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SEPTEMBER 2012

MYSTICISM - SCIENCE - THE ARTS



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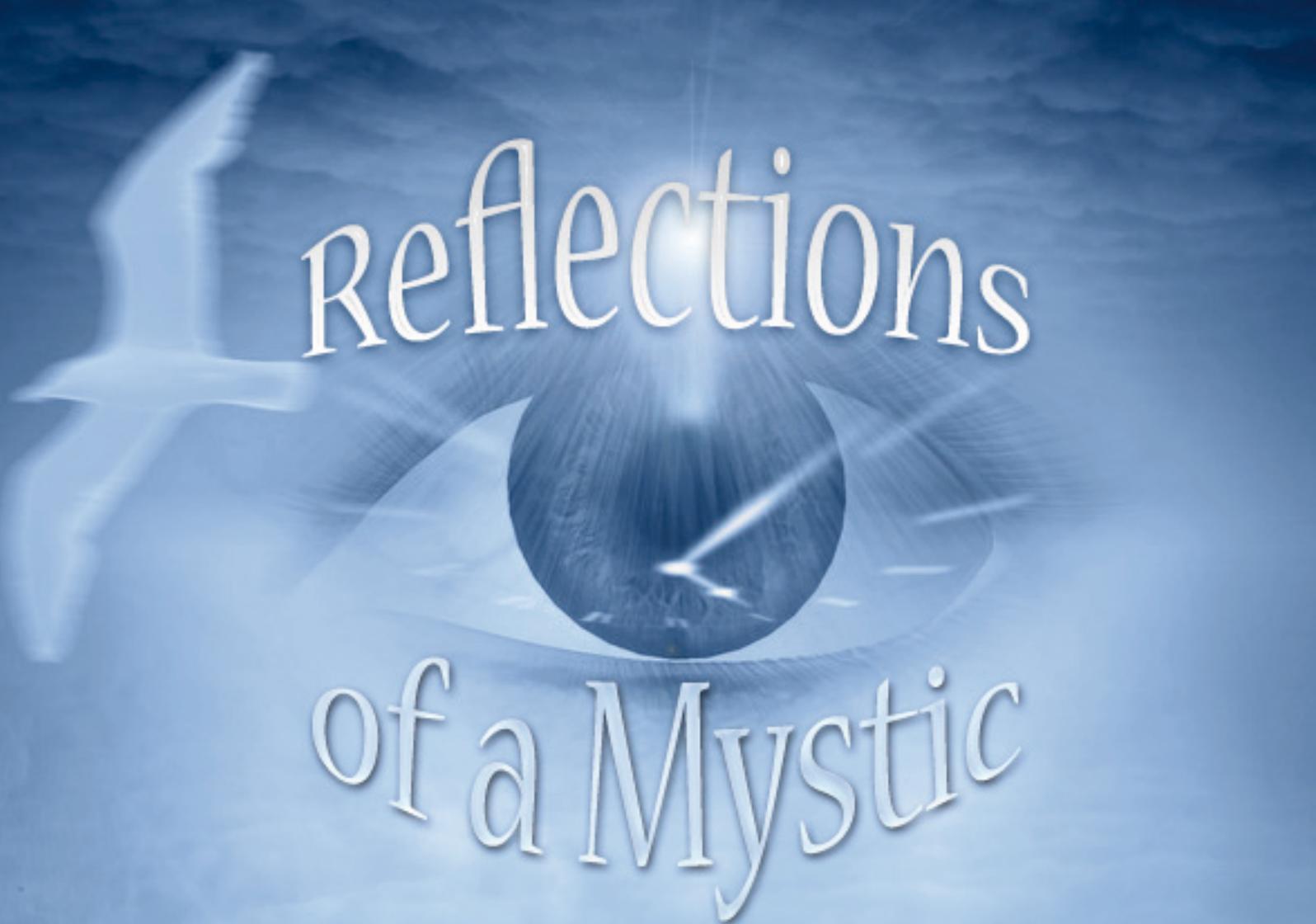
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Reflections of a Mystic

by Diane Weber

AS A METAPHYSICAL way of life, mysticism considers the psychic and spiritual worlds of greater consequence than their physical counterpart, the everyday world of material reality. Although Rosicrucians do not negate the important role of the physical, nevertheless as mystics, their highest priority is the search for truth. And in that search, each mystic eventually discovers that within the being of every living human, there exists a core of goodness exceeding all human understanding, and this they call 'God'. The aim of every mystic therefore is to realise and externalise this God in every act of life, thereby bestowing upon matter a purity and dignity worthy of this divine source.

The mystical life is achieved by a long process of spiritual refinement, and one lifetime is but a beginning. Many have sought the mystical

life. The ascetic forsakes the world and seeks to uncover his or her concept of this 'inner God' not knowing that a more stable path lies in engaging with the world rather than rejecting it. Most people are caught in the maelstrom of human responsibilities and cannot or do not wish to retire from the physical world. Yet many people, despite their daily challenges, also seek the divine in periods of solitude from daily affairs. Both the ascetic and the modern mystic who fully engages with life on all levels considers the crucible of life an opportunity to temper the metal of the soul. We seek that for which humanity has always sought; that which we hope will bring about a union with God and a reintegration of the warring forces within ourselves.

As mystics we yearn for truth; we search for it through meditation and feel an inexpressible

happiness when we discover or realise the God within. It is then for us a light, dispelling the darkness of doubt and confusion. We are able to see and love all life everywhere and, fortified with an inner serenity, we can meet adversity and suffering and accept them as part of the total human experience to be used as stepping-stones in our ascent toward perfection.

Humility

Humility is indispensable, being invariably the sweetest flower in the inner garden and of the greatest value. Genuine humility implies a profound knowledge of human psychology; it is a cloak that protects and defends true wisdom. Humility is not ignorance; rather, it is an introspective consciousness, a progressive realisation of divine unity which prevents us from being aroused by envy and keeps us aware of the consequences of our own thought. Freed from lower-level thinking we are, therefore, protected from our own pride and vanity and realise the inner peace of tolerance and love.

As the disciples of mysticism, teachers, sages and saints alike have sought wisdom within the inner silence of the soul. Mysticism is not a dazzling light that blinds. Neither is it a flickering perishable flame that confuses the aspirant. It is a permanent, dependable light, dissolving the errors of darkness.

Mysticism Must Be Lived

The greatest mystics of history did not limit themselves to merely writing down their message. It was their life in thought, word and deed that spoke most of who they were. Unlike the artist who leaves a masterpiece to enlighten and inspire posterity, the mystic finds it impossible to sever a part of the total consciousness and make of it a complete and comprehensive message that says it all.

It is well for the aspirant to remember, among other lessons, the teachings of the Master Jesus, that *"unless a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it stays alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit."* (John 12:24) To understand this parable is to understand a profound mystical truth.

Although humanity appears to be racing toward its own early demise, we understand that the race is yet in its infancy and that men and women are still playing with their lives, like children pursuing fantasies. Intangible, sacred and permanent values are ignored, and so many, many people occupy themselves with trivia and all that is transitory. In a turbulent and disquieting world, only the inner God is real, though sadly, so few are fully conscious of this yet.

"Mystics of past centuries sought perfection through the practice of moral virtues."

Mystics of past centuries sought

perfection through the practice of moral virtues, and so too does the mystic of today. Francis of Assisi, John of the Cross, eminent Muslim, Christian and Jewish mystics of past centuries, the seventeenth century German mystic Jacob Boehme, and many others, have been fountains of human inspiration.

