

— ROSICRUCIAN —

BEACON



September 2018, Vol 27, No. 4





Find your Deeper Self

In THE depths of your being resides your deeper Self, an aspect of your being which breathes in calm reflection the very rhythm of the universe. It is in touch with all things and communicates with all that matters for life on Earth. It seeks to instruct and guide its human ward how to live a good life, and does so with care for its wellbeing, and above all, with love and compassion for all expressions of life.

Your Self knows why you are here and what you are meant to accomplish in this incarnation. It knows what your chances are of attaining the goals you have set for yourself, and whether they are beyond your reach or fully attainable. And it assists you to reach the attainable goals with care and attention to the minutest details.

Your deeper Self is a veritable slumbering genius, eager to help you express your hidden talents with greater refinement and sophistication than you have ever considered possible. The most productive thing we can ever do is to find and communicate with this Self.

For millennia, seekers of universal truths have known of the existence of a kernel of perfection lying dormant in every person, manifesting supreme confidence, calmness, maturity and wisdom. This deeper

Self is called by Rosicrucians, the 'Inner Master', for it has in abundance, qualities of refinement, high purpose and spiritual maturity we would expect only of the most accomplished of humans.

You can discover how to access this high level of achievement and embark upon the definitive, true direction of your life simply by learning how to contact and regularly commune with your deeper Self. If you are searching for a way of accomplishing the most fulfilling and rewarding things in life, in a fair and ethical way, then learn from the ineffable wisdom of that inner perfection.

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

membership@amorc.org.uk
<https://www.amorc.org.uk>

 @RoscicrucianOrderEMEA
 @AMORC_UK
 <https://rosicrucian.online/>





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ISSN 0966-033X

Published quarterly by the
English Grand Lodge for Europe,
the Middle East and Africa of the
THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER®
A.M.O.R.C.®

Greenwood Gate, Blackhill,
Crowborough TN6 IXE
UNITED KINGDOM
Tel: +44-1892-653197
Fax: +44-1892-667432
Email: info@amorc.org.uk
Web: www.amorc.org.uk

EDITOR

Bill Anderson

Design and Layout

Cloud White

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Cover spread

Nature displays her
evening attire.

Forgiveness

by Amelia



Saints are those who permit God's forgiveness to come into them so fully that not only are their sins washed away, but their very selves, their egos, and the root of their self will is eliminated.

UNTIL I read the words above, I thought forgiveness was something we needed in order to have peace of mind, healthy relationships, and the occasional moment of spiritual growth. The quotation continues:

I used to forgive to the level I'd been forgiven. And when that level was moderate because I only wanted to lose my vices, not my self, I forgave only those who had offended me moderately. And my forgiveness helped them only moderately too.

Have you ever considered that there are different levels or degrees of forgiveness? I hadn't until I read that quote. But I recall that I never forgave enough to completely forget, and I often wondered if forgiveness wasn't perhaps just a form of weakness, a sort of failure. True, I always forgave a bit, just a bit, not too much. Forgiveness in moderation seemed the sensible thing for me, and I consciously always made an effort to forgive at least some of the transgressions against me. But I never went over the top with it, and I certainly didn't forgive those who didn't want it.

When we make this effort to forgive, no matter how



'moderate' it is, we open ourselves to a tiny dose of the immense healing power of Divinity. With a little more conscious effort and understanding, I could of course have raised my forgiveness up a ratchet or two, but I never quite 'felt like it', and I forgave as far as my pride permitted it. In theory though, and I eventually started thinking about this seriously, the level of purity and commitment to true forgiveness that I was potentially capable of, could have gone up indefinitely. There was nothing but my pride, hurt feelings and lack of understanding that stood in my way. And it started bothering me that the intensity of forgiveness is like the length of a piece of string. How long is the string? What level of forgiveness is enough?

The great Abrahamic lineage of religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, consider all forgiveness as coming ultimately from God. For those outside of this religious ethic it seems a bit odd to believe that anyone or anything could take on responsibility for what we have done, even a 'God.' Can some Supreme Being take on responsibility for our actions? Are we not after all responsible for them ourselves? How can anyone or anything else do the forgiving for us? Surely only *we* can give and receive forgiveness? That is eminently logical, but there is something missing from the argument.

There is a deeply mystical element to the Abrahamic view of forgiveness, a view that is lost on the vast majority of clerics and devoted worshippers today. The argument goes as follows: All humans are 'children of God' made in God's image and therefore possessing aspects of God; indeed possessing in potential *all* of God. We therefore have the, albeit limited, ability to forgive, though the emphasis is definitely on the word 'limited.' Reaching elevated forms of forgiveness then, can in this scheme of things only come about when our beings have been thoroughly attuned to and harmonised with the will of our God; in other words when the potential 'God in me' has come to a much fuller level of outward expression in us. When that happens, human forgiveness attains the purity of purpose and universality of the forgiveness of God, and indeed *becomes* the forgiveness of God.

The more we *try* to sincerely give and receive forgiveness, and the more we practise forgiveness, even when we don't feel like it, the more the subconscious mind accepts this state of affairs, and the more we genuinely begin wishing to forgive *fully* rather than just moderately. And the more we encourage ourselves to do this higher form of forgiving, the more we notice the beneficial effects of such thinking in our lives. And consequently, the closer we approach that amazing state of holiness known as 'sainthood.'



There are little steps we can take to aid this practice. Call it autosuggestion or affirmation if you wish, but constantly telling the subconscious that it has forgiven or accepted forgiveness will finally plant the thought in the great storehouse of our deeper being (the subconscious mind) where real action and permanent change becomes possible. We are after all 'walking alchemical laboratories' and the purpose of alchemy is to transmute something of a lower, less refined nature to something of a higher, more refined nature. When we truly want to accomplish something, in this case to achieve full forgiveness, we do it

When we make this effort to forgive, no matter how 'moderate' it is, we open ourselves to a tiny dose of the immense healing power of Divinity.

through a process of inner work, trying ardently to achieve an inner alchemical transmutation.

Remember, when making statements to impress into the subconscious mind what you really wish to accomplish, always use the *present* tense. It's not something you wish to accomplish in the distant future, you want it accomplished now! Pretend therefore that you are doing it now, in the present, and do your best to have it accomplished! Many great changes of necessity begin with pretence, and the real mystery is how that pretence is eventually transformed into full sincerity of purpose. Eliminate from your idle conversation statements like, "*I'll never forgive myself for that*", or "*I can't ever forgive her for what she did.*" Even if you don't mean it, even if you're aware you're just blowing off steam, the subconscious mind eventually accepts what you say *at face value*. So, don't say what you don't really mean!

Emotion of course speeds up acceptance by the subconscious of the commands we issue to it, so be





With correctly applied concentration and focused emotions, a person can be contacted thousands of miles away, just as easily through ESP as through a phone.

careful of the intensity with which you say things. But even without sincerity or any strong emotions, even if we intellectually consider that we're just 'blowing off steam,' enough of those statements will finally convince the subconscious mind that what we say is what we mean. Saying it flippantly and half seriously eventually does not count and the subconscious mind acts in accordance with our words and grants us our idle wishes. Few of us expect to become saints

We may never feel forgiven or even gain much benefit from being forgiven, but that is because we do not accept forgiveness, even when it is so demonstrably meant.

or even to become selfless in this life, but the effects of true forgiveness emanating with sincerity and emotion from our deeper Self, makes for a truly great difference.

In a book on modern philosophy I once read, the author said that in a full lifetime, he had encountered only one person who was truly free of self-condemnation or condemnation of others. This woman he said, was so serene, peaceful and loving, so free of ill will toward herself and her fellow beings, that just being in her presence was as if being in the presence of someone truly holy. I believe firmly that this is the sort of thing we should be aspiring to, even if we believe we have no chance of succeeding in a single lifetime. We may suspect it will take many incarnations to reach such a state of utter forgiveness, but it should nevertheless always be before us as our highest goal. When trying to accomplish something, it is essential to set up a few rules or guideposts to follow; and it is as well then that we create a few benchmarks to live by in our attempts to reach a state of living with constant, universal and permanent forgiveness.

Step 1: Love in a Universal Sense

Accept that divine forgiveness is automatic. Love is universal, it is the most powerful binding force in existence, and we see it manifested in all forms of life. Love

is therefore at the heart of genuine forgiveness. Universal love requires no conscious effort, it is automatic, just as true forgiveness requires no thought, it spontaneously emerges without effort. In the universal scheme of things, and if we accept the existence of a Divine Mind or God, it is not possible ever *not* to be fully forgiven by that Divine Mind. It is only possible for us to believe we are not forgiven, and the extent of that belief determines the extent to which we can forgive others. I remember reading something once that went as follows:-

Universal love and forgiveness are unchanging, as constant in our brief span of life as the law of gravity. Our 'goodness' or 'badness' does not affect the universal Law of Love in the slightest. It is only our understanding and perception of it that changes when our moods change.

In other words, Universal love is always there, and it is up to us to become more perfect vehicles for its expression in life. We may never feel forgiven or even gain much benefit from being forgiven, but that is because we do not accept forgiveness, even when it is so demonstrably meant. The forgiveness was there before we erred, it was there before we asked for it, and it will always be there for us to accept. If only we could accomplish that inner transmutation to make this possible!

Step 2: Avoid Judgement

The next step is to actively try and avoid criticising or finding fault with others. It does not come naturally, or at least not easily, and we must actively practise it. The technique must be mastered, and to do so involves controlling our thoughts. All criticism is destructive, whether expressed verbally or felt emotionally. *"Judge not, lest ye be judged."*

Have you ever met a person who always exudes positive thoughts and encouraging words? Not the soppy type who mindlessly supports you through thick and thin while not understanding the slightest thing about what really plagues you..., but a person who knows full well what you have been through, knows how you have erred, knows the mean streak in you, but still does all in his or her power to help you through it. Such people exist, and they are universally loved by everyone. No matter how others treat them, no matter the depths of insult that are hurled at them, they always respond with sweetness and kindness.

Up until the early 1970s the mere mention of extrasensory perception (ESP) was a guaranteed ticket



out of most academic fields. The positivist approach of believing only what instruments could measure, and ensuring that all reality conformed only to what could be measured, was for decades one of the immovable tenets of the sciences. But it vastly reduced our universe, and made the realm of the possible seem very small indeed. Few scientists of the time dared consider openly the possibility that thoughts can influence other living creatures, and that they can in fact be transferred between human minds quite easily. Today we have sufficient evidence to prove statistically that ESP is a fact, not a mere theory. There is as yet no plausible theory as to exactly how thought transference works, but like all other things it is likely to be governed by the fundamental laws of physics, and most people have at least an intuitive belief in it.

Mystics are of course quite convinced of it, for they use thought transference in practical ways constantly, just as billions of people in the world use mobile phones daily to communicate with each other. With correctly applied concentration and focused emotions, a person can be contacted thousands of miles away, just as easily through ESP as through a phone, but with far greater clarity and accuracy. Being convinced of this, mystics know that we must therefore carefully watch our thoughts, and try to curb unkind thoughts from reaching others.

"Judge not, lest ye be judged" applies not only to ourselves but to others as well. Of course we must face our faults and shortcomings and attempt to correct them; without such efforts, we are lost. But if we fail and do something we deeply regret, we should, the minute we are fully aware of our transgression, sincerely commit ourselves to at the very least "*go, and sin no more.*" If we then continue to err, and of course that may happen often, we should still not judge ourselves so harshly that we refuse to forgive our transgressions. A mild admonishment is enough, *provided* it is accompanied by deep and sincere regret, and as deep a commitment to "*sin no more.*"

Loving one's *Self* is not the same as loving *oneself*. The former is part of a universal current of impersonal love and it heals, while the latter sometimes borders on the narcissistic and harms. Love of one's Self does not equate to selfishness or self-centredness. It means loving one's Self as a being that knows it is part of an infinitely greater Whole, and in a manner similar to the manner in which the Whole loves and tenderly cares for all its parts. Loving one's Self means forgiving one's Self as easily and automatically as one should forgive the transgressions of others..., something that is hard of course, yet has to be accomplished eventually.

When we cannot forgive our Self, it is sometimes easier to shift the blame to others, at least partially. We have all no doubt heard ourselves say, or at least think the words: *"I wasn't the only one to blame!"* or *"it takes two to tango, he's as much to blame as me."* Many teenagers are preoccupied with the idea that their parents are to blame for many of their problems, their fears, phobias and hang-ups, and react angrily towards them when a bit more thought and maturity would set the record straight very quickly, and they would see how much their parents loved and cared for them regardless of what they did. It goes on even into adulthood, and quite apart from growing children radically diverging personality-wise, politically or religiously from their parents, the central issue lies in the admonition: *"Judge not, lest ye be judged."*

If we believe in the existence of some form of universal justice, namely, a universal law that ensures that all things are compensated for, then we should also believe that what happens to us is happening for just reasons. And if we take the reasoning a step further and acknowledge that there is no possibility of perfecting ourselves in a single life, then if universal justice exists, we must persevere live again, and again, and again, many times over in order for that justice to work its way through the universe and through our wider Self. And having come this far, we can then confidently say that we have confidence in the existence of Karma as the human version of the law of universal justice, and of Reincarnation as the primary means by which that universal justice is carried out. And once we have arrived at these conclusions, and firmly believe them, it takes little further thought to come to the conclusion that we are responsible *entirely* for what we are and for what happens to us. There are no exceptions.

In the vastness of time and space, we must have



Many teenagers are preoccupied with the idea that their parents are to blame for many of their problems.



lived before, and during those periods of life we will have accumulated debts to other humans and other creatures, and they would have accumulated debts towards us. In other words, we created the very destiny we are living now, the one we sometimes complain so bitterly about. If our parents were to blame for much of what we suffer, then logically we would be to blame for much of what our children suffer. And under such circumstances condemnation and self-condemnation would go on indefinitely. We have to face the fact therefore that this is not wholly true and that somewhere, somehow, in a pre-existence, we chose to live here on this earth with the people and conditions in our own special environment and to cope with whatever these people and conditions bring to us. We did not come into this life to be like fragile china dolls living peacefully on a mantelpiece. We came here to work out our true destiny and to evolve into greater beings. When we can face this we can go forward, we can forgive, we can accept forgiveness, and we can grow. *Judge not therefore, lest ye be judged.*

Step 3: Go at Your Own Pace

Next we must accept that everyone has the right to deal with life's vicissitudes at his or her own pace. We do not have the right to enter the life of another in order to chivvy him or her along to catch up with us. Have we not considered the possibility that some aspects of that person's life may be far advanced to ours? Maybe it is we who need to be chivvied along to catch up with the other person! Almost certainly, that is the case in at least some areas of our wider life experience.

