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March 2009



Know Thyself



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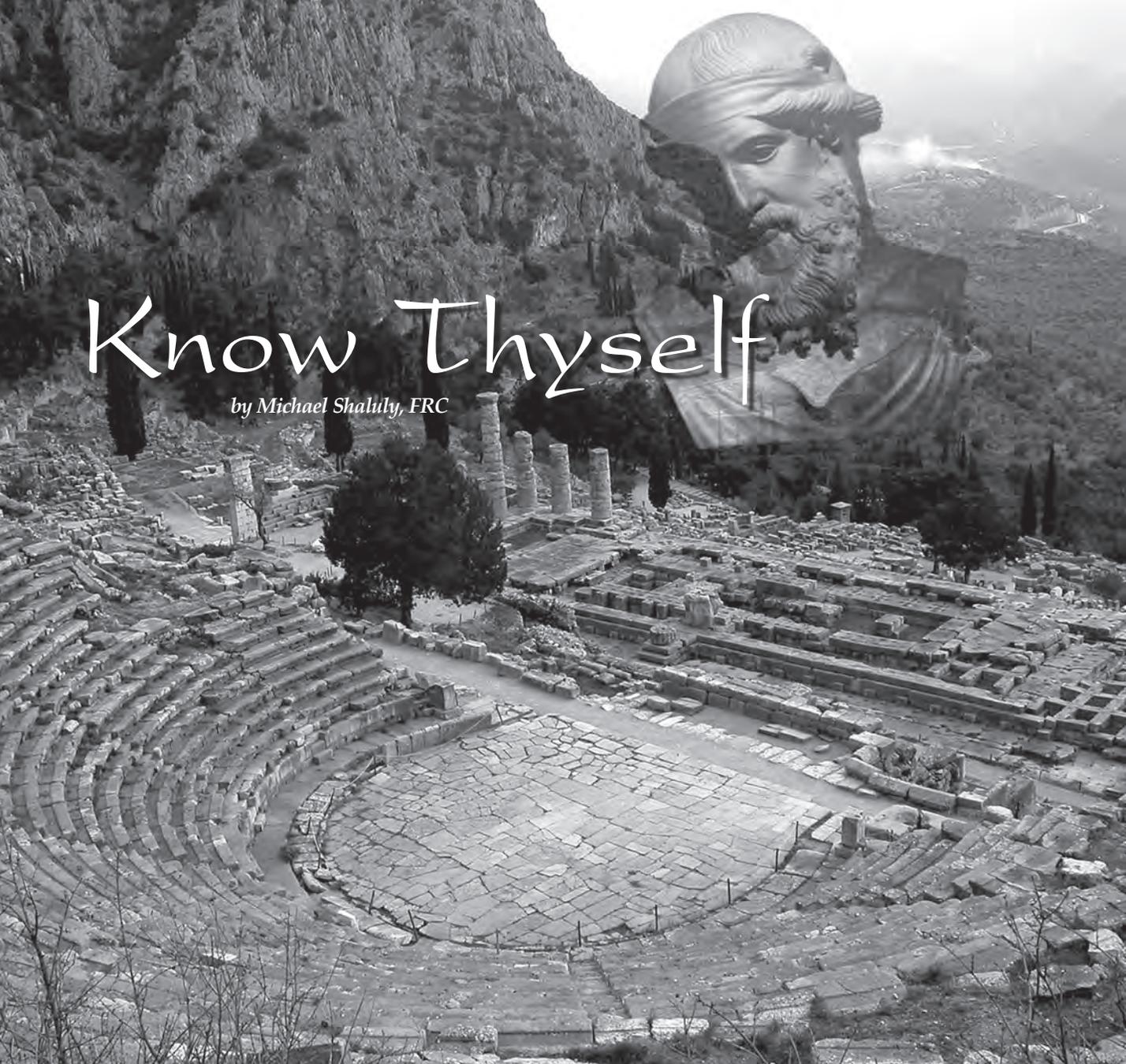
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COVER SPREAD

“Delphi”





Know Thyself

by Michael Shalily, FRC

"Know Thyself" is an easy phrase to repeat, and it may suffer from over-familiarity..., so much so in fact, that we miss its true depths. In this article, the author considers the journey that humanity has travelled with this injunction, and how it has guided us, and still does today.

A SEEKER GLANCED EASTWARD TO THE rising sun and found awe and mystery and love in one moment. This cosmic work of divine inspiration was feeding the soul a full dissertation. Whispering wordlessly from the depths, consciousness had realised itself.

The above expression defines a moment

when one is touched from within to follow the way of the heart. For centuries the mystery schools have been a place for mystics to study and follow these urges of their inner voice. Historians relate that in the ancient mystery schools of Greece, above the portal of Apollo at Delphi was inscribed the injunction "Know Thyself."

These two words travel through time and



give us pause even to this day. What might the author of this directive have meant to convey to the world at the time? Was this philosopher aware that these two simple words would travel to all corners of the world, and survive to make us ponder their meaning so many centuries later? Pause for a moment now, and observe what these words create within you.

The Quest for Self Discovery

From our first moments of the recognition of self and the beginnings of our conscious existence, up until the present day, we have shown a ceaseless and continual desire for self-discovery. What drives this desire? Where does it come from?

From the beginning of our first attempts at civilization to the modern day, we have demonstrated a powerful yearning to understand our relationship with all things, and indeed, with ourselves. It doesn't matter that we may have been wearing white robes in an ancient desert village, or a suit in the middle of a glistening modern city. Each of us has experienced, and continues to experience, the urge to advance towards a greater "something."

Legend has it that when humanity first became self-aware, one of our predecessors raised his or her arms in adoration to the rising sun, giver of all life. Turning to watch the life-giving rays advance upon the firmament, there before our seeker was his or her shadow, which formed a cross. Thus, our Rose Cross was born, as was humanity's quest to understand, not only creation, but also the movement of our consciousness within it.

Centuries later the sages of old passionately laboured to assist humanity to see beyond our difficult physical existence. In so doing, they promoted an exploration of self in conjunction with scientific inquiry, for they knew that the contemplation of consciousness was vital to our existence. They knew that humanity is interconnected with all things.

Long before the masses would accept it, these mystics understood that our planet elegantly spun through space in rhythm with our vast universe, and that consciousness had become aware of, and was a part of, this grand movement and unity. They were keenly aware of the harmonious balance of give and take that breathes animation into all things. Through these mystics, the ancient mystery schools were born



The shadow of the cross on the pyramid.

into a world that to this day thirsts for knowledge that will lead to Peace Profound.

These mystics of old continue to reach down through time to give us more than contemplative statements for us to peruse. Their remaining works speak to us now as they did then, and allow us to observe the advancement of consciousness through the history of humanity.

Think about what life must have been for human beings when we first experienced an awareness of self. All that surrounded us must have been mysterious and beyond comprehension. For the first time, we would have asked ourselves "Why am I here? How am I here?"

The great mysteries of birth and death and of our temporal existence would have been centre stage in our consciousness. Natural occurrences such as thunder and lightning may have been viewed as terrifying, inexplicable events. Perhaps to make sense of the strange world that surrounded us, we attempted to explain these phenomena through fanciful tales, a multiplicity of gods, or by other means. But through the power of thought, that driving force behind our conscious evolution and comprehension of all things, science and understanding began to develop. As our understanding of physical phenomena increased,



so also did our knowledge of and answers to questions about physical phenomena. As we freed ourselves from some of our fears and physical distractions, we gradually developed more time for reflection upon our conscious existence.

Development of the Mystery Schools

The great mystery schools, of which our present day Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is an integral part, developed around this evolution of conscious

The great mysteries of birth and death and of our temporal existence would have been centre stage in our consciousness.

understanding. These schools were a natural progression born of love and the desire to know and become. Many great scientific discoveries were a direct or indirect result of the workings of these mystery schools, but all who crossed their portals shared a common purpose: to pursue the inner urge to communicate with God, and to unveil those great mysteries of our conscious existence - the mysteries of life and death.

But unlike research of a physical nature, where there is provable and measurable data, the quest for inner unfoldment was not so easily defined. Much of this work focused upon individual experiences, inspiration and intuition. How does one define the invisible? Even though each of us can realise that our thoughts are invisible, we also know with certainty that they exist, and we know they are powerful. In fact, we know that while we are conscious, we cannot escape thought.

Yet, there have been many forces throughout time that wanted to tell others how to think, and with a desire to exert control over the masses. As a result, mystical work was often consigned to a fringe element in many societies and was shunned by many. For this reason, the mystics of the past and the mystery schools themselves often had to function secretly to avoid persecution. For those ready to

embark upon this path, this did not matter, for the desire to be aware of the greater, invisible self within was an unavoidable certainty.

Consequently, though often functioning at great risk, the mystery schools served an invaluable purpose throughout history, just as they do today. Even in the present, many individuals are impelled by the great whisperings of self, but know not how to pursue the answers. Hence, many conceal the most beautiful part of themselves with outer stimulation to keep the mind occupied. When the time comes, the consciousness of these individuals will pause and listen as the quiet, calm power of the small voice within reveals itself. They will then follow the path pursued by our mystic ancestors.

The Journey of Humanity

This is our journey, the journey of humanity, and though filled with the harshness that stems from misunderstanding and ignorance it is, nonetheless, a beautiful voyage towards a reunion with the God of our Hearts. It is, indeed, a journey to know ourselves, for only from ourselves can we attain true peace and true joy.

If we are unhappy, it comes only from within ourselves. Conversely, if we are joyous, this too comes from within us. What greater good can we do than to learn the ways of God, that breath of life that inspires each and every moment that gives us life? That spark of life within comes from our breath and contains all that we need for a fulfilling life. The quiet, sweet and calm urgings of the subtle voice from within are now stronger in our world than they have ever been.

Humanity's quest continues to define itself, and there is a realisation among many that there is more to life than our outer surroundings. The journey to find inner growth has begun, and great questions and their answers rest upon you, the seeker. Driven by conscience, the voice of self, calm and unwavering, will remain strong and unmoved as your guide.



Grand Relief of Eleusis: Demeter, Triptolemos, and Persephone, 5th century BCE; mythological characters in the Eleusinian Mysteries.





Humanity's quest continues to define itself, and there is a realisation among many that there is more to life than our outer surroundings.

With a glimpse of this inner beauty through communion with self, darkness will be dispelled and a greater light will be seen. Through this effort, you will find others of like mind who have strong arms to lean on for support and guidance.

Just as when the words "Know Thyself" were first inscribed in ancient Greece, the mystery schools are alive as an avenue for us to find spiritual and mystical understanding.

Your eyes are the eyes of the beholder, and as you journey inward, it is the human soul that will become brighter as an awe-inspiring wonder. The hand of the architect of time is absent there. Age will be replaced by wisdom; darkness replaced by understanding. In the face of adversity, words of inspiration will greet you.

We are the seekers, all of us, and we are now at the Portal of the Temple, guided by the sweet voice of conscience. Just as the sages of old, we also are building a grand and beautiful temple for others to pursue. May we go hand in hand gracefully and with loving thoughts, and present to the world that eternal request that leads to self mastery: Know Thyself.

Behold The Universe

by John McNally

My disbelief in the premise of creation does not mean I do not hold the Universe in awe and wonder. On the contrary, it becomes even more mystical. It can only increase one's reverence for the cosmos to realise that no matter how much we learn or understand, there are things which cannot and will never be known or imagined. And such mysticism can never be diminished or dismissed by simply explaining it away with dogma and deities.





The Compost Heap

by Annette Fields

COMPOST IS THE TERM GARDENERS give to the heap of rotting vegetation and manure that they use as a nutrient source for growing vegetables and other plants.

It teams with life in the form of worms, bacteria and all manner of wonderful little bugs. It is the broken down forms of once living structures that aids in the growth of new living things, and in this sense it is the crucial ingredient of the cyclic nature of all plant life.

Compare this with the concept of self-growth, where an individual can grow and evolve as a multi-dimensional being... something beyond just a mind and body. This is not about physical growth, but an inner spiritual growth. And just like the compost heap, our psyche, namely, our conscious and unconscious awareness, is composed of living and non-living structures. Let us call these "belief structures," as they are patterns or "structures" of thought that form the basis of what we believe. These have developed and grown since conception, and maybe also include inherited beliefs from long distant ancestors and perhaps even past lives. We've shaped and moulded them, and developed new ones during our life time through the experiences we've undergone.

For growth to occur within each of us, these structures need to be explored. The useful, really "fruitful" ones can be cultivated. The not-so-useful or "dead" ones need to be broken down and transmuted to make way for new belief structures; ones that are better for spiritual renewal and our personal evolution.

It is not by chance that there are many analogies comparing the human psyche and spiritual development with a garden and the plants within it. Some of the common symbols in esoteric and spiritual artwork include trees, flowers and gardens. We can look upon the biblical story of the "Garden of Eden" as allegorical, suggesting that the true "Garden of Eden" is an inner place (or state of mind), and that the "Fall of Man" is symbolic of the state of man's collective internal disarray.

So consider the analogy of the compost heap, and its breakdown of old forms to provide nutrients for the raising of new forms, from their tiny seeds into healthy plants. Reflect upon what belief structures are confining your own spiritual growth, and consider how they can be broken down and transformed to nourish your own spiritual path.





LETTING GO

by Maria Daniels, SRC

*Nature knows when to let go.
But we, in our presumption,
want to hold on forever to
things as they are, avoiding
change at all cost. But, you
know, in the process, we can
destroy both ourselves and
the things we love most.*

WHEN WE REACH A POINT OF self-destruction in situations or relationships, it's time to look at ourselves, at the relationship or at the situation in an honest, non-judgmental and loving way. If things have reached an impasse, we need to be courageous enough to look within and discover the cause. All too often, we try to place blame on others or on outside

influences in an effort to avoid facing the truth about ourselves. We allow the mind to fabricate lies to protect ourselves from the truth which, in fact, would free us if we accepted it. "Know thyself!" is a very old injunction, but it's the last thing our conscious mind wants us to do; for if we did, we would eventually realise the games it plays with us.

For us to know ourselves we need to



have the proper space and time to unravel those questions and doubts. Loved ones sometimes refuse to give us this space and time willingly.

Sometimes, after a lot of introspection and self-questioning, letting go of the relationship or situation is the only sensible answer. Letting go however, doesn't mean turning off love or holding any blame or ill will towards the other person. It does mean however, loosening our grip on people and things, and allowing that divine intelligence within us to guide us in discovering our true self. In essence, we allow the Cosmic to work through us and in so doing, find a peace that would be lacking if we kept holding on to things as we want them or expect them to be. Life has its ups and downs, and problems arise when we want life to be our way, when we want it to meet all of our expectations.