Time must be allotted for retreat, for meditation. There must be self-discipline in the study and application of the basic principles of life and constant practice of moral and virtuous habits. These are necessary to awaken and develop the psychic and spiritual elements of the aspirant. *"Mysticism is exalted grace,"* said Plato. And Saint Teresa, in describing the inner ecstasy, spoke of *"a going within to experience the feelings of the soul... a closing of eyes, ears and mind and realising life as pure soul."*

These heights are gained through progressive discipline, and the mystic discovers that the wisdom thus gained strengthens one in divine light. It girds us with spiritual power and reveals the real treasure of life: the sanctity of that inner God and the sublime nature of the human soul.

The Quest of the Holy Grail

Part One

by Earle de Motte



The Grail as an Object

THE GRAIL MYTH, which is about a knight's quest for a mysterious object, has proved to be one of the most enduring myths of all time. Its strength as a dormant survivor in the human unconscious and its intermittent emergence into consciousness at various points in history may be attributed to two groups of factors. First, there is the human appeal of the quest, the challenges of the journey, the object itself, and its relative inaccessibility. And secondly, as in nature, there is the apparent cyclic nature of events in human society, in which elements of the Grail myth emerge into the consciousness of societies beset by intense crises (excessive and frequent violence,

Illustration from a 14th century French illumination accompanying Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval*. It depicts the procession of the Grail borne aloft by a girl who is followed by a boy with a mysterious spear which magically bleeds from the tip. [Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/hg_gallery_01.shtml]



[Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/hg_gallery_01.shtml]

oppression, injustice, wars and civil strife, and today, impending environmental catastrophe), which represent the 'lows' of the cycle of human 'progress'.

The age-old Grail myth is a response, a counterbalance to the 'dark' side of events in history. It is an attempt to salvage something that has been lost or believed to have been lost in the human spirit, a new surge in the human soul to raise human consciousness to another 'high' in the cycle, a triumph of ideals over harsh reality, a victory of self over ego or the liberation of the divine spark within humanity from subservience to desire. The myth takes hold when the need is felt to raise the consciousness of humanity to be proactive in creating or restoring a paradise on earth in order to counter the presumed inevitability of increased suffering caused by ignorance and error.

Seeking a mysterious object, a talisman or elixir, becomes important in this consciousness shift. It is the human acknowledgment of our inability to cope without aid, and our willingness to undertake a commitment to secure this aid. The object then becomes the goal sought out by the individual, that is, it drives and motivates the journey because of its value. This value may lie in the selfish desire for power, but it later turns out to be something unselfish, noble, and inspirational to others; or else it is perceived to be what it is at the beginning and the end of the quest; a physical object or a symbol which provides the purpose for shaping the quester's destiny and, indirectly, the destiny of humanity.

"The Grail theme was soon Christianised after Chrétien's poem was written."

Development of the Grail Object

Regardless of the origins of the earlier components of the Grail myth (be they Celtic, Middle Eastern,

Asian or of medieval Christendom), its form as we know it took shape in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, commencing with the story of *Perceval* or *Conte del Graal* ('Legend of the Grail') by Chrétien de Troyes around 1180 CE. This was followed by several other accounts centred around the theme of the Grail quest. In Chrétien's poem, the Grail itself, which seemed to be a platter or dish, was carried into the refectory hall in a solemn procession during Perceval's visit to the otherworld castle of the Grail. Here, the Grail was described as being brighter than all the candles in the hall, consisting of pure, refined gold, and set with precious stones.

In other various Grail romances, the Grail displayed other magical qualities: it 'floated' into the room, it looked like a cup or stone, it temporarily blinded its beholders or made them speechless, it took the form of several images that appeared in a series before its beholders, it provided an inexhaustible *a la carte* menu to all the guests in the refectory hall, it maintained or extended individual lives, healed wounds and restored fertility to barren land.

Shortly after Chrétien's poem was written, in which there was no suggestion as to the Grail being of Christian provenance, the Grail theme was soon Christianised (although not with official Church authority) by two other Grail writers, Robert de Boron and Heinrich von dem Thürlin.

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The Grail, understood as a sacred cup and its sacred contents, the stories of its origin, its extensive journeys, the immense trouble taken by its protectors to conceal it from its enemies, and its transformative power on those who see or touch it that has given the chalice its strong evocative content of today's myth.

The former, in his poem *Joseph of Arimathea*, identified the Grail with the chalice of the Last Supper, which was also used to collect the blood of Christ at his crucifixion. Thürlein, in his *The Crown* described the Grail as a casket containing bread, which was accompanied by a blood-spotted cloth. The suggestion was obvious; a reference to the Eucharist was intended. There are many who see the Grail and its contents as a part of, or as symbolically explaining the meaning of, the Eucharist. In this view, receiving communion once a week establishes contact between the seeker of the Grail (that is, the celebrant) and the Grail and its contents (meaning the active partaking of the body and blood of the Redeemer). This is the most popular view.

The Christianisation of the Grail was supported by another account which connects the Grail to Christ, but not through the 'Blessed Sacrament'. The romance called the *Grand St. Graal* asserted that the Grail was a 'book' written by Christ himself after the Resurrection; and yet another reference in the introduction to the *Lancelot Grail* mentions that a vision appeared before a hermit of the eighth century, during which Christ appeared to him and said, "Here begins the book of the Holy Grail, here begins the terror, here the marvels." This seems to infer that the Grail was or is a record or storehouse of initiatic wisdom communicated to humanity by a great teacher in the priest-king tradition, represented by figures such as Melchisedek, Hermes Trismegistus, or Merlin, whether the book was written or communicated by word of mouth.

Initiatic Associations

A most unusual description of the Grail appeared in the romance of the anonymous writer of the *Perlesvaus*, or the 'High History of the Grail'. Here the Grail was a shape-shifter. This, together with the Templar undertones of the romance, as well as other references, suggest a strong connection with the initiatic tradition of the ancient mystery schools. Instead of the identity of the Grail being a single fixed object, it assumes a series of different

Remains of the so called Nanteos Cup, which in its time has been identified with the Grail. When examined professionally it was found to be a medieval drinking cup made from Rowan wood, which is native to Wales. [Source: <http://www.nanteos.com/nanteos-past-and-present.php>]



forms before the awestruck beholder who sees images of a crowned and crucified king, a child, a man with a crown of thorns and wounds on his body, another indescribable manifestation, and finally, a chalice. The transformations in this imaginative drama are accompanied by pleasant perfumes and an extraordinary brightness. The writer of the *Perlesvaus* seemed to be suggesting an initiation into some mystery cult, either Christian or another wisdom school. The images and other references in the story appeared to contain secret messages of a mystical nature, with deeper meanings, understood only by certain readers or listeners who look beyond the simple entertainment provided by the narrative.

However, it is the Grail, understood as a *sacred cup* and its sacred contents, the stories of its origin, its extensive journeys, the immense trouble taken by its protectors to conceal it from its enemies, and its transformative power on those who see or touch it that has given the chalice its strong evocative content of today's myth.

The Glastonbury Cup

Over the centuries there seems to have arisen a national or regional pride in locating the Grail (whether a chalice or other object) in certain parts of Europe. The Glastonbury story associated with Joseph of Arimathea is matched by similar stories in France and Spain.

In England, the chalice was popularised in the nineteenth century by the poet Alfred Lord Tennyson and in Germany by the composer Richard Wagner. In fact, not long after Tennyson wrote his *Idylls of the King*, it became known that a cup, a physical chalice made of olive wood, was in the possession of the Powell family, who looked after it for centuries at Nanteos, near Aberystwyth in Wales. It came into their possession shortly after

Henry VIII broke with Rome and, implementing his policy of the dissolution of the monasteries, ransacked Glastonbury Abbey. Because of de Boron's legend of Joseph of Arimathea and its other Arthurian connections, Glastonbury was believed to be the resting place of the holy chalice.

