disposition of the individual and his willingness not only to understand and embrace change but also to initiate positive changes that bring about improvement in the lives and circumstances of our fellow human beings as well as of ourselves. Perhaps, this is why in our Order, we regard transition or the so-called death as the highest initiation for mortals because we know of no one who has failed to embrace this ultimate change when the time has arrived for a transfer to the Invisible realm!

Yet, nothing in all the foregoing implies that one should behave like the small lizard called the chameleon—easily changing colours, characteristics or even personality and, like a rudderless ship, dance to every whim, fancy or caprice in our human environment! On the contrary, to open-mindedly embrace the multi-faceted changes in today's ever-growing diverse, complex world and still remain consistently consistent in the formulation, development and expression of one's personal philosophy of life, is to be truly Rosicrucian in every sense of the word. After all, a man is strong in nothing who is weak in character! To go through the necessary transformation and transmutation of the basic metals of our nature into gold, we must be good managers of change!

Therefore, it is our ability to embrace, handle and manage small and big changes that empowers us to cruise to that mystical wavelength where we may begin to experience an unfettered blossoming of the Rose within us as we carry the Cross of the physical body. So many members are in a desperate hurry to scale through the neophyte monographs and board the temple degrees into the higher planes of our Rosicrucian study programme only to discover that our higher principles are buried in the neophyte section. Immediately after this Convention, please make an effort to review your monographs beginning with the first one you received. You will notice and concur with the following observations:

It is change which causes us to know today what we did not know yesterday! It is change which causes us to understand today what we did not understand yesterday! It is change which causes us to enjoy and experience today what was considered impossible yesterday! It is also change that will cause us to attain in 100 years time, possibly in our next incarnation, what we have failed to attain in the current one!!!

Everyone of us must upscale our deeper understanding

of and approach to all manifestations of change if our world is to more quickly and strategically benefit from the good inherent in change.

Practical Levels of Change

For our practical application, let us summarize our reflections on the mystical attitude to change as follows:

At the Individual Level: Embrace change. Do not resist it. Work with thoughts that present defensible understanding of reality. Know that without change, growth and development of self and the mastery of life will be intensely painful. Show love and tolerance. Be sincere and be compassionate knowing that we are all one collective humanity.

At the Family Level: Recognize that the family represents the smallest unit of society and should therefore work with the orientation of thinking and acting in an integrated manner from the point of view of the whole.

At the National Level: Know that our nations are artificial boundaries and barriers which must be intelligently dismantled for painless changes to take place. Mother earth belongs to us all. No one can claim ownership of it. We are individual and group possessors. Embrace global changes. Humanity is one!

At the Global Level: The globe is our organization for the protection and perfection of nature, the development of our personalities and the reestablishment of universal citizenship as a more sustainable instrument of change introduction and administration. Be synergistic in thought and action because the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. As Rosicrucians we should think globally and act locally; wherever we are in time and space.

In conclusion, all change is constructive. Any negative conclusions are your own making. All humans and especially mystics must rise above such misconceptions to see the good in all changes and to maximize the potential in every change. In its ultimate expression, we must not only embrace change but we must be intelligent creators of sustainable change.

May we now and henceforth remain so well-attuned to the Cosmic that we may be empowered not only to adapt and adjust to changes but indeed to embrace them as opportunities for growth and mystical development thereby enhancing our capacity for greater service to humanity.

Finally, let us exercise our consciousness with the serenity prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr:

God grant us the Serenity to accept what cannot be changed, Courage to change what can be changed, and the Wisdom to know the difference.





The Music Language

by Paul Creston

THE LITERATURE on music as an art form is voluminous; on the science of music, it is adequate; and on the language of music, it is sparse. Yet, that music is a language has been acknowledged and, consciously or unconsciously, has been used by composers for centuries. It is pre-eminently the language of the emotions or moods. It can't philosophise, tell stories or paint pictures. It can only express and engender emotions, and this it does for those who understand the language more precisely and more convincingly than any verbal human tongue. Music truly begins where verbal language ends. To quote Victor Hugo: "*Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent.*"

A careful analysis of the elements of verbal language reveals historical, structural and functional parallels in music language. I shall touch briefly upon the historical parallels. There are seven principal theories of the origin of language, and there are as well seven for the origin of music. The changes in

semantics, the meaning of words, are paralleled in the changes in the use of chords. The evolution of verbal language from simple to complex, from monosyllabic to polysyllabic words, is analogous in music to the use of triads (three note structure) to complex chords, and from complex chords to polychords.

We must consider at length, however, the structural and functional parallels of language and music. As an introduction, I quote a passage from *Voices of Man* by the great linguist, Mario Pei:

All languages, without exception, have to have a set of **phonemes**, or sounds, which are distinctively significant to the speakers; a set of **words** which betoken actions and concepts; a set of **grammatical forms** which may be chiefly morphological (consisting of endings or changes within the words to convey modifications of basic meanings), or chiefly syntactical (based on the order in which the words are uttered).



Regarding musical language, the *Oxford Dictionary* states that music is “...that one of the fine arts concerned with the combination of sounds with a view to beauty of form and the expression of thought or feeling.”

Language and Music

To juxtapose the structural parallels of language to music:

1. In language, we have letters and symbols for sounds; in music, we have notes and symbols for tones or musical sounds.
2. In language, we have etymology or the origin of words; in music, we have the origin of chords.
3. In language, we have words, diction (or the choice of words), and syntax (order of words); in music, we have chords, harmonic progression (choice of chords), and order of chords.
4. Grammar is the part of language which deals with the principles governing the correct usage of language; the theory of music is analogous to grammar.
5. In language, a sentence is a related group of words expressing a complete thought; a musical phrase is a natural division of the melodic line comparable to a sentence of speech.
6. Tone of voice and inflection govern to a great extent semantics or meaning; similarly, dynamics, nuances and inflection govern expression in music.
7. Finally, we can juxtapose language dialects with folksongs and popular ballads, and written and extemporaneous speech with composed and improvised music.

As with verbal language, the function of musical language is to communicate. Verbal language can express and communicate ideas, describe scenes, relate stories, discuss philosophical theories, and also engender emotions. Music, without benefit of text, can express and communicate only emotions or moods. That is the only difference between verbal language and music.

It is commonly believed that music is a vague, esoteric language. On the contrary, the meaning of a well wrought significant piece of music is so precise that

there is no one word that can fully express a particular emotion. As Mendelssohn so aptly put it: “*The thoughts which are expressed to me by a piece of music which I love are not too indefinite to be put into words, but on the contrary, too definite.*” In fact, musical language begins where verbal language ends. For example, a single chord can engender a feeling which no word or synonym or combination of synonyms can effectively describe. The first word which may come to one’s mind might be “sad”; then may follow many shades of meaning, such as melancholy, doleful, pathetic, mournful, gloomy, tragic, disconsolate, and twenty other synonyms, all to no avail.

Conversely, another common misconception is that music is a universal language. For a language to be universal it must be spoken or understood by all peoples of the world. There is *no* language, verbal, graphic, sign or musical, which is understood by all peoples of the world, not even Esperanto, which was invented for the specific purpose of universality. The music of Africa is based on principles different from the music of the West. African music with its complex rhythms sounds strange to the Western ear and Western music was until fairly recent decades not favoured by people in Africa, unless studied as a foreign language. Music is nevertheless an international language in that the music of one group of countries is understood by every country of that group. The people of Europe and the New World have roughly similar music languages, while people of the all other regions of the world have other basically similar musical languages. There are several broad categories, and all of them have refined forms.

To resume the consideration of the parallel functions of language and music, we must realise that there is an appropriate language and an appropriate music for church, for theatre, for sports, for children’s games and activities, for relaxation, for Rosicrucian Convocations, and so on. In other words, a musical composition is created for a specific time, a specific place, and a specific audience. J.S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* was composed for an 18th Century Lutheran congregation, symphonies are written for an audience in a concert hall, and each human activity, from supermarket shopping to concert hall, requires an appropriate type of music.

However, there can be overlapping of categories, with certain restrictions. Music written for a church service could well be performed in concert or in the home, without the slightest disrespect or irreverence. But that same church music is most inappropriate in a sports arena, and military marches and tangos would be a travesty in any place of worship.





THE EYE IN ANCIENT EGYPT

by Paul Goodall

Ancient civilisations were fascinated by the human body and none more so than the Egyptians. They attributed certain qualities to each part of the body and used them in hieroglyphic writing to convey not only objective but also abstract meaning. The eye was regarded with particular awe and was one of the most commonly depicted of the body-parts throughout ancient Egyptian writing and culture.

THE IMPORTANCE of the eye to ancient Egyptians stems from its status as the premier organ of perception. As such, it was seen to express abstract qualities like consciousness, intelligence, knowledge and understanding. Having the ability to discriminate between light and dark, this led to it being regarded as a religious symbol. The Egyptians also believed that power emanated from the eyes, eventually

leading to the concept of the “evil eye”. In order to combat its influence an amulet was worn as a protective piece of jewellery featuring the eye in the form of the *wedjat* symbol commonly known as the “Eye of Horus”.

Although the origin of this symbol is uncertain, the use of the *wedjat* in Egyptian iconography was widespread and extensive, and is the most numerous of all amulets found in archaeological excavations. It



depicts the highly stylised eye of the falcon god Horus. On examination it will be seen that this depiction is an amalgamation of human and falcon form. Beneath the human eye can be seen the “moustachial streak”, the characteristic feature that is found under the eye of the bird in nature.

Horus was the son of Osiris and Isis and as such, one of the primary gods of the Egyptian pantheon. According to Egyptian mythology, Horus fought against Set, his uncle, in order to avenge the death of his father whom Set had killed. During the battle Set tore out the left eye of Horus, shredding it into pieces. These were discovered by Thoth, the god of wisdom and writing, who reassembled them by magic. Myths such as these are prone to variation however, and some say that it was Hathor who healed Horus’s eye.

From this myth was derived the method of representing fractions in arithmetic whereby each separate part of the *wedjat* was assigned a certain fractional value. In hieroglyphic writing these elements were used to indicate fractions in accounting. The sum total of these parts however, amounted only to 63/64, not quite a whole, but the Egyptians presumed that Thoth’s magic made up the remaining 1/64.

Taken together, both eyes of the falcon god Horus expressed duality. The right eye represented the sun, and the left, the moon. As a funerary amulet this was indicated physically by the different material used for manufacturing each eye; the solar eye was made from red jasper (a type of quartz) and the lunar eye from lapis lazuli (a blue mineral). The two eyes were frequently paired together and it was common to see them painted on the left (east) side of coffins. The mummy would be turned onto the left side to enable it to use the eyes to look out. In effect, the corpse was facing east toward the living rather than westward into the underworld which demonstrates that the Egyptians were not totally preoccupied with death.¹ This method of using the eyes

was also employed on boats to allow the path ahead to be seen and thus afforded advance protection to the sailors, a practice that is still carried on to this day.

Protection was the prime motive for the use of the *wedjat* however, and representations of this symbol abound. Amulets and jewellery were the main artefacts to incorporate the sign, but also plates inscribed with the *wedjat* were placed over the incision through which the viscera were removed from the deceased during the embalming process. Ornate pectorals were another way of displaying the sacred eye for protection. Winged eyes were encountered too, hovering over gods and kings.

Yet another function of the sacred eye derived from mythology was its use as a symbol of offering based on the presentation of the restored eye by Horus to his father, Osiris. Variations of this act are found widely, but more so in the later art of Egyptian history.

The symbolism of the eye was not confined to Egypt of course. Everywhere in the ancient world it was feared and revered and today it still

remains a potent esoteric symbol. It even appears on the currency of the United States. Its enduring appeal remains though, not just as a multi-semantic symbol but also in its aesthetic design that is a testament to Egyptian art and will ensure its continued use in future.



Ancient Egyptian wall painting of the falcon headed god Horus. Inner wall of the Tomb of Amenemonet, priest of Ptah-Sokar from the Ramesside Period, Thebes, Luxor, Egypt.