I remember a period in life when I was really upset at the way a friend was behaving towards me. Her criticism about certain minor issues was galling to put it mildly. One day, as if prearranged by an invisible hand, a pamphlet arrived in the post from a close friend. On the

cover it rather overstatementally proclaimed that it was possible to change my circumstances to such an extent I would always have only people whose thoughts and actions harmonised with mine. Although the pamphlet eventually led to my entry to the Rosicrucian Order, it was initially a bit of a let-down, as it seemed to put all the blame and responsibility on me! Up till then I had thought I was the passive, innocent party on the receiving end of constant criticism, when all along, according to the pamphlet, I was just as much at fault as the other party.

In simple terms it explained that if I changed myself to become firmly, solidly and without any doubts, the person I wanted to be, and if I did it with full confidence in the rightness of my actions, other people, and even my personal circumstances would change for the better. People around me would change in subtle ways to fit in with me, despite my not doing anything specific to change them. People who did not fit in would simply drift away with time, and those who were closer to the things I cherished would somehow 'blow in with the wind,' enter my life and bring with them the same firmness and confidence I had with myself. I can honestly say that this worked for me!

My friend mysteriously realised she was getting nowhere with her constant complaining and attempts to change me into what she thought I should be. She understood I think, that our friendship was almost at an end, and then the longed for transformation happened. She changed completely, and learned to accept me for how I was at the time, imperfect as it may have been in an ideal world. We discussed it many times in later years, and she had come to the conclusion that in some important respects I was 'superior' to her, while in others she was 'superior' to me. And that realisation is what changed her life, but especially mine. We



Our friendship was almost at an end, then the transformation happened, she changed, and accepted me for how I was. Now our friendship and bond has lasted a lifetime.





both fully realised this silently and without discussing it at the time, and respected each other much more because of it. From then on I was free to go at my own pace and she was free to go at hers, and the friendship and bond has lasted a lifetime.

When we learn to allow others to progress at whatever pace they can cope with, and never accept that we must progress at the pace of anyone else, we will have learnt a great lesson, and all people will respect us for what we are inside, rather than for what we accomplish materially.

Step 4: Recognise True from False Guilt

Finally, guilt comes in several guises, but the experience of feeling guilty is always the same: one of shame and a wish to make amends. It's all very well to compensate and make amends for guilt that is justified, but some forms of guilt are not justified and should not even arise.

It is surprisingly common to take on a guilt complex when we have done nothing to deserve it, in other words when the whole issue of feeling guilty arises from weakness rather than strength and logical reasoning. The classic case of false guilt comes from religious doctrines drummed into us by our parents and peers at school. It can take years of complicated

The experience of feeling guilty is always the same: one of shame and a wish to make amends.

living to eject the complexes that sometimes arise from our dogmas and the threats of hellfire and eternal damnation. And there are for some less fortunate people, feelings from childhood of being unwanted which create a sense of worthlessness that can register as feelings of guilt in the subconscious mind. And those feelings are very hard to get rid of, but they must go! Once we overcome the tendency to blame parents, school-friends, teachers and others, this type of guilt begins to ease of its own accord. Eventually we realise that these forms of guilt were never justified, and we are free to walk away from them entirely.

When we can distinguish false guilt from true guilt and deal with each accordingly, we are on our way to a more wholesome life, and will be able more fully to truly forgive. It may take time, patience and persistence to root out all our false guilt, but when we count the awful costs of living a life filled with false guilt and the resulting pain that comes with it, we are spurred on to take action, use our thought and reasoning processes more productively, and finally discover and eliminate guilt where it has no place being.



by Elizabeth Beniades

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

THE CREATIVE PROCESS within us goes on from moment to moment. It is a process where we lift the veil to the Garden of Eden, the fruitful garden existing beyond our finite self-concept. This process prepares the way for a blending of our consciousness with the subtler vibrations from above.

To be creative, it is necessary to commit the mind, heart and whole being to this process. And in so doing, it is possible to expand reality from the finite to the infinite. The first step in this creative process can be summarised by

the word *light*, meaning the focussing of consciousness. The second step can be encapsulated in the word *life*, meaning that which initiates action. And the third step can be summarised by the word *love*, the most beautiful and harmonising experience we can have.

Light

This first finite step, the step of consciousness or light, manipulated consciousness to deliberately focus our attention on something. We receptively centre our



attention on the information at hand. Our full awareness is gathered together and concentrated as if it were crowded into a thimble. We almost forget or lose sight of the physical being, for by choice (indeed necessity) we release awareness of our physical senses and our material selves, in order to be open and receptive to cosmic vibrations.

By being subjectively open and receptive, we are letting our objective selves go and preparing for a journey in a swiftly moving stream of consciousness, flowing from mountain to valley and eventually to the ocean that surrounds us. The stream of human consciousness is flowing from the Cosmic to the individual, the individual to the Cosmic, perpetually uplifting and renewing.

This step of light infuses us with the broadening vista of ever greater knowledge and freedom. This is the light that brings us out of the shadows of the finite mind, the light that creates a glow in our individual aura and a lightness in our step, the light that vibrates through every fibre of our being to raise and uplift consciousness into the realms of the Cosmic; more specifically, into the realms of *life*, the second step.

Life

In this, the step of action, or life, the indefinite second step, we put into action what we received in the first step. The phase of life is a gratifying, emotional experience based on our receptivity in the first step. We are not always aware just how gratifying this action will be and sometimes are easily distracted, discouraged and afraid. At this point, it is very important that we become courageous and steadfast in our original goal, keeping in mind the ultimate aim in order to overcome our particular obstacles.

We have received willingly and therefore need to willingly put into use in our lives what we have accepted. By this very action of receiving, we expand consciousness beyond ourselves, becoming free and flexible. And by acting willingly, we receive life, we receive the rewards of our efforts, and we become blessed. We become labourers in the vineyard of the Cosmos, willing to aid our fellow men and women, attuned with the finer and more subtle forces of nature.

Though not always apparent, action and change are constant processes in nature. Even in an apparently dormant scene, changes are taking place from moment to moment. Just as a seed needs to shed its outer shell, becoming more exposed to the elements surrounding it and bringing about new life, so we must peel back the skin of our objective reasoning, becoming more receptive to our surrounding elements and bringing us new life. A flow of energy surrounds us and engulfs us and life springs forth. Although manifesting our basic nature and essence,

we allow the beauty of life and its energy to bathe and refresh us with vitality and love. This flow of energy is constantly waiting to burst forth as part of the evolution and upliftment of all humanity.

The foundation of our being, having been established on these two processes of consciousness and action, is now ready to receive the infusion of love from the Cosmic, that all-embracing divine force that holds the fabric of reality together. We have transcended the finite, and the indefinite, and are ready to become transmuted in God's infinite light. Almost before we realise it, we pass into the third step, allowing the power and vitality of cosmic love to manifest through us.

Love

With the harmonising experience of love, we are prepared to receive impersonal, universal love, a love that cleanses and refreshes us in its wisdom, strength and beauty. This is the cosmic love that supports and adorns our inner temple. We have been receptive and active, and are therefore prepared for the step of experience.

Through awareness of the true essence of love, our inner nature is re-established on firm ground. By using the tools of consciousness, action and experience, we are able to manifest *light*, *life* and *love*, relearning that which we have forgotten in the physical world. The distinctive identity we cling to, the individual "I", has expanded to become a glow of warmth that evaporates shadows and radiates light into our being; a glow as if from a star, an impersonal glow of love.

Our purpose now is to be a tool of the Cosmic, a link in the cosmic scheme. Releasing what we are and letting go of stagnant concepts, we grow, giving and receiving love in its purest form. Responding to universal love leads to a newer, fuller reality, a more completely vibrant life. We become one with cosmic reality which manifests more clearly as we allow universal love to manifest through us. It is truly an expression of our love for Creation and of Creation's love for us.

And we are participants in that Creation too, by allowing the Cosmic to work through us, thereby making us creators in our own rights. We do this firstly by being receptive, secondly by initiating action, and thirdly through experience. We have always had *free will* and will always be able to freely make the choice of serving humanity and the greater Good.

Infinite wisdom, beauty and strength will be in abundance in life if we choose to create, moment by moment in accordance with our highest concept of goodness, peace and universal harmony. The first step is up to us.



by Stephen Sideri

Sekhmet

The Powerful One

*Sleep! For the sun has drawn the curtains of the night,
leaving the stars to watch you while you rest.*

*The sails of all the river boats are furled,
and birds have folded their far-flying wings.*

*Lion cubs are sleeping in the mother's warmth,
and fish dream in the shelter of the reeds.*

*The flowers breathe out their perfume on the dusk,
and all is still, save the night-singing bird.*

*So sleep and close your drowsy lids.
Sleep with the world and let your spirit free!*

From "Winged Pharaoh" by Joan Grant



LOOKING at Egypt from above, the Nile valley looks amazingly like a lotus flower, one of the emblems of ancient Egypt or the “*Two Lands*” as it was known. The symbolism of the number two, duality, forms an important part of our understanding of ancient Egyptian civilisation. But, what do the *Two Lands* refer to?

One interpretation, the most widely accepted one, is that they refer to (a) the *Upper*, southern part of Egypt, the part of Egypt lying south of Memphis and extending as far south as the border with Nubia, and (b) the *Lower*, northern part of Egypt from Memphis and through the Nile delta to the Mediterranean sea. These two regions are depicted by a knotted papyrus and reed plant, papyrus from Lower Egypt and the reed plant from Upper Egypt. With this interpretation, the *Two Lands* depict an ancient contest between two opposing political forces, one from the region south of the delta and the other from the delta itself, and which in late pre-dynastic times were united into a single religious and political power base, ruled by a single pharaoh.

Another interpretation is that the *Two Lands* refer to (a) the *Black Land* known as *Kemet* (from which we get the word ‘alchemy’), the dark, fertile soil deposited by the Nile on its flooded banks during its annual flood, and associated with the Nile Valley from the Mediterranean to the far southern border with Nubia..., and (b) the *Red Land* known as *Deshret* (from which we get the English word ‘desert’), referring to the desert areas on either side of the Nile valley, away from the flood plains, from the north to the far south along the course of the Nile.

But others have suggested that *Deshret* could also refer to the red soil upon which the ancient city of *Iunu* or Heliopolis (the City of the Sun) stood, the oldest and longest lasting solar temple of Ancient Egypt. This could then turn the idea of the *Two Lands* into a contest between Ptah, the patron god of Memphis on the one hand, and Ra, the patron god of Heliopolis, on the other.



The northern Nile Valley and the Delta.

There is no doubt one dominant explanation that was accepted by Egyptians throughout its 3,000 year history, but from our vantage point over 2,000 years since the Egyptian civilisation collapsed, the issue appears more complex than one would have thought at first sight. Let us now journey to ancient Egypt and discover the story of one of its lesser known goddesses, but one whose positive healing qualities still interest researchers of Egypt’s past.

Memphis

The last time I was in Cairo, I took a taxi to the ruins of Memphis close to the village of Mit Rahina, some 15 miles or 24 kilometres south of Cairo. At the dawn of recorded Egyptian history, the first traditional pharaoh, *Menes* (also known as *Narmer*), decided to build his capital city near the place where Upper and Lower Egypt joined. He named his city *The White Wall*, which either referred to the whitewashed walls of the royal palace or of the city walls themselves. The city later adopted the name of a nearby pyramid of the 6th Dynasty Pharaoh Pepi I (c. 2332-2283 BCE) and became *Men-nefer* (Enduring and Beautiful), which the Greeks called Memphis.

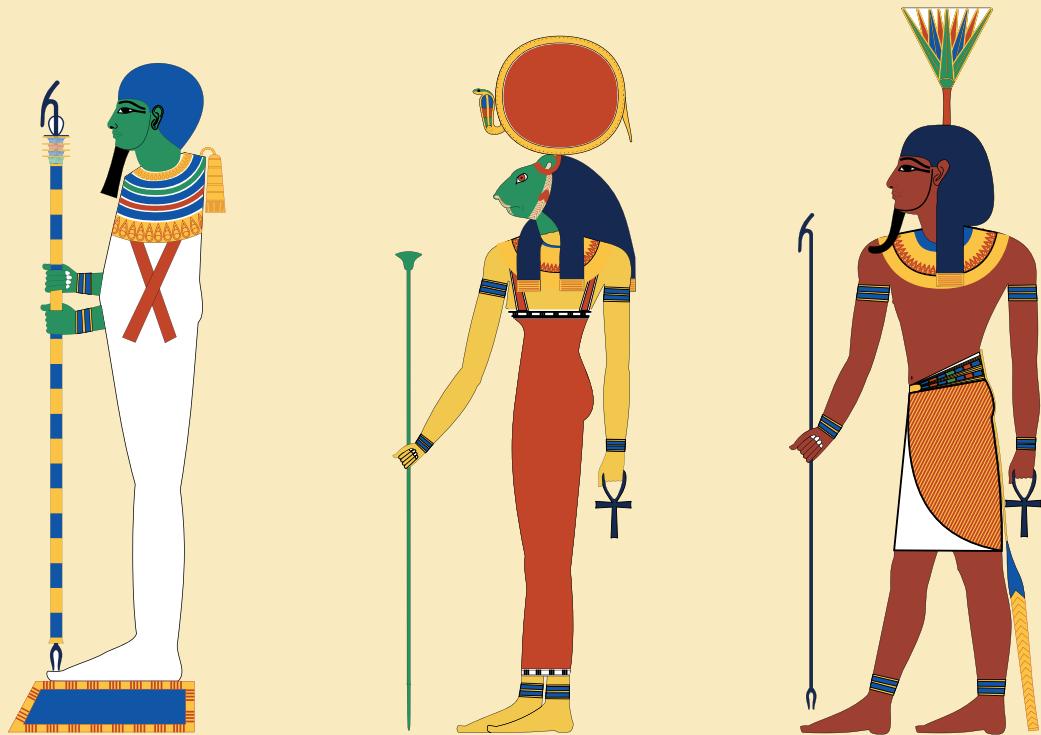
Nowadays the city lies beneath fields and several villages, so I knew that it would be unreasonable to expect anything as grandiose as Luxor in the south of Egypt. Memphis remained the capital of Egypt throughout most of its history because it occupied a strategic position near the beginning of the Nile Delta and possessed its own port on the river, where there was a high density of workshops, factories and warehouses that distributed food and merchandise throughout Egypt.

Hut-ka-Ptah, meaning “Enclosure of the ka



Artistic rendering of Memphis with its White Wall and the temple of Ptah.





The god Ptah of Memphis (left). The goddess Sekhmet (centre). The god Nefertum (right).

[psychic body] of Ptah”, was one of the most prominent structures in the city. The name of this temple, rendered in Greek as the *Aigyptos* by the historian Manetho, is believed to be the etymological origin of the modern English name Egypt. The golden age of Memphis began with the 4th Dynasty, when the city became the royal residence where rulers received the double crown, the divine manifestation of the unification of the Two Lands. Coronations and jubilees such as the *Sed* festival were celebrated in the temple of Ptah at Memphis.