Just before Henry's enforcers moved into the monastery the story is told that seven of the chalice guardians (monks) escaped to their sister monastery, Strata Florida Abbey, just outside Pontrhydfendigaid, near Tregaron in the county of Ceredigion, not far from Aberystwyth. Later, this monastery fell victim to the dissolution, but just before the intrusion, the seven monks (and their precious object) were given shelter at the house of the noble family of Nanteos, which was not far from the Abbey. Richard Wagner, twenty-seven years before composing his opera *Parsifal*, apparently visited the Powell family at Nanteos House (1855), and reported that he had seen the olive cup. The Powell family eventually moved to England and the cup was removed elsewhere for safe keeping.

There are other stories about what happened to the Glastonbury cup. One relates that at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, the cup was among the treasure that was split between two groups of monks who escaped to Wales. One group headed toward [the above mentioned] Strata Florida. The other followed the south coast of Wales and took shelter in the monastery at Caldy Island, taking the cup with them, where it still remains, of course, hidden forever!

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A third version of the Glastonbury cup story is retold to us by Hank Harrison in his book *The Cauldron and the Grail*. According to this source, the trustees the Chalice Well in Glastonbury have placed on the table of the attic at Chalice Well House their genuine Grail, along with place settings at the table for the return of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Space prevents us from enumerating the several other secret Grail sites in the British Isles.

France and Spain

On the continent, the Joseph of Arimathea and Glastonbury story is matched by the visit of the Magdalene (Mary Magdalene) to Marseille in Southern France, and in Spain there is a Grail cup legend associated with St. Lawrence and the Huesca region.

As early as the fourth century the legends describe the Magdalene fleeing the Holy Land, taking with her something called the Grail. The story tells of this Grail being hidden in a cave in Southern France and cared for by the Cathars, a religious movement centred in the Pyrenees.

In the early thirteenth century the Cathars were declared heretical and the so called Albigensian Crusade was launched against them. Just before the last stronghold of the Cathars, the fortress of Montsegur, fell to the Crusaders and the surviving Cathars were burnt at the stake, about four or five of them escaped, taking with them some unknown treasure, which was believed to include the cup, and hid it in a cave somewhere nearby in the French Pyrenees. From there it was probably taken to the monastery of Montserrat near Barcelona.

The Spanish story traces the Cup to St. Lawrence, a papal legate, who took the cup from Rome to a spot in the Huesca district in northeast Spain. It was hidden in a cave in the area where San Juan de la Pena monastery was built. Fear of impending Arab occupation led the Cup's guardians to move it to the French Pyrenees, to Montsegur or Montréal-de-Sos, or to both locations in turn, and then brought back to the San Juan de la Pena monastery. It was finally transferred to the cathedral in Valencia. It is probable that both stories refer to the same 'Grail' associated with the Magdalene.

Speculations

The debate still continues as to whether the Grail is a physical object, an earthly talisman, magical,



The Valencia Grail

This relic, which goes back at least to the 14th century, and is probably an 8th century artefact, is frequently referred to as the Grail. It is housed at Valencia Cathedral, and is officially known as the 'Holy Chalice'. It stands 17cm high. The cup is carved out of a piece of agate with 28 pea-sized pearls set into the base... It was only in the medieval romances that the Grail was identified as the cup of the Last Supper. The Church has never officially recognised the Grail, so the Valencia chalice has no real claim to be the Grail, and the Church authorities are careful not to publicise it as such. [Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/hg_gallery_07.shtml]

and worthy of being revered as such, or a symbol of something in the human spirit which activates ameliorative change in individuals and societies. To a pilgrim's heart, its symbolic meaning is perhaps better understood if manifested in concrete form, a wisdom book, a magic cup, a precious stone, or a relic associated with a great religious teacher.

There are others who, in view of the speculative nature of the actual existence of the Grail object, prefer to express the Grail mystery in something less tangible but spiritually real and in more meaningful terms. To some, says John Matthews in his *The Grail Tradition*:

"[the Grail] has no real existence at all, but [it] serves rather as a luminous idea that shapes itself at will to the needs of the individual... [and to others] it is part of an ongoing process of transformation, an alchemical dream of the soul on its quest for human evolution or oneness with God."

The idea would seem to have sprung into the consciousness of being from various parts of the world at the same time or in different periods of human evolution, and given expression in the various myths of individual societies.

Geoffrey Ashe gives an added dimension to the Grail as a powerful idea, seeing it also as a special relationship between the Absolute and Man. He expresses this very warmly in his book, *King Arthur's Avalon*:

"It [the Grail] was a visible pledge... of God's friendship towards mankind... [but] friendship can be tragically demanding and disruptive... A knight who achieves, may wreck his life doing it. But the Grail rewards him with priceless assurance. God is there. God's hand reaches out through the cruelty and indifference of the world... whatever the sacrifice, and that sacrifice is worth it."

Acknowledgement

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The Illuminating Light

The mind is turned toward God in the same way that the eye is directed toward the light of the sun; next it sees the light of the sun; third, in the light of the sun it perceives the colours and shapes of things. Therefore the eye, at first dark and, like Chaos, formless, loves the light while it looks toward it; in so looking, it is illuminated; in receiving the ray, it is informed with the colours and shapes of things.

Marsilio Ficino 1433-99
Humanist philosopher and Neo-platonist

THE TRUE MEANING



MANY WORTHY SUBJECTS acquire a bad reputation from misconceptions which have become associated with them. Their true and original meaning becomes obscured by the false ideas expounded in their name. That branch of philosophy known as *metaphysics* is one that has suffered this indignity.

The word 'metaphysics' has been popularly attributed to Aristotle. But actually, according to ancient historians, Aristotle originated the organisation of those subjects which metaphysics includes, rather than its name. It is related that the 'first introduction of the term [metaphysics] was a mere accident.'¹ Aristotle called these subjects his 'First Philosophy'. In 70 BCE in Rome, one Andronicus of Rhodes was collecting these writings of Aristotle. It seems that inadvertently he placed the First Philosophy after the treatise on Physics. The subjects of metaphysics were then called 'the treatise after the physical treatise' which is the literal meaning of the word *metaphysics*. Or more simply put, it means *over and beyond the physical*.

This distinction was to imply that metaphysics concerned itself more with abstract qualities than with a scientific observation and analysis of factual matters. But as it was termed 'beyond the physical,' it was construed by many early and later thinkers as meaning that which dealt with the supernatural. As a result, down through the centuries paralleling and often exceeding the true subjects of metaphysics have been many superstitions listed under its title.

In fact, many occult subjects actually having no relationship to true metaphysics are popularly expounded as such today. There are numerous persons who profess to be students of metaphysics who have no familiarity with the original sphere of knowledge which it includes. When they speak of metaphysics in terms of these

G OF METAPHYSICS

by Ralph M Lewis
Past Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order

fantastic subjects, they alienate those persons who might otherwise be interested in it.

Science of Causes

Among students of true metaphysics its definition lies in the study of *first principles*. It can further be defined as a systematic study of the fundamental problems relating to the ultimate nature of reality and human knowledge. Metaphysics is a speculation, not in regard to the particulars of our world, its kinds and species, but rather the attempt to find some first causes from which sprang the diversities of reality. It is also the attempt of the human mind to bring order out of the chaos of the separateness of phenomena.

To know the true beginnings and the unity of the cosmos, or reality, there must also be some order to human thought itself. Otherwise, we may be led astray by our thought, our perceptions and conceptions of the universe and our relationship to it. We must, therefore, know what thought is and how true or false are its representations, the ideas which it forms in our consciousness. To embrace this realm of inquiry, metaphysics falls into two divisions. The first is *ontology*, the second *epistemology*. Between these two realms are found the fundamental principles of philosophy, ethics, logic, etc.

Ontology

Ontology concerns the ultimate problems of Being and Reality. Simply put, what is Reality? What is the nature of true Being? What is the Real?

Is it the heterogeneous collection of things we ordinarily experience? Do all our perceptions that we know through our receptor senses fall into a kind of crazy quilt pattern or can they be reduced to some common substance or quality? In other words, what lies behind the phenomenal world, the one of sensation?