Picture yourself on a beautiful, sandy beach. The sand is warm and soft under your hand. Grab a handful of sand and squeeze it tight. Notice what happens. It begins to slip through your clenched fist. The more you try to hold onto it, the faster it seeps through, until you're holding only a small fraction of what you once held. Then scoop up another handful of sand, but instead of making a tight fist, leave your hand open, and notice how



Scoop up another handful of sand, but instead of making a tight fist, leave your hand open, and notice how the sand grains remain there, free to fall or remain.

the sand grains remain there, free to fall or remain. You find yourself holding the grains of sand in your hand much longer, with less effort, less expended energy, than if you had tried to possess them and hold them prisoner in your grip.

However, has either way of being with the sand changed your feeling about it, or changed

the sand? Obviously it hasn't. You still think of it as being worth having, worth experiencing. It's still just as beautiful and fulfilling to sit there and enjoy the sand's peacefulness and softness. Best of

Sometimes, after a lot of introspection and self-questioning, letting go of the relationship or situation is the only sensible answer.

all, it will still be there for you to enjoy, again and again, in times to come.

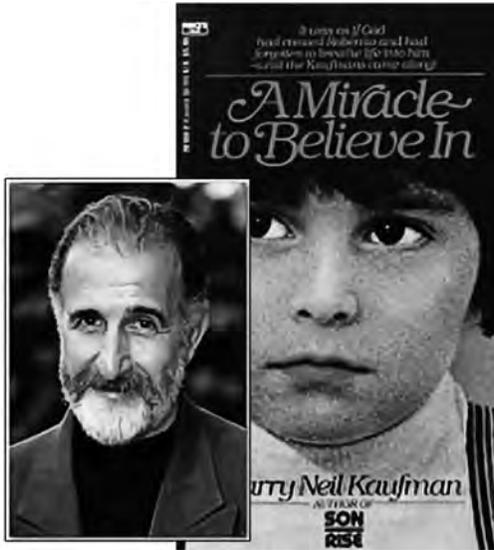
Life and Love

Life and love are much the same as those grains of sand. We want to possess forever the feelings that love arouses within us. We want to hold on to and recapture those moments of first excitement..., the feelings of happiness, exhilaration and completeness, by trying to cling to the loved one long after he or she has changed in ways we refuse to accept. Onto that loved one we have transferred the feelings that are really ours, and which we experienced originally because that certain person put us in touch with the most lovable and most beautiful part of ourselves.

It is often possible to recapture those feelings once again, and we should make every attempt in an honest way to learn from the problems and build a deeper, more loving relationship than existed before. There are times however, when only one of the partners is willing to put in the effort to make this happen, to explore every possible alternative to make the relationship work..., perhaps even long after "goodbye" would have been more appropriate.

Letting go means looking at ourselves honestly, learning to love others as they are, allowing them the freedom to be themselves, even though this may be different from what we would like them to be. It's having the courage to say, "I've changed, I've grown, I'm doing the best I know, even though I may not always be right. I'm offering you my hand. Come along with me in my growth, come and be my equal. But it's also okay if you don't want to come along. I'll love you, accept and respect you anyway, because that way I maintain both my integrity and support you in yours." After all, each one of us has our own path to travel, either together or separately, but we can still accept and love the other person for sharing our lives and for giving us their best.





A Miracle to Believe by Barry Neil Kaufmann

In the book *A Miracle to Believe In*, there's the story of an autistic child who was brought back to "life" through acceptance and unconditional love. It's a beautiful lesson in letting go. The question the parents were continually being asked by the therapist was: "Why would it make you unhappy if your son never changed?" The real meaning to that question is: Why do you feel that only by following you into your world will the other person's very existence make you happy? Why can't you be happy, loving and accepting, no matter what that other person chooses to do with their life? And, if it means letting go in order to allow that person to live life in their own way, then that's no reason to stop loving them or to continue to hold on to things as they were, or to visions of what they might be "if only..." The formula to remember is, "What if, or what was, is not the same as what is."1

The Freedom to be Yourself

How, then, do we know when to let go? If a relationship reaches a point where one of the people refuses to accept the other as they are, allowing them the freedom to be where they are, and what they are, then it's time to step back and take an honest look at what's happening. It's time for self-analysis and soul-searching. This can be an uncomfortable, painful and emotionally trying period, but one of tremendous growth and insight in personal and spiritual ways.

In evaluating the relationship, we should consider the following questions:

- Why am I frustrated or unhappy in this relationship/situation?
- Is there anything I can do about it, i.e., share my concerns, ask for help, give the other person a chance to meet me halfway, expose my feelings, make space for myself while I sort out my thoughts and feelings?
- How strongly do I feel about my commitment to stay in the situation (personal convictions, societal norms or religious beliefs aside)? What can I contribute to the relationship? Can I really feel comfortable and loving and happy within this relationship?
- Which values are important to me? Prioritise these values, such as honesty, willingness to grow, generosity, trust, peace of mind, risk taking, self-esteem, validation, openness, sharing, acceptance, truthfulness, freedom and maintaining appearances. Rate them, then see how they differ from those of your partner in the situation, if they're willing and open enough to discuss them honestly. Where do the areas of difference lie? Can they be ironed out? Are they worth ironing out, or is it better to go your separate ways? These are questions only you can answer.
- Is the relationship or situation going anywhere, or is it stagnant and stressful by the mere fact that it is in limbo? Can you resolve the issue

Each one of us has our own path to travel, either together or separately.

through confrontation, by setting limits and guidelines as to what you will accept in the relationship, and truthfully keep your word as to what it is you are willing to accept?

Have the courage to face the truth about yourself. Admit unpleasant truths about yourself, and be willing to change your behaviour. Accept the idea that it's okay for you not to be perfect, not to have all the answers. Realise within yourself that you are worthy of love, acceptance and happiness just as you are now..., not as someone wants you to become. You are unique and special as you are, where you are, and you don't have to be or do anything else to become worthy.

Letting go frees you to love the past, to accept the present and to plan and create the future. It frees you to accept the Cosmic plan for you; the real, whole, beautiful you, which will continue to be, long after situations and events in your life have changed and disappeared.



Working in Harmony with the Cosmic

by Simon Palmer, FRC.



Being appreciative of our relationship to the Cosmic and to all our friends should be a daily practice for each of us.

WE NEED TO APPRECIATE EVERY element of our lives, even those things that are sometimes unpleasant. It's from the unpleasant things, our difficulties and problems, that we learn life's greatest lessons. It's through these trials and tribulations that the Cosmic can help us most. If we develop the right attitude, we will attract the blessings of the Cosmic.

However, we can't expect good things from the Cosmic unless we give our whole-hearted support to moral and ethical standards, especially to those obligations we have assumed. What I mean is: whatever obligations we've made in life to other people, we must always uphold them.

If we're married and have promised to honour and respect our children, wife, husband and family, we must live the ideal life that will bring honour and respect to those who depend on us. No matter what the laws of the land may be, we mustn't work just within the law, but always try to uphold the highest moral and ethical standards in our lives, which will help to advance civilisation and help to build a better world.

We have an obligation to the Cosmic to spend a few moments as we fall asleep and allow our consciousness to enter into the Cosmic. Then we should think of some of the problems that other people have, forgetting ourselves entirely and becoming a living, conscious soul in harmony



with the Cosmic. In this way we become a companion worker with the Cosmic. At that time we can send out thoughts and radiate love, health and harmony to all those areas that we feel are experiencing difficulties and problems.

This is the work done by Rosicrucians and other seekers of spiritual self realisation each day to bring about changes in the world for the good of all. We may think of some unfortunate persons in our lives. They may not be related to or even really well known by us. But as we become aware of others in need and send good thoughts to them, we will start setting in motion circumstances that could assist them a lot.

Reach for the Highest

We should try to emulate the highest ideal of the Rosicrucian work, always trying to say something kind and thoughtful, something pleasant and loving to other people at every opportunity. Too many people are full of criticism, complaints, have some bias or enmity, jealousy or envy about

We must daily enter into a relationship with the Cosmic and allowing it to work through us.

other people, which keeps them out of harmony with the Cosmic. But we can never afford to have thoughts of jealousy, envy, hatred or even dislike or unpleasantness. Our attitude must always be that of being extremely kind, thoughtful and considerate. But normally, the best challenge for us is to always think of something useful and kindly. Even sending good thoughts to people we pass on the street will help them considerably.

This way, our relationship to the Cosmic is raised to a higher plane, and we lift ourselves and expand our consciousness to higher levels of achievement. We can be serious students of mystical literature, and that will help us. But if that study doesn't result in elevated thinking and acting in harmony with universal justice, then obviously we've not reached a higher level of consciousness. Raising our consciousness to a



Spend a few moments before falling asleep and allow your consciousness to enter into the Cosmic.

higher level assures us of a closer association with the Consciousness of the Cosmic and our life will become more aligned to the true purposes of the cosmic plan for mankind and the part we can play in the Great Work for the future.

So, it is important to give of ourselves and our thoughts, even for just a few minutes each day, in working on behalf of the Cosmic for the benefit of mankind. By radiating appreciative, loving and kindly thoughts, we become a channel to accomplish much good in the world, especially in our immediate community, in our place of work, or among the people we associate with. So much can be done with good thoughts. Radiating constructive thoughts to other people assures us of a close and loving relationship with the Cosmic, and blessings and gifts will come to us automatically, without our asking for them, because of the relationship we have established with the Cosmic.

These are the things that the Rosicrucian teachings try to inculcate into our consciousness, so that we become living examples of how the Cosmic works through us. It's not a matter of just drawing upon the Cosmic to let it manifest in our lives, but by daily entering into a relationship with the Cosmic and allowing it to work through us. In other words, we become perfect agents of the Cosmic in allowing it to work through us each day. Then we will be assured that everything



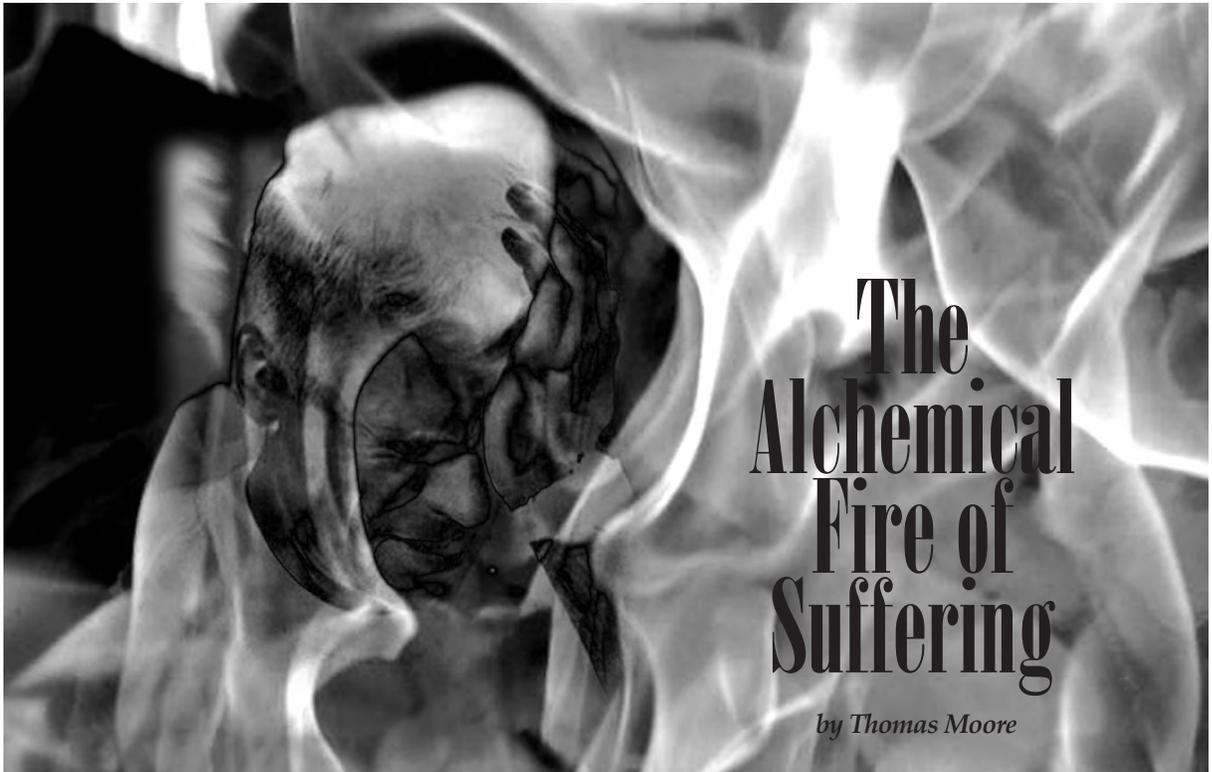
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we do in life will be meaningful, helpful and successful. We will then experience the joy of living, and a more prosperous and successful life.

We don't have to change our job. We merely need to live in harmony with the Cosmic, and the opportunities of the Cosmic will then place us in positions in our work, in our associations with other people, where we can do the most good. You've heard the old saying "like attracts

like..." well, try it. For some, it may mean that they take on important positions in society, and may have important work to do while others may work in the background and not seem to have any important function in the world. However, they have a greater importance by working in harmony with the Cosmic behind the scenes. This is the Great Work that the Rosicrucian Order helps anyone interested to realise and bring into their lives.



AN ALCHEMICAL FIRE TURNS BASE metals into gold. But, allegorically speaking, what's the fire, what's the dross and what's the gold? The answer is that fire is suffering, the dross is bad habits and gold is perfection. Really, you ought to be thankful for the coming of the fire, for without it the purification process is not active. Similarly, you should be thankful for the absence of the fire, for the rest and peace provided. You aren't meant to suffer continuously; only when necessary.

So, what's this fire of suffering and what's its purpose? It takes many forms: physical pain, mental discomfort, economic hardship and social disability, to name but a few. As the Tibetan

manuscript *Unto Thee I Grant The Economy of Life* reminds us, the most severe physical suffering is the briefest, while the longer-lived variety is milder. Mental anguish is usually a sign that you're out of tune with the Cosmic Mind in a physical or psychic way. Economic hardship and social problems usually reflect the same conditions. Something is amiss. The fire is there to remind you that you can act to alleviate the pain it causes and remove the cause of your discomfort.

In short, the fire is Nature's way of reminding you about Cosmic laws. You are violating a law in some way, and the Cosmic is providing you with a lesson, the purpose of which is to help you progress toward the goal of ultimate perfection.



PYTHAGORAS THE TEACHER

by Mary Jones, SRC

Part 4

The Pythagorean Philosophy of Numbers.

Part 1 of this series about Pythagoras concerned his life and times. This enigmatic Greek philosopher has left a legacy that has lasted to the present day. In Part 2, we were introduced to numbers and their influence on music. In Part 3 we continued our examination of numbers with an investigation into the Tetractys and the amazing correspondences we find with various modern sciences. In Part 4 we now look at some of Aristotle's comments in his Metaphysics and the philosophy behind numbers.