Footnotes

1. Bob Brier, *Ancient Egyptian Magic*, Quill New York, 1981, p.121.

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The Great Peace

by Pensator

Native Americans have always had a bad press from the Europeans who brought them the benefits and many ills of their culture from across the ocean. The Iroquois tribes of New York state had a reputation for ferocity and cruelty. But history is always written by the victors, who invariably discredit those they have conquered. Sometimes it is appropriate to question what we have been told and look deeper. What we now see, with hindsight, is a group of societies intimately connected with the world around them. They lived in a special relationship with this world and the supreme creator of all things, the "Great Spirit." And all who lived in accordance with the master plan drawn up by the Great Spirit at the beginning of time for "the people", lived in "Great Peace."



NINETEENTH Century New York state was a place of wide religious experimentation. Joseph Smith founded the Mormon church there before being expelled and moving far to the West; the Shakers, founded near Albany, had their heyday too; and the Seneca League of chief Handsome Lake instituted the moral code called the “*Gai’wiiio*” or “Good Message.” However, let us travel further back in time, to a time before the first Europeans entered the hinterland of the North American continent.

The relationship of the *Six Nations* or the *League of the Iroquois* to the United States Constitution has attracted much attention in recent years. Some writers have suggested that the substance of the Constitution drew its greatest inspiration from the *League of the Iroquois*. While there is little evidence for this, and Benjamin Franklin for one was interested enough to find out more about the League, there are elements about it which modern Rosicrucians may find interesting. It was regarded by many colonial Americans as a model form of representational government, a far cry from the authoritarian European models of government they had left. A number of historians have traced portions of the American constitution to the time-held practices of the League’s *Great Council*.

The Legend of the Peacemaker

The 16th Century was a time of troubles still preserved in Iroquois oral tradition. Feuding and warfare, both internal and external were rampant. From this time of perpetual warfare, a few leaders took a broader view. To them, the endless feuding was nothing but internal warfare between nations that ought to have been brothers. They began to seek a way out. The legend of the Peacemaker tells the story of how this changed, thanks to one extraordinary man.

There was a time when war was the normal state of things. North of Lake Ontario there lived a young Huron woman. Although a virgin, she became pregnant. Her mother dreamed that the child was destined to do great things. In due course, the child, a boy, was born. Named Deganawida, his mother and grandmother realised that he was a truly gifted child.

The story goes that he grew up to be a handsome young man, with a natural gift for speaking. He preached a message of peace through power and law. As other prophets in their own land, he soon faced jealousy and opposition. Announcing his intention to leave, he built a canoe and paddled across Lake Ontario until he came to the land of



Meeting of Hiawatha and Deganawidah by Sanford Plummer.

the *Five Nations* in New York state. At that time they were fighting each other just as fiercely as they were fighting other tribes. From east to west the Five Nations were the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca.

Deganawida, the Peacemaker, passed from west to east through Iroquoia, urging the hunters he met along the way to take his message of peace back to their chiefs. Moving onwards, he came to the Onondagas, where he quickly converted Ayonhwathah, the original Hiawatha, from cannibalism. He then asked Hiawatha to try to convert Thadodaho, a particularly malevolent Onondaga chief with snakes in his hair, while the Peacemaker travelled onwards to Mohawk country. There, after some trials and tribulations, the Mohawks accepted his message and became the founders of the League.

Meanwhile, Hiawatha’s efforts to convert Thadodaho had failed, and in return, Thadodaho killed Hiawatha’s three daughters. Devastated by grief, Hiawatha left his village and set out eastward for Mohawk country. Along the way, he came to a lake. To enable him to pass, a flock of ducks appeared and flew off carrying all the water with them. This enabled him to walk across the dry lakebed, which he saw was strewn with shell beads. Collecting them as he walked, he put some in a bag, and strung others on three strings as a symbol of his grief. Wandering aimlessly, he eventually encountered the Peacemaker.

Deganawida took the strings of shell beads and made more of them from the shells Hiawatha had collected. Laying the strings out one at a time, he uttered the words



Map of the Five Nations.





Iroquois painting of Thadodaho receiving two Mohawk chiefs (Reproduction).

of the “Requickening Address” for the first time. With fifteen strings of beads, he wiped away his friend’s tears, made him hear again, cleared his throat so he could speak again, and dispelled the darkness. Then he dealt with the other eleven essential matters of condolence. This ritual cleared Hiawatha’s mind of grief, and together they sang the Peace Song.

The Peacemaker and Hiawatha taught the ritual to the Mohawks, and accepted adoption into the Mohawk nation. Accompanied by Mohawk chiefs, they travelled westwards. The Oneidas joined the League quickly and were called younger brothers by the Mohawk. They bypassed the Onondagas and the evil Thadodaho, and approached the Cayuga, who joined as quickly as the Oneida had done. They also became younger brothers. The three nations then returned to the Onondagas, who all joined except Thadodaho. This time the Onondagas were called older brothers just like the Mohawk. Then with the chiefs of the four nations, they all went to the Seneca, who also joined as older brothers, thus completing the League. The Tuscaroras travelled north from the Carolinas and later asked to join the League. They joined as younger brothers and brought the League up to Six Nations.

With the power of the chiefs behind them, the Peacemaker and Hiawatha returned to Thadodaho. With a great deal of difficulty, his mind was made straight,

and Hiawatha combed the snakes from his hair. The Peacemaker made Thadodaho first among equals in the role of the fifty League chiefs, and taught them the words of the Great Law. The cycle of endless offence and revenge was thus ended by the Peacemaker.

Like most prophets, the Peacemaker was an outsider, fatherless and capable of performing miracles. Hiawatha is a recidivist Onondaga cannibal who dreams of a better life, but loses his daughters, wanders around and is eventually cured in Mohawk country by the protocol of greeting strangers. The Peacemaker’s code rests on three points. These are the good word (righteousness), power (civil authority) and peace (health of society). They aim to short-circuit the blood feuds. The joint mission of Deganawida and Hiawatha is to get the code accepted among the nations, who eventually come together as two polarities: older and younger brothers, or positive and negative as in the Rosicrucian teachings.

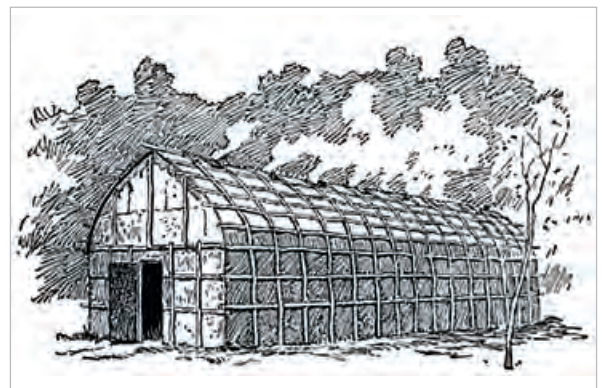
People of the Longhouse

The League members to this day still refer to themselves as “People of the Longhouse.” The longhouse was their traditional dwelling, where many families lived together under one roof. The metaphorical Longhouse of the League stretches across Iroquoia. The Mohawks guard the eastern door, and the Senecas guard the western door. The Onondagas keep the fire at the centre. Above them all soars the Tree of Peace. Each League chief is like a tree or a support pole of the great longhouse. Together the chiefs link arms and act as one.

Iroquois custom requires unanimity in League decisions. The concept of majority rule was not acceptable. Unanimity was often achieved by having the most senior chiefs speak last, so that they could add their wisdom. If the nations could not agree, they could act individually as long as their actions did not harm other League members.



Hiawatha Wampum belt.



Traditional Iroquois longhouse.





*Battle between Iroquois and Algonquian tribes near Lake Champlain.
Engraving based on a drawing by Champlain of his 1609 voyage.*

Women played a prominent role in this society, and it was they who chose a man to serve as one of the fifty League chiefs. They could also depose him if they felt he was not adequately doing his job. But Deganawida's role as Peacemaker set him above all others, and his position was never filled after his death. Hiawatha was adopted by the Mohawks, and after his death, out of respect for his accomplishments, his position too remained unfilled. As the chiefs died, the senior women of the clans chose new chiefs to raise up in their places, each new chief assuming the name and identity of his predecessor.

Adolescents assumed adult names that were more than mere labels of identity. Specific names were held by the clans, and an adolescent was given an appropriate name from the available pool. He or she thereby became the reincarnation of the previous holders of the same name.

The Great Law of the League or *Kayenerenhkowa* was given to the League by the Peacemaker and preserved for generations through oral tradition. It provided for the rights, duties and symbols of chiefs, clans and nations. Laws of adoption and emigration were also laid out, and everything was committed to memory and preserved by constant repetition for generations. Traditional ceremonies emphasised thanksgiving, solidarity and catharsis, and the thanksgiving speech still begins and

ends all important Iroquois ceremonies. Rather than requesting favours from the Creator, the thanksgiving speech always had as its theme gratitude for all things received, and pervaded all traditional Iroquois thought.

The League was founded upon two important structures, the clan and the Condolence Ceremony. Later, formal meetings of the League were typically begun with the Condolence Ceremony, to wipe away the grief of those who had lost chiefs since the last meeting, and to raise up new chiefs in their place. This ritual constantly renewed the League and gave it life.

Shell beads, usually called "*Wampum*" became the tokens of League activity. Each colour had a different significance. White was positive and constructive, connoting harmony and right mindedness. Black or purple meant the reverse, namely negativity and destruction. When a new League chief was installed, he was reminded:

You are a mentor of your people. The thickness of your skin shall be seven spans, which means that you shall be proof against anger, offensive actions and criticism. Your heart shall be filled with peace and goodwill. Your mind shall be filled with yearning for the welfare of the people of the League. With endless patience you shall





Lithograph of the Mohawk war and political leader Thayendanegea or Joseph Brant by Charles Bird King.



Iroquois engaging in trade with Europeans, 1722.

carry out your duty, and your firmness shall be tempered with tenderness for your people. Neither anger nor fury shall find lodging in your mind. All your words and actions shall be marked with calm deliberation. In all your deliberations in the Council of the League, in your efforts at lawmaking, in all your official acts, self-interest shall be cast away. Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people, and always have in view not only the present, but also the generations to come.

Hold fast to friends, for in union there is strength. Welcome the stranger and give him shelter, for he may become a prop to your house. Bury your hates and let them be forgotten. Let us have one mind, one heart, one soul, in which all of the nations shall be contained.

Many people think that the League was formed for the exclusive benefit of only the original five nations, and that all others were excluded from the *Kayenerenbkowa*, the Great Peace Law. This was never the case, and other native peoples took shelter beneath the Tree of Peace, most of them eventually becoming members or citizens of the League.

Do we not detect here the forerunner of today's United Nations? During wars, captives were often taken in and adopted, becoming members of whichever nation took them in. Often they were treated as equals and regarded as of their own people. If one of them died, his whole clan would assume the role of grieving, while other clans took the role of condolence, attending to the practical matters of burying the deceased. The body was buried on the third day, and the elaborate funerary rites ensured that everyone was either grieving or condoling.

The Peacemaker's thoughts had not been for the Iroquois-speaking peoples alone, but included all mankind. His great mind intended that under the shelter of the Great Tree all nations of mankind could rest. He said:

Wise men of the Iroquois often said that nations must draw upon the wisdom of seven generations past, and take responsibility for the well-being of seven generations to come. The essential features of Iroquois ethos reflected duality, ecology, cyclicity and equilibrium. There is much here for us all to ponder.