The ontology of metaphysics is, in its turn, subdivided into various theories of Being. Each one of these has had its renowned and ardent supporters. Let us touch briefly upon these subdivisions.

Monism is the conception that ultimate Being is One. It expounds that Being is a monad, a simple single substance or kind out of which has emerged the phenomenal world with all of its variations that we have come to know. There is then the question in Monism as to how this variation is accomplished. In other words, *how does the One bring forth many?* There have been

various explanations of how the One was in fact inherently dual in its nature and that there was a flux, a movement internally, that caused the various

phenomena of matter and energy which are known to us.

Pluralism is another of the subdivisions of ontology. This theory expounds that the first principles or ultimate Being is more than one. It contends, in general, that it consists of two attributes. Sometimes, it has been stated, there are many more attributes which in their combining and interaction create all the forms of the world. The early atomists, such as Empedocles and Democritus, held this latter view. Empedocles said:

“To know the true beginnings and the unity of reality there must be some order to human thought itself.”

"There is no coming into being of aught that perishes, nor any end for it in baneful death, but only mingling and separation of what has been mingled... When the elements have been mingled in the fashion of man, and come to the light of day, or in the fashion of the race of wild beasts or plants or birds, then men say that these came into being; and when they are separated they call that, as is the custom, woeful death."

Deity

The Jewish-Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-77), in his metaphysics, said there is but one infinite eternal substance, and that he called God. He did not think of God as being an anthropomorphic or personal being but rather a kind of universal consciousness or mind. This infinite substance had an infinite number of attributes which were of its eternal essence. Only two of these infinite number of attributes of which the substance consisted are known to man, declared Spinoza. These are *thought* and *extension* (matter). The *modification* of these attributes is what accounts for the modes or variations of the world, that is, the things which we experience.

If there is a plurality, if ultimate Being is not a single substance, what then causes its attributes or parts to act or react upon each other? What is the factor that accounts for movement and change within Being? Various explanations have

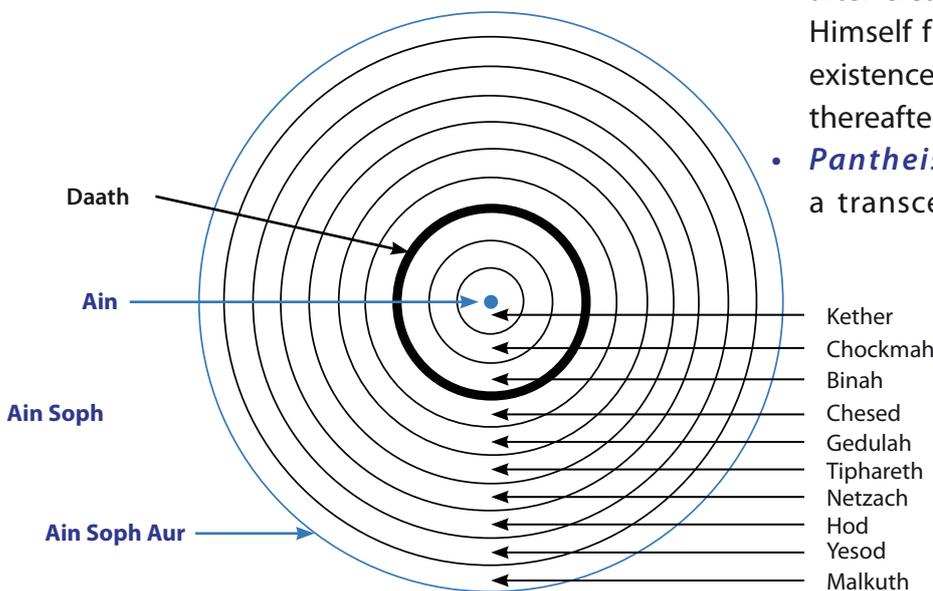
accounted for the motivating force underlying or inherent in Being since the time of the ancient Greeks. One traditional explanation has been the supernatural, that is, the belief in a Supreme Mind as embodied in a God or Deity.

Mind Cause

The earliest teleological concept, or the belief in a 'mind cause' underlying reality and uniting its elements to compose all things, was promulgated by the Greek Anaxagoras (500-428 BCE). The elements were not just four in number, that is, air, earth, fire and water, but also, he stated, the various qualities of them such as hot, cold, moist, dry and the like. But detached from these, behind them, was *Nous* or 'mind' which was self-moved 'and which is the cause of motion in everything else'.

Theism, *Deism*, and *Pantheism* also play their part in ontology. Each in turn is made to account for the generation of being.

- **Theism** is the conception of a personal God as a creator detached from being, that which he brought into existence, and yet he continues to manipulate it by the exercise of his will.
- **Deism** is also the notion of a personal God who is the initial creator of all being. But unlike the theistic concept, it contends that after creation God completely detached Himself from all reality. He brought into existence the laws of the universe which thereafter inexorably governed the world.
- **Pantheism** is the conception that a transcendental mind, universal and



In Jewish mysticism the formation of existence is essentially maintained through a series of divine emanations from the Godhead 'Ain' and developing through to 'Malkuth', the material realm.

external, not only brought everything into existence, but as well continues to permeate all that exists. In other words, God is in everything; yet no accumulation or sum of things alone is God for He is potential with even more than now exists.

Necessity and Permanency

Another aspect included in the ontology of metaphysics is the *doctrine of necessity*. This contends that Being is and never had a beginning for something cannot come from nothing. By the necessity of what it is, Being cannot escape manifesting its various expressions. It has to be. Opposed to this conception is the *doctrine of Tychism*. This expounds that everything happens by *chance*. In other words, the expressions of Being, its manifestations, do not come about by the inevitable necessity of what it is but rather by the adventitious or chance coming together of the variations or attributes of Being.

Something else that concerns the metaphysician is the problem of *permanency*. In short, why is Being eternal? Why can it not cease to be? The doctrine of necessity offers an argument for the permanency of Being in that non-being is paradoxical. Whatever exists, whatever is *realised*, would in itself be Being. Therefore, if there is something, no matter what its nature or name, it too would be Being. Consequently, the state of non-being would not be possible. Parmenides, founder of the ancient Eleatic School of philosophy, was the first to expound the doctrine that non-being could not exist.

Epistemology

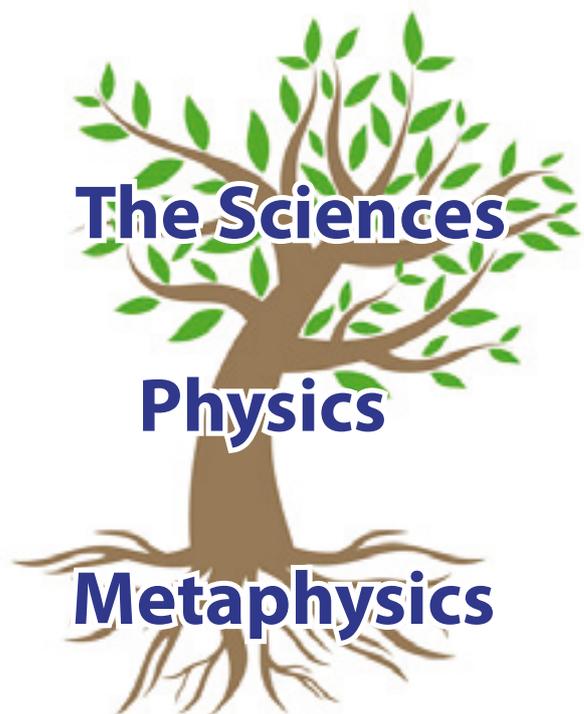
Epistemology, or the theory and science of knowledge, is the other principal division of metaphysics. Almost any department of knowledge can be traced to metaphysical suppositions. In this realm we enter the speculation

of what knowledge is. It concerns the distinction between, for example, sensations as cold, hot, pain and pleasure on the one hand, and our *perceptions* of colours, sounds and forms on the other. It likewise considers differences between *cognition*, the knowing or the understanding of something as an analytical process, and the mere consciousness or *simple awareness* of external impressions.