IN HIS WORK METAPHYSICS (c.350 BCE), Aristotle proposed three questions: What is existence, and what sorts of things exist in the world? How can things continue to exist, and yet undergo the change we see about us in the natural world? And, thirdly, how can we understand this world? He wrote in response to the first two questions on existence and being:

"...the so-called Pythagoreans, who were the first to take up mathematics, not only advanced this study, but also having been brought up in it they thought its principles were the principles of all things. Since of these principles numbers are by nature the first, and in numbers they seemed to see many resemblances to the things that exist and come into being—more than in fire and earth and water (such and such a modification of numbers being justice [for

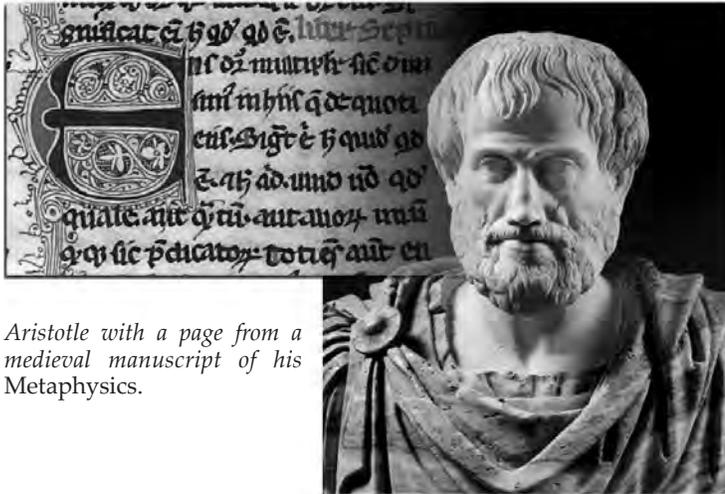


example], another being soul and reason, another being opportunity..., and similarly almost all other things being numerically expressible)...”

He continues to expand on the third question on understanding nature:

The substance of the entire universe is identified with numbers.

“...since again, they [the Pythagoreans] saw that the modifications and the ratios of the musical scales were expressible in numbers; since then, all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modelled on numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of nature, they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the



Aristotle with a page from a medieval manuscript of his *Metaphysics*.

whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number. And all the properties of numbers and scales which they could show to agree with the attributes and parts and the whole arrangement of the heavens, they collected and fitted into their scheme; and if there was a gap anywhere, they readily made additions so as to make their whole theory coherent.”¹

It is clear that they conceived number as the first principle (Greek: *Archê*) and that the substance of the entire universe is identified with numbers. Number is conceived not as a mental abstraction but something which exists in and composes all things. Philolaos of Tarentum (c.475 BCE), in his book *On Pythagorean Numbers* states: “All things, at least those we know, contain Number; for it is evident that nothing whatever can either be thought or known without Number.”

The Neo-Platonist Iamblichus reinforced this when he stated that the causal approach

to nature consisted “in positing mathematical things as causes” from which the objects in the perceptible world arise. He subscribed to the Pythagorean belief that only what was possible in mathematics was possible in the structure of nature, and that nothing could exist that implied a mathematical impossibility. What advanced thoughts for such an early era in our history!

Number Philosophy

A metaphysical philosophy lay at the heart of Pythagoras’ thought and teachings. His understanding of *numbers* was quite different from the understanding of today. To Pythagoras and his followers, the idea of *number* was a living, qualitative reality that had to be experienced. To them, it was not something to be used, but rather something whose nature was to be discovered.

Nowadays, we think of number as a sign to denote a specific amount or quantity. We use numbers as tokens to represent things. But the Pythagoreans saw *number* as a universal principle such as light or electromagnetism or sound. As modern physics has demonstrated, it is precisely the numeric, vibrational frequency or wavelength of electromagnetic energy that determines its particular manifestation.

Two Principles

According to , the Pythagoreans traced the origin of all things back to two principles..., the even and the odd. He wrote:

“Evidently then, these thinkers also consider that number is the principle both as matter for things and as forming both their modifications and their permanent states, and hold that the elements of number are the even and the odd, and that of these the latter is limited, and the former unlimited; and that the

Einstein says that the universe is “Number,” which accords with the ancient Pythagorean vision.

One proceeds from both of these (for it is both even and odd), and number from the One; and that the whole heaven, as has been said, is numbers.”²

For the Pythagoreans, the elements of





Iamblichus subscribed to the Pythagorean belief that only what was possible in mathematics was possible in the structure of nature.

number are the *even* and the *odd*, or the *limited* and the *unlimited*; this is because numbers derive from the One and the One from the even (unlimited) and the odd (limited). Aristotle tells us that the Pythagoreans saw the unlimited as evil, and limited as good. It seems that they also identified the number one (the monad) with the limited and two (the dyad) with the unlimited. The emergence of the One appears to follow the Law of the Triangle in that it comes from the odd and even and itself produces number or the whole of nature.

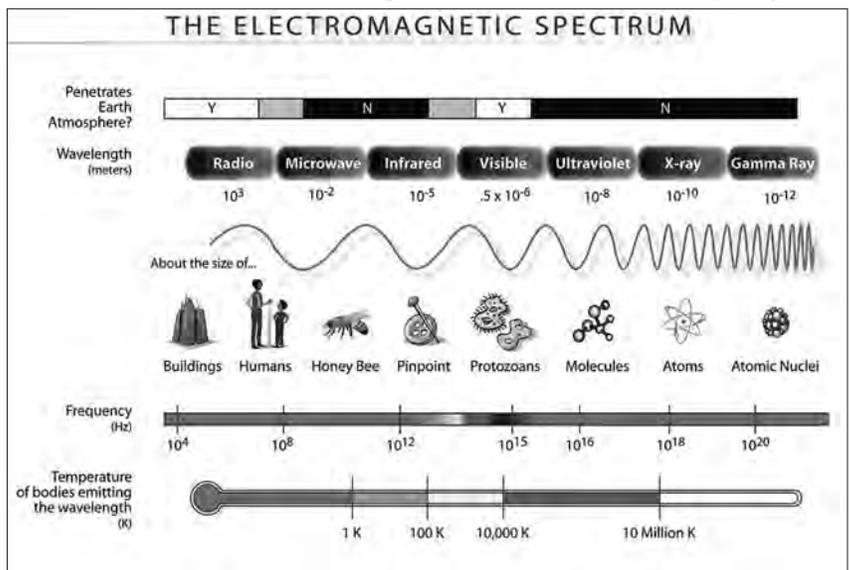
Accepting that "Number" constitutes the essence of everything, it is overshadowed by the concept of a material reality quite separate and distinct from what we might consider to be a purely abstract number, and

even today in atomic physics laboratories, reality is composed of complex numerical interactions in dealing with subatomic particles and fields. Einstein says that the universe is "Number," which accords with the ancient Pythagorean vision. According to Richard Feynman (1918-1988), the discovery of the Theory of Relativity came about because of a Greco-Pythagorean mode of investigation based on the interaction of sets of axioms with subsequent logical deductions. The strength of the foundations of scientific Pythagoreanism is from the methodological approach, rationally analysed and developed with great discipline and, at the same time, transcended by a powerful initiatory and ontological global system.

Geometry

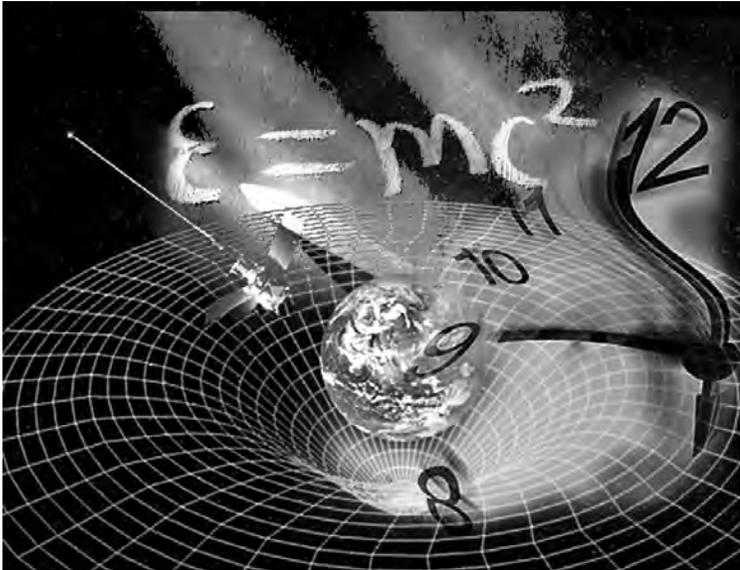
It should be noted that mathematics and geometry were considered to be intimately related, since geometry necessarily requires knowledge of mathematics and since numbers, consisting of single points, combine to form geometric figures, so that we can talk about triangular, square, rectangular and cubic shapes. Number was considered an essential part of the Monad, and the Monad was considered identical to a geometric point.

A number then was a geometric figure and a geometric figure was a number. The geometric figure is a number of points in space: the actual number determining the shape or object itself. The concept that is the basis of the Pythagorean



Pythagoreans saw number as a universal principle such as light, electromagnetism or sound.





The discovery of the Theory of Relativity came about because of a Greco-Pythagorean mode of investigation based on the interaction of sets of axioms with subsequent logical deductions.

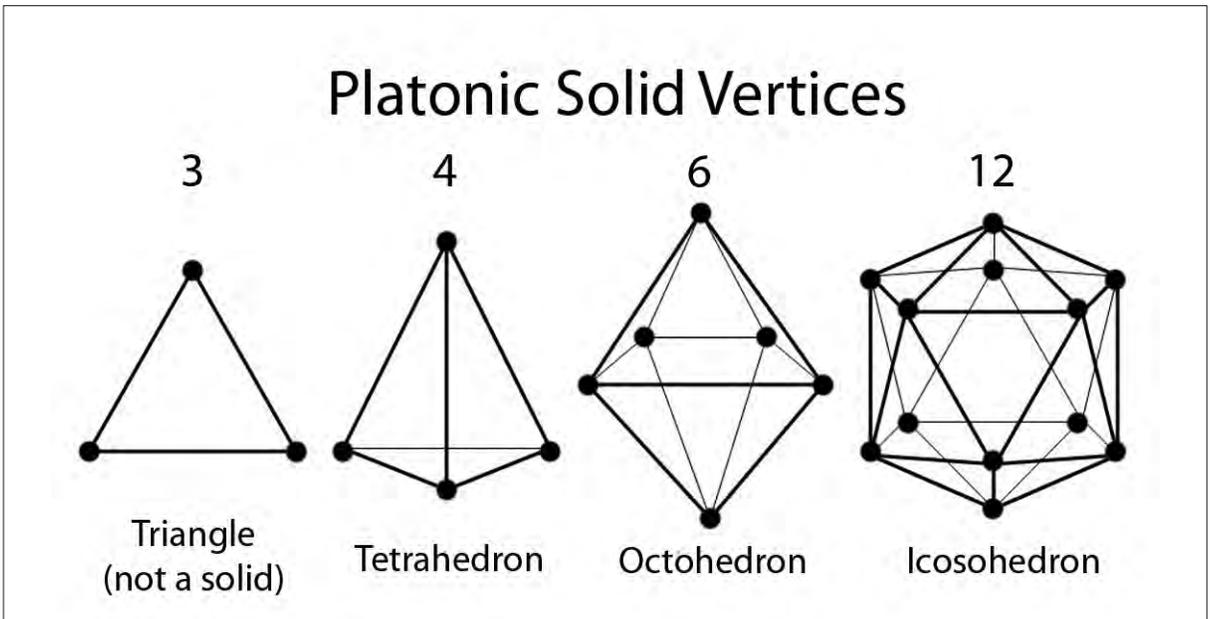
principle that things are numbers is therefore, a measurable one. From this we can infer that since the whole world is made of numbers it follows that the true nature of the world is a sort of geometry in numbers and is therefore measurable. This allows an explanation of things such as the seasonal motion of the celestial bodies, musical harmonies, the cycle of vegetation, as well as abstract qualities and things such as justice, the intellect and the soul.

The properties and elements of numbers correspond to the properties of things. So, something that seems far removed from number is, on closer inspection, traceable to a quantitative and measurable structure. Simple mathematical operations like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division allows the search for equality and harmony in One and the one in multiplicity. This was of great importance to the Pythagoreans, who were the first to measure the real and the abstract in nature in these terms, and recognise the unity and harmony of the world and its beauty.

For Pythagoras, mathematics was a bridge between the visible and invisible worlds. It was a way of understanding and manipulating nature, leading to the contemplation of eternal things that never vary. By focussing on the elements of mathematics, you could calm and purify the mind and ultimately experience true happiness. One, the original number, is what is in everything and everything is combined in the One.

Endnotes

1. Both quotes from *Metaphysics*, Book 1, Part 5, translated by W D Ross, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.1.i.html>
2. Ibid.



The geometric figure is a number of points in space: the actual number determining the shape or object itself.





A Thankful Heart is the Way to Happiness

by Masaru Emoto

WHY DO PEOPLE GO THROUGH LIFE looking for happiness? Dogs and cats look for food and comfort, but they certainly don't go to all the trouble that people do in their continual search for happiness. I suppose the reason is that we are the only ones who can align ourselves with the halo of happiness.

Many years ago I had a discussion with Dr. Ravi Batra, a well-known international economist, and he said something that has stuck with me: *Why do you think people continually search for happiness?* The reason is that humans have a link to unlimited existence. But many of us make a serious mistake. We set up conditions for happiness based on riches and fame, momentary pleasures and things that are limited and always changing. There are those who are rich beyond our understanding, and yet they continue to hanker after more as they strive in vain to find happiness. This fruitless path will not reap rewards because they are looking to find unlimited happiness in the limited world of money and riches.

Unless we can become one with the concept of an unlimited existence, we will never find true happiness. And it requires that we deliberately attempt to raise our consciousness. All that can be seen with the human eye is of this limited world. Sooner or later, the material trappings will end, and as long as that is how we define happiness, our hearts will always feel hollow.

Of course I understand that casting aside all desire is not possible or even advisable. In fact, desire is not what's preventing us from finding happiness. An appropriate amount of desire is

needed to make people strive for something better, and it is this that makes it possible for human society to rise to its current level. The problem arises when we become slaves to our desires. Our modern society operates on the ability to stir up desire in the masses, and it's no easy task to find happiness in a society established on insatiable desire. So what is it that we need to do to escape never-ending desire and find happiness? The answer is..., gratitude..., to have a thankful heart.

More than ever, we live in a time when love and appreciation is truly needed. And I think the right ratio for appreciation and love is 2:1, the exact ratio of hydrogen to oxygen in the water molecule! We have seen where words

More than ever, we live in a time when love and appreciation is truly needed.

of appreciation and love result in crystals of indescribable beauty. There are no conditions needed for appreciation. We can be thankful for life and for our freedom to move about. It's as simple as that, as simple as breathing.

When you align your soul with the halo of appreciation and love, a small drop of happiness will seep into your heart and spread throughout your body. This will link you to the vibration of happiness..., and happiness will become a part of your daily life. This is the secret for finding happiness right now, wherever you are. Don't wait, begin with gratitude and appreciation right now!