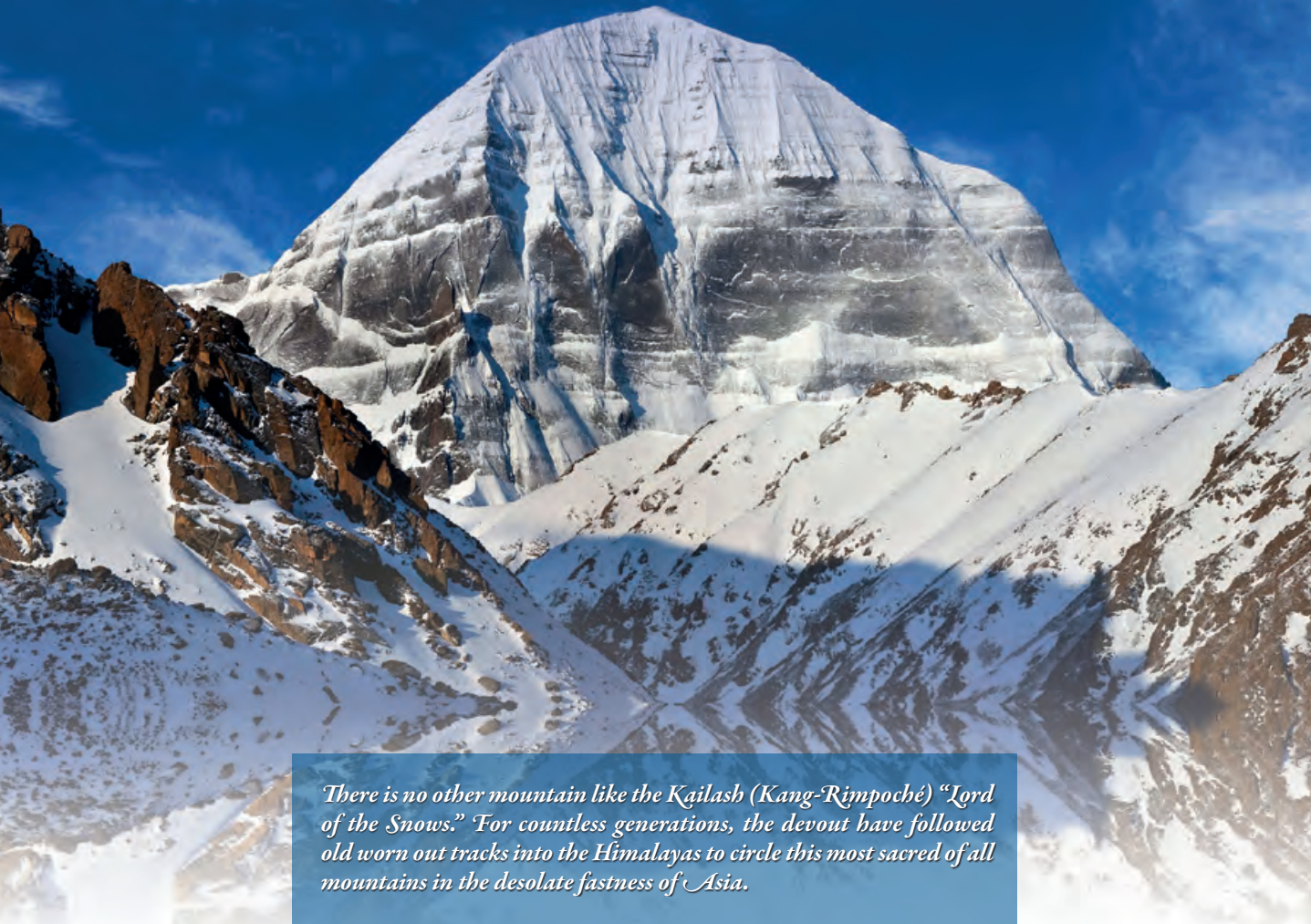
Iroquois in Buffalo, New York, 1914.



Mount Kailash

On the Mountain, Around the Mountain

by Juan Jimenez-Velasco



There is no other mountain like the Kailash (Kang-Rimpoché) "Lord of the Snows." For countless generations, the devout have followed old worn out tracks into the Himalayas to circle this most sacred of all mountains in the desolate fastness of Asia.

IDON'T think there can exist anywhere in the world a sight so magnificent, so overwhelming as the Himalayas. The sight of those giants of rock, of snow and of ice is an ongoing invitation to rise to the impregnable heights of one's self. No-one can ever forget a sunset in the Himalayas, when the mountain is dressed in red, violet

and purple. We feel infinitely small before the supreme Darshan, the vision of gods on earth. In those moments, all nature seems to explode in a climax of life and light. And so do we! In silence, we can but blend with that symbol of the unexplored, inaccessible summits of the self. However, in no other place can the presence be felt so close, the invisible spirit of divinity that with its loving





Pilgrims take a ritual bath in Lake Manasarovar before undertaking their journey.

protection watches over the stage of human evolution.

The inhabitants of those holy regions do not experience the pleasure that westerners have in climbing mountains. To them, these are the abode of spirits, of gods or of demons, of semi-human powers or of nefarious beings. To the spiritual, the value of the mountains does not come from the statistics of their height, which is so important to those who wish to conquer the summit, but from their personality, their exceptional character. Just as they would never dare tread on a holy talisman, the religious Tibetans would never dare to climb a holy



Small cairns of stones left by the pilgrims.

mountain. Instead of conquering the mountain, they would prefer to be conquered by it. There are many difficult and dangerous adventures, but the conquest of oneself remains the hardest, the most heroic, the most silent.

But of all the mountains of Tibet, the fame of the Holy Kailash has spread throughout Asia. There is no other mountain like the Kailash (Kang-Rimpoché), the Lord of the Snows, which forms the axis of two great civilisations: India and China. Both for Hindus and for Tibetan Buddhists, it is the centre of the universe, the land of absolute peace, the throne of Shiva, the abode of the gods, of the wise and of the immortals.

In June 1997, an expedition led by my dear friend and sensei Michel Rivert, left Berlin for the Forbidden Territory of Tibet. Our goal was not to climb mountains, but after travelling over 14,000 kilometres, and crossing the forests of northern India, and then almost 5,000 kilometres of desert, to reach the Holy Mountain, the Kailash, we were intent on carrying out the ancient ritual of walking around the throne of the gods, the Parikrama. This involves going around the Holy Mountain, travelling always from left to right, along a path of some 55 kilometres. Before beginning this pilgrimage, the most holy of all that exist, we had to take a ritual bath in Lake





Tibetan woman performing body-length prostrations at intervals throughout her circumambulation of Kailash.

Manasarovar, which afforded us the merits necessary for the exacting experience of reaching 6,000 metres on the Parikrama. The entire area was dotted with small cairns of stones carefully carved by the pilgrims who had come to this magical land from all over Asia, often putting their very lives in danger. The traditional prayer of the Tibetans could be read carved onto the stone: OMMANIPADME HUM, “Hail to the jewel of the lotus.”

I could never describe in words the joy we felt when we saw for the first time the frozen summit of the

Kailash after long, hard weeks of exhaustion and austerity. All our past suffering melted away before the sight, or rather, the contemplation of the Holy Mountain. Knowing that we had reached the holiest place on Earth brought us an indescribable feeling of happiness. The shadows, the darkness and the bad memories dissipated just as the mist disappears under the caress of the benign rays of the awakening of the soul. We had been told that in these lands, one’s mental faculties were elevated and that a person’s sensitivity became infinite; that close to the Kailash, mysterious voices could be heard, and that visions or revelations were to be seen; that the obstructions to thought faded away, and that all that was dark inside oneself became light.

Other legends spoke (and we heard it from Tibetan lips) of the presence of supra-human spirits who help pilgrims in the ritual of walking around the mountain. Legends they may have been, or perhaps the hidden desire of the collective, unconscious mind; but it is true that this is a strange land, unique in all the world, a mysterious and terrible land, but infinitely fascinating. At the foot of the Holy Kailash one cannot avoid the profound feeling that one is before something sacred, before a symbol of the virgin, unexplored lands of the interior of humanity.



Mount Kailash, Tibet, South face.



To the people of the east, karma is the law of cause and effect. The errors or otherwise in life generate positive or negative reactions in that or in the following life. All of which cause an eternal process of reincarnation in which we purify ourselves by compensating our wrongful deeds with benign acts. Every thought, every word, every act is the seed of subsequent manifestations which tend to show us the correct path to freedom. In the west, we have still not realised the importance and the evidence of this natural law, and we understand it even less in its fundamentally creative purpose. On the contrary, submerged still in the ambiguity of the concept of good and evil, we interpret this basic law of the universe as a punishment or as a reward. And it is true that the extensive literature on the subject has not helped to clarify to any great extent this teaching. Whether we want to accept it or not, the law exists and nothing and no-one can escape from its cycle of actions and reactions. Nevertheless, far from being a fatal principle, karma can be voluntarily compensated, and even neutralised.

Tradition says that a single circuit around the Kailash purifies the karma of a whole lifetime, and ten times around the Holy Mountain will purify the karma of numerous existences. One

hundred and eight ritual circuits of the mountain will ensure freedom in this lifetime. It is certainly true though, that this ancestral rite is a very tough ordeal, and in order to carry it out it is necessary to undertake (and I can bear witness to this) a superhuman mental and physical effort, and pay a high price in enormous personal suffering. But all the ways to freedom and knowledge demand this from us, do they not? Let us follow them to heaven.



High above a glacial valley leading off from Kailash, pilgrims pause at a monastery to view the sacred mountain. In the vastness of Tibet, they are but the latest to pass this way, just a few of the millions who have made their way, painstakingly from monastery to monastery, from century to century in search of the sacred. With the rigours of a devotion and tenacity which few in the Western world could even imagine, maybe some of these pilgrims reached their goal of Illumination and a final release from the cycle of birth and rebirth in material reality.



John Muir

Into the Universe Through a Forest

by Grace Mabidikama



THE CLEAREST way into the universe is through a forest wilderness. With these words, the naturalist and conservationist John Muir described his journey into a higher understanding of humanity's place within nature. A man of many talents, Muir was a writer, explorer, and an inventor who lived easily in the mountains and forests, treading lightly through the wilderness he loved so much. He was a naturalist, throughout his life he explored and studied

nature in depth. However, he went far beyond most naturalists, for he glimpsed something spiritual and eternal, a cosmic message, glowing through the myriad shapes and forms found in nature. In this sense, Muir was a philosopher and mystic, a teacher with a crucial message for generations beyond his own.

Born in Scotland in 1838, the young John Muir emigrated with his family to America when he was 11 years old. His early years were difficult, a strict Calvinist



upbringing and long hours of hard work on a cold and impoverished Wisconsin farm. Although he was diligent in his work and studied the Bible regularly, he could not bring himself to agree with his parents' bleak and gloomy view of the world. He knew about a different world. Despite repeated beatings, and tongue-lashings about hell-fire and brimstone, he escaped whenever he could to the beauty and solace of the surrounding wilderness, the woods and marshes near the small farm.

To Muir, the nearby wilderness was a joyous and exciting world of bright beauty changing with each season, a world of death and rebirth, of constant renewal. Even in the still of winter, when everything was snow-covered, he could sense an underlying energy and the eventual renewal of life from under the ice. In the wilderness he saw myriad shapes and forms of creation, each separate and yet related to everything else. And there were life processes to explore and contemplate. For young Muir, the nearby woods and marshes were living laboratories, alive with lessons and surprises, and a message for mankind. Many years later he wrote of this message: *"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."*

Eventually Muir decided to devote his life to an in-depth study of nature. Tramping through farmlands and the wilderness, down through the middle of the United States, he set out for California, where further realisations lay ahead.

In 1868, when he was thirty years old, he saw California's magnificent Yosemite Valley for the first time. Having decided to devote his life to the exploration and study of nature, he had taken off for the American West. Disembarking from a sailing ship in San Francisco Bay, Muir hiked across mountains and valleys, into the Sierra Nevada, to the special valley known as Yosemite. He was immediately awed by its bright beauty.

For the next few years, Muir lived in Yosemite, studying this special place in every detail. For the rest of his life, he considered Yosemite his spiritual home, returning there often. Through his writings, he championed Yosemite's preservation as a National Park, awakening political leaders and philosophers alike to the necessity of preserving the wilderness.

Fascinated by the process of ongoing creation so visible in Yosemite, Muir eagerly studied its rock-faced walls, the waterfalls and streams, the action of ice-



John Muir, c.1902.

crystals in shaping the rocky landscape, the storms which blow rain and snow across Yosemite's landscape. In the physical shapes and forms found in this beautiful area, the shining rocks, dashing waterfalls, trees, animal life, snow-crystals, wildflowers in the open meadows, Muir sensed a message of light and beauty for mankind, something appealing to man's higher emotions and desires.