This division of metaphysics likewise speculates as to whether the apprehension process actually conveys a true image of reality. When, for example, we perceive something, is it actually as we experience it? Can one ever know the true nature of reality? What we perceive may be merely what our consciousness conjures up from the vibrations of the external world which impinge themselves upon our senses and the sensations which they in turn produce.

Metaphysics is far from a dead or obsolete system of thought, having no place in the modern world of science and technology. It is true, of course, that the advance of science and instrumentation has made it possible to subject to empirical examination much

“Metaphysics is far from an obsolete system of thought in the modern world.”



natural phenomena whose nature was once but metaphysical speculation. In such instances, science has been able to demonstrate the cause and to prove by what is called 'natural law' how certain phenomena occur. In doing so, science has often disproved many early false conceptions of metaphysics. Remarkably enough, however, it has likewise substantiated what were once only the *conclusions of reason* in metaphysics.

Early thinkers did not have the technical means of either proving or refuting most of what they arrived at by sheer reason and logic. What was thought to be logically self-evident was held by them to be true. From the pragmatic point of view it was true at that time. In other words, it gave satisfying answers to questions concerning mysteries of nature which could not at that time be refuted. The only unfortunate aspect of this method was that often there was no subsequent attempt to verify a rational conclusion by the process of observation and analysis, or what we call the 'scientific method'.

Cosmogony

Today many of the general divisions of metaphysics still remain. They are embraced by science. Ontology in its subject matter is not extinct. *Cosmogony*, with the elaborate cosmological science of astronomy, has replaced it or rather includes it. These sciences today are also trying to find out, as did ontology, if there is

an ultimate substance, a *prima materia*, a basic energy underlying all the newly discovered sub-nuclear particles.

Theories of the universe abound in modern science. However, they are not founded exclusively on sheer abstraction but upon some thread of fact. Nevertheless, in their initial conception they are hypotheses. The same may be said with regard to epistemology. Its modern scientific counterparts are psychology, neurology, psychiatry and their subdivisions.

The stimulus of science, that which inspires its inductive method, its exploration and investigation of the particulars of the phenomenal world, is the result of initial theoretical speculations about the general. To be more specific, people still wonder, still conjecture; their imagination is continually fired by the mysteries of the universe. Their rationalisations are the metaphysics of today. But such generalities are no longer the finality, they are only the incentive to further empirical inquiry by a demonstrable science.

If ever the provocative thought of which metaphysics consists were to expire, then science, as we know it, would lose its idealism, the dreams which it seeks to convert into reality.

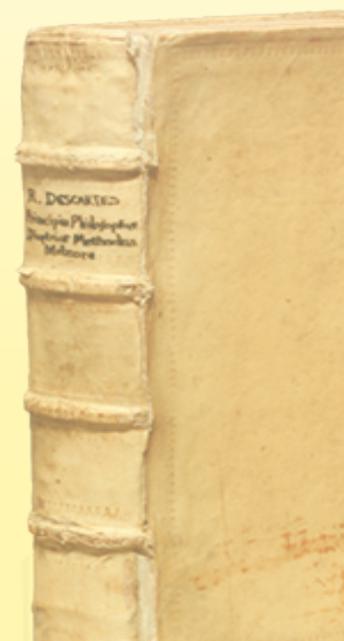
Endnotes

1. For a detailed discussion on the origin of the term 'metaphysics' see also: <http://www.phorrigan.fcpages.com> (ed.)



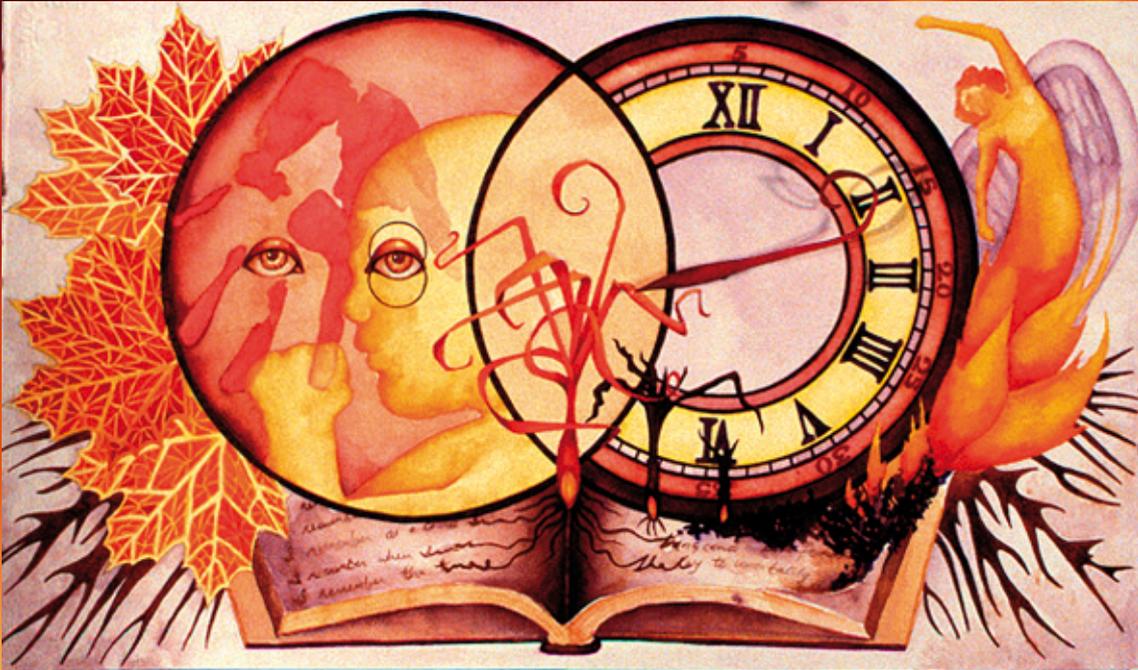
“Thus, all Philosophy is like a tree, of which Metaphysics is the root, Physics the trunk, and all the other sciences the branches that grow out of this trunk, which are reduced to three principal [sic], namely, Medicine, Mechanics and Ethics. By the science of Morals, I understand the highest and most perfect which, presupposing an entire knowledge of the other sciences, is the last degree of wisdom.”

The Principles of Philosophy (1644)
René Descartes



Immortality and the

afterlife



Immortality ©2002 Ingrid Sundberg

by Paul Goodall

IF THERE IS ONE QUESTION that dominates our thinking over all others, it is that of our own mortality. It always seems to be there at the back of our minds ready to announce itself at any time. Although the self awareness of our physical being is so deep-seated that it allows us much of the time to ignore the eventual demise of the physical body, it is only when we are reminded of it through a life threatening physical experience, the death of a loved one or through the media of television and books, that it asserts itself once more. We simply cannot escape its insistence that we ponder the mystery of life and death whether for a fleeting moment or by prolonged study through reading or contemplation.