- Reprinted with some minor editing from *The Secret Life of Water* by Masaru Emoto. Atria Books, 2005; 0-7432-8982-X





The Seeds of Self-Fulfillment As Within, So Without

by Mary Ann Fowler, SRC

As seekers of greater spiritual realisation know, the mind has a profound effect on their lives. Whatever their outward circumstances, the material expression about them is only a reflection of beliefs and attitudes they have held in the past. In other words, it all began in the mind.



THE KIND OF BODY YOU HAVE, THE kind of home you live in, the type of work you do, the kind of people you meet, are all conditioned by and correspond to the images in your mind. As there can be no plant without a seed, so the circumstances in your life spring from the hidden seeds of your thought. Every one of your actions is always preceded by thought.

Action then, could be thought of as the flowering of thought; joy and suffering are its

fruits. So when choosing the fruits of your life..., a healthy body, a satisfactory job, friends and opportunities..., you must first plant the seed of thought and supply yourself with the proper image in your mind before the thing will be manifested in your life. Without the mental image within, you cannot have the material expression without...; "as within, so without."

There are probably things you would like to change or eliminate in your life, and let's face it, we all have them! Perhaps there's some part



of your body you would love to change or some habits. If you rid your mind of the mental image, that is, stop thinking about the unwanted condition, you will have taken the first step towards removing it from your life. The secret of successful living is to build up or visualise the mental image you want, whilst at the same time getting rid of the mental image you don't want. How do you do this? By choosing the thoughts you allow your mind to dwell upon.

To Rosicrucians, thoughts are things.

To Rosicrucians, thoughts are things. According to the Law of Polarity, anything that's created anywhere in the Universe is produced by two other things. For years it was believed that the atom was the smallest particle of matter; but when scientists split the atom, and later with the discovery of sub-atomic particles, the Law of Polarity was apparent. It always takes two things, the positive and the negative..., the odd and the even, or the up and the down, to produce a third condition. Since thoughts are things, they too must be composed of two other things. The two components of thought are clearness (the negative, passive element) and interest (the positive, active element). If you want to try out the Law of Polarity and create what you want in your material world, you should start with your thought process. First, you need a clear mental picture of what you want; second, you need enough interest to cause the creative forces of the Universe to respond to your desires.

The Thought Seed A Creative Idea

Thoughts by nature externalise. You've heard the old saying "like attracts like..." well you tend to attract to yourself and to become attracted to people, circumstances and situations that are similar to the images you hold in your thoughts. If you think about happiness, you'll attract happiness into your life. But it's impossible to be successful and happy while you think about



If you think about happiness, you'll attract happiness into your life. But it's impossible to be successful and happy while you think about and hold an image in your mind of failure and sadness.

and hold an image in your mind of failure and sadness. Remember, the type of thought you concentrate on and hold in your mind will reproduce itself in your outer world: for as within, so without.

Most people want to become happy, healthy and prosperous. But do you hold that image in your mind? or do you just read an inspirational article or two and then wonder why you're not more successful in attaining your goal? One of the reasons you may not see the manifestation of your desires is because you haven't acted according to the Law of Polarity. If you don't think quietly, constantly and persistently about the kind of things you want, and you don't act on the guidance from within..., if you let doubt

destroy the second pole, i.e., your interest..., that doubt causes the image to become distorted before time has permitted the creation to express itself in physical form. The thought seed, or the creative idea, must be nourished and kept alive through its gestation period just as with any other life form.

An egg for instance, has within it a tiny seed capable of becoming a chicken. But before you can see the material manifestation, namely the chicken, the mother hen must have enough interest during the three-week gestation period to nourish the egg by keeping it warm with her body, turning it in various positions with the expectation of seeing a chick. If the hen loses interest and fails to sit on the egg, the chick will be still-born. The manifestation then is a rotten egg. It's the same with your thought ideas. Lose interest and fail to act, and your idea becomes the equivalent of a rotten egg.

Concentration

If you want to be successful, concentrate your thoughts on things such as love, wisdom, joy and beauty, and use affirmations to maintain your interest while nourishing your thought-ideas throughout the gestation period. Your mind must



be open and receptive, and intuitively you'll be directed toward your highest good by the Cosmic Energy within. Just as the hen acts intuitively in changing an egg into a chicken, you can act intuitively to change your idea into its material manifestation.

The Rosicrucian teachings emphasise concentration, because concentration is the key to a happy life. Through concentration, you build an image within that will then be manifested in your life. Many people fail to concentrate successfully because they think that concentration requires the classic use of will power in the form of closing your eyes real hard, grinding your teeth and generally tensing the body all over. This may work on occasion, but it's a lot easier to concentrate the effortless way..., and it's a lot easier.

Think about a camera! In a camera there is of course no question of pressure. The secret lies in focus and depth of field. If you want to photograph an object, you focus your camera lens quietly and steadily on the object and calmly select your depth of focus. You don't press violently against the lens of the camera and you don't move the camera from one item to another, moment by moment. If you did, you would end up with a blur. The same is true with the picture you are developing in your mind when you don't keep your thoughts concentrated for any length of

The Rosicrucian teachings emphasise concentration, because concentration is the key to a happy life.

time. In attempting to concentrate, some people think health for a few minutes and then wander off to thoughts of ill health or fear. They think prosperity a while, and then without knowing even, start worrying about their debts and how they're going to pay their bills. They think about bodily perfection and then think about old age, aches and pains. Is it any wonder they are so apt to demonstrate a hazy, blurred image?

I am not advocating taking one thought and trying to hold it by will power. That's not quite the approach to take. Rather, allow a train of thoughts to have free play in your mind; one leading naturally to the next; a bit like entering a so-called "brown study." The thoughts must be positive, constructive, harmonious and about your desire. By thinking quietly and without effort you'll attain the mental image of all-round



Most people want to become happy, healthy and prosperous. But do you hold that image in your mind? or do you just read an inspirational article or two and then wonder why you're not more successful in attaining your goal?

success. When you have an image of success in your mind, success will follow in your outer experiences in the form of a healthier physical body, happier relationships, more productive work and fuller spiritual development: for as within, so without.

Power of Affirmations

How are you using the great power of affirmations? Do you tell your friends about your problems, and then explain that you're using affirmations to rid yourself of the problem? If so, you're strongly affirming the existence of the problem which is the very thing you're trying to get rid of. If you tell your friends you're going to work on your rheumatism, your lack of finances or your undesirable relationships, you're making these things very real in your subconscious mind.

What should you do? Change your mind about the problem and forget it for a period of time, say for a month, and you'll be astonished at the results. To keep looking for any improvement in the condition is remembering the problem, putting energy into the problem..., and that's really affirming the existence of the problem, isn't it? The secret is to forget the problem and have your thoughts changed into the new condition. Believe what you're thinking, and act as though the

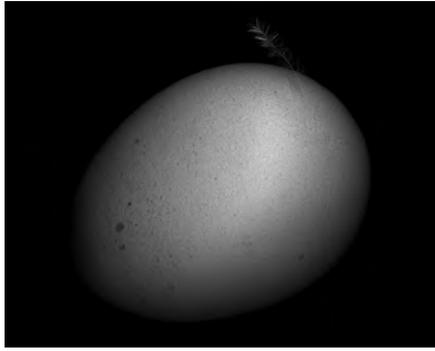


new condition were already in existence in the outer world. If you do this, the new condition will soon appear outwardly, because the outer is only the projection, the visualisation manifested, of the inner.

Your true thoughts and beliefs are projected in your daily experiences, and correspond with the circumstances in your life. True activity always comes from within and is manifested outward. False activity tries to work from without inward. As with the seed and the egg I spoke about earlier, growth comes from within. The seed and the egg contain everything necessary to create life in a visible form. The tiny mustard seed, so small you can't see it once you place it in the soil, will burst forth from within and produce a plant two feet tall. If you do a project because you've been inspired from within and you act on that inspiration, that's a true action and you are working from within outward. Your work is alive and will be productive. If you're working from outside inward, your work will not be productive; in fact, it will fail.

The Infinite Mind

If you are to be successful in your job, you must love your work and be inspired from within to take positive action. The same is true in your mystical development. If you insincerely meditate, perhaps in order to impress others, your efforts will be in vain. But if you turn your consciousness within, to attune with and accept the guidance from the Infinite Mind, your spiritual growth will be apparent and will be reflected in the circumstances of your life. Your thoughts rapidly crystallise into habits, and habits solidify into circumstances. The real you then, is reflected in the circumstances of your life, and those circumstances are the results of your thoughts.



Interest is important; before you can see the material manifestation of this chicken egg, the mother hen must have enough interest during the three-week gestation period to nourish the egg by keeping it warm with her body.

Thoughts of fear, doubt and indecision crystallise into weak and irresolute habits, which solidify into failure. Impure thoughts of every kind..., thoughts of envy, jealousy, revenge, injustice or unfair criticism, crystallise into confusing habits which solidify into adverse circumstances. On the other hand, beautiful thoughts crystallise into habits of grace and kindness, which solidify into genial, cheerful and pleasant circumstances. Pure

thoughts of love, health and happiness crystallise into habits of temperance and self-control which solidify into circumstances of success and peace. Just as lovely, pleasing and enjoyable thoughts produce a sweet and sunny disposition, so do

Thoughts of fear, doubt and indecision crystallise into weak and irresolute habits, which solidify into failure.

sour, disagreeable and offensive thoughts result in a sour and unattractive face. If you persist in a particular train of thought, whether good or bad, it cannot fail to produce its results in your character and in your world.



You don't press violently against the lens of the camera and you don't move the camera from one item to another, moment by moment. If you did, you would end up with a blur. The same is true with the picture you are developing in your mind when you don't keep your thoughts concentrated for any length of time.

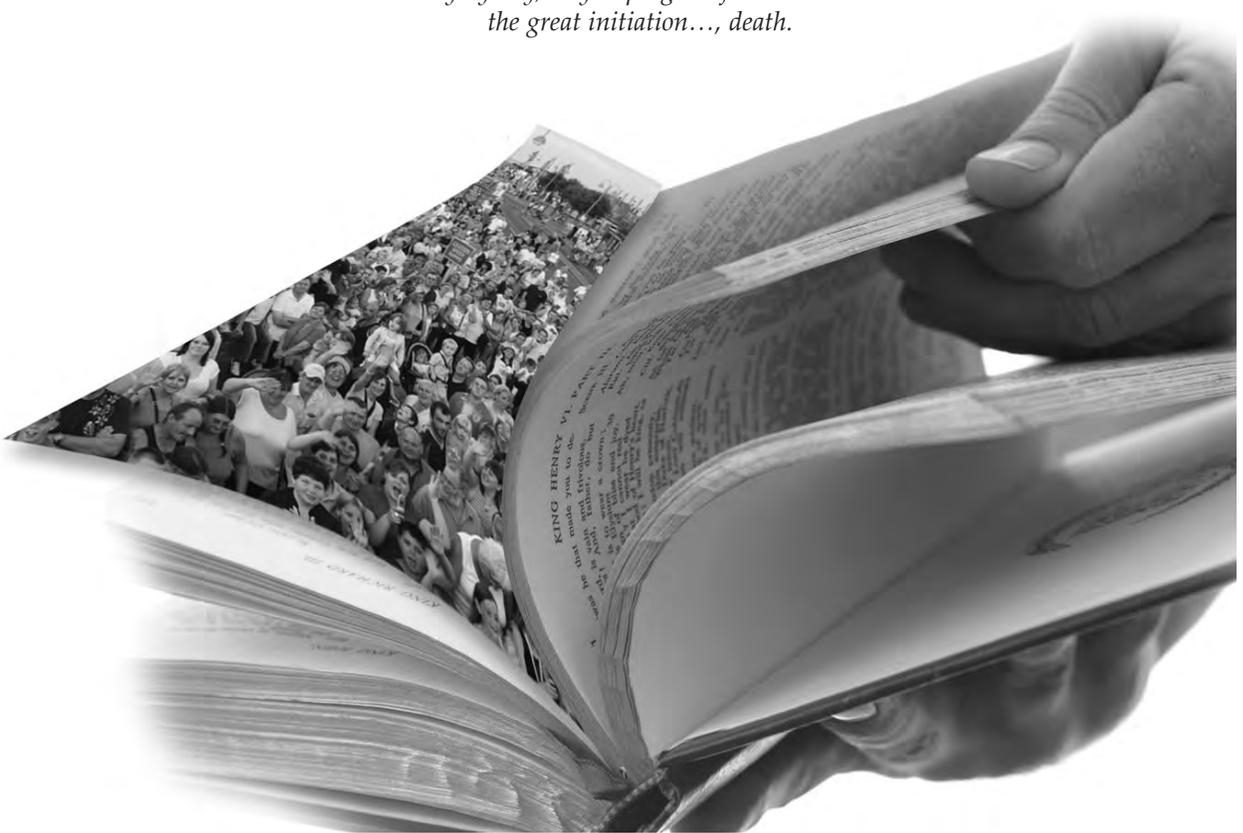
So look at yourself and your life. Are you pleased with what you see? If you want to improve your life, you must improve yourself. Begin by changing your thoughts, for much of the misfortune you encounter in life is as a result of your own inharmonious thoughts having led you to the circumstances that brought the misfortune about. The peace and harmony in your life is a result of your own mental harmony within. You are meant to be a happy, healthy and prosperous person; and happiness, health and prosperity are the result of a harmonious adjustment of the inner with the outer: for as within, so without.



Turn the Page

by Fraser Lawson, FRC

Whether you realise it or not, you're creating a story of life unlike any other, day by day, as you progress from birth to the great initiation..., death.



DOU MAY NOT ACTUALLY WRITE THE story of your life unless you keep a daily diary, but you do live an episode each day, even if you remain isolated and alone. Your daily episode may be a tragedy, a farce, an adventure or a comedy. Whatever it is, it's still your personal experience of life, whether it's a fortunate one or not quite so.

But then you are after all the author, so life is what you make of it.

And because you are primarily responsible for your story, make it what you want it to be. But there's the thing...! don't just record the episode as dictated by circumstances or by other people. If you always do what others want and never do what you want to do, it will make you a really



miserable person. You're not being as creative as the Cosmic intended you to be, but rather like some puppet being manipulated by other people, who are not happy just to control their own lives but must extend their control to others too.

The strong will always come in and exert their strength and power where there's a vacuum. That is after all the way of Nature. But every person is a part of the Creator and is given the same opportunity to be creative. Given enough time and effort, success or failure is ultimately a human decision.

New Day

Regardless of the past, each new day is the same for everyone. It is unmade, uncreated; it is a "blank page" for you to write your own story as you want. No matter whether you're young or old, healthy or sick, rich or poor, each new day is yours to create as you want! You can, and must, reject all negative, limiting thoughts. Forget about whatever advantages other people may have had over you yesterday. That was yesterday! Today you have the same blank page as they do! Forget about the past. It's finished; and done with. Think about today. It's before you; it's unshaped.