Muir's descriptions of the transcendent beauty of nature helped further the cause of wilderness preservation. In one of his books *The Yosemite*, he wrote: *"But no temple made with hands can compare with Yosemite. Every rock in its walls seems to glow with life."* To Muir this valley was a great natural temple, beckoning man to explore his higher self. He was fascinated with light. Further along in the same book, he wrote:

One of the finest effects of sunlight falling on water I ever saw in Yosemite or elsewhere I found on the brow of this beautiful fall, (Illilouette Fall)... Nothing in clouds or flowers, on bird-wings or the lips of shells, could rival it in fineness. It was the most divinely beautiful mass of rejoicing yellow light I ever beheld, one of Nature's precious gifts that perchance may come to us but once in a lifetime.

And from sunlight to moonlight, further along in the same book:

Lunar rainbows or spray-bows also abound in the glorious affluence of dashing, rejoicing, hurrahing, enthusiastic spring floods, their colours as distinct as those of the sun and regularly and obviously banded, though less vivid. Fine specimens may be found any night at the foot of the Upper Yosemite Fall, glowing gloriously amid the gloomy shadows and thundering waters, whenever there is plenty of moonlight and spray.

"Light, I know not a single word fine enough for Light.... holy, beamless, bodiless, inaudible floods of Light." With these words he expressed his lifelong fascination with Light. He was perpetually awed and excited by the





John Muir with President Roosevelt.

ever-changing play of light across the face of nature, be it light refracted through a rainbow, sunlight playing across mountain peaks, or more subtle moonlight, caught for seconds in the dashing spray and ripples of mountain waterfalls. Sunlight playing through wind-driven clouds quickly changes the colours in a landscape, emphasizing particular hues, bringing them to the surface, while toning down and softening other colours. And, with clouds scudding across the sky, in moments, the colours change again. Across the landscape, flowers reflect back all of this light, opening their beautiful blossoms to the Sun.

Through all this beauty, and through keeping in touch with his intuitive self and his high values, Muir came to a higher understanding of man's place within nature. He understood the vital link between wilderness preservation and man's future. And this is much more than a physical link, it's spiritual. Wilderness is a vital part of ourselves and has much to teach us. Its beauty touches us deep within, touches the Soul, and in so touching, appeals to the higher aspects of man's nature.

John Muir spent much of his life tramping through the American wilderness. He also spent much of his time and energy awakening the American public to the rampant destruction of that wilderness. Through speaking and writing, Muir made the public more aware of what was going on, and the wilderness beauty they were about to lose forever if action was not taken soon. He spearheaded the conservationist movement. In 1903, when his beloved Yosemite was threatened with logging and further development, he went camping in this beautiful area with President Theodore Roosevelt, personally guiding him through the beauty of Yosemite's mountains, domes, waterfalls, meadows, and giant sequoia trees. Among Roosevelt's comments:

Yesterday I saw for the first time a grove of your great trees, a grove which it has taken the ages several thousands of years to build up; and I feel most emphatically that we should not turn into shingles a tree that was old when the first Egyptian conqueror penetrated to the valley of the Euphrates. That you may say is not looking at the matter from the practical standpoint. There is nothing more practical in the end than the preservation of beauty, than the preservation of anything that appeals to the higher emotions in mankind.

President Roosevelt was impressed, and later designated over one million acres of wilderness as National Parks and Forests. John Muir's good work lives on, perhaps best exemplified today in the increased spirit of conservation and ecological awareness throughout the world.

JOHN MUIR (1838-1914)

Whether climbing Alaskan glaciers or guiding Teddy Roosevelt through Yosemite National Park, left, Scottish born John Muir saw wilderness as something quasi-spiritual, where

"tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilised people" could find renewal. As a nature writer and the Sierra Club's founding president, he argued eloquently for preservation, as when he battled to save Yosemite's beautiful Hetch Hetchy Valley you might *"...as well dam for water tanks the people's cathedrals and churches"*, he fumed. Muir lost, yet his words still echo with each new threat to wild places.

"How hard to realise that every camp of men or beast has this glorious starry firmament for a roof! In such places standing alone on the mountaintop it is easy to realise that whatever special nests we make..., leaves and moss like to marmots and birds, or tents or piled stone..., we all dwell in a house of one roof, and are sailing the celestial spaces without leaving any track."





Mahakala

Protector of Travellers, Great Power of Time

by Charles Tease

AS ROSICRUCIANS, we realise that no one religion holds the sole truth to the exclusion of all others. They are all expressions of the one Cosmic source and, ultimately, all teach the same principle. Therefore we can learn something from all of them. Many and varied have been the concepts of peoples around the world throughout the course of history, and the path of evolution will continue to lead us, as our knowledge and consciousness grow into the expanding universe. Our Order teaches us that no God is false, as long as it represents the highest possible ideal of the believer.

In the Indian sub-continent, there are five major religions. Hinduism and Buddhism alike have pantheons of gods. Frequently, their sacred books tell of battles and slaughter, but that these do not have literal meanings seems fairly obvious when one considers the sublimity

of some of the figures described in the ancient texts and legends. Look, for instance, in awe and wonderment at Shiva, as Nataraja or Lord of the Dance, dancing to the rhythm of cosmic order, trampling underfoot the demon of ignorance. Surely this can only be a source of inspiration to the aspiring mystic?

In Tibetan Buddhism, one of the gods, Mahakala, is depicted as an incredibly ferocious warrior holding, in his right hand a razor-sharp axe with which to sever the life-roots of enemies, and in his left hand, a chalice from which he drinks their blood. This may appear rather gruesome for modern western taste. However the texts state that his task is to protect the traveller on the path to enlightenment. It is the traveller's enemies that he attacks.

All of us reading this today are travellers on the path to enlightenment. Do we have any enemies attempting to



bar our progress? In times past, leading mystical philosophers have suffered torture and death for their efforts to make progress along the mystic path. Socrates, for example, was executed for his belief in a sole God and for allegedly denigrating the pantheon of gods at the heart of Greek religion, at the end of the 4th century BC. Many of the famous scientists of the 15th and 16th centuries AD faced the Inquisition for expounding beliefs that did not precisely match the agreed teachings of the Christian churches. Many Rosicrucians of the past concealed their affiliation with the Rose-Cross, often because of prejudice, though there were notable exceptions who made public their membership. Free thought has been and is currently being suppressed by governments around the world. Do we ourselves experience adverse reactions today?

Nowadays, we are subject to rather more subtle pressures than hitherto, pressures from family and friends, from churches, from the establishment in general. We may experience a form of embarrassment and be reluctant to declare our affiliation through our fear of others' response to what is essentially a very private journey.

So where does Mahakala come in and what is he doing for us? Of course he is not out there in the physical world, like a serial killer, swinging his axe and chopping up all those who express prejudice against us, or who try to bar our progress. As usual we must look a bit deeper, beyond the physical plane, for his field of operation.

Our real enemies are not out there in the physical world but inside us, in our thoughts, in our illusions and self-delusions. The greatest obstacles to our progress on the path are our own creations, the mental barriers and the results of our own actions and inactions, our karma. We should be able to glide smoothly from here to eternity in one easy movement, but, in fact, it takes us unknown eons to get there. Why does it take us so long? Because the impurities in our thought processes clog up our steps and cloud our vision so that we lose sight of where we want to go and how to get there. In Hindu and Buddhist terms, we live in 'Maya', the world of illusions. The aim is to see clearly the way to Cosmic heaven. The theory seems easy,



The mask for the Hindu god Mahakala has three eyes and five skulls.

the outer and inner aspects of ourselves, so that, as we progress through the degrees of the teachings, we see self more and more clearly. We strip away our illusions and our self-delusion layer by layer. At the same time we must consider our karmic obligations, recognise and confess to our past sins, coming to terms with what we have done and what we have thought. In time we wash away the grime of ages and can begin to polish the precious stone until, however long it takes, we may shine forth in glory and eventually be found worthy of our true mission in life. To aid us we have the protection of our own inner master, ready at any time to deal with our enemies if we will but ask. The only conditions laid down are that we demonstrate in ourselves high ideals, loving kindness and tolerance at all times.

Further enlightenment on the meaning of Mahakala can be found in the works of the famous Indian teacher Swami Prabhupada. In a commentary on the Bhavagad-gita, he states that 'Kala' is an alternative name for one of the holy trinity, Paramatma, or God in the heart of man, while 'Maha' is the measure of his greatness. Here indeed is spiritual food to nourish the traveller on the path! On one level we have a warrior protecting us on our journey to the centre. On another level he is an aspect of the Divine coming to meet us and lead us home. In the words of our former Emperor Ralph M Lewis: *"As Man moves towards the Divine, so the Divine moves towards Man"*

the practice very difficult.

What can Mahakala do for the aspiring mystic on the path to enlightenment? Looking at the root derivation of his name in the migration from India to Tibet there appears to be a reference to the 'Destroyer of Illusions'. As the traveller progresses along the Path, Mahakala is going to swing his axe and cut off his illusions, consuming their life-blood, and helping to clear the way ahead. Of course, he is not going to do it all of his own volition, we will need to form a partnership to identify the enemy and deal with it.

The teachings of the Rosicrucian Order return time after time to the importance of this partnership. We are given every encouragement and many practical exercises to harmonise



Big Sheep

by Madeleine Cabuche



WHILE MANY people are convinced that animals can have no souls, others are equally convinced to the contrary. I have long known that when a strong bond of affection exists between a human being and a domestic animal, frequent instances of telepathy are exhibited between them and, as time passes, the animal expresses its affection in ever subtler ways until there arises a stage where one could say that it is almost at the point of evolving from simple consciousness to the first glimmerings of self consciousness. The love existing between human and animal is the catalyst which brings this about. In fact Harvey Spencer Lewis, Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order between 1915 and 1939, wrote about this on several occasions. If an animal achieves even the rudiments of self consciousness, he argued, a soul of some sophistication must be finding expression within its body.

Here, I would like to tell of some extraordinarily evolved behaviour displayed by a remarkable feral cat who, even without the benefit of a close human bond, exhibited reasoning, forethought, paternal care and responsibility and finally, a courage that was considered rather than spontaneous, when he overcame his fear of human contact to perform an act he deemed necessary.

I first met him through my friend Maud, who at the time was Resident Warden in an old house in Putney, London which had been converted into bed-sits. Maud, who was quite potty about cats and long deprived of their company, was overjoyed to find the long, shabby garden frequented by stray cats of every description. She was overwhelmed by such a wealth of cats at her disposal: blue ones, black ones, tawny ones, mufti-coloured ones. When I visited her, I thought I had never before seen



so many beautiful cats together at one time. Sleek and finely-boned, their eyes shone yellow and true green, surrounded by bright fur, the latter doubtless due to the plentiful quantities of good food provided by Maud and one or two of the residents. Even after several months, many of them remained shy, waiting patiently for dinner to appear, yet venturing forth to eat only when the kitchen door was firmly closed.

Names, now and again, were bestowed upon the friendliest: Snowdrop, White-paws, Stripes, etc., but the patriarch, one of the mufti-coloured cats, defied all choice of a name. Purposeful and majestic, he boasted the longest, thickest coat imaginable, mainly white but splattered with a variety of other colours. And he was large! One day, as she regarded the swathes of wool-like fur, inspiration struck. 'Big Sheep!' Maud exclaimed.

Big Sheep's consort was a small and timid tabby, one of the least impressive of the crowd, from whom he was inseparable. One day, she disappeared and so, for a while, did Big Sheep himself: When he eventually returned he was walking purposefully down the narrow strip of path, leading behind him several miniature replicas of himself. Leaving a space of several feet between them, his golden eyes looked up at Maud: "*My children need feeding!*" Surmising that something must have happened to the little tabby, Maud searched until eventually she found her, stiff and dead in a nearby derelict shed. Big Sheep had assumed responsibility for his children.

What an exceptional animal who used reasoning, courage and trust to secure another's welfare.

Adjacent to the kitchen door, a wall of crumbling brickwork offered on its broad top both a comfortable seat and an excellent vantage point from which to view proceedings. Here, progeny ranged to each side of him, he kept vigil when food was due. Initially, when Maud appeared, a timid female kitten had fumed to bolt whereupon Big Sheep gave the kitten a formidable cuff around the ear, bidding her stay if she knew what was good for her. She stayed.