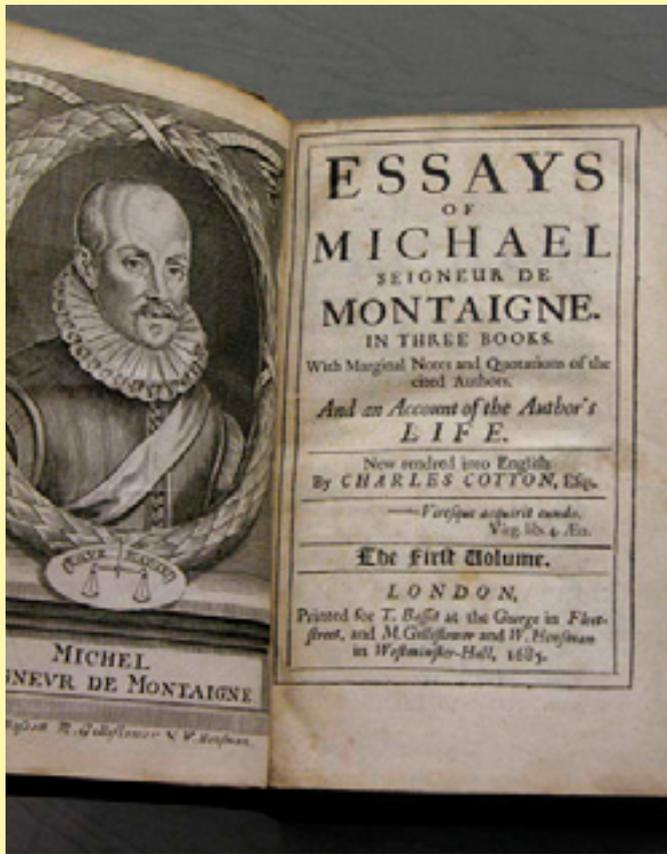
The first written record of man's discovery of death was contained within the Gilgamesh Epic, the earliest known literary work from Babylon (c. 2500 BCE) where its general themes are the same as now, following the notion that we must somehow continue to exist after we die. Indeed, so strongly are we attached to living that the idea of a continuation of life after death is an agreeable

proposition and has been so for millennia. Given the particularly difficult day to day living of those in the past and the fear that such suffering might continue after death, the speculations of ancient philosophers concerning the soul's ultimate blissful immortality would have been very comforting.

Fear of Death

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

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The French essayist Michel de Montaigne in his *Essays* (1580) says that:

"If we have known how to live properly and calmly, we will know how to die in the same manner."

This reflects the attitude of those who were in a position to appreciate the Renaissance spirit and the world of which they were a part. The idea that life could be enjoyed was a far cry from the Christian custom of living in the fear of death.

Immortality and the Soul

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

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Ralph M Lewis, Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order from 1939-87, describes it thus:

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

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

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

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

Aristotle on the other hand, proposed that the 'active intellect' or mind, which he considered of divine origin, was the eternal part of man's nature, denying that the whole soul was indestructible with certain parts of it being inseparable from its body.³

Since the foundation of Western learning (scholasticism) relied on Aristotelian principles,



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

Resurrection

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

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

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

the universally accepted Platonic ideas of immortality were undermined and it wasn't until the Renaissance and the resurrection of hermetic texts that the idea of an immortal soul was extant again.

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

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

Descartes further asserted that our soul is quite naturally independent of our body and therefore not liable to die with it. The very fact that man can think, sets us apart from machines and the rest of the animal kingdom. He concludes from his argument *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am [i.e., I exist]), that it is the soul that by nature thinks, and that this essence of ourselves actually requires no physical body in which to exist since the soul is incorporeal and entirely distinct from the body.



René Descartes (1596-1650)

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

Reincarnation

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

The Greeks gained their ideas about reincarnation from the Egyptians according to the Greek historian Herodotus (c.484-425 BCE). It appears that Pythagoras (c.570-490 BCE) was the first to teach the doctrine of reincarnation



to the West although his ideas were further refined by later Greek philosophers. A famous fragment of the contemporary philosopher and poet Xenophanes (c.570-475 BCE) provides some insight into what Pythagoras thought happened to the soul after death:

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

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

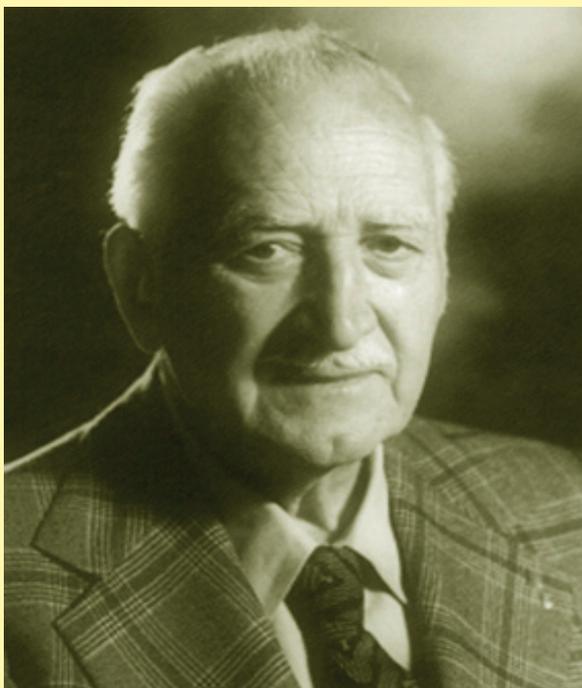
Popular ideas about reincarnation in the West stem primarily from Hinduism as a result of being frequently exposed to this religion. The Hindus believe that at the heart of every person is the divine soul which they call atman and which also experiences multiple incarnations. The contemporary Indian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

*"Since souls are eternal, and since their normal condition is to be associated with a body which is perishable, it is plausible to assume that in order for the soul to remain in its normal condition, it must inhabit an unending succession of bodies."*⁴

Immortality: The Mystical Viewpoint

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

◀ Pythagoras: from 'The School of Athens' by Raphael, 1509



◀ **Ralph M Lewis, Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order from 1939-87**

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

In other words, matter, regardless of how it may be changed or modified by heat, pressure or some other force exerted upon it, still exists in gaseous or other forms. It might be reasonable to accept that this attribute of permanency of matter and energy must also exist in the non-physical world with different non-physical characteristics.⁵

So, immortality then is the concept of the continuance of the manifestation of a force of which we are now consciously aware. This force pulsates through us in the form of life and expresses itself in physical existence, mental activity and a degree of adaptation to the environment. That these forces will continue, is hard to doubt. But

in order to support and perhaps illustrate the foregoing, here is an analogy of that permanency:

We know that life can be contained in a very small area. Imagine a tiny seed waiting for the right conditions to prevail in order to begin its growth. It is known that seeds have often lain under conditions unfavourable for growth for years and even centuries. When exposed to soil and moisture however, they have successfully germinated and life in the form of a plant began again. Surely then we can make the assumption that if a seed having lain for long dormant periods can preserve the essence of life, then the life or soul that is within the human body will also survive and manifest in some form when our physical bodies can no longer serve life's purpose.

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

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

*"The word 'transition' as used by Rosicrucians alludes to death not as a cessation of the human self but rather as a change to another transcendent existence."*⁶

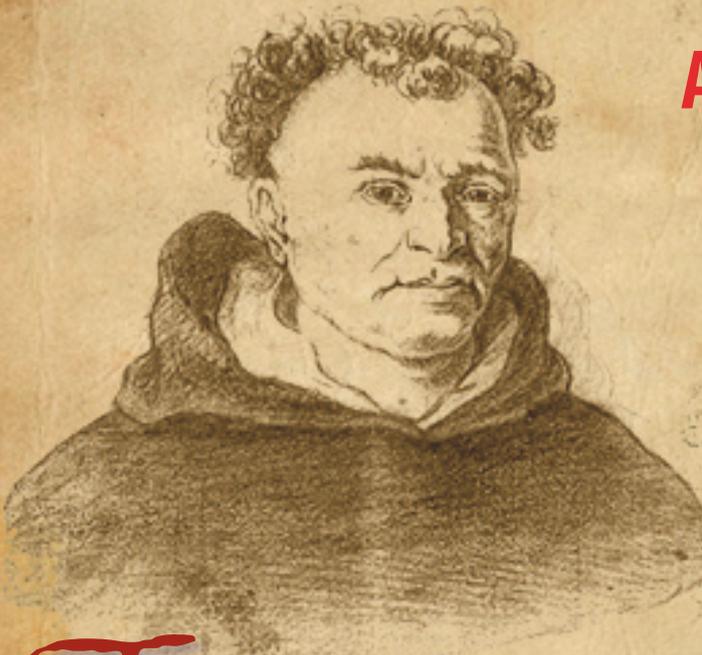
Endnotes

1. Lewis, Ralph M, *The Conscious Interlude*, AMORC, 1982, pp.228-229.
2. Plato, *Phaedrus*, c.370 BCE. This work was set as a dialogue between the characters of Socrates and Phaedrus through which Plato presents his philosophy.
3. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, I 1, II 1. A treatise outlining Aristotle's philosophical views on the nature of living things.
4. Quote from Jacques Choron, 'Death and Immortality' in *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, edited by Philip P. Wiener, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1973-74, Vol.1, p.646. (Online edition)
5. See also William Hand, 'Scientific Mysticism', a series of articles that have appeared in the *Rosicrucian Beacon*.
6. Lewis, Ralph M, *Mental Alchemy*, AMORC, 1979, p.258.