So what are you going to make of today? Within you slumbers the creative spark of God, so discover that God manifests through you. You have an important job to do, so it's time to get started! The first step is to control and order your thinking. Too many of your past failures were self-created by your own negative thinking. Sooner or later you're going to have to realise



Regardless of the past, each new day is the same for everyone. It is unmade, uncreated; it is a "blank page" for you to write your own story as you want.

and accept that fact. The unhappy consequences of your own negative thinking are going to be presented in your life repeatedly until you finally realise that you're punishing yourself. Then you'll begin to think positively, and your life will start to change. That is Nature's way of teaching.

Too many of your past failures were self-created by your own negative thinking.

It is a matter of willpower to control your thinking. It's just as easy to think that you'll succeed as to think that you'll fall flat on your face. It's no more difficult to think that you'll feel better than to think that you'll feel worse. You just need to decide whether you want happiness and good things to happen today, or unhappiness and disappointing experiences. Remember, you create, whether you like it or not!

Attraction

The second step is to study and master the law of attraction. You attract to yourself what you mentally create around you. A good experiment is to watch people, say in a nightclub. Even if they don't know each other, after a short time you'll see the outgoing, jovial, fun-loving people gravitating toward one another; while the sour-faced, complaining ones will attract each other. This experiment is a great experience, so try it!

The fact remains that attraction is a basic and inviolable law of nature. You'll attract whatever dominates your thinking because you have created it that way. If you think negative thoughts, you'll attract negative circumstances. All dreams and desires you have that are compatible with natural laws, are possible. This is why you can and must create!

Attunement

The third step is attunement. Within yourself is the wisdom and power of the Cosmic. It's that creative spark which belongs to God. Learn to subdue the arrogant ego inside you and let that unlimited, imprisoned power of the Cosmic resurface and take over your life. Discover that it thinks only positively. It possesses the ultimate in confidence, faith and expectation. It can do everything that is good and constructive. It refuses to do anything that's destructive or contrary to natural law. This is the greater you!

Realise that you're a certain unique



expression of God that's needed to do certain unique work for the world. What a challenging and tremendous thought! But how will you attune with this power? Who are you to be so honoured? Watch it, that's a negative thought! It's not difficult to practise attunement. Nothing positive is ever placed beyond your reach. Simply find a quiet place and dismiss that dominating ego. Then, "Be still and know that I am God." No further instructions are necessary.

Decision

The fourth and final step is decision. Having been introduced to a greater life, decide to change! Decide to accept the privilege and responsibility! Decide to ignore or eliminate the failures and limitations of the past! Decide that today and tomorrow will be better because you'll help to make it better.

Let it be known that you'll not allow any negative thoughts to come into your mind; that

Realise that you're a certain unique expression of God that's needed to do certain unique work.

you'll not be party to any evil or destructive plans or activities; that you'll see only the good in every person you come into contact with. You'll be surprised to discover how many will be attracted to you and will



After a short time you'll see the outgoing, jovial, fun-loving people gravitating toward one another; while the sour-faced, complaining ones will attract each other.

want to join you in your determination. The law of attraction will not and cannot fail!

Maybe the previous pages in your book of life are less than satisfactory; you may even be ashamed of them. You don't need to be, because you lived those pages as you then understood life. They are experience. But they are finished and you cannot change them. Forget them! The future is before you..., unmade. You'll create it on the remaining blank pages. So, just turn the page!

The Universal Heart

by Anthony Hanley, FRC

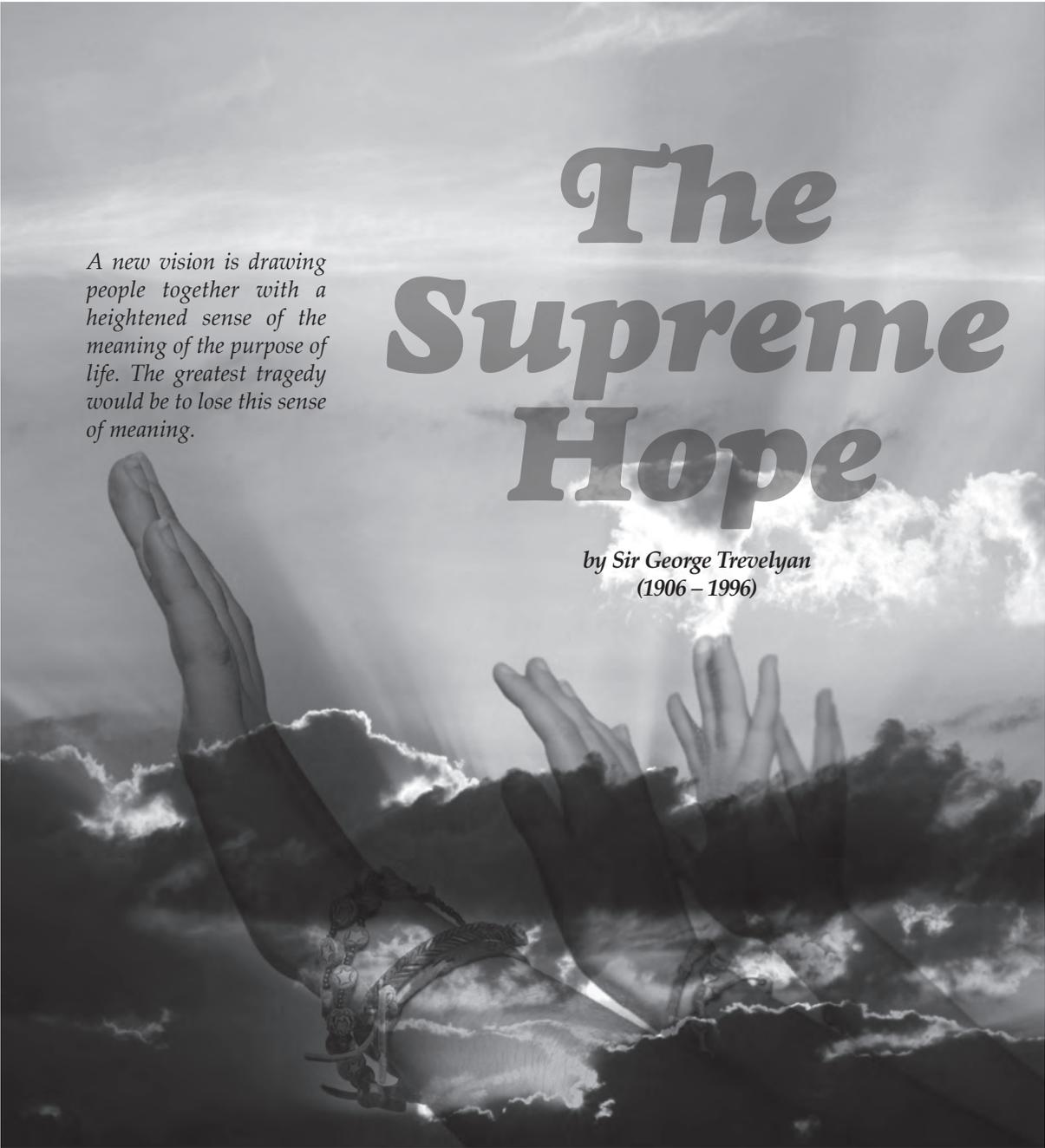
*We're all just a part
of the Universal Heart,
that's described and defined
by the omnipotent mind.*

*We're all just a scene
in an everlasting scheme that
becomes for some a nightmare
or an effervescent dream.*

*We're all just a node
of an invincible abode
whose tendrils reach so low
in order that we might grow.*

*We're all just a blip
upon a cosmic sailing ship
whose ongoing journey through vast space
decides the future of the race.*





The Supreme Hope

A new vision is drawing people together with a heightened sense of the meaning of the purpose of life. The greatest tragedy would be to lose this sense of meaning.

*by Sir George Trevelyan
(1906 – 1996)*

THE ASTRONOMER ROYAL SIR JAMES Jeans wrote: "What does life amount to? We have tumbled, as though through error, into a universe that by all the evidence was not intended for us. We cling to a fragment of a grain of sand until such time as the chill of death shall return us to primal matter. We strut for a tiny moment upon a tiny stage, well knowing that all our aspirations are doomed to ultimate failure and that everything we have achieved will perish with our

*race, leaving the Universe as though we had never existed."*¹

Can we not see that human aspiration must ultimately come to a stop if that is the truth? Sooner or later despair must set in, with the sense that life is without meaning. It is indeed miraculous that we go on so bravely hoping, believing and worshipping in the face of a heavy load of doubt. Later in his life, Jeans modified his attitude, sensing that the Universe was ultimately



of the nature of thought: *"The tendency of modern physics is to resolve the whole natural universe into waves and nothing but waves. If annihilation of matter occurs, the process is merely of un-bottling of imprisoned wave energy and letting it free to travel through space. These concepts reduce the whole universe to a world of light, potential and existence, so that the whole story of creation can be told with perfect accuracy and completeness in the six words 'God said: Let there be Light.'"*²

But light we know is Life, is Spirit, is God. So close are we to the bridging of advanced physics and mysticism! It is this conviction of the divinity of all life that is now flooding our thinking. We see that the universe is in fact spiritual in essence; that matter is derivative from creative spirit; that the planet Earth is not to be seen as a dead speck of dust but as a living seed, bearing on it that most precious cargo, human consciousness. It is a strange paradox that the view that humanity is wholly unimportant has led to human arrogance in our age. If matter is merely dead and we are an accident of evolution in a nature wholly indifferent to us, then why should we not exploit it for our own gain? But first came the primal oneness of *Being* and *Spirit*, and from this our world of diversity is derived.

We wake up with something of awe to realise that humans are an integral part of nature, and that we are stewards of our planet with the task of serving it. What are we doing with our stewardship? A new humility awakens once we recognise that humans are indeed important to the universe and human evolving consciousness is part of a great plan. Human thinking is now hovering between these two world views, and an expanding of consciousness is leading many to see the limitations of our materialistic outlook.

Materialism

Materialism essentially is not wrong, but it is a partial truth and dangerous when taken as the only value. It is part of the human spiritual evolution that its thinking should plunge into the mastering



Sir James Jeans (1877-1946)

of matter even to the point of disintegrating it into the energy of which it is constituted. The great challenge is now to step beyond materialism and widen our vision to include the spiritual planes of creative being.

Humanity is at a turning point in which materialistic thinking could drag us blindly down into a new bestiality, unless we can awaken to a deeper truth and rediscover the lost sense of meaning and spiritual purpose. To this end, humanity is called on to expand its consciousness.

The great French palaeontologist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) has provided us with a picture of evolution that could well bring about a marriage between scientific thinking and religious inspiration. Teilhard's argument is that every cell and molecule is *alive* and has a "within." Its core is energy and energy we must see as "frozen spirit." Thus there is no dead matter. The outstanding feature in evolution is that these living cells and atoms have an inbuilt faculty for clustering together to create ever more complex structures

In humans an organism is made so complex that it becomes self-conscious.

and organisms. Even the smallest plankton has an incredibly complex structure. How much more so in animals where consciousness has developed?

Complexity

Throughout evolution there is manifested this purposeful turning-in of atoms upon themselves, first to create minerals, then plants, fish, animals and finally human beings. Each stage results in a release of tremendous creative energy. Each step in this increasing complexity results in greater consciousness. In humans an organism is made so complex that it becomes self-conscious. Here evolution becomes conscious of itself and can reflect.

If matter is dead, then it could not manifest purpose and drive toward a consummation. That



matter *is* alive is shown by this inbuilt drive toward a consummation. It is all too common to judge the values in our universe on the basis of mere size and distance. We are appalled by the smallness of our planet in the vast expanses of space and therefore conclude that we are unimportant. Not so, says Teilhard..., the true measure is *complexity*. The great red giants among the stars have an extremely simple atomic arrangement. Compare this with millions upon millions of cells in a human brain, making self-consciousness possible.

Spiritual Evolution

We consider humanity to be the peak of evolution and of supreme importance to the universe. We can, in imagination, view the sweep of life from the simplest organisms up to humans and realise that in some sense the life within the atom, being eternal, has passed up through minerals, plants and animals into people. We become more aware of our profound relationship to the whole of living nature and its kingdoms, for we are part of a single sweep of ever-mounting consciousness.

Furthermore, we realise that the human inner core is spiritual in origin and that it has descended from eternal worlds to which it must return when freed from the drastic limitation of a physical body. Thus we must grasp the idea of a spiritual evolution in the human being that unites with the upward-striving urge of physical evolution.

We too often tacitly assume that humans, as the peak of evolution, are a more or less finished product. We therefore look for advance to be in the form of social improvement. Teilhard suggests something much more exciting. The drive within evolution will not stop. It logically follows that the human molecules will turn in upon each other to create an ultra-human clustering. The power manifested in each cell to cluster with others on the same wavelength must ultimately be recognised as of the nature of love. Each molecule is becoming conscious of this rise of love and

is beginning to unite in human clusters or new groupings. These can only have one purpose: to raise consciousness to a higher level. Self-consciousness was achieved in humans. Now, in

As people take the next step in consciousness they will form groups bound creatively in love.

greater complexity, humanity advances toward Cosmic Consciousness and it moves toward the real consummation, the reuniting with God.

Thus Teilhard welcomes the crowding of our planet as a symptom of the end of a great evolutionary epoch. We are rushing inexorably into a world society, merging into one world, one family. We may expect a new form of collective life. As people take the next step in consciousness they will form groups bound creatively in love, in which the individuality of each member will enrich the group and itself be enriched by united activity.

God Consciousness

Teilhard and Vladimir Vernadsky have made us familiar with the concept of the "noösphere," the thought layer surrounding the planet, created by human thinking and yet to be seen as an objective reality. It is a great unity, a "human mind" that actually extends the consciousness of the planet. In Rosicrucian terminology this is the *égrégoire*, about which we have heard so much. As love awakens in the heart, uniting kindred souls, we may expect the real Spirit of Earth to develop a new Human Heart. Consciousness has risen from low life through the animal sensitivity to self-consciousness.

As the human soul breaks out of the mould of matter, it discovers its goal. Teilhard has called this "*homing in on the Omega Point*," describing the maximum level of complexity and consciousness towards which the universe appears to be evolving. As we awake to the glory of the prospect ahead and realise the drastic limitation of consciousness



Pierre Teilhard de Chardin spent many of his Jesuit years as a paleontologist and geologist in China and Mongolia. His attempts to reconcile science with religion faced opposition from the Church.



involved in living in the body with its five senses, we recognise as a brother or sister every other soul that has taken the same step. Out of these will come the new groups, aware of the meaning of life, the purpose of humanity and the power of “unpossessive” love.