As the kittens grew, Maud increased her almsgiving, finding somehow within her meagre budget the means to satisfy the appetite of fifteen or more cats. Big Sheep continued to prove he was an extraordinary cat and did not cease to watch over his children, even as they approached early adulthood. Neither, to anyone's knowledge, did he seek a new 'wife.'

In Maud's bed-sit was a French window leading out into a narrow conservatory. One evening, a strange noise



persisted for a long time. Eventually, she discovered that it emanated from Big Sheep who was sitting close to the window, patiently and persistently rubbing his huge paw with a sound resembling that of washleather, against the glass. Slightly behind him was a daughter, patently very unwell. Cautiously, Maud opened the long window and Big Sheep who had never before come to within less than five yards of the house, came close to Maud, ushering his reluctant daughter towards her. He waited until assured that she understood the situation before silently melting, back into the darkening garden.

The young cat, although very nervous, accepted the shelter of an upturned cardboard box filled with makeshift bedding. And there she remained, never stirring, never venturing out even for food or drink. Big Sheep, meanwhile, appeared now and again to keep an eye on things from a safe distance. His behaviour was all the more remarkable when one considers that in the wild many felines will, given the opportunity, kill the offspring of their competitors. Whatever had been wrong with her, the little cat recovered and after three days re-emerged to join her father.

Over the next month she became less timid and eventually, domesticated. Maud named her Blossom and when finally, when Maud had to move on, she took Blossom with her to her new home, where she lived happily for many years. What happened to Big Sheep? Cat-snatcher vans regularly frequented the neighbourhood, though Maud had always managed to circumnavigate them, even rescuing Blossom herself on one occasion. Big Sheep was too wary and far too clever to be caught and hopefully, still receiving handouts from some of the residents, continued to live peacefully, majestically and wisely among his progeny.

What an exceptional animal who, acting on his own initiative, independently of any human attachment, used reasoning, courage and trust to secure another's welfare. His behaviour must surely pose many questions.



SILENCE

by Jeanne Guesdoin



Before he would initiate a neophyte into the mysteries of his teachings, the philosopher Pythagoras would subject the candidate to various ordeals which were designed to strengthen his character and which would allow Pythagoras to judge his personality and future prospects accurately. The newcomer amid the sages of Croton, was therefore permitted to listen but never allowed to speak or ask any questions. For months on end, he was subjected to the discipline of silence, so that when he was finally able to speak again he would do so only with circumspection and respect. He had learned inwardly, through personal experience, that silence is an almost divine power, the mother of all virtues.

Alas, why are we not still today under the paternal authority of Pythagoras? The main trouble with today's world is the lack of silence. Not only is contemporary society literally poisoned by the tumult of machines, but also, and especially, it is saturated with loud and empty words. It is a question of who will speak the loudest, who will make the most statements, who will tell the story with the most trifling details. How right was Kierkegaard, the great Danish philosopher, when he wrote: *"The world in its present state is sick! If I were a doctor and was asked for advice, I would answer: 'Be silent!'"*

True Rosicrucians can be recognised by their oral temperance, among other virtues. They speak only





“Great truths are taught only through silence”

sparingly, and their words are rich in meaning. And they practise the following advice from a Sufi teacher: *“If the word you are about to speak is not more beautiful than silence, then do not say it!”*

When we seek initiation into any new form of knowledge or ability, we must remain silent, not only with others but with ourselves also. We really need to understand this well; for it is only in silence that our God communicates with us. In order for us to hear this Sacred advice, to receive intuitive flashes, we must know how to silence the profane voice within. The Bible teaches this symbolically in the First Book of Kings (Chapter 19, verses 11 and 12), where the prophet Elijah is shown taking refuge in the desert and waiting for a message from the Lord:

And he said: “go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the lord was not in the wind. And after the wind, came an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake came a fire; but the lord was not in the fire.

And then, devoid of any of the fanfare of a strong wind, earthquake or fire, a still small voice spoke to Elijah and it was his God. In his famous treatise entitled *Language of the Birds*, the Persian mystic Attar expresses the same truth in a different way. *“As long as they walked, they*

talked; but when they arrived all talk ceased. There was no longer a guide nor a traveller, and even the road had ceased to exist.”

A great French mystic, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, deserved to be named *‘the Unknown Silent One’* by his disciples. More than anyone else at the time, he exalted the virtues of silence. *“Great truths are taught only through silence...”* he wrote. Better yet, he made this remark, which unfortunately applies so well to our own times: *“Is there a greater proof of our weakness than the multiplicity of our words?”* It is true that silence is a real test to the one who, through habit or tendency, does not know how to observe it. Tradition relates that the ancient Greeks and Romans had a goddess especially in honour of silence, and this shows to what extent our ancestors worshipped this virtue.

As related in this message, the discipline of silence is a great power for good, for it allows us to maintain within is a vital influx that useless words would waste away. Before you speak, try to evaluate if what you intend to say is worthwhile, if it can do some good, and especially if it is not going to cause any harm. You will notice that the effort you exerted in repressing a useless word causes a reaction within, a struggle against temptation. And each victory will give you new power.

That is why it is wise to follow the Sufi’s advice, and if what you are about to say is not more beautiful than silence, then abstain from speaking. Meditate upon this message; think about it often. I hope it will help you to ascend one more step on the ladder of spiritual discovery.





The Rainbow Serpent

by *Ronnie Bigsmile*

WELL G'DAY, g'day all you earth fellas. Come, sit down in my country. I see you come into the sacred place of my tribe to get the strength of the Earth Mother. We are a bit different you and me. We say the earth is our mother; we cannot own her, she owns us. This rock and all these rocks are alive with her spirit. They protect us, all of us. They are what you fellas call a temple. Since the Alcheringa, that thing you fellas call Dreamtime, this place has given us all shelter from the heat, a place to paint, to dance the sacred dance and talk to his spirit.

How does one repay such gifts? By protecting the land. This land is the home of the Dreamtime. The spirits came and painted themselves on these walls so people could meet here, grow strong again and take this strength back into the world. This is my totem, Kabul. You know her as the Carpet Snake. She is my tribe's symbol of the Rainbow Serpent, the giver and taker of life. When the spirits of men have been made strong again by Kabul, she'll come back to this earth.

But we are not strong now. We are too tired from fighting time, machines and each other. But she sends





her spirit ones with message sticks to help us take time, to remember, to care for her special things. First there is Dooruk, the emu, with the dust of the red Earth Mother still on his feet. He comes to remind us to protect the land, to always put back as much as we take. Then there is Kopoo, the big red kangaroo, the very colour of the land. He comes to remind us to always take time for ourselves. And Mungoongarlie, the goanna, is last of all because his legs are short. He brings the news that we, his children, are forgetting to give time to each other.

But the animals of the Earth Mother come to say more than this. They come to say that our creator, that Rainbow Serpent, is getting weak with anger and grief for what we are doing to this earth. But come fellas, sit down by my fire. Warm yourselves and I will tell you the story of how thw world began.

In the time of Alcheringa the land lay flat and cold. The world was empty. The Rainbow Serpent was asleep under the ground with all the animal tribes in her belly waiting to be born. When it was her time, she pushed up. She came out at the heart of my people, Uluru, or as you call it Ayer's Rock. She looked around, everywhere was all dark, no light, no colour. So she got very busy. She threw the land out, made mountains and hills. She called to her Frog Tribe to come up from their sleep and she scratched their belly to make them laugh. The water they stored in bad times spilled over the land making rivers and lakes. Then she threw the good spirit Biami high in the sky. She told him to help her find light.

Now Biami, he's a real good fella, he jumped up high in the sky and smiled down on the land. The sky lit up from his smile and we, his children, saw colour and shadow. And that warm sun spirit saw himself in the shining waters. The pine trees, they burst into flower. That's his way of telling us it's time to hunt the big mullet fish. And when the wild hop trees bloom, that's his way to tell us the oysters are fat on the shores of our great sea spirit, Quandamooka. Grow strong Kabul, come back to

your children, the mountains, the trees and our father, the sky. Come, bring us your birds of many colours, come back to your rivers rushing to Quandamooka. Return to your teeming fish of a thousand colours and shapes.

Kabul is the mother of us all. She is the spirit of the land, all its beauty, all its colour. But there are those who see no colour, who will not feel the beauty of this land, who wish only to destroy the mother and themselves. Their eyes are open but they do not see. Kabul, bring back the fire of knowledge to your children. Like the fire of that pretty stone in the ground, the one you call the opal, the colours of the rainbow, the colours of life itself, bring it back.

It is good for all people to dream of places which are beautiful to them, of the waters where they sail their boats and canoes. And now it seems that with all our great machines we can travel almost anywhere. We can travel across the land at great speed. And for some, the city with its bright lights and the music and dancing of the modern world, there is almost nothing we can't do. We can hover or swoop in the air, and we do all these things with the land. Good reason to protect it then.

But where would we ask our machines to take us? They have no spirit or feelings of their own. Only we can guide them to the places that have meaning for us. That is why, like my ancestors before me, I will always come back to this place to share the feeling of the land with all living things. I belong here where the spirit of the Earth Mother is strong in the land and in me. Take time you earth fellas. Let the spirit of this mighty land touch you as it touches my people. The water is good, it carries the strength of Kabul, and now that I am rested, I'm ready for my own journey into the world.

Have I helped you to rest on your way? Perhaps soon, in all our travels, we will see Kabul in the places she has made. Perhaps she will come again when the spirits of men and the spirit of the land are once more together as one.



Mevlana:

Jalau'd Din Rumi *Turkish Mystic Philosopher*

by Bill Anderson



ALTHOUGH Rosicrucianism is a product of the Western mystical tradition, it has its roots in more ancient times in the east. This ancient tradition gave rise to other branches of the same tree. The land now known as Turkey has a long tradition of spirituality. You can feel it around you at the most ancient sites. In Islam, one of the best known of these mystical branches was the work of one man, Mevlana.

The Story

The city of Balkh in Khorasan (ancient Bactria or modern Afghanistan) is an ancient one. It was known as the 'Mother

of Cities' and was said to be the birthplace of Zoroaster. Through the ages, it had been exposed to many different cultural and religious influences. The Zoroastrian Magi, Greek philosophers, Christian missionaries and Buddhist sages had all left their mark on the city, before the advent of Islam. This may explain the atmosphere of speculation and enquiry, which permeated the city. And this, in turn, may explain Mevlana's spiritual and intellectual development.

He was born in Balkh on 30 September 1207, where his father was a distinguished teacher. The great Turkish philosopher and poet Jalalu'd Din Rumi is better known in the West as 'Rumi' because his family settled in Anatolia, Asia Minor, known as Rum to the Arabs and Turks. In





*'Bowl of Reflections with Rumi's poetry.
-- early 13th Century, Brooklyn Museum --*

Turkey he is called 'Mevlana', from the Arabic word for "Lord" or "our Master", a title given to him on account of the great respect in which he was held by his devotees both during his lifetime and after his death.

The Middle East has always been one of the world's great crossroads. Commerce and ideas moved through this area from Rome to China along the Silk Road. But other things, less welcome, also travelled along the Silk Road. The Mongols were coming! As their armies approached Balkh, Mevlana's father took his family to the west, where they finally settled, after sixteen years of travel, in the city of Konya (Iconium of the Romans) when Mevlana was 21 years old. Konya was the capital of the Seljuk Turk Sultanate of Rum, and it was the Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad who had heard of Mevlana's father, and invited him to teach in the capital. When his father died, in 1231, Mevlana took his place and quickly established a reputation for scholarship. He had an extensive knowledge of all branches of philosophy, and was well-read in the works of the classical Greek authors. His works bear clear traces of Neoplatonic thought.

He was introduced to Sufi mysticism in his late 20s. As the Mongol armies came closer and closer, strange mystical bands swarmed through the countryside, sometimes stirring up the discontented population to rebel against their rulers, and thus facilitate the Mongol advance. In late October 1244, something unexpected happened. One day, on his way home, a stranger put a question to him. We don't know its exact wording, but it made a great impression on him. The stranger was a dervish or mystic called Shamsuddin of Tabriz.