The Egypt Exploration Society’s *Survey of Memphis* (SOM) has shown that the earliest settlement was close to the wadis leading up to what we now call Sakkara. Anyone who has visited the temples at Abydos will get the general idea. As the rains over the Sahara decreased, leading to greater desertification, sand accumulation forced the settlement to move from Sakkara down to the Nile floodplain which is where Menes built his capital on the west bank of the Nile.

The SOM has identified two periods in history when the beginning of the Nile Delta was located at Memphis, originally in a marshy area, though nowadays, it is some distance from the current head, which through time has migrated northwards. Although the core of the city was around the pharaoh’s fortress and the Temple of Ptah, there is evidence that the city itself extended for miles along the riverbank.

The Triad of Memphis

Ptah is one of the Egyptian creator gods, or more likely, a dominant aspect of the ultimate, unknown creator god (*Atum* or *Tem*) who was considered to have existed before all things. It was through the will of Ptah that the world was ‘thought’ into existence by him. The world was conceived in his mind and then realised through the vocalisation of a lost word. Ptah conceived the world and gave the power of life to all living creatures.

Ptah was the dominant element in the *Triad of Memphis*. Consisting of Ptah, his wife Sekhmet, the daughter of Ra, and their son Nefertum, these three deities were the protectors of both Memphis and the *Two Lands*. One of Sekhmet’s Memphite titles was *Mistress of Ankhtawy* where Ankhtawy, meaning “*Life of the Two Lands*” was for a while, one of the names given to the city of Memphis. Apart from her main temple in Memphis, and other smaller shrines attached to temples throughout Egypt, her secondary city was Leontopolis in the Delta, where a large temple was dedicated to her worship.

Sekhmet was often portrayed as a woman with the head of a lioness. On her head she wore a solar disk with a uraeus around it. She was, throughout Egyptian history a very ancient goddess, possibly stretching back to the belief systems of nomadic hunter gatherer tribes in the Sahara west of the Nile when the Sahara was still a



vast savannah, teeming with game. She appears in the 5th Dynasty Pyramid Texts (Utterance 248) in the Pyramid of Unas where we are told of pharaoh Unas' cosmic rebirth as a star through the good graces of the all-powerful goddess Sekhmet. And among the items of furniture in Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings was a bed with lion heads which was used during rituals meant to assist the deceased pharaoh to ascend to the fixed stars of the heavenly firmament.

UTTERANCE 248

Unas is a great one.
Unas came out between the thighs
of the Divine Ennead.

Unas was conceived by Sekhmet;
It is Shesemtet [loincloth ornament]
who gave birth to Unas
[as] to a star with [a] sharp front,
with [a] wide stride, which brings food
for the journey of Ra every day.

Unas has come to his throne which is over the
Two Goddesses [who protect Upper and
Lower Egypt]; and Unas appears as a star.

Images of Sekhmet have been found in the 4th Dynasty pyramid of Seneferu at Dahshur and the 5th Dynasty mortuary temple attached to the pyramid of Sahure at Abusir, so her cult goes back to at least the very early beginnings of written Egyptian history.

At Sakkara was a shrine of Sekhmet, as yet undiscovered, where her sacred lions were kept and an animal cemetery where they were buried after they died.

Book of the Heavenly Cow

According to legend, one day the solar deity *Ra* requested the assistance and protection of the goddess Hathor, for he had overheard a group of men plotting a conspiracy against him. He asked Hathor to "neutralise the threat." This is when Hathor, this gentle, nurturing goddess of motherhood transformed herself into the fierce lioness Sekhmet and slayed all of Ra's enemies. But once she had started, she couldn't stop. Having got a taste for human blood, she went on a rampage that nearly killed all humans on earth.

This story of the two goddesses is told in the *Book of the Heavenly Cow*, a book depicting events taking place in the underworld. It is the source for the story of Sekhmet slaughtering humankind and stopping only after Ra tricked her into drinking 7,000 jars of red-ochre dyed barley beer, which he had ordered his high priest at Heliopolis to prepare. For three nights the goddess Hathor-Sekhmet waded in the blood of humans, but the sun god Ra took pity on the few remaining humans and saved them by causing Sekhmet to fall into a drunken stupor, upon which she reverted back into the kind, gentle cow goddess Hathor.

Although the text is recorded in the New Kingdom period, it is written in Middle Egyptian and may have been written during the Middle Kingdom. The *Book of the Heavenly Cow* was first discovered in the outermost gilded shrine of Tutankhamun, though the ancient text was incomplete. Fortunately, three complete versions of the ancient text were discovered in the tombs of Seti I, Ramesses II and Ramesses III, all three in the Valley of the Kings. Each version was found in a subsidiary room of the sarcophagus chamber exclusively designed for the *Book of the Heavenly Cow*.

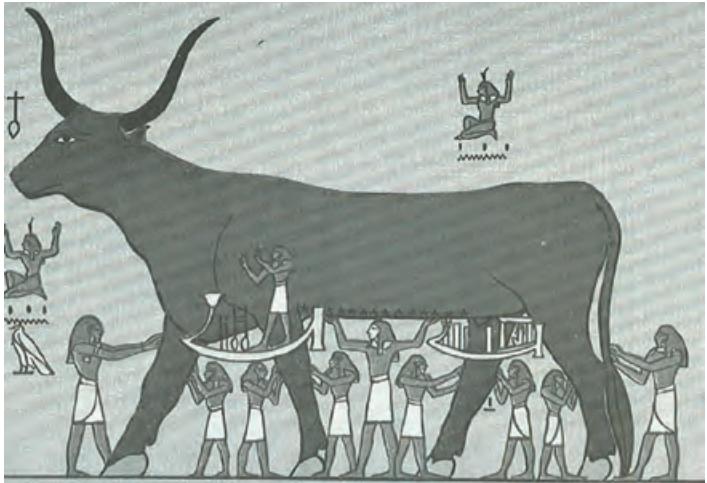
The *Book of the Heavenly Cow* is divided in half by the image of Hathor, the cow goddess and her supporters. There are no discernible breaks in the text aside from this representation of Hathor. Due to this there are no clear breaks in the text that allow for a clear structuring of the narrative. But egyptologists who have studied the text closely have suggested a loose division into four sections, the first of which describes the destruction of humankind, (think of the biblical Fall of Man), in which humans plot against Ra.

After Ra consulted with the other gods, the goddess Hathor is chosen by him to act as the violent Eye of Ra. She was to deliver divine punishment to humankind and did so by slaughtering the rebels and bringing death into the world. The few survivors of Hathor's wrath were saved only when Ra tricked Hathor by flooding the earth with dyed beer resembling blood, which Hathor drank and became sufficiently intoxicated so she could cause no more death. The final part of the text deals with Ra's ascension into the sky, the creation of the underworld, and with the theology surrounding the *Ba* (soul). The structure of the ancient Egyptian text the *Book of the Heavenly Cow* forms 330 verses, and it is widely believed among scholars



The goddess Hathor.





Scene from the book of the Heavenly Cow. The sky goddess Nut is depicted as a cow and supported by the eight Heb gods.

that it originated during the Amarna period, though still possessing a far more ancient origin.

There is a text called *Sehetep Sekhmet*, “Pacifying Sekhmet”, where the pharaoh recites a great hymn when he enters the temple on the first day of the year:-

Come to the Pharaoh in peace [for] he filters for you the seven jars of honey and grape juice. Drink it! Sekhmet-Bastet-Hathor [she] is satisfied with her Horus.

Come to the Pharaoh! Do not enter or leave in anger. You are not filled with all this bad rage.

Amunhotep III and Healing

During the 18th Dynasty, when Amunhotep III “the Magnificent”, father of Akhenaten, was building his mortuary temple at Kom el-Hettān on the west bank of the Nile opposite modern-day Luxor, he had its courtyards and solar court lined with over 700 statues of Sekhmet, two for each day of the year. Many of these were later moved to the temple of Mut (wife of Amun) at Karnak, while many have since found their way into museums around the world.

Last year archaeologists uncovered 66 statues of Sekhmet while excavating the site of Amunhotep III’s mortuary temple. Three of the Sekhmet statues are almost complete, measuring six feet (1.9 metres) tall, 1.6 feet (half a metre) wide and three feet (one metre) deep, while the others are damaged with only parts remaining. Each statue is a masterpiece of sculpture, combining the head of a lioness with the body of a woman wearing a tripartite wig and a long tight-fitting dress.

The pharaoh certainly didn’t need protection from any powers on the borders of Egypt, for the country was at the apex of its power and influence, though possibly due to something less tangible than military might. We have met Sekhmet as a fierce goddess, a lioness-headed goddess who fought and destroyed Ra’s enemies. But, she had a different personality, a dual aspect if you like, for Sekhmet was as well the fierce goddess who drove away sickness.

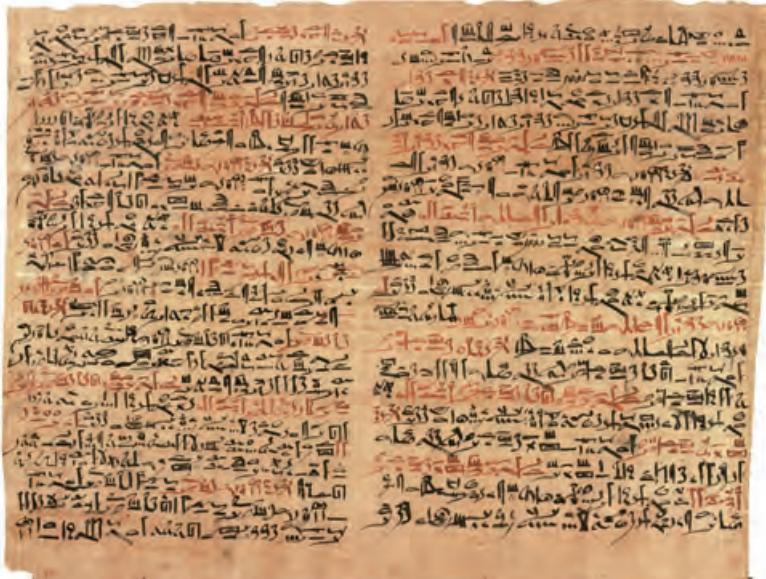
Her statues show her seated, the head of a lioness atop a woman’s body with the solar disk and uraeus of Ra on top of her head. Most certainly, she was the ferocious bringer of both violence and pestilence. But, look again. In her left hand, the healing hand, she holds an ankh, the symbol of life. On the one hand she could bring terrible suffering but on the other hand she could protect and heal.

Great efforts were made to appease her therefore and to ask her not to use her power for evil. So, it seems likely that Amunhotep III’s mortuary temple was not lined with her statues to protect him from his internal or external enemies, but to ward off epidemics, known as the *Year of Sekhmet*, that were raging around the Middle East around this time.



Statues of the seated Sekhmet currently in the Louvre in Paris. She wears the woman’s dress typical of the Old Kingdom and notice the ankh in her left hand.





Part of the Edwin Smith papyrus.

Polarities

Ancient Egyptians loved their dualities or as we would term them, *polarities*. Sekhmet could bring death but also restore life. As a lioness she personified the fury of the chase, of war; but at the same time, she was the caring mother who looks after her cubs. As we saw in the *Book of the Heavenly Cow*, once the fury of mass killing subsided, the rage became transformed into placidity and she became the docile and loving Hathor. So we have two sides, two opposite ends of a single spectrum, a single multi-faceted nature.

Ancient Egypt was renowned for its medical care and the standard of its healers. Medicine was practised in a *House of Life* which was attached to most temples. Interestingly we also read that the priests of Sekhmet were also used as healers, and as we can see from Old Kingdom tombs in Sakkara, the high priest of Sekhmet was famed for his medical knowledge of people and animals. Below is a quote from the Edwin Smith papyrus which is very interesting as it suggests that temple healers well knew about the blood circulatory system.

There are canals in the heart to every member. Now if the priests of Sekhmet or any doctor puts his hands or fingers upon the head, upon the back of the head, upon the two hands, upon the pulse, upon the two feet, he measures the heart, because its vessels are in the back of the head and in the pulse; and because its pulsation is on every vessel of every member.

I have tried to show how this semi-anthropomorphic goddess had two distinct aspects to her personality: one dangerous and destructive (plagues were referred to as the *Arrows of Sekhmet*) and the other, protective, nurturing and healing. And she had temples all over Egypt, not just at Memphis, and was closely associated to their Houses of Life, no doubt what we today would refer to as a hospital or clinic. The hot desert winds were called the "*breath of Sekhmet*" and she was revered for thousands of years as the great *Mistress of Life*.

On the exterior wall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak, beside the sacred lake, decorated under Rameses II, a variety of offerings are being made to various deities, including two to Sekhmet: purification of ointments and sistra before Sekhmet of Memphis and an offering of vases of water to her. Water purifies, revives and refreshes the goddess:

The jar is filled with primordial water. The ewer is filled with rejuvenating water. The vase is rich with what comes out of the primordial water. I purify your statue in your place, I render your body pure, I purify your body.

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The Luminous Mountain

by James Wilson



DEAR FRIEND, you came to me today because your heart is heavy and you feel a longing you can't easily satisfy. Indeed, you don't quite know what you're longing for; am I correct? See that Light on the horizon? What? you don't see it? Okay, try looking a bit further, in fact much, much further; further than you've ever looked

before. Penetrate the mist that clouds your vision, look beyond the mist for this Light, and seek it with all your heart. Assuredly you can and indeed will find it, for you are ready.

Do you begin to see it? Yes, I see by the look on your face that you see it, though it's faint at the moment, isn't it? Continue looking though until the Light becomes



brighter and disperses the mist. Good, this is a good start and a very important beginning.

As you continue looking at the Light, you will see that it shines forth from the pinnacle of a great mountain. Desire it, truly want it in your being, and you will begin seeing its form, for it is your destiny to do so. So far, so good; you are beginning to develop your vision. But stop now and rest your eyes a while, for they are not used to looking at such a Light, and I will tell you about the great luminous mountain.

Light at the Summit

It is the brilliance of its luminescence that distinguishes this mountaintop from the peaks of all other mountains. It is not just the sunlight glistening off crystals of snow that gives it its radiance. Rather, the Light has a special quality that comes from another, otherworldly source.

The luminous mountain is both everywhere and nowhere and seems to be wherever it is earnestly sought.

This mountain's height is unknown. Some say it can never be known, but don't let that put you off. What is known is that it is higher than any of the other great rocks that stand tall and proud upon the landscapes of our planet. Its slopes are steeper, its faces craggier, and its summit more daunting than any other scaled by humankind. There are many hoary legends of valiant souls who have climbed it, and looking at it from a distance you are forgiven for thinking that no one could ever climb to such heights. Yet despite its great height and steep slopes, its peak is attainable by all. No need to look at me like that, for I speak the truth and mark my words, you will begin climbing this mountain one day too, indeed everyone eventually will.