The society that is formed out of this vision heralds a new age. A new flow of love and sympathy is apparent between souls on the same path. It brings a joy, excitement and zest that will override any disasters in this life. For we shall have disasters and are having them as the inevitable symptom of the breaking down of the old society, but if we have set our feet upon the upward path we shall be guided through all the disasters and be brought together with kindred spirits.

A Utopian Vision

A veritable new society is forming in our midst, and a new age is emerging with the strength and inevitability of the coming of spring. We are filled with the stupendous hope that something new is coming to birth and that there is indeed a higher world closely watching and deeply concerned with the welfare and redemption of humanity.

Humanity’s path is now upward over widening fields of consciousness. Even while in the body we can learn through meditation to free ourselves from its limitations and contact the sphere of Absolute Being, the primal oneness that is everywhere and permeates every living



As the human soul breaks out of the mould of matter, it discovers its goal. Teilhard has called this “homing in on the Omega Point,” describing the maximum level of complexity and consciousness towards which the universe appears to be evolving.



Teilhard welcomes the crowding of our planet as a symptom of the end of a great evolutionary epoch.

form and yet is beyond all the manifestations of diversity. We learn to see our lives on Earth as an allegorical journey in which, through the overcoming of obstacles and trials, we may unite with our higher self and make ourselves worthy to enter the realms of expanded awareness.

As we grasp the majestic picture, everything recovers the meaning that we thought was lost. Seeing the endless vistas ahead for soul development and exploration, we recognise infinite value and significance in every experience in our earth span, and in every contact. It implies that to adult education in the truest sense there is no limit. We are preparing now for entry into what might be compared to a university of the spirit when we have left the restrictive body.

The hope is therefore that we are on the edge of a new renaissance not only technologically, but artistic and religious, as human thinking learns to unite in communion with the flow of spiritual power and higher knowledge.

Endnotes

1. Quoted in Kropf, R. “Our Environmental Responsibilities in Light of Contemporary Cosmology: A Teilhardian Retrospect,” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, North America, 1022 02 2007.
2. Jeans, Sir James, *The Mysterious Universe*, Cambridge University Press, 1931, p. 77.



BODHIDHARMA



Bodhidharma. Woodcut print by Yoshitoshi, 1887

by Marc Cornwall, FRC

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF Bodhidharma's coming from the West? In Zen dialectic, this question actually means, "What is the highest truth of Zen?" Bodhidharma was said to be a Persian from Central Asia or a South Indian prince of the Pallava dynasty, and is considered the 28th Indian patriarch in a direct line from Buddha. His very name speaks of his

nature; *bodhi* means enlightenment, and *dharma*, Truth or the Absolute. His fateful journey from India to China began the transmission of a lamp of knowledge whose flame still burns.

Bodhidharma, or Pútídámó in Chinese, entered Guǎngzhōu (also known as Canton), China, around 527 CE, when he was 109 years old. During his years in China he initiated Chán Buddhism (known as *Zen* in Japan) and the



elements of modern martial arts. Bodhidharma explained Chán this way:

- A special transmission outside the scriptures;
- No dependence on words or letters;
- Direct pointing to the soul of man;
- Seeing into the nature and attainment of Buddhahood.

Upon arriving in Guǎngzhōu, Bodhidharma was invited to speak with the Emperor Wǔ Dì of the Liáng dynasty. The Emperor was very proud of his extravagant patronage of Buddhism and thought he had earned a sure place on the “other shore.” He informed Bodhidharma of his work and asked, “What merit have I gained from these acts?”

Bodhidharma answered, “None.” He explained to the crestfallen emperor that such deeds were of limited worth and that their merit faded in time. Real merit, he said, can be gained only by awakening inner wisdom and seeing into one’s nature, not through strictly worldly pursuits. Wǔ Dì then inquired as to the nature of the highest truth of the holy teachings. Bodhidharma’s famous and profound reply: “Emptiness and no holiness!” In other words, Bodhidharma implies that the very depths of the universe, its elemental being, cannot be classified.

In Northern China

The ancient master then travelled to the kingdom of the Northern Wèi dynasty in China, which became his primary sphere of activity. Here he found many Buddhist and Confucian scholars who were willing to discuss small points of scriptural doctrine, but none who pursued the actual practice of Buddhism. Bodhidharma’s religion was every act of daily life: eating, sleeping, talking with others and working. Action was his method of practice.

Bodhidharma next journeyed north to the small Shàolín mountain monastery. He found the monks there spiritually developed but physically weak. To remedy this he instructed them in “*The Eighteen Hands of the Lúohàn*.” These eighteen exercises are the basis of modern *kung-fu* and *karate*.

Zen students still revere Bodhidharma for his resolution and strength of will. After his stay at the Shaolin monastery, he moved into a nearby mountain cave. There he practised *zuò chán* (*zazen* in Japanese), sitting meditation, for nine years, and spoke little or not at all to his visitors. The Chinese called him the “wall-gazing Brahmin,” though he was not simply gazing at

a wall (it was actually an 8,000-foot cliff), but was cultivating his spiritual power and his *wù* (*satori* in Japanese), or state of enlightenment. Zen monks today mistakenly practise *zazen* while staring at walls.

Bodhidharma had no great band of disciples during his life. Those who wished to learn from him were totally devoted to becoming enlightened and learning Truth. One such devotee cut off his own arm to demonstrate his sincerity to the stern Bodhidharma, who finally accepted him.

Bodhidharma lived long and well, dying sometime before 534 CE. It is not known where he died, but his vital Chán/Zen lives, the Dharma;

- Requital of hatred, living with the results of past offenses.
- Conforming to Truth, living in oneness with the Original Mind, which is in stillness.
- Seeking nothing, no attachment to things, conformity with changes in circumstances.
- Being consistent with Dharma, the Truth, the nature of which is pure (and empty).



This Japanese scroll calligraphy of Bodhidharma reads “Zen points directly to the human heart; see into your nature and become Buddha.”





Six of the "Eighteen Hands of the Lúohàn" to strengthen the physical body.



Emperor Frederick II



by Connie James, SRC

FREDERICK II (26TH DECEMBER 1194 – 13TH DECEMBER 1250), of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, was King of Germany, of Italy and of Burgundy. He was also King of Sicily from his mother's inheritance. He was Holy Roman Emperor (Emperor of the Romans) from his papal coronation in 1220 until his death. His original title was King of Sicily, which he held as Frederick

I from 1198 to his death. His other royal titles, accrued for a brief period of his life, were King of Cyprus and Jerusalem by virtue of marriage and his connection with the Sixth Crusade.

He was raised and lived most of his life in Sicily, with his mother, Constance, who was the daughter of King Roger II of Sicily. Upon his mother's death in 1198, Pope Innocent III briefly became his guardian. It was this pope



who began the crusade against the Cathars in the Languedoc. Frederick's empire was frequently at war with the Pope, so it is unsurprising that he was excommunicated twice and often vilified in chronicles of the time. Pope Gregory IX went so far as to call him the Antichrist. But he was also known far and wide as *Stupor Mundi...*, "The Wonder of the World."

He was said to speak six languages: Latin, Sicilian, German, French, Greek and Arabic. By contemporary standards, Frederick was a ruler very much ahead of his time, being an avid patron of science and the arts. He was also the patron of the Sicilian School of poetry. His royal court in Palermo, from around 1220 to his death, saw the first use of a literary form of an Italian-Romance language, Sicilian. The poetry that emanated from the school predates the use of the Tuscan idiom as the preferred language of Italy by at least a century. The school and its poetry were well known to Alighieri Dante and his peers and had a significant influence on the literary form of what was eventually to become the modern Italian language.

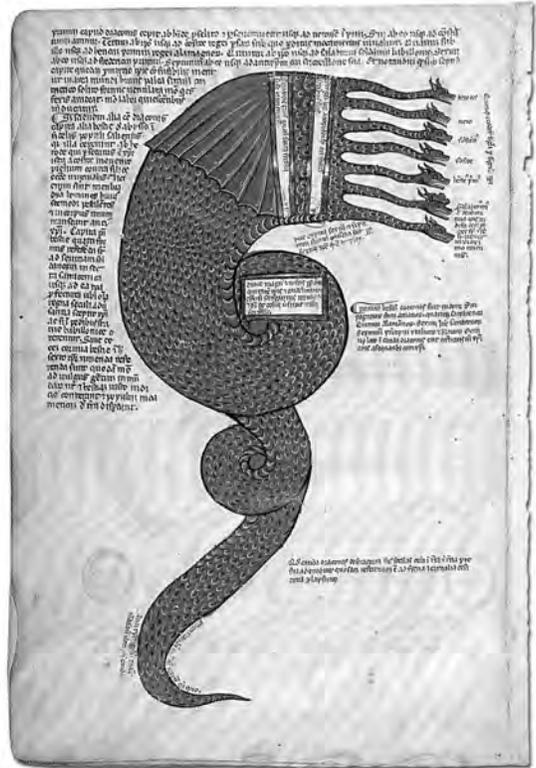
Sixth Crusade

In the summer of 1227 thousands of people poured into the southern Italian port of Brindisi to embark upon the latest crusade against the dreaded Saracens. Soon two small fleets of ships crammed with crusaders left the harbour and sailed toward the Holy Land. But then disaster struck. Plague quickly claimed the lives of hundreds of men. Even the leader of the expedition, the 32-year-

Having been raised in Palermo, where many nationalities freely mixed, he understood and appreciated such people and their cultures.

old Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, fell ill. The hot-tempered Pope, Gregory IX, already impatient with Frederick's seeming reluctance to lead a crusade, promptly excommunicated the Emperor. Thus the Sixth Crusade had a most inauspicious start, although it was to end in glory for Frederick.

The Emperor set forth with a new fleet the following spring. After journeying to Cyprus, he landed in Palestine where he was spurned by Christian nobles, warriors, and ecclesiastics alike because of the Pope's excommunication. Yet he



In a 13th century theological manuscript, a stylised dragon represents Frederick as the worst enemy of the Church and of the Faith. He was excommunicated twice and often vilified in chronicles of the time. Pope Gregory IX went so far as to call him the Antichrist.

did not need the armed strength of warriors to gain Jerusalem; his own wits were sufficient to ensure success. As the leader of a crusade, he was in some ways unorthodox, not at all like his fellow Christian kings. Having been raised in Palermo, the capital of the polyglot kingdom of Sicily where Italians, Normans, Arabs and Jews freely mixed, he understood and appreciated such people and their cultures. Moreover, Frederick was an intelligent, sceptical and scholarly man who undoubtedly used all the force of his personality and learning to convince the Ayyubid Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt (1218-1238) and nephew of Saladin, who had a high opinion of him, of the wisdom of making various concessions, and most importantly, that of handing Jerusalem over to the Christians.

Jerusalem

After concluding these drawn-out but fruitful negotiations, Frederick felt it was time to proclaim the glory of his accomplishments to the world. He decided to lead his pilgrims into the holy city and





The sixth Crusade: Frederick negotiates with the Sultan al-Kamil at the gates of Jerusalem.

to take officially the title of King of Jerusalem despite the Pope's continued denunciations and threats. Thus, on 17th March 1229, the Emperor made his entry into Jerusalem. For the first time in all the crusades, pilgrims entered the city without spilling blood. Because of this, Frederick was declared the "Emperor of Fulfilment" who,

Throughout Europe people began to speak of Frederick as the new King David.

as if by miracle, freed Jerusalem "without battle, without instrument of war, without bloodshed" as the promise ran.

The following day, the fourth Sunday before Easter, an unprecedented coronation took place. In the most holy place in Christendom, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Frederick placed upon his own head the royal crown of Jerusalem while loyal nobles and pilgrims watched. Unlike other kings, he did not need a priest, the traditional intermediary between man and God, to place the crown upon his head. At his coronation, he may have worn the red silk mantle that had been crafted during the reign of Roger II. It bore an Arabic inscription indicating that the robe dated from the year 528 in the Muslim calendar, and incorporated a generic benediction, wishing its wearer "vast prosperity, great generosity and high splendour, fame and magnificent endowments, and the fulfilment of his wishes and hopes. May his days and nights go in pleasure without end or change." His worthiness to wear the crown of the most holy of cities sprang from his own inner worth and sense of piety. Throughout Europe people began

to speak of Frederick as the new King David, who would usher in a golden era of peace.

Learning of Frederick's act, Pope Gregory was incandescent and determined to topple his enemy, the man whom he had declared to be the Anti-Christ. Papal armies invaded Frederick's homeland, the Kingdom of Sicily, only to be thrown out once the Emperor had returned to Europe. After many months of recriminations, a truce was called between Pope and Emperor. Yet it was an uneasy peace that lasted only a few years, and true peace and prosperity were not ushered in after all.

Stupor Mundi

The people of Ravenna, Italy, were amazed by an unusual procession that came to town in the autumn of 1231. Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Germany and Sicily, had come to settle some pressing matters in northern Italy. With him he brought most of his court, and what a wonderful court it was!

Frederick and his courtiers rode on splendid Arabian and Spanish horses, and their equipment was loaded on camels. Arabs strode alongside in bright, flowing robes, accompanied by Africans who sounded gleaming trumpets. Arab girls, dancers and acrobats, rode in palanquins placed upon the camels' backs. But most intriguing were the animals: falcons, leopards, lions, lynxes, bears, apes and one huge elephant, a gift of the sultan. This spectacle indeed reflected the emperor's personality as a lover of the grandiose as well as the bizarre. But it also reflected Frederick's



One of Frederick's finest achievements was the drawing up of a body of laws in 1231, the Liber Augustalis, or "The Constitutions of Melfi" for Sicily, drawn up at the castle at Melfi. They were written in Latin and translated into Greek before their promulgation.



astuteness as a politician who knew how to put on a good show to impress the common folk.

As a politician, Frederick had successfully taken the lands bequeathed him by his father, unified them, and built them up, especially the Kingdom of Sicily, into a wealthy and powerful state. The strong agricultural base of Sicily was enhanced by building new castles, roads, ports and even cities, which expanded the grain trade and thus augmented the land's wealth. Political stability was also furthered when the local nobility was subdued by Frederick's armies. He was then free to create his own political base, which he did by taking the most talented people in Italy under his wing. He established two of Europe's earliest universities in Palermo and Naples to train Sicily's new governors, judges and lawyers. One of Frederick's finest achievements was the drawing up of a body of laws in 1231, the *Liber Augustalis*, or "The Constitutions of Melfi" for Sicily which was based upon ancient Roman law.¹ This, the first European constitution since

One of Frederick's finest achievements was the drawing up of a body of laws in 1231, the Liber Augustalis.

the Byzantine Emperor Justinian's time, reflected Frederick's desire to create a well-regulated and progressive state, whose laws ensured just and reasonable treatment for every person.

The teachings of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, so apparent in the *Liber Augustalis*, played a vital part in Frederick's life. He once commented:

"Such treasures of the mind should not be hoarded but to be given freely to all men, since all men desire knowledge. As for myself, I spend in reading all of the time that is not occupied with affairs of state, that my mind may become an instrument for the acquisition of knowledge, without which there can be no free and liberal life for mortals."