This meeting completely changed Mevlana's life, and the two became inseparable friends. He neglected his teaching duties and family to talk about religion and become engrossed in esotericism. Then one day, Shamsuddin disappeared as mysteriously as he had appeared. After this, Mevlana gave himself entirely to the composition of poetry and to the mystical ritual known as the Sema (pronounced "se-maa").

Tarikat – The Mystic Way

Mevlana acted more as a spiritual mentor than a professor at the Madrasa or college in Konya. As a result, he attracted the attention of some of the most prominent personalities in the Seljuk state. Among his admirers and disciples were high-ranking ladies, as well as women of less respectable professions. He accepted both men and women as students: *"We have come to unite, not to separate."*

As he turned to Poetry, Music, Singing and the Sema, his own transformation began: *"Put two fingers on both your eyes, can you see anything? But even if you cannot see*



*'Double-page illuminated frontispiece, 1st book (daftar) of the
Collection of Poems (Masnavi-i ma'navi), 1461 manuscript*





An Ottoman era manuscript depicting Rumi and Shams-e Tabrizi.

it, the world exists. The fault lies only in your own fingers. Pull yourself together, remove your fingers from your eyes and see whatever you wish.” His poetry speaks of stars and constellations, flowers and trees, snow and ice. *“Common weeds grow in two months, whereas a redrose grows and flowers only in a year.”*

For him, everything was charged with the grandeur of God, and reflected his glory. He wrote in Persian, the literary language of the time, as well as Turkish, Arabic and Greek. His best known work is the ‘Mesnevi’ (Mathnawi in Arabic), a six volume work of rhyming couplets, considered one of the most important works of Islamic literature.

A figure of great importance to the history of philosophy, not only in the Muslim world, but also in the West, his work is notable for the underlying belief in the value of man’s existence, and the importance he places on the freedom of the individual and freedom of expression. He regarded all mankind as worthy of love and forgiveness. His message was for all without discrimination, a love for the human race itself.

Mevlana died on 17 December 1273 in Konya. His funeral was attended, not only by the most renowned people of the day, but also by the Christians and Jews of the city. December 17 is celebrated not as the anniversary

of his death, but as his ‘return.’ He saw death as a ‘returning to God,’ and referred to the night of his death as the ‘night of celebration,’ saying that the night on which the soul parted from the body should be celebrated like a festival.

Here are a few of his sayings:

The rays of the sun shine fragmented a thousandfold into the courts of a thousand houses. But if you remove the walls between them, you will see that the splinters of light are one and the same.

Trouble for a friend is no trouble. Putting yourself to trouble for a friend is an act of love.

He who respects is respected.

If you have put your trust in God, trust God in your work, earn and then rely on God.

If you want the new, then you should divest yourself of the old.

Be it slow or quick, he who searches eventually finds what he seeks.

Grief comes from unobtainable wishes.

To love humans is to love God.

You think that the past and present are different, but in reality they are both the same.

Be the sky, be a cloud, make it rain!

I am one life, but I have a hundred thousand bodies.

Pour the water of life into the sea of life, and become a boundless ocean.

The Whirling Dervishes

His Order became known as the Mevlevi Order. Throughout the six centuries of Ottoman rule, it occupied an important place in society at all levels, and held much influence at court. Sultans such as Selim III, Mahmud II and Mehmed V even became members. Their monasteries



were to be found in many of the larger towns and cities of the Ottoman empire where they became important educational and cultural training centres. Throughout the history of the Order, the most refined and powerful personages in the state were among its members and sympathisers.

The rites of the Mevlevi Order take the form of the Sema, which induces a feeling of soaring, ecstasy and mystical flight. It took place in a hall of the monastery known as the Semahane, where those taking part would spin around in a ritual dance, and hence came the name the Whirling Dervishes.

After the evening meal and prayers, the dervishes enter the hall barefoot, praying as they walk to the strains of music played by a small orchestra. When the ceremony begins the Semazens or dancers remove their black mantles, pass by the Sheyh one by one, bow and kiss his hand. As he moves away from the Sheyh, he slowly opens his crossed arms, turning slowly to the music in the background. As he turns, he opens out his arms so that the right arm is slightly higher than the other, with the right hand opened palm upwards, towards the sky, and the left hand palm downwards, towards the Earth. The

Semazens both spin full-circle and turn slowly around the hall at the same time.

The spinning dance, the costumes worn by the dervishes, and each part of the ritual has its own particular significance. The black mantles represent the grave or their deaths to the temporal world. The white robes worn during the ritual are their shrouds, or symbolise the sphere of the divine. When they dance, one hand faces heaven, ready to receive God's blessings, the other the earth, in a gesture of bestowal, to symbolise mankind acting as a bridge between heaven and earth. They maintain that everything revolves: as electrons around a proton, and the earth around the sun, even the galaxy itself revolves. During the ritual, a cosmic sphere is created in dance as symbolic planets spin around the sun. Today, in Turkey, visitors can still watch performances of the Sema.

God exists in every particle of nature for Mevlana, the poet of Pantheism. His beauty appears everywhere and in all things. Love what beauty you wish, for knowingly or unknowingly, you are loving God. — Peyami Safa



Jalalud-Din Rumi gathers Sufi mystics.



Jalalud-Din Rumi statue.



Searching for Something Better



by Eve Baker

*Sow a thought and you reap an action;
Sow an act and you reap a habit;
sow a habit and you reap a character;
sow a character and you reap a destiny.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson —

Ashdown Forest, Sussex

WHAT IS the discontentment which creates such restlessness among people nowadays? Some say it is an overzealous search for perfection, others for an over-fastidious nature, never satisfied with anything, always seeing the flaws rather than the small signs of perfection. There are many reasons I suppose, but foremost among them is I believe an inner

sort of blindness to the obvious, an inability to recognise the most treasured object of our quest when it passes before our very eyes. And there it goes, out of sight, and we simply go on searching, never remembering for a moment that we once had it straight before us.

I remember one summer, looking for a suitable subject to sketch on the Ashdown Forest in East Sussex,





Friens Clump - Ashdown Forest

only a mile or two in fact from our beloved Greenwood Gate, headquarters of the Rosicrucian Order in the United Kingdom. I wandered about from place to place, considering first the group of pine trees making up Greenwood Gate Clump, then Kings Standing Clump, then over the gorse a distant view, a quiet pasture on a slope leading to up to the airman's grave at Duddleswell, and a valley and stream cutting a narrow channel between grassy banks overhung by alders. Somehow, none of these were right. I wandered from place to place, becoming more and more despairing, eventually returning to the pine trees of Greenwood Gate clump that I had originally considered. During the interval, the light had changed. They appeared different. It was a hot day, bringing about the aromatic perfume of the pines and the gorse. Light shimmered round them in quivering vibrations although the air was still, a windless day.

How often do we look at things, seeing more readily what is wrong than what is right? And very often we allow the offending detail to assume exaggerated proportions.

Several hours I spent sketching those trees, well over a hundred years old, looking at them differently, more intently, so that I became aware of their strength, their grace, their real identity as living forms. My finished sketch was not particularly good and has long since been destroyed, but the memory remains clear and strong as one of perfection rejected at first but which was there, awaiting acclaim. The subject, the day, the situation all offered ideal combinations for my purpose; yet I took so long to see with perceptive eyes. I could so easily have

failed to see altogether what was already there through my own fault-finding criticism.

How often do we look at things, seeing more readily what is wrong than what is right? And very often we allow the offending detail to assume exaggerated proportions. Perhaps that is how I first saw the group of pine trees, finding not what I was looking for, seeing some not quite satisfactory aspect, a line that failed to please, or some detail wrong, so that I turned away, dissatisfied. But later, through a moment of illumination, when light had brought the trees and me into focus, there were no wrong aspects, it had been right all along.

Sometimes, I wonder if it is our destiny to see so many things in such a distorted way that we are forever frantically making changes in order

to improve things. Perhaps this is what the allegory of the Garden of Eden is about; that man, through trying to improve on perfection, caused himself to be removed from it in consequence. This could be one interpretation, for ever since then it seems, all down the ages, we have a long saga of human arrogance and pride, trying to improve on things, changing them, and often leading to destruction. Everything has become so impossibly complicated that it is now difficult to accept anything simple as perfect and entire without trying to improve on it. Has this always been a quality of the human mind, or has it developed as civilisation have evolved? Have we always been more prone to making errors before finding out that things were better left undisturbed, that the original had a rightness that cannot be improved upon..., after we have damaged it?

There seems to be a tantalisingly strong impulse to say or think that if only certain things were changed, were in another place, were larger, or of a different shape, were somehow, anyhow other than what they were when first encountered, they would be so much better. And then we find much later, after much disappointment and bitter experience, that they were fine as they were, in fact much better before anyone interfered with them! We are told that this is how we learn, but it seems to be a long, confusing and damaging process; part of evolution no doubt, but perhaps one we grow through to a wiser, more perceptive stage of knowing. I can envisage a time when matter is not such a dominant factor as now, when it will no longer be necessary "to do" in order to find out what is wrong with what we are doing, for the faculties of mind and intuition will be allowed greater scope, and we will perceive with direct understanding what we see now only dimly.





We have upset the ecology of our world to such a grave extent that it is still uncertain if it can be redeemed. We admit that the warnings which were given by certain more far-seeing people were right in their predictions. Global warming, species extinction, loss of habitat, overpopulation, the list goes on and on what our species has done. The predictions have been proven to be true and the consequences for all life on Earth are increasingly dire. We have a lesson to heed here: *if nature ain't broke, don't mess with it*, and this is the direction in which true progress should lie. This is the further development to encourage, the ability to see and to know directly, intuitively, without doing anything, precisely what the ultimate right action for this time is.

And yet, I suppose, we all rush in and make what alterations to our environment that we decide on, with the best of intentions, thoroughly convinced that our actions are right. How often are gardens planned, only

to be re-designed a short while afterwards, on further consideration! I well remember well how at one time we collected stones and suitable rocks to build a rockery in our own cottage garden, feeling quite sure that it would give us what we required: colour with the minimum of labour, thinking that aubretia and arabis, saxifrage and London Pride and similar rapidly spreading plants would grow quickly and thickly, preventing the weeds from coming through. To some extent, this was correct, and the plants spread and flourished as we hoped; but the more pernicious weeds still provided a problem. Couch grass and ground elder were rampant and their roots were able to extend beneath the boulders and become matted with the plants.

We have a lesson to heed here: *if nature ain't broke, don't mess with it*, and this is the direction in which true progress should lie.

Eventually, the only answer to the problem was to dismantle the rockery, laboriously to unearth all the stones, some of which were of a considerable size and weight and moreover had become quite deeply embedded in the soil, and somehow to dispose of them. Our final conclusion was that the original lay-out was better as it had been with beds that could be regularly dug and cleaned. So this is what we reverted to and has since worked perfectly satisfactorily. One such error was not sufficient, however!



There was another occasion when it seemed that a flower bed to tend would prove easier than so much grass to mow each week, in the foolish illusion that periodical weeding would suffice to keep it in order. Again, this was another theory that was valid only in argument. In practise it was much more arduous to mow the paths around the beds than to go straight across the whole area.

On a less personal level, taking the countryside as a whole, we may recall when there was a wide-scale extermination of wild flowers growing on roadside verges, termed “weeds”, in comparatively recent years, until a uniform green of nothing but grass was achieved. Then people began to miss the flowers they had so systematically banished. Not only did wide expanses of unrelieved grass seem monotonous but bees, butterflies, moths and other very desirable insects declined alarmingly. There was an ominous deadness with the verges. The flowers had many virtues which were not acknowledged until they were not there.

This must be our goal, to learn to see when a thing is perfect and not to damage it.

So, flowers are being encouraged once more, colour is reappearing, the glorious gold of dandelions and orange-tipped butterflies, patches of rosy-pink centaury, delicate spikes of agrimony, the royal purple of knapweed, majestic mullein, starry marguerites, dainty poppies and dusky marjoram, are all coming back to our verges, making them less tidy but more habitable for all the other life forms. All we have done is bring things back to as they always used to be. Once more, things have been found to be better had they been left alone. In spite of many remembered incidents such as these, people still go on gilding lilies, painting roses, failing to know perfection when it is right before them, deceived perhaps by the very simplicity of perfection into thinking that there could be something better.