The luminous mysterious mountain, in spite of its size and grandeur, can't be seen if you look at it only casually. You must look at it in a thoroughly unfamiliar manner, as indeed you must have done already, for you have seen its Light have you not? Rejoice at that, for it is a real achievement. Where the mountain is located is an impenetrable mystery, for no matter where you live, if the heart is ready, you have but a short distance to travel to reach the rock-strewn slopes at its base. The luminous mountain is both everywhere and nowhere and seems to be wherever it is earnestly sought. It was shaped by forces beyond our understanding, constructive forces of a most refined power..., forces that labour eternally for

you and I and flow from a fountain of the most profound and pure Love.

Soon you will begin your journey and my words will give you hope and comfort, so listen carefully. I understand your apprehension for I have felt it too, many times. Don't despair, you must summon your courage and be calm. Now that you have rested your eyes a little, look up again. Do you feel the immensity of the luminous mountain? The altitude of its summit is extreme and as you begin to climb, your breathing will become laboured at times because of the effort you must apply. But you will never need to carry oxygen bottles during your ascent, even when you reach the highest levels, for paradoxically, the higher you get, the easier your breathing will be.

And what of specialist clothing and climbing aids? No doubt you'll be surprised to hear that the thinnest clothing will be adequate even if you wish to climb beyond the clouds. You will have no need of ice picks, crampons or ropes, for even when the going gets really tough, you are already equipped with all you need, though you may not know it yet. And when the temperature falls in the darkness of night, if you should feel cold, wrap yourself in a cloak of Love, for this will prove adequate for your needs.



You will have no need of ice picks, crampons or ropes, for even when the going gets really tough, you are already equipped with all you need, though you may not know it yet.



The Journey

There is one item you must take with you however..., a large backpack. For when you begin your journey to the heights you will, through necessity, carry a load that will be heavy and burdensome. This is the weight of your past errors and misjudgements, and you must carefully pack them away and carry them on your back. I can hear you groaning, but see for yourself, there is no other way.

Don't give me that pleading look; trust me, I've been there. There's no escaping it, you must prepare to carry your self-made burden. You are still strongly attached to your past, and although it may be a great weight to carry, take heart, for your burden may be lightened soon as you progress with this most adventurous undertaking.

Occasionally you will need to rest, and while you recover, take out one of those onerous little packages and examine it carefully. It is at such moments that you may feel the Light penetrate your being as you realise that you no longer need that particular package. As you look at it, your desire to be rid of it will be great, and after careful examination, you will understand its contents intimately and will know how its broken bits can be repaired. You will wish you could simply discard this small package in order to lighten your load a bit, but be careful not to carelessly cast it aside in its unsightly form. You don't want the beauty of the mountainside spoilt by leaving it around for others to find. Rather, you must repair it, and in so doing, it will be transformed into something of greater benefit to both yourself and others.

Turn it into something that will help you with your ascent, something that may become a source of inspiration to both yourself and others in times of need. It must become something that you would willingly and gratefully wish to give to someone else as your blessing on them. Then your package will shine with the Light of the mountaintop, it will be no burden at all and will take no space in your backpack. You will know what to do with it when the time is right, so don't be apprehensive.

From the start of your ascent, you will carry no provisions, for all things needed to sustain you are readily available at any point along your journey, no matter which path you take. You may not see it from this distance, but the luminous mountain has many faces and as with any mountain, some routes are easier than others. The severity of your climb will therefore depend upon the choices you make, how well you observe the mountain ahead, how well you plan your journey. But do not worry, your inexperience is always taken into account

and you will have guide books, maps and a compass with which to navigate your way. Use them well, lest you stray from your path, but take care not to put all your trust in them, for useful as they are, your inner compass is far more accurate and you must learn to use it well and rely on its infallible readings.

Climbing the Mountain

When you begin your climb, indeed at all stages of your ascent, travel slowly, deliberately and consciously, observing everything around you; take great care for there are many hazards. Proceeding slowly and thoughtfully is the only safe way to ascend. The landscape can be treacherous and though you will long to reach the Light as quickly as possible, it would be dangerous to run towards it, even if you had the stamina to ascend the slope that fast.

Take heed of my words, for many have fallen and I have seen them dusting themselves off, dazed, hurt and confused, far below where they stumbled. Some will pick up their backpack, and joyful for the lesson learnt, retrace their steps up the slope and smile with happiness as they pass the place where they fell, being grateful that

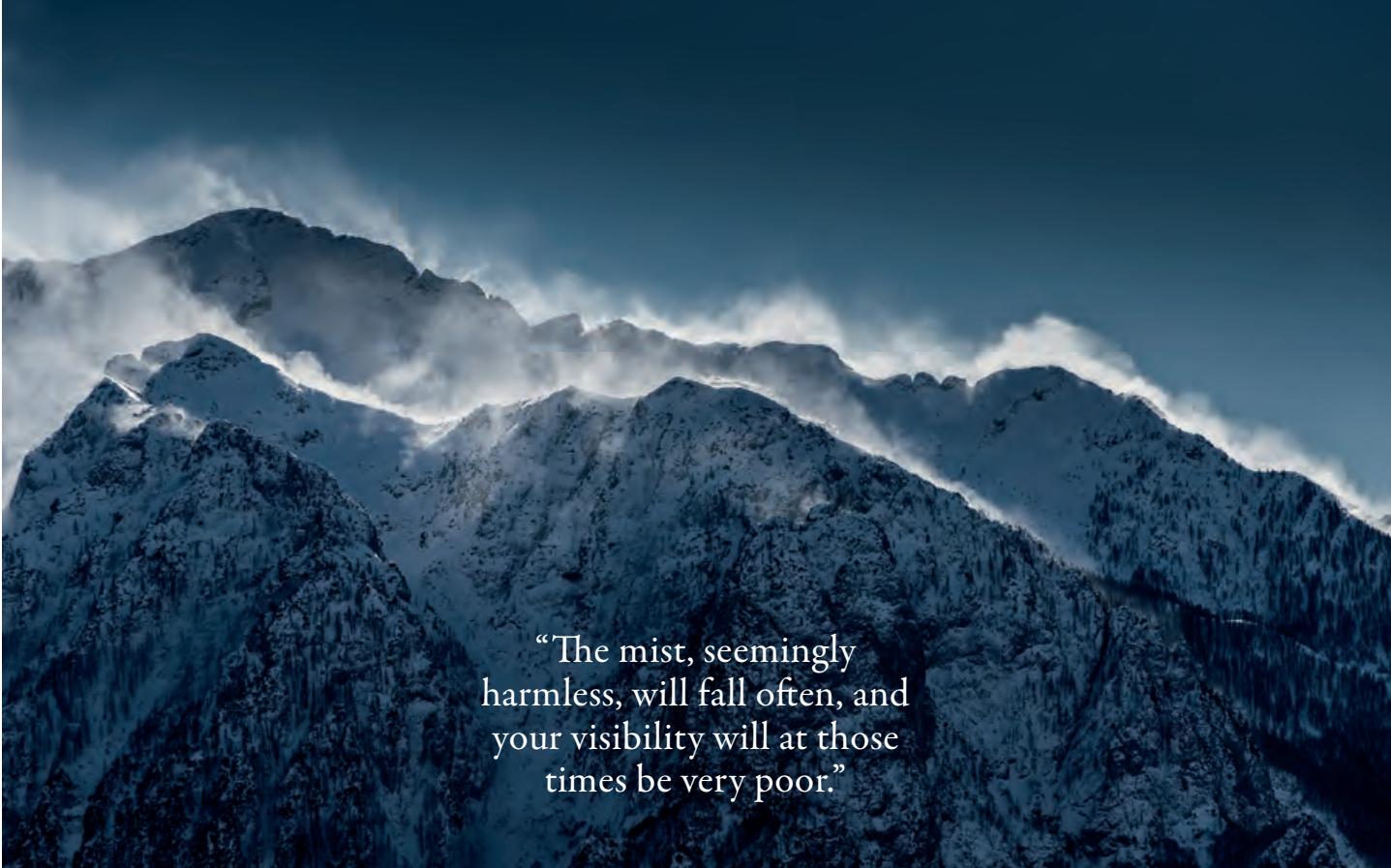
The severity of your climb will therefore depend upon the choices you make, how well you observe the mountain ahead, how well you plan your journey.

they are now more alert and more able to avoid the same mistake. Sadly though, others wallow in their hurt pride and turn away from the mountain, idly walking in the easiest direction for a while, and that inevitably is down, back to the shadows of the valley where they mistakenly believe they will find an easier life but find instead a harsh, untamed and inhospitable world.

Your journey to each important staging post on this mountain will take its time, maybe a very long time, but don't be troubled by this, for others have travelled your path and they succeeded, so why shouldn't you? The mountain you are climbing is the greatest there is, so remember to pause occasionally when the weather permits, to enjoy the view; not only the vast vistas, but even the small, easily overlooked details always close to hand. There is always interesting detail right before you.

You will of course inevitably encounter some bad weather. The mist, seemingly harmless, will fall often, and your visibility will at those times be very poor. You will no longer see the Light and you may despair. But if you





“The mist, seemingly
harmless, will fall often, and
your visibility will at those
times be very poor.”

look carefully at the map that I will give you, you will find that there are refuges placed at just the right locations that offer shelter from the mist, strong winds, driving rain and snow storms. And don't forget the Light you carry with you in those little packages you transformed. Now they can be used as flashlights to light up your path. Use them wisely and be sure to help others when they need your assistance.

The awesome forces of the mountain may eventually weaken your spirit and strike fear and despondency into your heart. But your courage, determination and sincerity of purpose will always see you through the worst of these conditions. And should it become necessary to seek out one of these refuges, as it most certainly will at times, you will find there messages left by others who have gone before you..., messages of hope and encouragement. Such messages you too may leave for others to read in their times of need.

As I say these words to you, my heart is truly with you, for I know how hard the journey can become. You will often feel isolated and alone, especially when the mists have covered the slopes, and this can be the harshest of trials. But when the mists eventually clear and you look around you, you will see that you are not alone for there are many others undergoing this difficult and demanding journey; you are but one of countless others who have taken up the challenge of scaling the luminous

mountain and you are well on your way. Your fellow climbers are at various levels of advancement upon the cliffs and inclines, some above you, some below..., each grappling with their own fears and mastering their own chosen precipitous avenue.

Don't be afraid to call for guidance from those above, and be mindful of those below, for they may ask for guidance from you. We must all help each other ascend the slopes, and you will find great joy in doing so. And should you find you have strayed from the path

Your fellow climbers are at various levels of advancement upon the cliffs and inclines, some above you, some below.

a little and have wandered unseeing into one of the many dark crevices where you cannot find comfort from your travelling companions, know that you are never alone..., even then, indeed, especially then. Look deep within your being and you will find that I am there, right at your side. My companionship is all you will desire during your entrapment and there too will you find the strength you need to free yourself. Be calm, be still, for I am always with you, right at your side.





There's No Turning Back

I look upon you with much love and understanding, for I know your deepest fears and hopes. You may doubt you have the courage, strength and stamina to ascend to such daunting heights, but once your ascent has begun up those rocky inclines, there is no turning back..., your fate is sealed, and you will ever more feel compelled to move towards the Light.

Even if you should fall, and this you will occasionally do, and find yourself back in the valley where you now stand, you will sooner or later feel compelled to return to resume the ascent..., if not in this life, then in another. You have your eye on the Light now and your heart will not allow you to relinquish your yearning for its embrace. I'm sure you already feel it. Why does the Light shine if it does not shine for you? And what is Light if not Illumination, knowledge and truth?

You know you will never be satisfied with anything less, and it is for this reason alone that you will begin your journey soon and leave behind this dark valley of sorrows. You may feel safe and secure in the obscurity of the shadows, but you can dwell in the valley of ignorance only so long before your heart yearns for something more, before your heart yearns for greater Light.

When your legs begin to tremble, when your hands

are cut and bruised, when your eyes weep with painful effort and you think you can't go on..., know that there are still some who will come to your aid..., veteran climbers who have already touched the apex and have descended deliberately to help aspirant climbers such as you who need to be held just for a while and to be shown a better way. Allow them to help you for that is their greatest wish. Open your heart to these Master Mountaineers and they will guide your movements towards every hand and foot hold, every little niche that will serve to help you ever further upward. Remain sincere in your yearning for the Light, be pure of motive, have Love in your heart always, and they will respond to your cries for help. They are agents of Light and can guide you to it better than anyone else.

Last Words

There is one last word of guidance I wish to offer you, my friend. Should you ever falter, should your spirit begin to wear, do not look ahead and despair at how far you still have to go. Rather, look behind, and see how far you have already climbed. You will find no small comfort in viewing the path well taken and the heights you have already attained. Rest a while and then continue your ascent with your eye and heart once more upon the Light.

Your fate is sealed, and you will ever more feel compelled to move towards the Light.

Go now and prepare yourself for your journey, for you know in your heart that the life you are so familiar with must now be left behind. Reflect on what I have told you about this great mountain and be of good cheer, for I will always be with you, even in your darkest hour. This ascent will not be the easiest of journeys, but it will be an adventurous and joyful one if you will but have the courage to let go.

Take my blessing with you now as I surround you with my lesser Light. Once you have taken that first step upon your chosen path, know that you will also have the blessings of all who have gone before you. If you truly aspire to reach towards the heavens, your efforts will be richly rewarded. And remember that simple, obvious and wise old Tibetan saying: *"...many are the vistas that are revealed to one who has attained the mountaintop."* Go, seek the luminous mountain, scale its heights and one day return to help others do the same.



A young woman with curly hair is sitting cross-legged on a grassy lawn in a park. She is wearing a light grey hoodie and dark pants. Her eyes are closed, and she appears to be in a state of deep meditation or prayer. The background is a bright, sunlit park with trees and flowers.

Meditation on Love

by Ian Murphy

IN THE world of matter, the most important force in creation is the power of Love. This has been spoken of so many times it seems cliché, but think about it a minute..., the daily expressions of love we see about, and those that come from us, are they not manifestations of one of the most powerful forces of attraction known to humanity? This power of love dominates and shapes all lives it touches, and each of our incarnations on this physical plane are changed primarily though it alone. In conjunction with the effects of our karma, it assists in attracting precisely the people, possessions and events we need for our soul personality to evolve.

In her book "*From Bethlehem to Calvary*", the late 19th and early 20th Century author on Theosophy, Alice Bailey, argues that while Buddhism is the "*way of mind*" esoteric Christianity is the "*way of love*." For me, love in its purest form connects our inner self with the God of our deepest understanding, and ultimately with all aspects of the Universe.

In modern Christianity we find four injunctions that the master Jesus gave to his disciples to follow. All mention the word love, and are designed to appeal to our hearts. The first injunction, to *love God with all your might*, is essential before the love of God can manifest in you. The second and third injunctions: to *love both your neighbour and enemy* are related to the way we think. We

must strive to produce good thoughts and good deeds as much as we possibly can, even to those who intentionally or unintentionally manage to do us harm. The fourth and final injunction was to *love one another*. I feel this is the most important of the four. We must learn to extend our love and compassion to all living creatures, and we can do this daily by attunement to the highest forces of love and compassion in the Universe. Rosicrucians do this through what they call their daily *Celestial Sanctum* attunement, not only strengthening themselves in the process, but strengthening and expanding as well the collective energy of similar thinking people throughout the world.