A Questioning Mind

Some of the best minds of Europe were at Frederick's court or corresponded with him. Not satisfied with pat answers or superstition, he constantly asked questions about everything in life. In one letter sent to an Arab scholar he brought up questions quite



Frederick was buried in the cathedral of Palermo in Sicily where his splendid tomb may still be seen.



Frederick wrote a treatise in Latin around 1240 entitled De Arte Venandi cum Avibus (The Art of Hunting with Birds). This was a treatise on ornithology and Falconry and dedicated to his son Manfred.

difficult to answer:

"What causes the winds? Whence comes the fire in volcanos? Why is the sea salt? Why do objects partly covered by water appear bent? What causes the illusion of spots before the eyes? What is the effect of heredity? How important is environment in human life? Would a child brought up without companions be able to speak? And, if so, what kind of language would he use? What force holds the earth in suspension? What determines the position of the planets?"

Not content to be a mere questioner, Frederick was also a researcher. He observed birds closely, especially falcons, and wrote a treatise around 1240 entitled *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus* (The Art of Hunting with Birds) that was revolutionary in its scientific treatment of a subject.

Frederick was too great a man both in personal power and intellect for the era he lived in. His many-sided genius may have appealed to many people, but the Popes of his time regarded him as a danger to both their spiritual and temporal power. Shortly after Frederick's death in 1250 foreign armies, at the instigation of the Church, destroyed his kingdom. Yet even though the Church was triumphant, Frederick's ideas in the long run won out. The free and liberal life he extolled re-emerged in the Renaissance, and no longer could tradition and dogma hold it back.

Endnotes

1. Also called the *Liber Constitutionum Regni Siciliae* or *Costitutiones Melphitanae*, from which its informal name, "Constitutions of Melfi," derives. The name *Liber Augustalis* was invented by commentators who believed the laws were a statement of the theory of autocracy (David Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 1988, p.203).





An
Exploration
into
**Spirit
of
Place**

by Carol Mason, SRC

Many people have written about the sacredness of the land and its relevance to the opening up of a portal in the human psyche. This can, and often does, bring about some kind of change, if not a transformation, since the powers that govern the universe can rarely resist the chance of a human being opening up to something greater than themselves; a symbiosis of human and land.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS WE have revered the Earth, and created of it a goddess or sometimes a god (*Geb* in ancient Egypt and *Ah Uuc Ticab* among the Maya) to whom we have paid homage. It has been suggested that travelling to places such as Uluru (Ayers Rock) in central Australia or Table Mountain in South Africa may mean some kind of revival or even reverence for what we have forgotten. The uncertainty of climate change, economic problems and social upheaval, has no doubt made us all think about what the future may hold.

Sacred Earth

We can't say that any one piece of land is more sacred than another, since by definition it is all

a part of creation. What we can say is that many of the nations on Earth are covered with teeming masses of people who can't help but pollute, for all must live. We have seen huge fires burning in the rainforests of the Amazon and on Borneo, as tracts of this, the lungs of the earth, are torn up to graze sheep or cattle, or to replant with palm trees for their oil. This has gone on now for many years and has led to drought, famine and strange and savage weather. Now we see that food itself is becoming something to burn for fuel.

Where does one find the sacred place in any land? Now place, it seems, is immune from this abuse of landscape. How do we go about finding it? One way is to familiarise ourselves with the great books of the past. All nations have their own literature that describes the land, the deserts and





David Tacey

The New Australian Spirituality

the sea. Now that so much has spoiled the land, it seems to me that by reading the books written in past years we may find the portal. Perhaps it is time to revisit the great books of all cultures such as those of Egypt, Greece and India, for in them the essence of creation is evoked. We can also read modern authors who feel the loss of land deeply such as those from Australian Aboriginal, African and Pacific authors. In these is the portal kept open..., for thoughts, as many know, can go a long way to creating the deed.

Australia

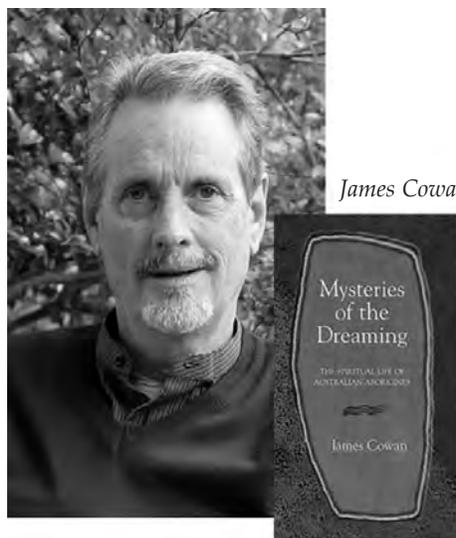
If we take a look at Australia, we can't help but notice that the land itself contains a power within it. It exists in the great sandstone monoliths in the centre and the eroded remains of volcanoes and mountain ranges in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. There are books such as *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (1995) and *Re-enchantment: The New Australian Spirituality* (2000), both by Associate Professor David Tacey, that suggest some kind of essentially Australian spiritual revival is underway. In this we can see the truth, for it is in the investigation of personal and inner spiritual needs and wants that we find the pathways to the kind of spiritual renaissance Tacey speaks of.

But when we speak of the influence of powerful landscapes, we must be careful not to infringe on the indigenous cosmological territory, for their spirituality is something that we cannot share except in our reverence and respect for the land. The powerful deserts and mountains remind us of the beginning of things and the land itself is

a stark reminder of where we have come from and, to an extent, what we have lost. Its vastness is like a void: its power that of the spiritual presence that many have experienced. The very uniqueness of this unbroken living tradition has alerted us to the sheer variety of spiritual and cultural perspectives that have long lain buried in the Aboriginal tradition itself.

In his book *Mysteries of the Dreaming* (1989), the Australian philosopher James Cowan, who spent some time with Aboriginal people in Central Australia, explained the teachings he learned from the Elders. They taught him that people are profound creatures of poetry, who like to make up stories out of the deep metaphors of existence. These metaphors are said to be bridges to the inner world. Because Aborigines had developed such an acute sense of themselves in relation to landscape through song and ritual, they believed that song made the land into a lived and living reality.

In ancient Egypt, the desert was regarded as a "no-man's land," a place between heaven and earth where people are judged, weighed and nurtured to make a step into the light of the stars. The land of Australia, a very old land, has been a place of initiation for at least the last 40,000 years. Nowadays we can look upon its deserts and the vastness, the isolation created by the endless sea, as a sarcophagus from which we will emerge: a promise of evolution fulfilled. It is time to look at the landscape with new eyes, for there is something there to remind us of our origins and help lead us back to the earth, which needs us now more than ever.

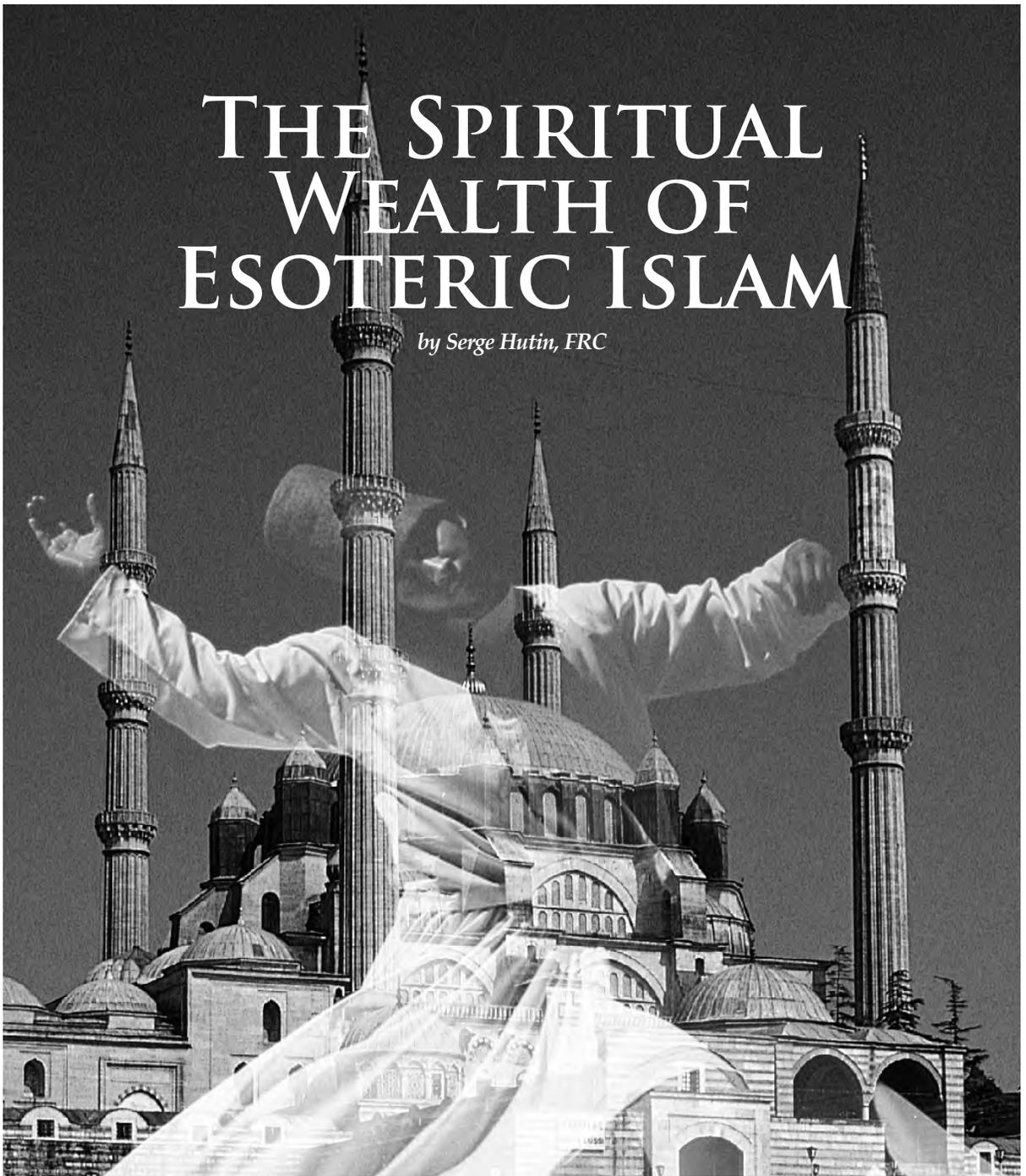


James Cowan



THE SPIRITUAL WEALTH OF ESOTERIC ISLAM

by Serge Hutin, FRC



THE FIRST VOLUME ENTITLED *FROM the Early Beginnings to the Death of Averroes* (1198) of the important three-volume *Histoire de la philosophie Islamique*, appeared in 1964. It was published in English in 1993 as the *History of Islamic Philosophy*. The trilogy was written by Professor Henry Corbin who was the director of Islamic studies at the

Sorbonne in Paris, and who also taught every year at the University of Tehran. This book is a living testimony of someone who fully understood the higher meaning of the initiatic, theosophical and mystical currents of Islam. Even today, no better introduction to a serious understanding of these probably exists.

My aim is not to try and give an adequate



but bland summary of the magnificent spiritual panorama Corbin offers us, but to extract from it some elements that can make us fully aware of the immense spiritual wealth, still so readily unappreciated in the West, of Islamic esotericism in its traditional forms.

The Secret Meaning of the Koran

Islam is a religion that relies entirely on an inspired book, the *Koran*. The Muslim religion in fact forms the third and last revealed branch of what may be termed the Abrahamic tradition: Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all "Religions of the Book" of the same monotheistic revelation.

Like the *Bible*, the *Koran* is subject to two types of interpretation, both completely genuine. We can see in it "the rules for living in this world and the guide of beyond this world." On the one hand,

Islam is a religion that relies entirely on an inspired book, the Koran.

there are the literal interpretations and on the other hand, the esoteric exegesis. The problem of the "true meaning" of the sacred work dictated to the Prophet Mohammed, could not in fact arise for the initiates of Islam who are completely loyal to their spiritual convictions and religious practices, while, at the same time, recognising the real existence of inspired men outside their traditional path. On the one hand, this active tolerance is expressed in the significant recognition of the fact that the higher knowledge of thinkers from ancient Greece also came from the "niche of the lights of prophecy" and, on the other hand, in the absence among Muslim initiates of all mistrust towards sincere representatives of the Abrahamic tree as well as other paths. This extreme form of tolerance even results in the admission of Christians and Hindus among their students by some Sufi masters in Iran and Pakistan.

But to come to the precise problem of the *Koran's* esoteric exegeses, Corbin states the principle very clearly: "To indicate as a goal the achievement of the spiritual meaning implies that there is a meaning which is not the spiritual meaning, and that between this and that which does not exist, there is



Henri Corbin and his definitive history of Islam.

perhaps a gradation, leading to a plurality of spiritual meanings."

And he quotes several pages further on a remarkable statement from the 6th Imam (Guide) of the Shi'ites, Ja'far as-Sadiq (702-765 CE): "The Book of God is made up of four things. There is the revealed word; there is the allegorical understanding; there are the occult meanings related to the hidden world; there are the higher spiritual doctrines. The literal word is for ordinary mortals. The

allegorical understanding is for the elite. The occult meanings belong to the Friends of God. The higher spiritual doctrines belong to the prophets."

This passage can be interpreted as follows: "The literal word is intended for hearing; the allegory is intended for spiritual understanding; the occult meanings are for contemplative vision; the higher doctrines concern the realisation of the whole of spiritual Islam."

Why is esotericism necessary? The reason is obvious. The great Persian Sufi mystic al-Hallaj (858-922 CE) was careless in revealing his great illumination publicly to the profane in the streets of Baghdad. Many Sufi masters felt that it was inappropriate to share mysticism with the masses, and it earned him his execution eleven years later. Not only the profane and the ordinary believers among them, even the most devout cannot understand the secret truths, but they risk making initiates look like the impious and sacrilegious who despise the beliefs and practices of the exoteric religion; which is what happened to al-Hallaj.

The preceding quotation allows us to understand the existence of not just one esoteric meaning of the *Koran*, but of several hierarchical meanings, corresponding to the progressive stages of the initiate towards complete illumination. The differentiation of meanings in the *Koran* is part and parcel of the necessary spiritual hierarchy within humanity. There are three categories among these:

1. The ordinary profane;
2. Those who have the potential to become possible initiates (hence the need for initiates to make contact with them);
3. The initiates who are themselves divided into





A page from the Koran.

various grades according to their degree of personal advancement on the path.

The Initiatic Hierarchy

Traditional Muslim initiations are generally unknown if not distorted in a grotesque way, as shown in suspect accounts that sometimes still circulate on this subject. In Europe, we hear confused stories about the Dervishes, the Ismailis (because the Aga Khan, given more or less equal status as their “pope,” is one of the personalities the world media willingly talks about) and the “Assassins,” the followers of Hassan-e Sabbah, the “Old Man of the Mountain” and friend of the scientist and poet Omar Khayyam, who were finally destroyed by the Mongols when they razed their formidable Iranian fortress of Alamut.