We have been told that our earth is “a planet of schooling.” This we interpret to mean a place of learning by doing, where endeavour must be seen as busy effort. This may indeed have been right up until recently, but do we need to go on doing things in quite the same way?

Most of the instances I have related may have been of trivial events to prove a point, but there are many others connected with our modern way of life that are constantly proving equally foolish. In horticulture, for example, artificial plant-feeding is rapidly giving way to a return to organic substances. Intensive methods of farming are being considered dubious and widely condemned in some circles, with an increasing inclination to resort to a more natural way of husbandry, even if the yields are far lower.

Natural law is stronger than we give it credit for. It is capable of maintaining a balance if allowed to, if just left to its own devices. But this does not mean nature-run-wild, without restraint, or that it does not need some fostering and encouragement. It does however imply greater observation, thought extended both deeper and wider; the encouragement of a greater sense of wonder and respect for all life, indeed a deep reverence for it. This way we will be spared much waste of labour, energy, despair, disappointment and expense. This way will humankind make greater strides of progress than by any amount of over-busy activity.

This must be our goal, to learn to see when a thing is perfect and not to damage it. Then, by perceiving the perfection, identifying ourselves with it in recognition of its superb refinement and economy. From this we learn a vital lesson, one of the most important that our time on earth was meant to teach us. There is no need to rub something out and draw it again when we have learnt to identify perfection. Nor do we even need to try and make a replica of perfection, for we can become part of it even if only momentarily, if we learn to observe with sensitivity. Perhaps that is why, when I see again that group of trees in the Ashdown Forest, I never fail to recognise them. And now I always see them as I did in that moment of revelation, in perfection.

Our world can be perfect once again, when we have ceased trying to improve what needs no improvement, doing things the wrong way through over-elaborate schemes and deceptive practices, out of ignorance and arrogance. If we stop seeking for something better, we may then give the perfection which is already here a chance to make itself known to us. We cease looking but learn to see.

*Not a day passes over the earth,
but men and women of no note
do great deeds, speak great words,
and suffer noble sorrows.*

— Charles Reade (1814 – 1884) —



Aspects of Silence

by Sven Johansson
(Grand Master)

AS A WORD, “silence” has probably more subtleties of meaning than most of us are aware of. Of course we probably all know a few of the differences in meaning of this and other related words; but usually we think of just one of them, namely: “no sound.” Silence comes from the Latin root *silere* meaning to be silent, quiet, noiseless, not speaking, making no sound, being verbally inactive,

vocally at rest, ceasing to speak or sing, etc. And from *silere* we get, via Old French, our familiar English word *silence*, but devoid of most of the subtlety of meaning it originally possessed.

The concept of silence, and of course the word *silere*, far predates the language of the Romans, and can be traced to a word in ancient Phoenician where it meant not only *quietness*, but also things like *stillness, tranquillity,*



serenity, peace, and more, indeed much more than merely refraining from making sounds. From that ancient Northwest Semitic word it is believed a similar sounding word found its way into Aramaic, Hebrew and eventually Arabic, and is today known as *Shalom* in Hebrew and *Salaam* in Arabic, meaning “*peace*” or more specifically, the blessing: “*peace be upon you.*”

Over the millennia, the original word has altered in pronunciation from language to language, and small nuances of meaning have been added and taken away from it. And by the time the word entered the English language, its meaning had altered from its original intended form, to what we commonly attribute to it today, namely, the absence of sound. In the following article, I will discuss three types of silence and end off with a fourth type which is seldom used at all and more than the other three can quite accurately been seen in the development of silence in its ancient, original meaning of quietness, stillness, tranquillity, serenity and peace.

Silence of the Tongue

I will begin with verbal silence or “*silence of the tongue.*” Quite apart from trying to avoid loud, aggressive people and environments, some people wisely try to control their input into those environments, and that includes restricting the amount of talking they do. That is not to say that anyone needs to be meek and mild in all circumstances; but it does imply that it is good to remember that being verbally silent is often wiser than speaking. Of course we should not avoid speaking altogether, merely exercise careful control over our words and speak only when the circumstances require it. Being able to speak well when necessary and to be silent when it is better to say nothing..., that is the ideal way of conserving and even building up our precious reserves of Vital Life Force. But it is of course not the easiest of things to do, especially when issues we feel passionately about are at stake.

Knowing when not to speak is important, and if you think back a bit over your life, I’m sure you’ll agree that speaking in anger and saying things you didn’t really mean, was one of the first issues you recognised as a stumbling block to your inner development. We all need to be inwardly restrained at times from speaking when nothing good can come from what we’re so eager to say. It’s a delicate and refined form of verbal control..., knowing when to speak, how to say it best and for greatest benefit, and of course knowing when to be silent.

For some, especially the gregarious, friendly types,



Sometimes it is better to hold your tongue then to speak.

it is often hard to remain silent when silence would accomplish more good than talking. No matter how good our verbal intentions are, there are still times when silence would accomplish more than talking. On the flip-side of the coin, how do we learn to say what needs to be said when just a few words could be of immense, even life altering benefit for someone? That is the delicate balance needed; knowing when to speak and when to remain silent.

Deliberate, well thought-out control of our words and how we should say them, combined with experience and attunement with the deepest recesses of our own inner sanctity, are of course the only way forward. It is a true art and comes ultimately only from deep attunement with our soul. Proficiency does not come easily, and it demands we deliberately be aware at all times what we’re doing and what we truly wish the outcome to be, so we can exercise the required control the instant it is needed. Usually, there is no advance warning and our control has to be like a subconscious reflex action, fully automatic and under the direction of our inner Master.

A good place to begin is to resolve deliberately, though only after careful consideration, to do our best to be as alert as possible always. It is a deliberate, sensitive and refined form of manipulation of awareness, far superior to any of the extremely harmful drugs some people take nowadays to get a boost to their cognitive alertness. It goes much further than this, and ultimately remains under our full control. Being conscious of what we’re doing or saying in the present, though crucially, also knowing what we’re about to say, is paramount.

When fighter pilots train to become aerial dogfighters, an expression of overriding importance drummed into them is *situational awareness*. As mystics, we are training to become metaphorical ‘dogfighters’ in the arena of our inner lives, and it behoves us therefore



to train ourselves assiduously to become masters of our situational awareness. And that of course spills over into control of our words, knowing when to be silent, when to speak, and what to say when we need to speak.

Saying Nothing vs Speaking Up

We can probably all recall instances when it would have been best to say nothing, and other occasions when it would have been best to speak but didn't. Most of us respect a person who always seems to say the right thing at just the right time, and furthermore, says it with precision and few words. The ability to speak one's mind intelligently when there is a need to, and remaining silent when speaking would be counter productive, is a trait most worthy of development.

As with all valuable things in life, it is however a very difficult thing to accomplish, but one that most

Most of the time, what we say or fail to say, is affected more by how our egos have reacted to a situation than by pure reason or intuition.

assuredly eventually has to be mastered. Most of the time, what we say or fail to say, is affected more by how our egos have reacted to a situation than by pure reason or intuition. And frequently we leave things unsaid simply because we are too afraid to hurt or offend someone, even though we know it would have been better for certain things to have been said and for the person to have been temporarily shocked at our frankness, rather than for us to have remained silent. The truth hurts at times, but in some situations that is not a good enough reason to remain silent, especially when a few well placed comments could have an enormous positive bearing on the lives of others.

A fundamental rule relating to the question whether or not to speak, is to be intelligently informed about what we're about to say. Making our statements on matters with precision and clarity, and avoiding mere waffle and idle chit-chat as much as possible, is fundamental to our decision to remaining silent or to speak. Remember how harmful loose and unformed talk can be because of the unquestioning nature in which so many individuals accept information. If inaccurate statements are made, or worse still, if deliberate lies are said, who among the many listeners would bother to investigate further? The sad fact is that very few would, and that is why we all, though especially the media, have such great responsibility to report accurately and without embellishment what we believe to be the truth. Sadly, the internet is awash with both deliberate and innocent though sloppy falsehoods,

and many lives each year are harmed by this.

Summing up, it all comes down to a point of judgement in the use of our speech, thinking before expressing our opinions in words, and of always being *situationally aware* of what we have just said and what we feel right about saying next. Above all though, and the one thing which will always cause us to say the right thing at the right time, is to say what we have to say with kindness, always! It is an aspect of universal love, and is sure to bring out in us the most beautiful verbal expressions we are capable of.

Silence of the Mind

The second form of silence is more personal, for it involves *silence* or rather, *stillness of the mind*, denoting refined control of our mental faculties. Controlling our thoughts is not the same as suppressing them, but it does mean channelling them into the most important things we need to think about. Silence of the mind involves exercising a basic control over the *idle wanderings of our thoughts*. We've often heard the expression "thoughts are things." It means that thoughts have certain potentialities

and that 'wrong' thinking and 'right' thinking has definite effects upon our lives and immediate environment which in turn lead to physical consequences. That is not only a Rosicrucian principle, it is accepted by all serious systems of thought.

If thoughts really are 'things', then they are important primarily because they have value, just as gems have value. Would it not be wise therefore to use our thoughts carefully and not to waste them? After all, the number of thoughts we will have during our lifetime is limited, and idle thinking or daydreaming *without purpose*, is an offence to the self and a failure to exercise silence of the mind. Daydreaming is fine, provided there is a clear purpose to it. But if we allow ourselves to do nothing but idly daydream



without purpose and purely as a result of a lack of discipline, we are wasting the life force that animates us. And we are wasting our limited, precious time and effort with thoughts that should, at the very least, be constructive, creative and possible of being brought to successful fruition of something good and beneficial for as many people as possible.

It may be enjoyable to idly daydream of how great it would be to be wealthy, or to accomplish great, important things in life; or worse still, how we could have altered history if we had lived in a different era with the knowledge we have today. However, merely daydreaming and doing nothing of a practical nature to implement our thoughts is not exercising good judgement.

What is needed is a deliberate directing of our thoughts, throwing out idle speculation and daydreams about what could never happen in the real world, and replacing them with thoughts specifically intended to bring about a better state of being.

Clearly it would be far better for us in quiet moments to try and direct our thoughts towards such qualities and ideas as will bring us happiness and contentment, than to idly speculate upon how great life would be if we were suddenly to inherit a fortune. Suddenly having a lot of money would be no guarantee of gaining happiness or inner peace, whereas preparing ourselves for an elevated

Silence of the will is the basis of all control of behaviour and comes before both control of our thoughts and control of our speech.

mode of existence through the disciplined and channelled form of thinking practised by mystics..., this brings us not only happiness but a supreme sense of fulfilment as well.

Let us therefore *control our tongue* and accomplish that by *controlling our thoughts*. Silence in both cases is often the preferred route, though such silence has meaning only if there is purpose and intent behind it.

Silence of the Will

And then there is *silence* or *stillness of the will*. Society generally considers self-control and the development of will-power to be important personality traits and certainly there is great merit in this; for only when intelligent people exercise their will-power can society have well-planned and clearly defined directions to follow. One of the better by-products of silence of the will is the ability to direct oneself toward the development of a worthwhile



With silence of the will and mind, we can avoid doing unnecessary things.

moral character..., moral that is, in the context of our societal and spiritual norms.

Silence of the will is the basis of all control of behaviour and comes before both control of our thoughts and control of our speech. So, while there may be short-term benefits to the wholesale gratification of our desires, the long-term consequences for society as a whole, and indeed ourselves in particular, are harmful. Without a healthy restraint of some of our deeper urges, we run the risk of impinging upon the freedoms of others and indeed of entirely halting our own evolution. Being ruled by an incessant need to gratify every urge we have, no matter how trivial, is an indication of how far we have to go in attaining mastery over our lives.

Physical desires or urges have their proper place in nature and the perpetuation of every species. But for creatures, like humans, who have a well developed ability to think, reason and plan for the future, they should never become the dominant purpose of life itself. Silence of the will therefore implies control of the cravings of the physical senses and relegating them to their proper place in the overall scheme of our deeper evolution. Silence of the will is more than merely controlling our thoughts; it means, most importantly, controlling our emotions, urges and so-called 'natural inclinations.' These all precede the intellect which in turn precedes speech and action.