Buddhism also uses this concept in its *Meditation for Loving Kindness* where you first try to find loving kindness for a friend, then for someone towards whom you have neutral feelings, then towards someone you dislike, and finally towards the whole world. No one said a true path of spiritual enlightenment is easy, but it is certainly rewarding all the way. Rosicrucians have a booklet entitled *Liber 777* which explains how anyone can contact the *Celestial Sanctum* and through it, reach the higher latitudes of the Cosmic itself. Repeatedly using this method to meditate over many years enables any sincere seeker to connect with the conscious will of the Cosmic and thereby enable themselves to harness and redirect the love with which we are surrounded at such times.





TAI CHI MEDITATION

by Charles Tease

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

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

Philosophers practising meditation and natural living, created systems of exercises which linked to their understanding of health maintenance and medical

treatments. That such systems have survived millennia suggests they have value in our modern age.

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

Qi

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



Tàijíquán utilises *Qigōng* exercises for the same purpose, and positive results are felt fairly quickly. At this stage *Tàijíquán* means working with the universal energy. There is a Daoist practice expressed as *Jīng Qi Shén Wú Dào*.

Jīng is the life force which gives rise to *Qi*.

Qi is vital energy which leads to *Shén*.

Shén is spirit which achieves *Wú*.

Wú is emptiness which leads to *Dào*.

Dào is the root of all things.

These statements may seem empty and circular, but they allude to deep, indeed profound, concepts.

Dàodéjīng

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

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

Wújí

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

the *Ni Jing* (I Ching).

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

Pursuit of Wisdom

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

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

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

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

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

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

Endnote

1. Stephen Chang, *Chinese Yoga* (1983).



The Rose

Reflections on its Meaning

by Laura Kacoutie



THE ROSE CAN have several meanings across many different cultures and traditions. This beautiful flower that we can find growing in our garden is most commonly associated with love. Indeed, the red rose can be a symbol of passion, a gift between lovers. The Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, is often depicted with roses in her hair, around her neck or at her feet. However, the red is only one shade of this flower. The various colours of the rose can also carry different

- A yellow rose is a symbol of friendship, joy and good health.
- A pink rose is a symbol of gratitude and peace.
- A white rose is a symbol of purity and spirituality.
- An orange rose is a symbol of enthusiasm, optimism and excitement.

meanings:

As well as the colour of the rose, its scent also carries its symbolism and can have a special effect on the psyche. In aromatherapy, the smell of the rose has one of the highest vibratory frequencies of all essential oils and its soothing scent can help alleviate stress, depression and anxiety. In some traditions it is also said that smelling a rose with no apparent roses nearby, can signify the presence of God.

Beyond its colours and scent, the rose itself has a range of esoteric meanings. In medieval times, “*sub rosa*”, a Latin expression which literally means “*beneath the rose*”, was a term used to signify secrecy. Anything discussed in a chamber with a rose suspended from the ceiling, or at a table beneath a hanging rose, was understood to be secret and was forbidden from being disclosed elsewhere. In alchemical texts, the rose is also a fundamental symbol, and is depicted in the works of Robert Fludd and symbolising, among other things, completion, perfection and regeneration.

It is also not surprising that the rose is associated with prominent religious figures. In Christianity, Jesus is referred to as the “*Rose of Sharon*” while the Virgin Mary is often associated with roses, the Rosary, meaning “*Crown of Roses*”, being a clear example of this association. In Eastern traditions, the rose is associated with the Heart Chakra, *Anahata* in Sanskrit. Meditating on this centre can assist with rebalancing love, compassion and harmony towards oneself and others. For Rosicrucians, the rose has a special meaning, for it is in the name “*Rosicrucian*” and it lies at the heart of every Rosy Cross, which in turn is the best-known of all symbols associated with the Rosicrucian Order.



As a Rosicrucian, when I contemplate the rose, and reflect on its esoteric meaning, I cannot help but notice two things. Firstly, I see the various folds of the petals, signifying the unfolding of our consciousness, the flourishing of our hearts and minds as we progress on the spiritual path. Yet I also contemplate the stalk on which the flower sits, and looking at the thorns, I understand the difficulties we encounter on any true path of spiritual evolution. I understand that situations can be prickly, there can be fear, there can be pain, but the beauty of the rose lies at the end of it all.

And finally there is the most beautiful of experiences we can ever have: enlightenment! Many people have been inspired by the rose, and a friend of mine recently forwarded me a beautiful poem written by fellow Rosicrucian Jack Hurst. I hope it will inspire you too, to contemplate the beautiful rose, whose symbolism can speak to us all.

Seek ye the red rose, for here is the meaning of life.

Seek ye the red rose whose beauty and fragrance are nature's glory.

Seek ye the red rose, for here are the cycles of life; from bud to bloom with petal full, the dropping of seed to be reborn.

Seek ye the red rose, for here is the reflection of nature's law symbolic of life.

Seek ye the red rose and find its secret, for when you do your path will be clear, your path of glory.

For you are the red rose of glory.



Out of This World

by Divinator

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I was filled with an extraordinary vitality and a raised consciousness with a completely new set of values. I was heading for my true home.

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LITTLE DID I know what lay ahead when we started our friendly little group. It was towards the end of 1960, long before we had enough members in our area to start a formal Rosicrucian group, that a small band of Rosicrucians used to meet to meditate on profound subjects and discuss their individual results. We each took turns to lead the group and the subject of its meditation. It was our custom, before we meditated, to offer up a prayer for guidance and protection. It also helped to still the myriad active thoughts brought on by the day's activities, but the request for protection became very significant in the following experiment. The subject chosen was: "*What does one experience at death?*"

Using the Rosicrucian technique of visualisation, I entered the silence along with my companions and imagined myself slowly drifting away from my body when, suddenly, everything changed and for a moment or two there was what I can only describe as a feeling of chaos, following which I found myself in a totally different state of enhanced being. I was filled with an extraordinary vitality and a raised consciousness with a new and higher set of values. I was heading for my true home, filled with an deep and joyous ecstasy; every fibre of my being vibrated with an intensity of feeling that, in the comparative light of this world, I can only describe as a divine and compassionate love.

I was aware that whatever question occurred to me,



no matter the theme, the answer would be instantaneous. Even thinking of a person, living or dead, would give me complete knowledge of that person and the only limit would be my inability to think of a particular subject. However, I was no longer interested in the quest for knowledge. The person sitting in the chair that used to be me had been cast aside like a heavy raincoat on a hot summer's day. My one overwhelming desire was to become reunited with the Divine Source which I knew lay within a globe of light beckoning from afar. For one moment I could see myself as a translucent sphere of living colours, streaming with indescribable happiness to merge my identity within the all-embracing love of the Supreme Being.

As I drew near to my destination, it filled my vision, just as the moonscape must have seemed to the astronauts on their Lunar landing. Then suddenly everything changed. The joyous ecstasy was no more. I was again aware of my human limitations and conscious of two shadowy beings who now appeared close by. An object, the size of a clenched fist, was placed upon my chest and the next moment I was back in my material body, sitting in my chair and aware of the rest of our group. I had returned reluctantly with mixed feelings of wonderment at being privileged to have had such a wondrous experience, but disappointment as well at being sent back. It would seem that beings with a greater wisdom than mine had heard our opening prayer and had sent me back to complete my experience in this incarnation. But I had glimpsed something wonderful and out of this world, and never again would I view my life in quite the same way.

Reflection

Many times since, I have recalled this experience and pondered on the lessons therein; for like most of us, I had struggled hard to develop and preserve my identity. I was in the armed forces throughout the second world war and fought in many countries before competing in the world of commerce. I had always endeavoured to keep fit, physically and mentally, yet in that brief higher state I had discarded my body without a moment's hesitation and did not want it back. This was a great shock indeed. On reflection, my outlook in the higher state was certainly different from that in the present life, so perhaps it was the particular personality tied to this incarnation that I was trying to discard.

The next surprise was that knowledge of facts, such as we necessarily learn in this world, are not needed in the next. The main surprise, or should I call it a glorious reward, was the tremendous power of emotion that filled my being and compelled me to immerse myself in

the Divine Source of all, like a small grain of steel drawn to a powerful magnet. It is very difficult to describe adequately, but it left a most vivid impression on me: but this I do know! This divine compassionate love is Cosmic Consciousness, it is the answer and reward to all of life's trials and to which we will all eventually return.

I could see myself as a translucent sphere of living colours, streaming with indescribable happiness...

Do I sense you thinking "*Of what practical use is this?*" The answer is easy and needs only determination to put into effect. Dwell as long as you can on the beautiful moments of life, or whatever it is that lifts your emotions onto a higher plane. It may be the strains of a soul-moving melody, a magnificent picture or painting, a breath-taking view, the first heart-melting smile of a new-born baby or the deep feeling of spiritual peace that meditation brings. But the more you experience this uplifting emotion, the more you will receive of the highest blessings of life. It is our salve in moments of stress, and is at the very heart of the Rosicrucian égrégore which we experience in the Celestial Sanctum. It is the strongest force in existence, indeed it is the Great Creator itself. Albert Einstein referred to this path to spiritual awareness when he said:

The most beautiful and the most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the power of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.

When you are experiencing these moments of enchantment, alone or in a group of like minded people, don't keep it to yourself; send it with the blessings of the God our your comprehension to those in stress or nations in conflict. You will be pleasantly surprised at the result. This is why, after all these years, I decided to share my experience with readers of this magazine. Although a great Master once said "*Do not throw your seed onto stony ground*", I can now sense that much mental ground of this world has become very fertile indeed and you; for have you not read this through to this last paragraph?

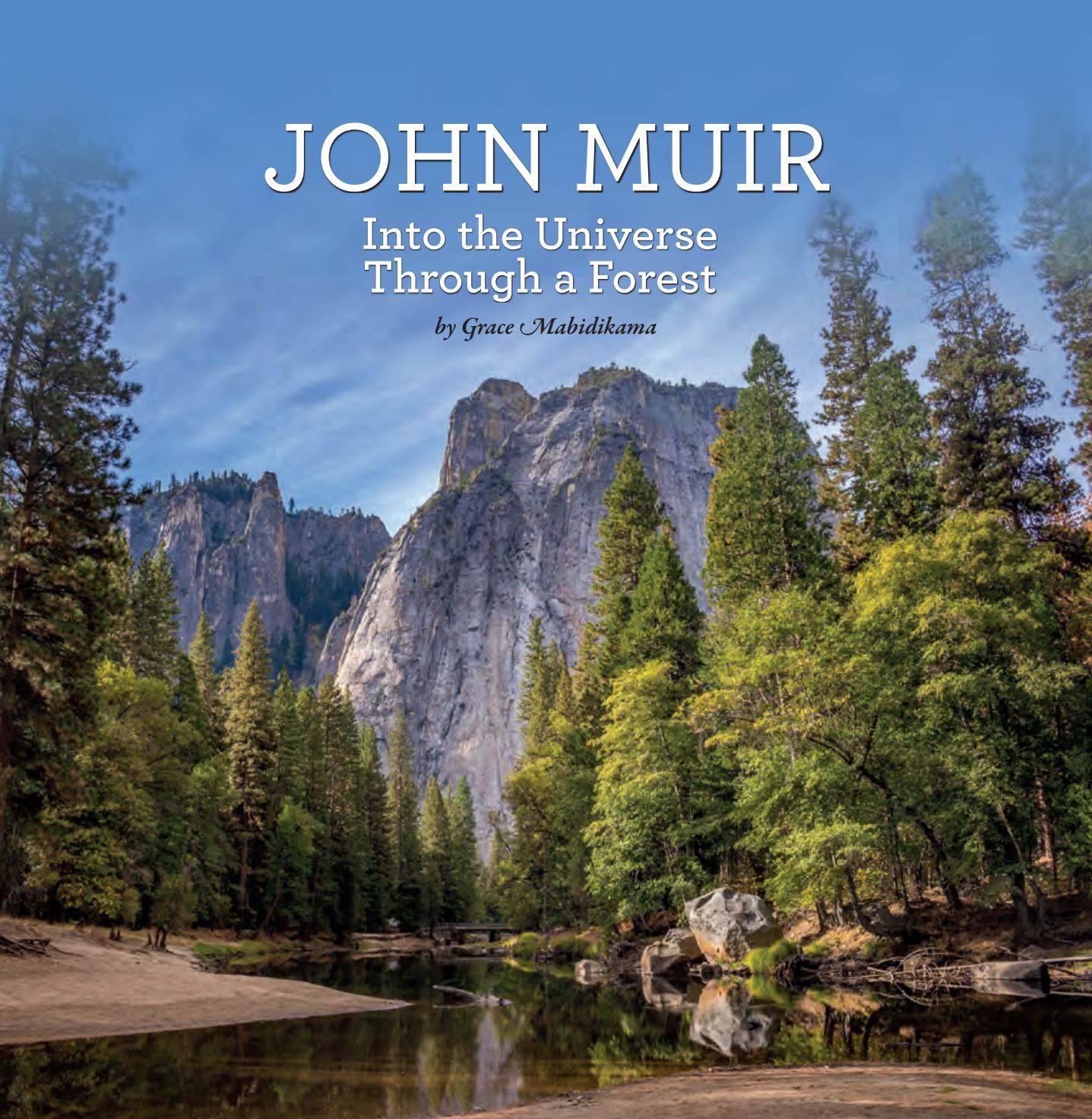
So, a spiritual seed is already stirring, indeed flourishing in you. Nourish it therefore, and you will join that illustrious band of sowers, and Illumination will surely be yours one day, and you will have learned the true meaning of..., Peace Profound!



JOHN MUIR

Into the Universe Through a Forest

by Grace Mabidikama



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



John Muir, c.1902.

Fascinated by the process of ongoing creation so visible in Yosemite, Muir eagerly studied its rock-faced walls, the waterfalls and streams, the action of ice-crystals in shaping the rocky landscape, the storms which blow rain and snow across Yosemite's landscape. In the physical shapes and forms found in this beautiful area, the shining rocks, dashing waterfalls, trees, animal life, snow-crystals, wildflowers in the open meadows, Muir sensed a message of light and beauty for mankind, something appealing to man's higher emotions and desires.

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

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

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

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





John Muir with President Theodore Roosevelt.

"Light, I know not a single word fine enough for Light.... holy, beamless, bodiless, inaudible floods of Light." With these words he expressed his lifelong fascination with Light. He was perpetually awed and excited by the ever-changing play of light across the face of nature, be it light refracted through a rainbow, sunlight playing across mountain peaks, or more subtle moonlight, caught for seconds in the dashing spray and ripples of mountain waterfalls. Sunlight playing through wind-driven clouds quickly changes the colours in a landscape, emphasizing particular hues, bringing them to the surface, while toning down and softening other colours. And, with clouds scudding across the sky, in moments, the colours change again. Across the landscape, flowers reflect back all of this light, opening their beautiful blossoms to the Sun.