Corbin corrects all the overly simplistic ideas on these topics. In particular, he does justice to all the dark stories (like a Gothic novel) spread about the “Assassins” by their enemies in the first place, and then by generations of Western self-appointed “historians” who specialised in

Shi'ism rests on the belief in the Imamate, that is, in individuals considered as Guides.

secret societies. On Sufism, Corbin’s book makes the point very clearly. What are the Sufis? They are mystical Muslims who gather in initiatic communities, often in a more or less monastic manner, and which are grouped into the various Dervish Orders.

The characteristic of traditional Sufism is always to develop into an initiatic hierarchy.

Just to confine ourselves to the past, let us take for example the secret society of the Ikhwan as-Safa or “Brethren of Purity” which had its centre in Basra in Iraq during the height of the Abbasid Caliphate. They wrote 52 treatises on mathematics, natural sciences, psychology and theology. Their initiates divided themselves into four grades, corresponding to spiritual aptitudes that develop with age, with initiation not being possible before about the age of 40. At 40 years of age, members began their progress towards illumination. At 50, they could even be ready to perceive directly the spiritual light in the totality of things, into the microcosmic heart of humanity as in the Great Book of Nature. From all evidence, the ages of 40 and 50 are intended to characterise



Many dervishes are mendicant ascetics who have taken the vow of poverty. Pictured here are a Persian and a Sudanese dervish of the 19th century.

initiatic maturity, and are not to be confused with the temporal time of civil society. The ages of 40 or 50 years (33 is also frequently cited in the Christian tradition) is the age of initiates when they are finally ready, like Dante, to receive the great illumination, which could, according to the real advancement of the pilgrim on the path, become manifest before or after physical maturity.

In Corbin’s work, we find detailed chapters on an area even less well known by Europeans than Sufism, that of Shi’ism of which the Ismailis are one of the two great historical branches. The Shi’ite phenomenon is entirely placed within the perspectives of an ardent and persevering search, in the true esoteric sense, of the real spiritual path of the whole of Islamic Revelation,



and consequently, of Islamic History. But this esotericism, which developed after the Prophet, is more particularly based on the problem of both an obvious temporal and spiritual supreme authority of Islam. Shi'ism therefore rests on the belief in the *Imamate*, that is, in individuals considered as "Guides" (*Imam* means "Guide") to the whole gamut of history from the death of Mohammed (considered to be the "Seal of the Prophets" ending the period of prophets) to the end of the earthly cycle of manifestation.

The historical conception of Shi'ism therefore goes back to the years of Mohammed himself. The Shi'ites were, from the beginning, those who, in contrast to the Sunnis (Muslims wanting to maintain rigorous observance of what is called the *Sunnah* code of the oral traditions which complete the *Koran*), wanted to put Islam under the supreme governance of an Imam manifest in the holy person of Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet by his daughter Fatima. The *Imamate* would always have to remain among the descendants of Ali after his death.

While the "Twelver" Shi'ites recognise, as their name indicates, twelve successive Imams beginning with Ali, the Ismailis recognise only seven. The real contrast is in fact only an apparent

one, because the esoteric implications correspond and appear as complementary. Corbin draws us to the following observation: "*While Twelver imamology symbolically corresponds to the twelve constellations of the Zodiac (like the twelve springs gushing from the rock struck by Moses' staff), Sevener imamology of Ismailianism symbolises the Seven Planetary Heavens and their moving stars.*"

Even the idea of secret initiatic governance in the background of visible history is completely traditional in many forms of esotericism. In Sunni Sufism we find, under a different form from the Shi'ites, the idea of an invisible esoteric hierarchy in which the *Qutb* (the mystical pole or axis) is the summit. In this case, we should remember

In Sunni Sufism we find, under a different form from the Shi'ites, the idea of an invisible esoteric hierarchy.

that traditions of this kind are always played out on various levels in the historical domain as they are in personal initiation. It should also not be forgotten that human initiators still have as their mission and role to allow the initiate gradually to have contact with "the spiritual entity," with the "Angel of Philosophy," (a term openly used in Shi'ite esotericism) and with their personal guide, the "Master Within" who will only appear when the student is ready. This, then, explains the manner in which traditional esoteric documents are simultaneously placed from a point of view which Corbin calls "metahistory" and on the level of the visible world on this plane. This is obvious in the chief problem of the succession of great Divine Emissaries on the earthly plane.

Regarding this, Corbin quotes a wonderful text from the Persian Ismaili poet and philosopher, Nasir-e Khusraw (1004-1088 CE): "*Positive religion is the exoteric aspect of the idea, and the idea is the esoteric aspect of positive religion. Positive religion is the symbol; the Idea is the symbolised. The exoteric is in perpetual flux with the cycles and periods of the world; the esoteric is a divine energy which is not subject to becoming.*"

In the course of events in this world, invisible determinism always shows through in a visible form. This is essential in truly understanding the traditional idea of historical cycles. Earthly events can only be explained in relation to "a drama in Heaven;" in fact they prepare the end. In Islamic esotericism, as in the better known perspectives in



Arabic manuscript from the 12th century for Brethren of Purity, the secret society of the *Ikhwan as-Safa* which had its centre in Basra in Iraq during the height of the Abbasid Caliphate.





Sufi mystics conducting a whirling dance.

Europe of the Christian Apocalypse, the problem of the “last days” plays a determining role.

In Shi’ism, they talk about the 12th or last Imam, the “Imam of the Time,” the Imam “hidden from the senses but present in the heart.” Vanished

Being able to radiate the Divine Light within our heart, this is the goal the mystic pilgrim is fixed on.

from this plane “the Hidden Imam” is nevertheless accessible to initiates, gradually becoming their personal invisible guide, their inner master. Until the hour of the Millennium, the “Hidden Imam” only remains visible in dreams, or in personal manifestations which have a “visionary” characteristic. But when the present cycle comes to an end, the last Imam, the Master Within of the Shi’ites will become manifest on the earthly plane. It is he who will preside over the Golden Dawn, the advent of the New Era. At the end of the present cycle then, the *Mahdi*, the “Hidden Imam” who has been living in occultation since 872, will bring complete revelation and supreme fulfilment.

Illumination

The initiatic forms that appeared in Islam intend, like all similar paths whether based on an exoteric religion or not, to enable the inner light to radiate within. In Sufism, we therefore find exercises that

are aimed at internalising Islamic revelation.

In the quest of complete illumination, the initiate will relive the experience had by the Prophet himself, especially at the time of his *Mi’raj* or ascension, an experience during which Mohammed, after having been transported in spirit to Jerusalem, rose up through the seven heavens to the throne of Allah. In the same way, Sufi mystics try to understand the *Koran* inwardly in some way, by again finding through the correct pronunciation of the Koranic Suras, the mystery of the original “Enunciation of the Holy Book.”

In the final analysis, the exegesis of the *Koran* will rest on the parallel between the vicissitudes of history and the ways in which the soul attains the liberating illumination. For example, the marvellous example, in Sura 95 (at-Tin), of the olive tree growing on top of Mount Sinai, is interpreted as follows by an anonymous Ismaili author: “*This Sura means the spiritual pilgrim sees that his own personality, as Moses did, is none other than his “Sinai,” the inner sanctuary where the theophanic Form can shine..., the Divine Light.*”

Being able to contemplate “in the Soul of the soul,” and being able to radiate the Divine Light within our heart, this is the goal the mystic pilgrim is fixed on and will attain when illumination has finally blossomed within. Here is a quotation from the great Persian Sufi Abu Yazid Bastami (804-874 CE) who played a major role in placing the concept of divine love at the core of Sufism: “*When finally I contemplated truth through truth, I lived truth through truth and I existed in the truth for the truth in one eternal present, without breath, without word, without hearing, without knowledge, until God had communicated to me a knowledge thrust from His knowledge, a language issued from His Grace, a regard modelled on His Light.*”



The spiritual pilgrim sees that his own personality, as Moses did, is none other than his “Sinai,” the inner sanctuary where the theophanic Form can shine...



To radiate a Divine Light within us and to lose ourselves in it, this is the Great Illumination. Here is another marvellous passage from the Persian mystic al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE) that Professor Corbin quotes: *"The moth which has become the lover of the flame, has the light of this aura as nourishment as long as it is still some distance from it. It is the portent of the dawning illumination which both calls and welcomes him. But he must continue to fly until it catches him. When he has reached it, it is not up to him any more to move towards the flame, it is the flame that advances within him. The flame is then not his nourishment but he is nourishment for the flame. And that is the great mystery. One moment a fugitive, he then becomes his own beloved, since he is the flame. And that is his perfection."*



The Persian mystic al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE).

And here we find the aim of all initiatic training. Sohrawardi (or Suhrawardi in Arabic), a great Persian philosopher (1155-1191 CE), shows himself to be an authentic initiate when he tells us that the human soul must tear itself away from the shadows of its "western exile," that is, from the world of sub-lunar matter, to progress "towards the East" from where the Light comes. Through the very act of their awareness of self, beings of light will become a presence to each other, and note this, experiencing one of the privileges of the state of Rosy Cross, in the precise meaning of the term.

Alchemy

In Islamic lands, alchemy thrived. To quote one name alone, that of the illustrious Jabir ibn Hayyan (Geber in the West), the student of the 6th Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, who is credited with the definition of Hermeticism as "the science of Balance."

It is a question, in fact, of finding the relationship which exists in each body of the manifest and the hidden. These operations apply to the material as to the spiritual, as Corbin rightly points out to us: *"It is the transmutation of the soul coming back to itself which will affect the transmutation of the*

body. The soul is the very place of this transformation." Alchemy, with its marvellous secrets of total human transformation was undoubtedly known by a number of Muslim initiates, as much within Shi'ism as in the Sufi Orders. Islamic hermeticism has shown itself to be one of the important branches of traditional alchemical filiation.

Henry Corbin was able to show clearly in his remarkable work *Corps spirituel et Terre céleste* (known in English as *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*) that it is impossible to understand something of alchemical operations without seeing these as marking out the stages of an initiatic path, the spiritual pilgrimage towards the rediscovery of the Divine within. It is only in this way that it is possible to understand the exact meaning of this teaching from Imam Ja'far: *"The human form is the supreme evidence by which God confirms His Creation. It is the book he has written with His hand. It is the temple He has edified through His wisdom. It is the gathering of all universes."*

Very explicit also is this declaration from the 6th Imam of the Shi'ites: *"The light of the Imam in the heart of believers is brighter than the Sun which spreads its light."* And the golden rule of all initiatic training and all esoteric discipline is found in this Ismaili saying: *"He who knows himself knows his Lord."*

As for contact between Muslim and Christian initiates, they merit quite a few pages. Let us be content to remember the contacts, undoubtedly established, between the Knights Templar and the Muslim who formed the so-called "Assassins;" and let us also remember the legend of Christian Rosenkreutz who came to receive the light from the "Wise men of Damcar." Not only do all esoteric traditions meet on the summit, but their interrelationship on this plane is also an incontestable reality.

The sign of God's love is to bestow three attributes on His lover: A generosity like that of the sea, a kindness like that of the sun, and, a humility like that of the earth -- Abu Yazid Bastami



Jabir ibn Hayyan; known by his Latinised name Geber he was the author of many esoteric treatises concerning a range of subjects such as alchemy, astronomy, astrology and medicine, geology and philosophy. He was a great influence on the esoteric tradition of the medieval and later periods.



Spring Symphony

by Beatrice M. Holloway, SRC

PRING! DOESN'T THAT WORD have a clear ring that sends vibrations of joy all through our hearts? As we rub the sleep from our eyes after the repose of winter can we hear the silvery clear, ringing tones of the voice of Nature waking up to renew herself?

Here in the upper reaches of northern hemisphere, spring is with us again: clear sunlight, a cool, gentle breeze, greening grass, opening buds, springing flowers and a tender blue sky. What joy after the cold of winter, the days of storm and bleakness!

Each season is a symphony of glory, composed, directed and produced by the Master Musician. Winter has passed. Its theme was solemn, grand, with overtones of loveliness and others of sad sublime majesty. If we were listening, we would have discerned the soothing lullaby of Mother Nature as she slept. Then the storms began to descend, the winds blew and the symphony increased its tempo.

The gentle lullaby continued but it was accompanied by vigorous harmonics and grand chords of triumph! The storms washed the air and filled the rivers. The rains and snow sank deep into the earth, to bubble forth later in mountain springs

that ran their course with joy back to ocean depths. From this underground source, new life was being drawn upward by the grasses and flowers of the meadows and by the trees of forests, decking all the earth in new verdure and colour.

How can we describe this symphony of spring? It is one joyous hymn to Light, Life and Love! Even the word itself has a ring to it! Do we not hear its bell-like tones; a clear call, a challenge to awake, a new birth leading to a new flowering? It sets hearts to singing as new vitality comes into conscious objective manifestation. No longer has its voice the sombre harmony of winter, for it is eminently a song of rejoicing, a clarion call to upward and forward going. The winds sing more gently, little caressing melodies. The storms are but laughing showers playing hide and seek with the pale golden sunlight and accompanied by rainbows of promise.

SPRING – ring - ring! Let hearts rejoice! Away with gloom and negation! Life is again made manifest in power and beauty. The anthem swells in glory, each a harmonious part of the whole, a *Te Deum* of adoration to Light, Life and Love.

May each of us be a note in perfect accord with the Master Musician's divine composition.





Rosicrucian Order

Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World



SINCE THE DAWN OF CIVILISATION, humanity has sought answers to the great mystery of existence. *What is life? Where does it originate? What is its true nature? Is there a transcendent purpose to life? Is there a conscious state of existence after death? Have we lived before and will we live again? And why is there still such gross inequality in the world, even in this age of rapid technological advancement?*

These substantive questions have occupied the minds of the world's greatest spiritual and moral thinkers for millennia and in various ways they were able to answer *some* of these questions. Few, however, reached the ultimate goal of complete and satisfying answers to *all* questions of life; but those who did, attained a state of *mastery* over their lives and achieved happiness and fulfillment which few have even dreamed of. They were ordinary men and women though with the difference that they had "inner vision", a profound understanding of life in all its forms, and ultimately, complete mastery over their personal destinies.

You may be surprised to know that accurate answers to all questions you can formulate are already within your reach, for they are a part of your greater being which in turn is part of the universal stream of life. The *Rosicrucian Order AMORC* teaches how to tap into an infinite source of inspiration and wisdom to reach those elusive answers and to solve the most vexing of problems. If you wish to know more about how you can receive and one day master this knowledge, please write or call us at the address below, specifically requesting our free introductory booklet entitled "*The Mastery of Life*".

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*Know thyself and thou wilt know the
Universe and the Gods,
-- Thales of Miletus (640-562 BCE)*