Food and drink are essential to the maintenance of life. But whereas most of us enjoy good food and drink when taken in moderation and at their proper time, devoting our attention and effort solely to the gratification of this one physical appetite has serious long-term consequences; not only because of the obesity it eventually causes but because of the damage it does to our ability to control our destiny. All urges are directly linked to chemical and hormonal secretions within the



body and while, as aspiring mystics, we accept that some of these imbalances are beyond our power to correct, we should do everything possible to employ silence of the will to affect our imbalances and to bring them under control. So, by silencing or at least muting the will in such cases, we are placing our physical desires in their proper perspective. Almost always, those inclinations are mere wants rather than true needs, and muting or silencing the will in such cases, enables us to fully comprehend and accept that the excessive gratification of our wants and desires is not worthy of our mystical aspirations.

An important aspect of silence of the will is the development of *emotional control*. Absolute free reign of the emotions, namely, allowing ourselves to act and react purely as we feel and as our emotions happen to be at the moment, is harmful to our further ability to develop. Every time we allow ourselves to act in this way, we make it just that bit harder to control our lives, and considerable effort becomes necessary to undo the inner damage which our unbridled emotional behaviour has caused.

Silence of the Self

To sum up, I have mentioned three forms of silence: *Silence of the Tongue* which depends on *Silence of the Mind* which depends on *Silence of the Will*. All three are important, and many techniques for accomplishing their aims have been devised over the millennia, many times over, but especially in the Rosicrucian Order. But above and far beyond all these stands *Silence of the Self*, the sort of silence we all strive for when we seek true meditation and attunement with the God of our understanding. Silence of the Self leads to an opening up of the main channel of

communication between our outer, mundane self and the infinite sanctity of the Source of all that is. It is by far the hardest to accomplish, yet we can get there eventually if we accept that small steps must at times be taken in order to reach our final destination.

Begin therefore by regularly and deliberately *silencing the tongue* when there is no need to speak, *silencing the mind* when there is a need to control your thoughts, and *silencing the will* when there is a need to control your instinctual emotions and urges. Stepping up from the mundane level of these three areas of control to the level implicit in the final step of *Silence of the Self* is impossible to accomplish in a short time, and probably impossible to accomplish even in a single lifetime. But just thinking of the 'silence' as not merely "no sound" but more importantly meaning for us much more the qualities of *quietness, stillness, tranquillity, serenity* and *peace*, is a good first step to take. And thinking of silence in these terms is a sure way of leading us to the path upon which we will eventually arrive at *Silence of the Self*.



And So What?

by Roland Northover

*Let's leave the loveliness of lyrics from afar,
On echoes sent from clouds in Heaven's bar.*

*Let's brush aside the music in the air
Of concert's sound from cosmos cadence fair.*

*Leave Light and Sound to build their palaces in Space,
Giving the Holidays of Heaven to all the human race.*

*Prepare the Plan or Path for Purpose from afar,
While learning to steal the living silence of a star.*



Rosicrucian Convention – CALABAR 2017 –

“IMMORTALITY”

by Obonga Inika



Despite the nearly 1,000 members bustling around in the foyer of the Calabar International Convention Centre, something subtle, calm and joyful seemed to radiate from this gathering of very special seekers of Light. Members of the Rosicrucian Order had just emerged from the closing Mystical Convocation of a Rosicrucian Convention on the theme of “Immortality”, which was held in Calabar, Nigeria in from Thursday 26th to Sunday 29th October 2017.

It was the end of four days of numerous workshops, seminars, lectures, mystical dramas, visits to Rosicrucian Park in Calabar, and mystical convocations dedicated to enlightening our understanding of some of the deeper mysteries of life, and ultimately in doing so, revealing many undeniable truths about our immortality. This was no ordinary crowd of people, but smiling, happy fratres and sorores of the Ordo Rosae Crucis who had shared

intense days of treasured spiritual bonding which had raised them above the usual stresses and strains of the mundane world.

The Old City of Calabar

Calabar is where the English West Africa Administration of AMORC is located. The town is known as the premier tourist destination of Nigeria due to its invitingly clean and green image. With relatively narrow roads, many colonial buildings huddled up with modern ones, interspersed with several outdoor relaxation spots, places of worship, and well-maintained green grass areas, the impression of a quiet, warm and close-knit community is ever present.

There is a certain calmness that one notices when entering Calabar. It is of course a bustling town but there





Grand Administrator Dr Kenneth U Idiodi and Grand Master Sven Johansson during the opening ceremony.

is order, and peace prevails. Some say Calabar is one of the few places in the world where several energy lines converge, creating the vibrant and dynamic centre it is, through a confluence of energies. On the other hand, Rosicrucian philosophy informs us that it is mind that “assigns dimension” to what we perceive, and makes our world “real” to us. It is the concentrated positive thoughts of persons well-schooled in the techniques of mental alchemy that bring about the transmutation necessary to turn any mundane environment into a pleasant and peaceful one. Certainly, Rosicrucians especially seek to accomplish this as often as they can, and not only for their own benefit but for the welfare of all others within their environment. In fact it would not be far-fetched to believe that Rosicrucian Park in Calabar, being the focal point of the fond and loving thoughts of hundreds of thousands of Rosicrucians who have visited this unique place over the decades, may have contributed to the harmony that exists in the surrounding environs. Irrespective of this though, the locals of Calabar are renowned for their warm and friendly disposition to visitors, which puts one immediately at ease. Because of this, the name Calabar has been endearingly been said to be an acronym for “*Come and live and be at rest.*” With the great success of the recently concluded Convention, Rosicrucian members could be forgiven for changing this to “*Come and live and be a Rosicrucian.*”

The Calabar International Convention Centre was an ideal venue for the Convention, being a relatively new sprawling complex with state-of-the-art facilities all in good shape. The main foyer with a sparkling ceiling and lights overlooked a lush scenic view of natural tropical vegetation that provided a subtle sense of connection with the forces of nature. The entire complex with its main hall of 2000-seat capacity and over 21 other smaller venues ranging in capacity from 200 to 900, as well as VIP suites, were at our disposal, providing us with well-appreciated flexibility and comfort.

Pre-Convention Activities

The awareness campaign for the Convention, in the year leading up to it, put members in a heightened state of anticipation. And this may explain why attendance to the pre-convention activities on Thursday 26th October was almost as high as in the Convention proper. The pre-convention workshops were on “*Psychic Awakening*” and “*Principles for Abundance.*” These were facilitated by Grand Councillors Fr. Ekanem Kofi-Ekanem and Fr. Johnson Ikube who took participants through the fundamentals of these subjects.

After this, a forum on the relationship between Rosicrucianism and Martinism was facilitated by Provincial Masters of the Traditional Martinist Order (TMO). Apart from registered Martinists, the session was also open to members of AMORC who had not yet registered as TMO members. Though a distinct Order in its own right, the teachings of the TMO, sometimes described as Christian mysticism, were explained to be complementary to the teachings of the Rosicrucian Order. After the forum, participants went on a lunch break and returned to activities for Martinist members only.

Grand Councillor Prof. John Idiodi gave a presentation on the subject “*Sustaining Stability and Progress in Life*” in which the practical efficacy of prayer was substantiated amongst other things. The day ended with a General TMO Convocation in which an illuminating discourse from the Most Venerable Sovereign Grand Master Brother Christian Bernard was read by the Most Venerable Grand Master Brother Sven Johansson, who addressed the august assembly of brothers and sisters. Also present in the Convocation were the Most Venerable Grand Administrator Brother Kenneth Idiodi and four Provincial Masters.

The Convention Opening Ceremony

The Grand Opening of the Convention took place the following day on Saturday 27th October 2017. The celestial voices of the Rosicrucian Choir welcomed members to the Opening Ceremony and raised them in heart and mind to states of ecstasy. Tears flowed freely, as members were treated to the soothing and elevating choral compositions of the choir. With members in a state of happiness and well-being, the Chairman of the Convention Planning and Implementation Committee, Grand Councillor Arc. Ekanem Kofi-Ekanem welcomed members to the Convention with a brief welcome address. This was immediately followed by a dazzling display by a cultural troupe that showcased a blend of traditional Nigerian dances and contemporary dance moves and sounds.



Grand Administrator Frater Kenneth U. Idioidi then took to the podium to formally greet and welcome the participants to the Convention, followed by a special message from the Most Worthy Imperator Frater Christian Bernard, delivered by Grand Master Frater Sven Johansson, after which the Convention was declared open and activities scheduled for the Convention began to roll out with clock-work precision.

The presentations were delivered by a seasoned resource of long-standing and experienced members of the Order, such as Grand Councillor Prof. S.M. Ogbonmwan, Grand Councillor Prof. T.A.T. Wahua, Grand Councillor Arc. Ekanem Kofi-Ekanem, Grand Councillor Prof. John Idioidi, Dr. Inodu Inekigha, Regional Monitor Dr. Andre Azemar, and Sr. Ese Magege. Taking the theme of the Convention from various angles, this formidable team of Rosicrucian lecturers taken together did an amazing job of dismantling the subject of immortality to its bare essential components for re-assembly in the minds of the participants. Members were left with no option than coming to a full understanding and grasp of immortality in its entire scope.

Some Memorable Highlights

In his address on the theme of the Convention, Grand Administrator Fr. Kenneth Idioidi called upon the Rosicrucian Choir to sing the “Immortality Song” which he had composed specially for the Convention. The song had seven verses, each throwing light on a different aspect of immortality. And riding on the waves of a beautiful catchy melody that members continued to hum to themselves throughout the Convention, a powerful message and teaching on immortality was brought home.

We were also privileged to listen to the Grand Master Fr. Johansson delve deeply into the subject of immortality in his keynote address. He stated that throughout each incarnation, there are special moments of clarity, during which we receive partial answers that profoundly change our lives for the better and expand our appreciation of life and our place in it. And he shared his experience that *“during the calmness and serenity of inner silence, we can gain an appreciation of the true form of existence, and ultimately learn how to ask the questions that really count.”*

Two inspiring mystical dramas were presented in the course of the Convention. The Lagos Zone presented the Unity Drama on Friday. As the title suggests, it highlighted the power of unity and this was done by contrasting it in drama with the destruction that divisions can cause.



Courtesy visit to Cross River State Governor Senator Ben Ayade

On Sunday morning, the Thales Lodge, Port Harcourt Drama Team put on a stellar performance in the mystical drama called *“The Rite of Demeter”* which portrays the profound ideas of immortality held by the adherents of the Eleusinian Mysteries, an Ancient Greek mystery school that forms part of our Rosicrucian heritage.

Two Mystical Convocations were held during the Convention. A Pronaos Convocation conducted on Friday was addressed by the Most Worthy Grand Administrator who delivered a discourse on reincarnation and led members in an exercise aimed at unveiling subconscious memories of past lives. And on Sunday, Grand Master Fr. Sven Johansson addressed the closing Convocation during which he admonished members to apply a simple triadic principle to all their actions by reflecting on three questions before they act..., namely: *“Is it true?”, “Is it necessary?”, “Is it kind?”*

If all concentration and no play makes the Rosicrucian too serious, there was no chance of this happening at the Social Evening and Banquet on the Saturday evening where things were put in place to adequately lighten things up. Members had a relaxing evening as they fed on an array of mouth-watering delicacies after which they took to the dance floor and danced their cares away.

The Convention ended with group photographs and a post-convention bus tour that took members through the tourist spots of the old town of Calabar. As members left the Convention venue embark on journeys to their various destinations, no doubt the thoughts of their immortality continued to play in their minds, giving them a much needed sense of balance even as they held thoughts of love and appreciation for the wonderful experiences they had been privileged to have over the past four days.

In the remarks of one of the participants which perhaps say it all: *“This wonderful Convention will be talked about for a very long time.”* Yes indeed, we live again and again and forever!





**Memories from the
Calabar 2017 Convention**





Gratitude makes sense of
our past, brings peace for
today, and creates a vision
for tomorrow.

-- *Melody Beattie* --