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

John Muir spent much of his life tramping through the American wilderness. He also spent much of his time and energy awakening the American public to the rampant destruction of that wilderness. Through speaking and writing, Muir made the public more aware of what was going on, and the wilderness beauty they were about to lose forever if action was not taken soon. He spearheaded the conservationist movement. In

1903, when his beloved Yosemite was threatened with logging and further development, he went camping in this beautiful area with President Theodore Roosevelt, personally guiding him through the beauty of Yosemite's mountains, domes, waterfalls, meadows, and giant sequoia trees. Among Roosevelt's comments:

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

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

JOHN MUIR (1838-1914)

Whether climbing Alaskan glaciers or guiding Teddy Roosevelt through Yosemite National Park, Scottish born John Muir saw wilderness as something quasi-spiritual, where "*tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people*" could find renewal. As a nature writer and the Sierra Club's founding president, he argued eloquently for preservation, as when he battled to save Yosemite's beautiful Hetch Hetchy Valley you might "...as well dam for water tanks the people's cathedrals and churches", he fumed. Muir lost, yet his words still echo with each new threat to wild places.

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

—
-- JOHN MUIR --



A photograph of a young woman meditating in a lotus position on a blue mat in a lush green field. She is wearing a white tank top and olive-green shorts. Her eyes are closed, and she is breathing deeply. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees.

by Jeanne Guesdon

SILENCE

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

an almost divine power, the mother of all virtues.

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

True Rosicrucians can be recognised by their oral





“Great truths are taught only through silence”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Empathy: A Rosicrucian Trait

by Mary Brown



EMPATHY is the ability to read and understand people and be in-tune with or resonate with others. Sometimes it is voluntary and at other times it can be involuntary, especially for someone who is a natural empath.

Humanity evolves over time, just as everything connected with life does, just as the universe itself does. This is characteristic of everything that exists in the manifested world. But we feel that human evolution is not limited to the material aspects of our existence, convinced as we are that we possess a soul, that is, a spiritual dimension.

According to our teachings, it is this soul that makes us conscious beings, capable of reflecting upon our origin and destiny, and this is why we consider human evolution as an end, spirituality as a means, and time as an enlightener. – from “*Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*”, March 20, 2001.

As a Rosicrucian, I’m enormously proud that I belong to an organisation which is a magnet for those people seeking to evolve. Among all the members I have met, there is a group of people who stand out and, to me, epitomise what a Rosicrucian should be. These people are empaths.





Empaths are often born writers, singers and artists with a high degree of creativity.

How Empathy Works

Empathy is the ability to sense the feelings and emotions of other people, and experience this as if we were feeling it ourselves. Empathy is often confused with sympathy and compassion, but these are different things. Both sympathy and compassion are about having feelings *for* someone, for example when we see their distress. While sympathy is about having the feelings for someone, compassion has an active component to it – we feel sympathy for someone, combined with a feeling of wanting to help. In contrast, empathy involves experiencing the feelings for yourself, as if you were that person.

Everything has an energetic vibration or frequency and an empath is able to sense these vibrations.

There is a spectrum of empathy on which we all sit. At one end, you find people who have an empathy deficit (such as those with narcissistic personality disorders, or psychopaths), and at the opposite end you have the Highly Sensitive People and the Empaths. People who are empaths have more empathy than the average person and can feel the emotions of others in quite an extreme way, which for some can be overwhelming. They are also sensitive to subtle energy and more open to profound spiritual and mystical experiences.

While there is much we don't yet understand how empathy works, we do have some information. Everything has an energetic vibration or frequency and an empath is able to sense these vibrations. They can recognise even the subtlest changes that are undetectable to the five senses.

For example, words hold an energy pattern that

originates from the speaker. They have a specific meaning particular to the speaker. Behind that expression is a power or force-field, better known as energy. For example, hate often brings about an intense feeling that immediately accompanies the word. The word hate becomes strengthened with the speaker's feeling. It is that person's feelings (energy) that are picked up by empaths, whether the words are spoken, thought, or just felt without verbal or bodily expression.

I Found Them

Knowing that the purpose of all human beings is to perfect themselves and to become better, strive continually to awaken and express the virtues of the soul which gives you your life. In so doing you will contribute to your evolution and will serve the cause of humanity. – from "*The Rosicrucian Code of Life*" (available at <https://www.amorc.org.uk>).

Empaths are often born writers, singers and artists with a high degree of creativity and imagination, so the artistic community can be filled with them. They are known for many talents as their interests are varied and broad. They often have interests in many cultures and view them with a broad-minded perspective. I have found them in all walks of life and in every culture. They can be within your family, neighbourhood, work or in the broader community. There is no single defining gender, career, personality or any other label that we can place on empaths in general, they are everywhere and can be anyone.

They are the listeners of life and often problem solvers, thinkers and studiers of many things. As far as they are concerned, where there is a problem, there is also an answer. They will often search until they find one, even only for their own peace of mind. They are hypersensitive people who experience a high level of compassion, consideration and understanding towards others. Their intense empathy creates a tuning-fork effect, where they seem to actually 'feel' the emotions of the people around them. Many are unaware of how this works; they may have simply accepted long ago that they are sensitive to others.

Many people learn to hide their authentic feelings and put on a show for the outside world. An empath can often sense and relate to someone's true emotions that run deeper than what they project on the surface, in that case they will act compassionately to help that person express themselves. Empaths experience empathy towards family, children, friends, close associates, complete strangers, pets, plants and even inanimate objects. Some





Empaths are often passionate towards nature and respect its bountiful beauty. They frequently enjoy the outdoors: a walk on a sunny beach, a stroll in the rainy woods, mountain views, or experiencing the ocean.

are naturally more empathic towards animals, to nature, to the planetary system, to mechanical devices, to buildings or to any variety of beings or things. Others will have a combination of some or all of these. Empathy is not limited by time or space. Thus, an empath can feel the emotions of people and things at a distance.

Know Thyself

We can't go forwards by walking backwards or climb life's stairways by going down the stairs. If we want to know what lies beyond the door which appears before us, we have to be bold enough to open it. – from "*Rosicrucian Reflections*" by Christian Bernard (Chapter 4).

A deep sense of knowing accompanies empathy. While compassion and understanding are good virtues, they can also be problematic. There are times when it may be difficult to distinguish our own feelings from those of others. This is especially true when it comes to pain and suffering, which can be emotionally or physically demanding on someone who's empathic.

For this reason, they can become reclusive at times simply because the outside world can be a great drain on their personal energy. Indeed, many empaths are introverts

and need to take time alone to recharge. This is especially important after spending time in crowded, busy and overstimulating situations. There are also varying levels of strength in empaths. It may be related to their awareness of self or their understanding of the powers of empathy. This could also be impacted by the acceptance or non-acceptance of empathy by those associated with them.

Sensing and Reading Others

We believe that every human being possesses a soul, and from our point of view it is this soul that makes each of us a conscious, living creature, capable of thoughts and emotions. The better part of our human nature resides in our soul, and we live on this Earth precisely in order to raise our awareness of its virtues and express them through our judgements and behaviour. – from the "*Appellatio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*", January 2014.

Empaths often possess the ability to sense others on many different levels. From their position in observing what another is saying, feeling and thinking, they come to understand that person. They are often very affectionate in personality and expression, so they are great listeners and counsellors. They will find themselves helping others



and often putting their own needs aside to do so.

This is why we find so many of them in careers connected with compassion, such as healers, clergy, counsellors and carers. Indeed, the psychologist Carl Rogers cited empathy as one of the three ‘core conditions’ needed by counsellors in order to build a therapeutic relationship with their clients. Empaths can also become very proficient at reading another person’s body language and may intently study their eye movements. While this in itself is not empathy, it is something that stems from being observant of others and can be combined with the finely attuned sense of what the other person is feeling. In a sense, empaths have a complete communication package.

Connecting with Nature

Now comes sundown. The west is all a glory of colour transfiguring everything. Far up on the Pilot Peak Ridge the radiant host of trees stand hushed and thoughtful, receiving the Sun’s goodnight, as solemn and impressive a leave-taking as if sun and trees were to meet no more. The daylight fades, the colour spell is broken and the forest breathes free in the night breeze beneath the stars. – from “*My First Summer in the Sierra*” by John Muir.

Empaths are often passionate towards nature and respect its bountiful beauty. They frequently enjoy the outdoors, whether that means a walk on a sunny beach or a stroll in the rainy woods. They may find themselves continually drawn to nature as a form of release. It is the best place to recapture their senses and gain a sense of peace in the hectic lives they may live. The time to get away from it all and unwind with nature becomes essential to the empath. Some are more drawn to certain elements of nature, such as water. They might find themselves attracted more towards ponds, rivers or oceans as a place of peace. Others may feel more of a connection to the mountains or the deserts.

Love and respect for all living beings is the mantra for empaths.

Due to their innate sensitivity, empaths are averse to violence and cruelty. They will avoid violent situations, whether real, reported in the media or depicted in films. With their deeper connection to nature and animals, most empaths will be drawn to veganism or vegetarianism. For an empath, the suffering and killing of animals is unacceptable and the only option is to have a meat-free

diet. Love and respect for all living beings is the mantra for empaths.

Compassion

Every society should not only encourage face-to-face meetings among its members, but also open itself up to the world. By doing so, we defend the cause of a human fraternity making all individuals citizens of the world, which implies putting an end to all forms of racial, ethnic, social, religious or political discrimination or segregation. Such openness encourages the coming of a Culture of Peace, founded upon integration and cooperation, something to which Rosicrucians have always devoted themselves. As humanity is one in essence, its happiness is only possible by promoting the welfare of all human beings without exception.

– from the “*Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*”, March 20, 2001.

Empaths have a tendency to openly feel what is outside of them more so than what is inside of them. This can cause empaths to ignore their own needs. In general, an empath is non-violent, non-aggressive and leans more towards being the peacemaker. Any area filled with disharmony creates an uncomfortable feeling in an empath. If they find themselves in the middle of a confrontation, they will try to settle the situation as quickly as possible, if not avoid it all together. If any harsh words are expressed in defending themselves, they will likely resent their lack of self-control. The preference is to peacefully resolve the problem promptly.

People of all walks of life, as well as animals, are attracted to the warmth and genuine compassion of empaths. Regardless of whether others are aware that someone is empathic, people are naturally drawn to them as a metal object is to a magnet. Even complete strangers find it easy to talk to empaths about the most personal things. Before they know it, they have poured out their hearts and souls without intending to do so consciously. It is as though on a sub-conscious level that person knows instinctively that empaths would listen with compassionate understanding.

If we start from the principle that our soul is evolving towards the perfection of the universal soul from whence it came, then mankind’s objective consciousness is the reflection of its understanding of the universal Consciousness within it. – from “*Rosicrucian Reflections*” by Christian Bernard (Chapter 23).



Maat & Asha

Egyptian and Persian
Concepts of World Balance

by Bill Anderson



To Rosicrucians, the universe is in a state of balance and harmony called "Cosmic Order," or simply "The Cosmic."

THROUGHOUT the 3,000-year plus history of ancient Egyptian civilisation, though many things changed, there was a constancy of certain key concepts that lasted throughout the whole of their history. One of these concepts was *Maat*. Rosicrucians will be familiar with *Maat* which means roughly truth, balance and cosmic order.



As the Indo-Iranian tribes swept south into Iran and India, they brought with them a similar concept called *Asha* in the ancient Persian religion, Zoroastrianism. Without any known contact between the Egyptian and Indo-Iranian civilisations until much later in their history, it is fascinating to speculate on how they both arrived at the same concept.

Maat as a Principle of Cosmic Order

Maat does indeed mean truth, but this is too simple a translation of the Egyptian term. To the ancient Egyptians, *Maat* represented the principle of Cosmic Order as well as eternal renewal. *Maat* is right order in nature and society, as established by the act of creation, and means, according to the context, that which is right, that which is correct: law, order, justice and truth. It was considered that this state of righteousness had to be preserved and established in all matters great and small.

Originally, *Maat* seems to have been something simple, a concrete geometrical and physical term denoting *straightness* and *evenness*. The earliest hieroglyph for it probably represents the base of the pharaoh's throne which may in turn be regarded as a stylised form of the primeval mound, the first piece of earth to appear after the act of creation. This straightness later came to mean *right* and *correct* in an ethical sense. The transference of meaning gave the concept its significance and made it a fundamental concept in Egyptian thought and behaviour.

Maat originated with creation: it was brought into being by the primordial god and then constantly refreshed or restored by each pharaoh. This is plain from the following two texts: “*the sky is at peace, the earth is in*

joy, for they have heard that Pharaoh will set right in the place of disorder”, and “*Tutankhamun drove out disorder from the Two Lands and Maat is firmly established in its place; he made lying an abomination and the land is as it was at the first time.*”

Maat From the First Time. The Act of Creation

The crucial points are these: *Maat* is equated with the “*First Time*”, namely, with the act of creation. The pharaoh who drives out disorder, is an incarnation of Atum, the primeval god of creation from Heliopolis. The end of disorder goes hand in hand with the establishment of *Maat*: “*Maat is great and its effectiveness lasting; it has not been disturbed since the time of Osiris.*” There is punishment for him who passes over its laws. There is an extant *Hymn to Maat* where emphasis is laid upon its unbroken continuity from the mythical time of Osiris onward and its everlastingness, for *Maat* outlasts human life.

Maat in the Judgement of Humans

There was an aspect of *Maat* as a measure of judgement upon humanity. So important was the concept of *Maat* that it applied not only to religious and ethical matters but to earthly justice as well. As justice, *Maat* was the basis of the Egyptian legal system. The vizier, who was responsible for the administration of justice, was, from the 5th Dynasty onward, called the *Priest of Maat*. In later times judges wore an image of *Maat* on a chain about their neck. *Maat* also appears personified in human



Book of the Dead



guise, wearing the headdress of a large single ostrich feather.

The Egyptians believed that during some past golden age, when all aspects of human life were allegedly in harmony, the law instinctively took account of all facets of human conduct, so that justice and ethics were integrated and social justice prevailed. They wrote for instance that in the era of the primordial gods, “*Maat came from heaven and joined those who lived on earth.*” At that time, it was believed, there was no injustice, no pain, no hunger, in short, no everyday problems whatsoever.

The judgement of the dead is dealt with in its most developed form in the *Book of the Dead*. Here the vignettes in the papyrus of Hunefer or the papyrus of Ani accompanying the text show that the dead man's heart, deemed to be the seat of the intellect and will as well as the life-giving centre of the physical body, is weighed against a symbol of *Maat*, usually depicted as a feather, which serves as an ethical standard. The jackal-headed god Anubis, who has become an attendant of Osiris, lord of the *Duat* (the underworld), is master of the balance, and is in control of the pointer; Thoth, the scribe of the gods, records the verdict and announces it. If the verdict should be

To the ancient Egyptians, *Maat* represented the principle of Cosmic Order as well as eternal renewal.

unfavourable, the person falls victim to the *devourer*, a hybrid monster waiting hungrily nearby. If the verdict should be favourable, the deceased is invested with the attribute of *Maat* and as one who is *maat kheru*, “true of voice”, is brought before Osiris on his throne.