Tommaso Campanella

A Philosopher of Nature

by Ruth Everitt



TOMMASO CAMPANELLA (1568-1639) was a Renaissance man. He was a brilliant intellectual who lived a life of action.

Most often remembered as a philosopher and scholar, he was also a priest and political activist who wrote more than 80 works reflecting his philosophy, ideas and dreams.

Tommaso Campanella was born at Stilo in Calabria in Southern Italy on the 5th September 1568. At that time it was part of the Kingdom of Naples ruled by the Spanish Habsburgs. By the age of thirteen he had read extensively in Latin. At fifteen he joined the Dominican Order,

attracted by the fame of Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas. Eager for knowledge, he read all he could in philosophy.

He soon came to feel that the Aristotelian philosophy did not contain 'sincere truth' and turned to Bernardino Telesio's *De Rerum Natura* ('On the Nature of Things') of 1586. He was inspired by the older philosopher's appeal for a direct study of nature over abstract reasoning and agreed with Telesio that knowledge should be based on human experience, arguing that instead of relying on age-old concepts to explain the universe, philosophers should



A View of 17th century Naples by Gaspar van Wittel

engage in a direct study and observation of man and nature. Through this process man would eventually come to understand the natural laws underlying the working of the universe. Early in his life, in 1591, Campanella expressed these views in his *Philosophia Sensibus Demonstrata* ('Philosophy Demonstrated by the Senses'), a defence of Telesio's empirical approach. This work disturbed the Church and Campanella was briefly imprisoned for heresy.

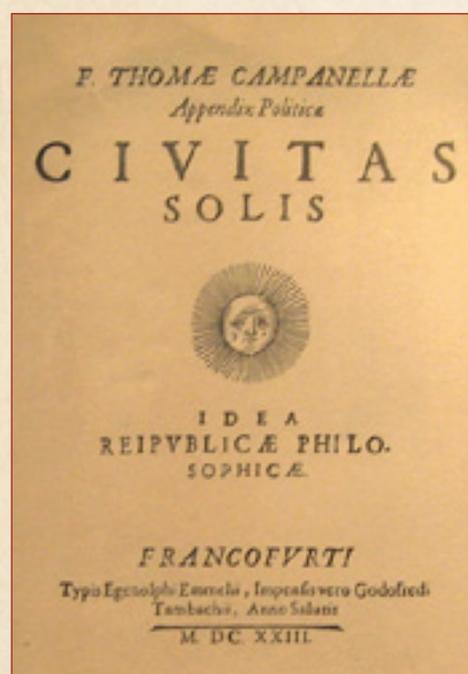
Like his contemporary, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Campanella suffered the superstitious wrath of the time. Both men envisioned a new age, more in harmony with nature and with a more mystical view of humankind and the universe. Such an age would value and encourage the discovery of new knowledge, independence of thought and the creative potential of each individual. Unlike Bacon however, Campanella mistakenly felt that the new age could be brought about through a magical reform within the Church itself.

In and Out of Prison

Because of his outspoken views, Campanella spent much of his life in trouble with the law, the Church or both. In 1592, during a year at the University of Padua he met Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). Various accusations were made against him and he was imprisoned. While in prison he began writing, addressing some of his works to Pope Clement VIII, who thought highly of him, as did Popes Paul V and Urban VIII. At the end of 1594, he was transferred to the prisons of the Holy Office or Inquisition in Rome. Amongst the charges against him were that he had taught in his *De sensitiva rerum facultate* ('On the Faculty of Sensation in Things'), begun in 1590, a heretical doctrine of the world soul. However, he was released from prison in 1595.

In 1598, by which time he was back in Naples, he was again arrested, this time being accused of leading a conspiracy to free Calabria from Spanish control. According to him, the year 1600 was a particularly important year. Calabria

was to prepare for the new age by throwing off Spanish 'tyranny' and establishing a republic embodying the new religion and ethic based on nature and natural religion. He was re-arrested in 1599 and imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition in Naples, where he was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment on charges of heresy and conspiracy. However, during this long and difficult prison term, he created some of his most brilliant work, including books, poems, madrigals, metaphysical hymns and his famous utopian work, *Città del Sole* written in the original Italian in 1602, better known by its later Latin title and translation *Civitas Solis* ('City of the Sun') published in 1623.



His Philosophy

Campanella's writings and philosophy reflect an interesting combination of Neoplatonic ideas and the direct experimental method. Among his more famous books were *Metaphysica*, *De sensu rerum et magia* (On the Meaning of Things and on Magic) of 1620 and *Universalis philosophiae seu metaphysicarum rerum juxta propria dogmata, partes tres* ('Universal Doctrine of Philosophy, or of Metaphysical Things according to their Proper Principles, in Three Parts') printed in 1638.

His ideas were an adaptation of certain fundamental principles of Aquinas and Albertus

Magnus, modified by original opinions and fused with ideas from Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Empedocles, Christian mystics and Jewish and Arabic schools of thought. He argued that truth is perceptible through a study of nature and the Holy Scriptures. Sensory experience and the speculations of reason are both sources of knowledge - 'Cognoscere est sentire'. However, human intellect must combine these two sources with the feelings of his own existence to reach a true understanding of the universe and its laws.

Philosophy, he believed, was an all-embracing science with all other sciences referring to philosophy as their ultimate source and foundation. He distinguished between innate and acquired knowledge, holding the innate to be superior. Knowledge about the world could be gained either through intuition or through abstraction and with intuitive knowledge, the concrete reality of a thing could immediately be understood by the intellect. Abstraction, he believed, can never present more than a confused and unclear picture.

Campanella argued that 'to know is to be'. The universe is sentient, he claimed, and all its parts have a spiritual nature and are vivified, directed and governed by a universal soul of sense and intelligence that is God. Being (all that exists) consists of three transcendent attributes: Knowledge, Power and Love. Reflection on our own consciousness reveals three things: I am; I know I am; and I love my own being. Whosoever loves himself, loves God. The three transcendent attributes are possessed in a perfect degree by God. Humans and all other creatures possess these attributes, only in degree. God's existence is proven by the fact that consciousness can conceive of the Infinite. The idea of the Infinite therefore, must be derived from the Infinite.

Tommaso Campanella lived at a time when traditional medieval thought was giving way to the new ideas of the Renaissance. The centuries-old authority of the Church was being questioned

in many areas. Philosophers, scientists and artists with new ideas were expressing themselves more and more daringly and openly.

Città del Sole

In the City of the Sun Campanella describes the ideal city-state. The book is a dialogue between a Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers and an adventurous sea captain from Genoa who claims to have visited the ideal city. The captain describes a wildly utopian republic in the New World. In some ways this utopia resembles Plato's Republic, but there are also other influences, and Campanella's own ideals are certainly apparent.