Many statements of innocence were voiced by the deceased before the actual weighing of the heart took place. These are at times referred to as the Negative Confession or the *Confession to Maat*. They correspond to an ideal way of life to which all should aspire, and constitute a moral code that prevailed for millennia in Egypt. Ideally you were expected to conform to *Maat* in your speech and actions. Statements to this effect are to be found among ancient funerary inscriptions. The range of human affairs permeated by these ethical principles was as broad as it could be. It included people's conduct toward their fellow human beings, toward the gods and toward society. *Maat* imbued justice with an ethical spirit.



Symbol for Zoroastrianism.

Asha

Zoroastrianism, the religion of the ancient Persians, is a vibrant religion to this day. As a religion it has influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and its effects can be seen both in Neoplatonic philosophy and Muslim Sufi thought.

The vastness of the Eurasian steppes encouraged the Indo-Iranians to conceive their gods as cosmic, not local, divinities. They understood a universal principle known in Avestan (the language of the Zoroastrian texts), as *Asha*, the principle that governs everything, from the workings of nature to human law and all human conduct.

The Amesha Spentas

The ancient *Asha* or *Asha Vahishta*, later known as *Ardvahisht* under the Sassanian dynasty (224-637 CE), was one of the divine Heptad of Zoroastrianism, comprising *Ahura Mazda*, the Wise Lord and the six *Amesha Spentas*, the Bounteous or Holy Immortals (archangels), the six aspects of God's own nature, through which all people came to know God. It is through these seven primal emanations that God's will is done. It is through them that we reach God. This doctrine was an ancient, mystical way of looking at reality, and this distinct group of seven play a central role in Zoroastrian myth and ritual. Each *Amesha Spenta* protects and can be represented by one of the seven creations, which Zoroastrians believe collectively constitute the divine creation. In myth, the Holy Immortals care for and protect their creations, and in the rituals, a token of each creation is present to represent the spiritual presence of that Holy Immortal.

Asha, considered as the most beautiful of the Holy





The Goddess Maat

Immortals, represents not only the opposite of untruth, but also the divine law and moral order in the world. *Asha* preserves order on earth as he smites disease, death, fiends, sorcerers and all vile creatures. He is truth and cosmic order and is considered to be the closest of the Holy Immortals to God.

Asha connotes the eternal, immutable law that governs the universe, and regulates both the spiritual and corporeal worlds. In Zoroastrianism, natural law and divine law are the same. *Asha* constitutes the yardstick for determining right and wrong. He sets normative ethics and provides the standards that apply to all people at all times. He represents absolute values. The assumption is that right deeds produce benefits alike for the author of the action and for society at large. The accrual of benefits to the author of the act is automatic. As with the law of Karma, the law of *Asha* ensures that happy consequences accrue to good acts. An individual reaps what he or she sows.

Asha is Truth

Asha means many related things, and can't be translated by just one English word. You need a whole constellation of words to translate it: righteousness, law, cosmic order, truth and justice. But *Asha* is first and foremost *Truth*, the opposite of the *Lie (druj)*.

The concept encompasses all clear and objective vision, all honesty and unclouded thoughts, words and deeds. Then it is *Righteousness* which involves a commitment to good actions that build society and lead toward health, peace and good will. These actions are not prescribed, as they are in Jewish or Islamic sacred law, but they will vary as the conditions of history or society vary. The underlying call to right action however, remains the same.

Asha is also *Law*; not a prescribed set of commandments, but a description of the laws that rule our lives and the universe around us. *Asha* is impersonal. In Zoroastrianism, *Ahura Mazda* is not the type of

God who suspends the laws of reality in order to make a point or to help someone. In Zoroaster's concept of divine governance, there are no suns standing still, miraculous healings, miraculous plagues or deliverances, no resurrections from the dead. In all the *Gathas* (Zoroastrian hymns), there are no miracles or supernatural occurrences; this is astonishing for something composed at least 3,500 years ago. In *Asha*, God set up the laws of reality, both in the natural world and the social world; and he will not break them.

The law of *Asha* describes what actually happens, not what should happen. It encompasses the law of gravity and all physical laws discoverable by science as well as the laws of consequences governing our own behaviour, which are discoverable by sometimes painful experience. Throw a rock in the air and, if unhindered in its descent, it will come down: that is *Asha*. Overindulge in alcohol one night and you will wake up with an unpleasant hangover; that is also *Asha*, the law of consequences. If you do wrong, quite often the world itself will punish you, either by its own laws, or by someone taking the law into their own hands.

But what of those who do wrong and prosper, who die happily after a life of evil? Then we must look to the

To the ancient Egyptians, cosmic order was portrayed as a beautiful young woman, the goddess Maat.

world to come, which is also under the rule of *Asha*, where, as Zoroaster states, the "*Best Existence*" (heaven) is waiting for those who choose good in this world, and where the "*Worst Existence*" (hell) is reserved for those who have done evil. This *hell* is not eternal, since all things will be purified by the end of time; but it is long enough to purify evildoers.

Therefore, to praise *Asha* as the "*best*" (Avestan: *vahishta*) is to put yourself in harmony with cosmic order, and to commit yourself to the search for Truth in your spiritual, moral and working life. *Asha* dwells within you, as it does in everyone, and it is divine. Every time you do a righteous deed, no matter how small, you are bringing yourself closer to God through *Asha*.

Light and Fire Temples

Asha is clearly associated with light for it is "*most fair, bounteous, immortal, made of light and is all good things*." Truth is also associated with light. The ritual fire in all Zoroastrian temples was associated with *Asha*, as fire was the creation most associated with it. Today, in



Zoroastrian Fire temples, the *Bahram* fire, the most sacred of all fires, is necessary to fight the forces of darkness and evil and is regarded as the symbol of truth. In their Fire temples, the Persians did not worship fire; rather it was a symbol of Light and cosmic Order. Similarly in Rosicrucian temples, this tradition is perpetuated with the vestal flame.

Asha Vahishta is the spirit of universal law, which should be the choice of all who wish to be numbered among the *ashavans*: followers of truth or righteousness, the worshipers of the Wise Lord, as opposed to the followers of the lie and unrighteousness. The Lie is the principle of evil. In the *Yasna* ceremony, *Asha* is represented or more accurately, epiphanised, by fire. Fire played a major part in Indo-Iranian religion, and this is an example of Zoroaster's enthusiasm for retaining elements of his pre-revelation religious upbringing and training. *Asha* is the quality of the divine Heptad which most effectively opposes the demonic *Druj* or *Lie*, the instrument of deceit by which the evil spirit attempts to seduce humanity away from the true path.

Summary

Maat was the order established at the creation. It was the cosmic and rightful order that the Pharaoh and every member of society had to maintain. *Maat* was the heart of Egyptian ethics. The goddess *Maat* was the personification of physical and moral law, order, truth and justice. She was the highest conception of physical and moral law and order known to the ancient Egyptians. There is a small ruined temple dedicated to *Maat* at Karnak. The temple is inside the Precinct of Montu, the smallest of three enclosures at Karnak. The temple



Zoroastrian priest performs a ritual at a fire temple



Hymns of the holy Gathas.

seems to have been built by Queen Hatshepsut, then reconstructed by Tuthmosis III.

The Indo-Iranians believed that there was a natural law that ensured that the sun would maintain its regular movement, the seasons would change and existence would continue in an orderly way. To the Indians this law was known as *rta*, to the Persians as *Asha*. Truth, honesty, loyalty and courage were felt to be proper to mankind. It was considered man's duty to uphold the great cosmic and moral principle, and thereby help to sustain all the good in creation.

The Persian Great King or *Shâhanshâh*, was the leader in the great cosmic battle between Truth and the Lie. He established order and peace on Earth with the aid of the Wise Lord *Abura Mazda*. To the ancient Persians, *Asha* is sublime righteousness and justice. It is a universal justice and ideal truth to which we should all aspire, and emanates from the light of the Holy Mind itself. Even today the second month of the Persian year (April-May) is called *Ordibehesht*, a modern version of *Ardvahisht* or *Asha Vahishta*, the spirit of universal law.

To the ancient Egyptians, cosmic order was portrayed as a beautiful young woman, the goddess *Maat*, while for the Persians it was a handsome young god *Asha*. In both lands, the inherent beauty attributed to cosmic order is axiomatic. Both concepts arose independently in different parts of the world: Africa and the Eurasian steppes, yet both had so much in common, a recognition of inherent order to the universe and the right way for people to behave; in other words, what we now call *Karma*.

As long as I shall be able and strong,
so long shall I look in quest of truth.
Truth, I shall see thee, as I acquire good thinking
and the way to the Lord. (Y28.4-5).



Life Lessons & Truisms

by Will Hand

A

LL OF US, at some stage in our lives, have come across a particular phrase or sentence that seems to carry more meaning than may be apparent on the first reading. In this article I will share some of the sayings and truisms that have been meaningful to me. I offer some of my interpretations of each saying but also suggest that each is worthy of a few moments' individual reflection and contemplation.

The best things in life are not things.

There is a sister saying to this: "the best things in life are free." Both are alluding to the same fact, that the acquisition of material goods by itself will not make you happy. This is not to say that desiring and acquiring a nice home, car or other consumer item is a bad thing; it is just that ultimately without your health, inner peace and the love of others, you will probably end up unhappy and somewhat unfulfilled as a person.

Love begins when judgement ceases.

This is a personal favourite of mine. It is saying that as soon as we master the ego and take ourselves away from any value judgements, then love can blossom. Mystics over the centuries have realised that one of the great obstacles to enlightenment is paying too much attention to the self, which is what judgement is about. So the love referred to here is a mystical love. You could also argue that in affairs of the heart you can never truly love a person if you are always judging them!



Don't anthropomorphise computers; they may not like it!

Computers are commonplace. Indeed you can't go to a bank, shop, airport, restaurant etc., without coming into contact with a computer of some sort. Even most watches nowadays have computer circuitry in them. They can do marvellous things very quickly but does a computer have a mind of its own? Can a computer make decisions and act like a human being? Well they certainly seem to make decisions sometimes. "Computer says no!"

But can we really compare computers to human beings? Do they have feelings or emotions for example, or other qualities that we call human, especially the awareness that they are aware? The accepted answer to this question by science is: no.

Having said that, perhaps in the future machines will be developed with as much or maybe more processing power than the human brain and then, just possibly, that may attract soul energy and turn a machine into a living expression of Soul. We would then be able to genuinely ask them whether they like being anthropomorphised or not.



If you think training is expensive, try ignorance.

I came across this one over 20 years ago when I was teaching meteorology to graduates. It is one of those glaringly obvious truisms, yet how many companies have you come across where (through ignorance) staff have not coped and possibly lost customers? I bet at least one!

Would you embark on a project, possibly investing a lot of time and money not knowing the first thing about it? Yes we can all learn eventually by our mistakes, but sometimes those mistakes can be very costly. A little bit of training can go a long way... Actually we, as Rosicrucian students, already know this. Imagine how much harder your lives might have been had you not had the benefit of our Rosicrucian studies.

There are two ways to become rich: make more or desire less.

Many people in today's world want to be rich in a material sense. However, the only way they feel they can achieve this goal is to work harder and try and earn more money. This causes problems with stress, family break-ups etc. But there is another way, and that is to take stock and really think about what you want and why you want it. By crossing non-essential items off the list and taking stock of what you have already, you quickly discover hidden riches in time, peace and money.

No rain, no rainbows.

This is a meteorological fact for sure. Everybody likes rainbows; they are beautiful objects but transitory in nature, and the opportunity to appreciate them must be seized quickly. However, according to the law of duality, before you can really appreciate a rainbow you must first experience some rain. Everything is dual in nature and all is relative.

Every silver lining has a cloud.

This saying is similar to the previous one and is usually quoted the other way round. By quoting it in this way however, we can more easily see that to every action there is a re-action. What to one person may be a "silver lining" is to another person "a cloud." There is no absolute value in life, only relative values.

Man created God in his image.

A truism if there ever was one! The only way we can talk about God, endeavour to explain God and to

glorify God is in human terms. Nobody knows the true nature of God, as God is beyond enquiry. We can feel the presence of God but we can never ever say we understand God.

Predicting is very difficult, especially when it concerns the future.

This is a rather witty saying but one that holds a note of seriousness. How many times do we come across people who claim to know the future? Profess to know our individual fate or tell us that unless we change our ways then something terrible will happen to us? Almost all predictions of such sort end in failure as the predictions are more for the benefit of the predictor's ego than for the recipient. Indeed, the effect of false predictions can be upsetting for susceptible individuals. Life is continually evolving, there may be a master plan, but no individual can be aware of such a plan in much the same way as a single letter on this page can ever be aware of the meaning and intent of this article.

Smile, it's the second best thing you can do with your lips.

A friendly smile goes a long way, try it and see next time you want to do something with your lips!

The loudest voice in the room is not necessarily the clearest.

There is often strength in silence. Knowing when to stop talking and listen is an art and of great benefit. People who like the sound of their own voice are often too busy talking, and in doing so miss many learning opportunities. If they continue to go through life like this then their messages can become muddled with a lack of clarity as they will not have progressed.

Luck is the meeting place of preparation and opportunity.

I love this one because I always tell people that there is no such thing as luck. Or, if I wish to concede a point, that everybody makes their own luck. Throughout life opportunities for advancement, wealth, peace and happiness will arise. If we are prepared, and the Rosicrucian studies prepare us admirably, then we will recognise and seize these opportunities. Others may think we are lucky. However, I'll tell you now, I'd rather be lucky than good any day!



A Roman Sarcophagus in Córdoba.

by Stuart Scott

Image: Michel Wal / Wikimedia



ON A RECENT visit to the *Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos* or Royal Palace complex in Córdoba in Spain, with its beautiful gardens, I came across a marvellous Roman sarcophagus in the so-called “*Inquisition Tower*”, where you can also find original Roman mosaics.

Dating from the 3rd Century CE, it is a work of superior quality and great beauty, and it is obvious that the person who created it was a brilliant sculptor. It was found in Córdoba in the Huerta de San Rafael del Brillante (Saint Raphael’s Garden) and then transported to its present location.

The Symbolism

The main design on its surface depicts the gates of the underworld or afterlife. Its fig leaves appear half-opened and they are decorated with ram and lion heads symbolising strength and energy. Two columns with capitals support the close pediment. Two-faced peacocks are represented in it, symbolising eternity.

The philosophy behind the collection of sculptures

alludes to a search for eternity. Once the visitor goes through the door, there are two groups: on the right, the owner or the head of the family. He is depicted wearing a toga, Roman sandals on his feet and he is holding a sealed letter in his hand, signifying that he was a lawyer. He appears with a philosopher or teacher who acts as a mentor.

On the left, the lawyer’s wife wears a toga and she has an elaborate, wavy hairstyle, possibly due to plaiting. At her feet is a basket with a dove perched on it as a symbol of her purity and dedication to her home. She and the woman accompanying her both hold sealed letters.

On the extreme left and right of the carving are fluted columns with acanthus capitals which give way to its sides. Both sides of the coffin feature Pegasus, a mythological winged horse which was born of the blood of Medusa when she was decapitated by Perseus. At their feet, a lion or leopard is shown either running with Pegasus or attempting to harm him from below. These are Dionysian symbols of the speed and the strength which should be used in bringing the owners of the luxurious funeral mansion to the afterlife.





Tagore's Message

by Vincent Edwards

WHEN INDIA'S great poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was still very young his father insisted he drop his books and go up into the high Himalayas. He did so, and the sight of those lofty, snow-covered peaks gave the youth a new outlook on the world. He caught a vision that he cherished for the rest of his days. It was of a free world, where love and understanding counted for more than national boundaries. There, men and women would live like brothers and sisters, side by side,

and scientists could pursue their studies in the service of people. There was no reason for distrust, since war had been outlawed by love and human fellowship.

Probably no-one loved peace and hated war more than Tagore. The time came when his name became a household word in his native country, and his poems were known to both rich and poor alike. His songs were sung in crowded city quarters as well as by travellers on far-off caravan trails. And tens of thousands were stirred by his dreams of world peace.



Nobel Peace Prize

In 1913 came Tagore's crowning honour with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in literature. It was the first time someone from Asia had been chosen, and the recognition of India's great genius brought praise from all sides.

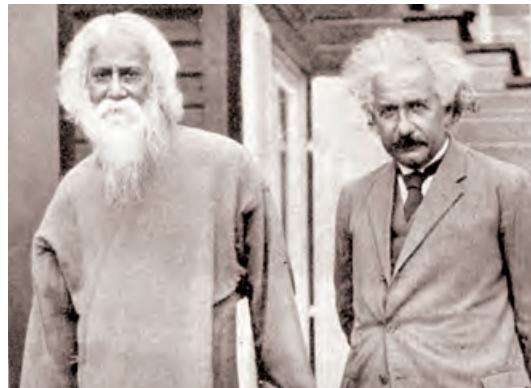
Among English-speaking readers, Tagore drew almost as enthusiastic a following as he did among his own people. The Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, wrote a preface to one of Tagore's works in which he told of how marvellous had been the shock of the discovery of the noted Indian. When Yeats related this to a Bengali physician, the latter did not seem the least surprised. The doctor answered: "*Every day I read Rabindranath. One of his verses makes me forget all the annoyances of the world.*"

In 1916, Tagore made a memorable visit to America. Everywhere he travelled, he attracted wide notice. People who saw him could not soon forget the man with the gentle eyes who went about in the attire of his native country. He was such an impressive figure in his long brown robes, his patriarchal beard, and his iron-grey hair. When he smiled, his whole countenance seemed illuminated with his deep love for humanity.

On a visit to Japan in 1916, he made just as profound an impression on the public. On one occasion he was invited to speak to a young people's group. The boys and girls were moved to admiration as they heard the courteous visitor make this delightful confession:

Do not be frightened of me or think that I am going to give you a long lecture. I know I look rather formidable with my grey beard and white hair and flowing Indian robe, and people who know me by my exterior make the absurd mistake that I am an old man, and give me a higher seat, and pay me deference by keeping at a distance from me.

But if I show you my heart, you will find it green and young..., perhaps younger than some of you who are standing before me. And you would find also that I am childish enough to believe in things which the grown-up people of the modern age, with their superior wisdom, have been ashamed to own. That is to say, I believe in an ideal life. I believe that in a little flower there is a living power hidden in its beauty which is more potent than a Maxim gun. I believe that in the bird's notes Nature expresses herself with a force which is greater than that revealed in the deafening roar of the cannonade.



Rabindranath
Tagore meets
Albert Einstein
-- 1930 --

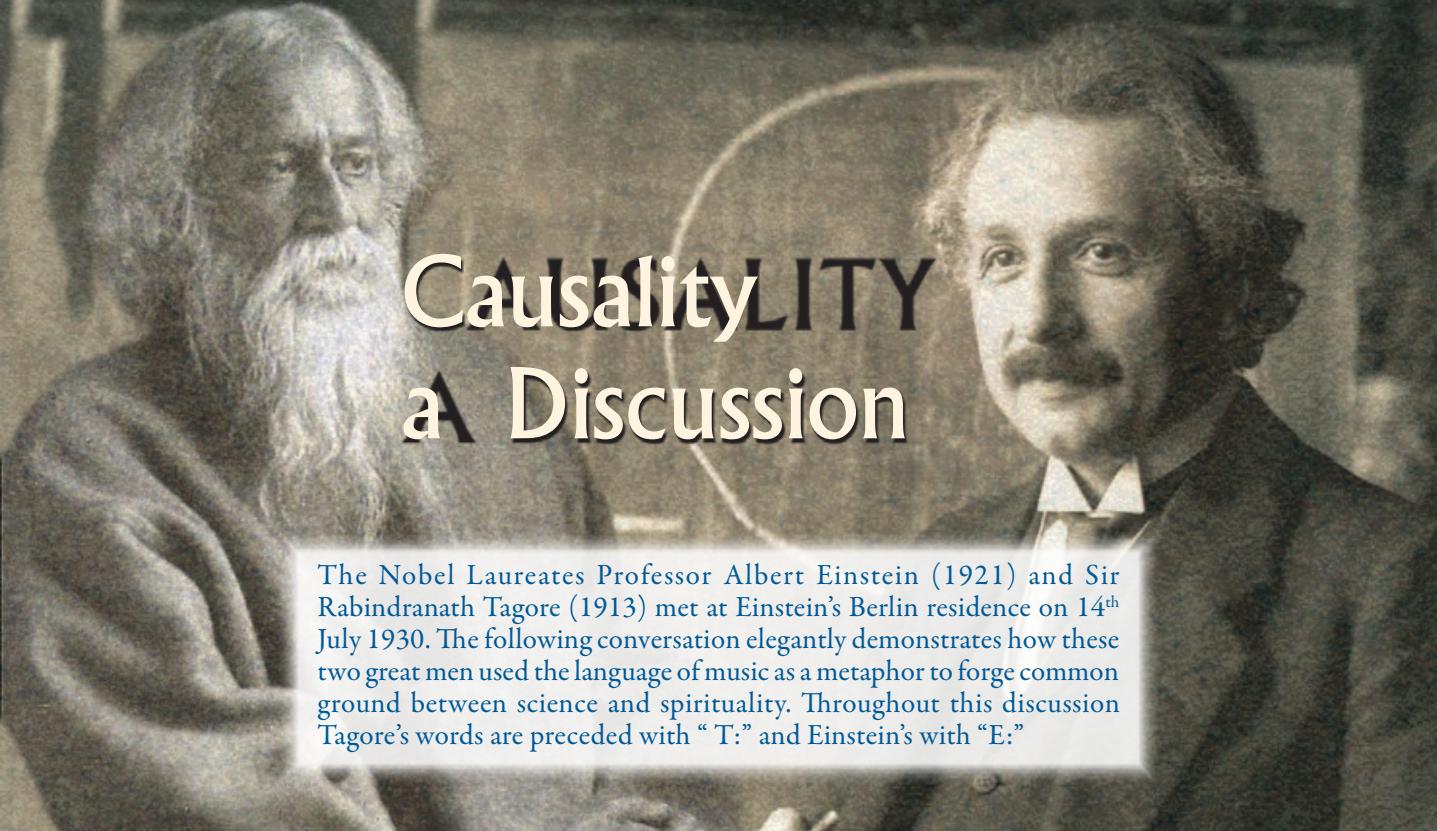
These are surprising and challenging words. Nothing could better reveal what sort of a thinker and poet Tagore really was. And yet, in an age when all the great nations were building up powerful armaments, he dared to dream of a world of human fraternity. Was it nothing but a poet's crazy dream? Perhaps there are high-up statesmen who would have us believe so, but thoughtful persons know better. If beauty and goodness are to last, the great Bengali poet's vision must come true. The walls that creeping suspicion have built between nations will have to come down.

Eighty eight years have passed since Tagore passed away, but his voice is with us still in his beautiful poetry, reminding us of the special message of peace he carried with him throughout his life. With the awful rise in world tensions that is occurring today, it would be well for more world leaders to think less about hypersonic weapons and more about human kindness and tolerance for the ways and beliefs of people other than themselves.

Many of his verses prove that he identified himself with the 'little people' of the world. He frequently spoke of nature and of things of the soul. A flower, a mountain, a cloud, all suggests the Creator. It is doubtful if ever a poet told of the love of God with greater simplicity. Study these samples of his thought, and then judge for yourself:

- Let me think there is One among those stars that guides my life through the dark unknown.
- Wrong cannot afford defeat, but Right can.
- God waits for us to regain our childhood in wisdom.
- The noise of the moment scoffs at the music of the Eternal.
- Those who have everything but You, my God, laugh at those who have nothing but Your Self.
- God is ashamed when the prosperous boast of His special favour.
- God grows weary of great kingdoms, but never of little flowers.





Causality

a Discussion

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

- T: I was discussing with Dr Mendel [*a mutual friend*] today the new mathematical discoveries which tell us that in the realm of infinitesimal atoms, chance has its play; the drama of existence is not absolutely predestined in character.
- E: Yes, I am well acquainted with this, but the facts that make science tend toward this view do not say goodbye to causality.
- T: Maybe not, yet it appears that the idea of causality is not in the elements, but that some other force builds up with them an organised universe.
- E: One tries to understand in the higher plane how the order is. The order is undoubtedly there where the big elements combine and guide existence, but in the minute elements, this order is not perceptible.
- T: Thus duality is in the depths of existence, the contradiction of free impulse and the directive will which works upon it and evolves an orderly scheme of things.
- E: Modern physics would not say they are contradictory. Clouds look as one from a distance, but if you see them nearby, they show themselves as disorderly drops of water.
- T: I find a parallel in human psychology. Our passions and desires are unruly, but our character subdues these elements into a harmonious whole. Does something similar to this happen in the physical world? Are the elements rebellious, dynamic with individual impulse? And is there a principle in the physical world which dominates them and puts them into an orderly organisation?
- E: Even the elements are not without statistical order; elements of radium will always maintain their specific order, now and ever onward, just as they have done all along. There is then a statistical order in the elements.
- T: Otherwise, the drama of existence would be too desultory. It is the constant harmony of chance and determination which makes it eternally new and living.
- E: I believe that whatever we do or live for has its causality; it is good however that we cannot see through to it.
- T: There is in human affairs an element of elasticity also, some freedom within a small range which is for the expression of our personality. It is like the musical system in India, which is not so rigidly fixed as western music. Our composers give a certain definite outline, a system of melody and rhythmic arrangement, and within a certain limit the player can improvise upon it. He must be one with the law of that particular melody; and then he can give spontaneous expression to his musical feeling within the prescribed regulation. We praise the composer for his genius in creating a foundation along with a superstructure of melodies, but we expect from the player his own skill in the creation of variations of melodic flourish and ornamentation. In creation we follow



- the central law of existence, but if we do not cut ourselves adrift from it, we can have sufficient freedom within the limits of our personality for the fullest self-expression.
- E: That is possible only when there is a strong artistic tradition in music to guide the people's mind. In Europe, music has strayed too far from popular art and popular feeling and has become something like a secret art with conventions and traditions of its own.
- T: You have to be absolutely obedient to this too complicated music. In India, the measure of a singer's freedom is in his own creative personality. He can sing the composer's song as his own if he has the power creatively to assert himself in his interpretation of the general law of the melody which he is given to interpret.
- E: It requires a very high standard of art to realise fully the great idea in the original music, so that one can make variations upon it. In our country, the variations are often prescribed.
- T: If in our conduct we can follow the law of goodness, we can have real liberty of self-expression. The principle of conduct is there, but the character which makes it true and individual is our own creation. In our music there is a duality of freedom and prescribed order.
- E: Are the words of a song also free? I mean to say, is the singer at liberty to add his own words to the song which he is singing?
- T: Yes. In Bengal we have a kind of song, we call it kirtan, which gives freedom to the singer to introduce parenthetical comments, phrases not in the original song. This occasions great enthusiasm, since the audience is constantly thrilled by some beautiful, spontaneous sentiment added by the singer.
- E: Is the metrical form quite severe?
- T: Yes, quite. You cannot exceed the limits of versification; the singer in all his variations must keep the rhythm and the time, which is fixed. In European music you have a comparative liberty with time, but not with melody.
- E: Can the Indian music be sung without words? Can one understand a song without words?
- T: Yes, we have songs with unmeaning words, sounds which just help to act as carriers of the notes. In North India, music is an independent art, not the interpretation of words and thoughts, as in Bengal. The music is very intricate and subtle and is a complete world of melody by itself.
- E: Is it not polyphonic?
- T: Instruments are used, not for harmony, but for keeping time and adding to the volume and depth. Has melody suffered in your music by the imposition of harmony?
- E: Sometimes it does suffer very much. Sometimes the harmony swallows up the melody altogether.
- T: Melody and harmony are like lines and colours in pictures. A simple linear picture may be completely beautiful; the introduction of colour may make it vague and insignificant. Yet colour may, by combination with lines, create great pictures, so long as it does not smother and destroy their value.
- E: It is a beautiful comparison; line is also much older than colour. It seems that your melody is much richer in structure than ours. Japanese music also seems to be so.
- T: It is difficult to analyse the effect of eastern and western music on our minds. I am deeply moved by the western music; I feel that it is great, that it is vast in its structure and grand in its composition. But our own music touches me more deeply by its fundamental lyrical appeal. European music is epic in character; it has a broad background and is Gothic in its structure.
- E: This is a question we Europeans cannot properly answer; we are so used to our own music. We want to know whether our own music is a conventional or a fundamental human feeling, whether to feel consonance and dissonance is natural, or a convention which we accept.
- T: Somehow the piano confounds me. The violin pleases me much more.
- E: It would be interesting to study the effects of European music on an Indian who had never heard it when he was young.
- T: Once I asked an English musician to analyse for me some classical music, and explain to me what elements make for the beauty of the piece.
- E: The difficulty is that the really good music, whether of the East or of the West, cannot be analysed.
- T: Yes and what deeply affects the hearer is beyond himself.
- E: The same uncertainty will always be there about everything fundamental in our experience, in our reaction to art, whether in Europe or in Asia. Even the red flower I see before me on your table may not be the same to you and me.
- T: And yet there is always going on the process of reconciliation between them, the individual taste conforming to the universal standard.





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Please book as soon as possible. For more information, navigate to the official Convention website at:-

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