The City of the Sun is built on a hill encircled by seven walls. It is ruled by a Sun Priest, a philosopher-king named Metaphysic, assisted by three philosopher-collaborators: Power, Wisdom and Love. The social system of this ideal state is communist (as in Plato's *Republic*), everything being shared in common. Each individual works toward the common good, and poverty and extreme wealth are eliminated. As in other utopias there is a strong ethic of social utility and public service; learning and invention are encouraged and put to use for the amelioration of society. Education of the young is vital to this society; the



A modern depiction of Campanella's City of the Sun. ►

A 16th century depiction of the Inca Temple of the Sun in Cuzco.

[Source: http://www.allposters.com/-sp/Incan-Temple-of-the-Sun-in-Cuzco-Peru-1500s-Posters_i4233322_.htm]



arts, science and metaphysics are held in high honour. The population is well educated and virtuous, and the communal society is obviously an enlightened one.

On a hill in the centre of the city stands a great temple, a perfect orb supported by massive columns. On the temple's interior walls, just like the Inca Temple of the Sun in Cuzco, are depicted the major stars and planets. And this brings us to one of the most dominant elements of the City of the Sun, *astrology*. Life is lived in harmonious relationship with the stars and planets. From this relationship is derived all happiness, health and virtue. In connection with this, Campanella introduced a most daring and unusual innovation for his time: eugenics or selective breeding. Men and women are matched astrologically, and the right moment of conception for the best possible child is discovered through the stars. Campanella was dedicated to transferring the ideals and values to the next generation.

The Hermetic tradition, the metaphysical and magical teachings handed down from the priesthood of ancient Egypt, strongly influenced the social and religious structure of the solar city. Some see here the Hermetic influence of the magical city of *Adocentyn* described in the *Picatrix*, a medieval work of talismanic magic. Campanella also anticipated some of the social and educational reforms of the future in his utopian treatise. He was an original thinker far ahead of his time. All of these potent elements, including the Hermetic and futuristic, are apparent in his design of the City of the Sun.

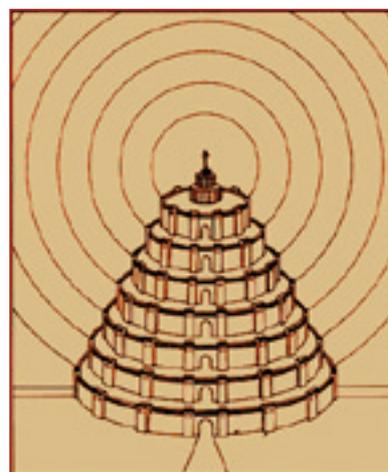
The Twilight Years

In 1626, thanks to the astrologically minded Pope Urban VIII who appealed directly to Philip IV of Spain, Campanella was released from prison in Naples and subsequently held in Rome by the

Holy Office until 1629. He left Italy in 1634 for the more favourable and intellectually liberal climate of France, where Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu received him with marked favour. He was granted a pension and allowed to live in the Dominican convent in the Rue St Honoré in Paris, where he died on the 21st May 1639.

In prison he had completed many volumes of philosophical works that are still being studied and translated by scholars today. Across the years of great pain and imprisonment Campanella had triumphed. Through these heroic efforts, his books lived on to serve the community of humanity, distinguishing him as a brave mystic and thinker in the Rosicrucian tradition.

Although not a Rosicrucian himself, there was a connection: Campanella's German disciple, Tobias Adami, took some of his manuscripts to Tübingen in Germany around 1611-1613, and it was here, at Tübingen, that Johann Valentin Andreae and his circle of Rosicrucians lived. Andreae published some of Campanella's poems, but it is in his book *Reipublicae Christianopolitanae descriptio* ('Description of the Christian Republic') of 1619 that we can clearly see the influence of the City of the Sun.



A ziggurat-shaped form of Campanella's City of the Sun, adapted from G. Reale and D. Antiseri, *History of Philosophy and Science*.

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Singing Bowls

by Nobilis

A SINGING BOWL is a simple metal bowl between 5 to 7 inches in diameter which can produce a sound that resonates in a similar way to a glass when you run a wet finger around its rim. Although associated with Tibet, singing bowls have a long tradition in many countries across the Far East.

While their origin is uncertain, they are said to have been introduced to Tibet along with Buddhism around the 8th century CE. The use of singing bowls in Tibet is the subject of much debate and many stories. Some people say they were used for meditation while others say they were magical tools for transformation of self and of matter. Today they are used worldwide for meditation, relaxation, healthcare, personal well-being and religious practice.

According to legend, the original bowls were made from an alloy of seven metals representing the seven planets then known. However metallurgical analysis suggests that the original bowls were made from a complex alloy of up to twelve different metals, giving them

their distinctive rich sound. Modern versions are usually made from a much simpler alloy, mainly copper, and do not have the same complexity of tone and harmonics.

Antique singing bowls may display abstract decorations like lines, rings and circles engraved into the surface. Decoration may appear outside the rim, inside the bottom, around the top of the rim and sometimes on the outside bottom. Unlike new singing bowls, antique ones never display figurative decoration like Buddhas, mandalas or dragons. Modern singing bowls are often made to look like antiques and are often sold as 'old antique' or 'vintage.' The vast majority of bowls on the market are however new, even if they are advertised as 'old.' New singing bowls lack the warmth and complexity of tone found in the fine antiques which are a rare find today and very collectable.

A more recent innovation is the popular crystal singing bowl. The use of the word 'crystal' is misleading, for crystal bowls are actually made from silicon glass. Although these crystal bowls

may seem similar to the metal ones, they are musically very different, producing a single clear tone rather than the complex harmonics of their Himalayan counterparts. Crystal bowls are neither better nor worse than metal ones, but they are certainly different.

Playing the Singing Bowl

Singing bowls are played by striking the bowl in certain places with a soft mallet to produce a warm bell tone. Genuine antique singing bowls produce a complex chord of harmonic overtones. Singing bowls may also be played by the friction of rubbing a wooden, plastic or leather wrapped mallet or wand around the rim of the bowl to produce overtones and a continuous 'singing' sound. Here is the method:

1. Place the bowl in the palm of the left hand if you are right-handed. Smaller bowls should be held by the fingertips.
2. With your right hand grasp the wand about mid-length, much as you would hold a pen but pointing downwards and touching the wood. If you are using a padded wand the red wool should be on top.
3. With an even pressure, rub the wand clockwise around the rim of the bowl.
4. Experiment with speed. Let the sound build up slowly as the bowl picks up the vibration.

A special sound effect can be produced by adding a small amount of water to the bottom of the bowl. The sound produced using this technique is strangely similar to dolphins singing. The amount of water used varies of course with the individual bowl.

Start by filling three quarters of the bowl with water. Be careful not to get the rim of the bowl wet. Now, play the bowl using the wand-around-the rim technique. Bring up the sound by using a steady, even pressure. Pull the wand away from the bowl rim and let the bowl continue to vibrate while still holding the bowl in your hand,

tilt it so that the water inside gently laps towards the inside rim. Continue to swirl gently while tilting the bowl and water. Experiment with the amount of water used. Usually the best effect is produced with a minimum amount of water.

Another way of modifying the sound is by the use of the mouth. Start the bowl singing by using the wand-around-the rim technique. Pull the wand away from your bowl and let the bowl continue to sing. While still holding the bowl in your hand, raise it up to your mouth. The sound may then be modulated by changing the size and shape of the oral cavity. Experiment with the relative position of your mouth to the outside rim.

Healing Sound

The sound vibrations emanating from the bowl stimulate the body to recreate its own harmony and help produce alpha waves, which are present in the brain during deep relaxation. Many people feel they have been touched and cleansed within when they listen to the sound of a singing bowl. As some describe it: *"Time stands still. There is a feeling of peace, sometimes relief in aching parts of the body, or at the very least, contact with something beyond daily life."*

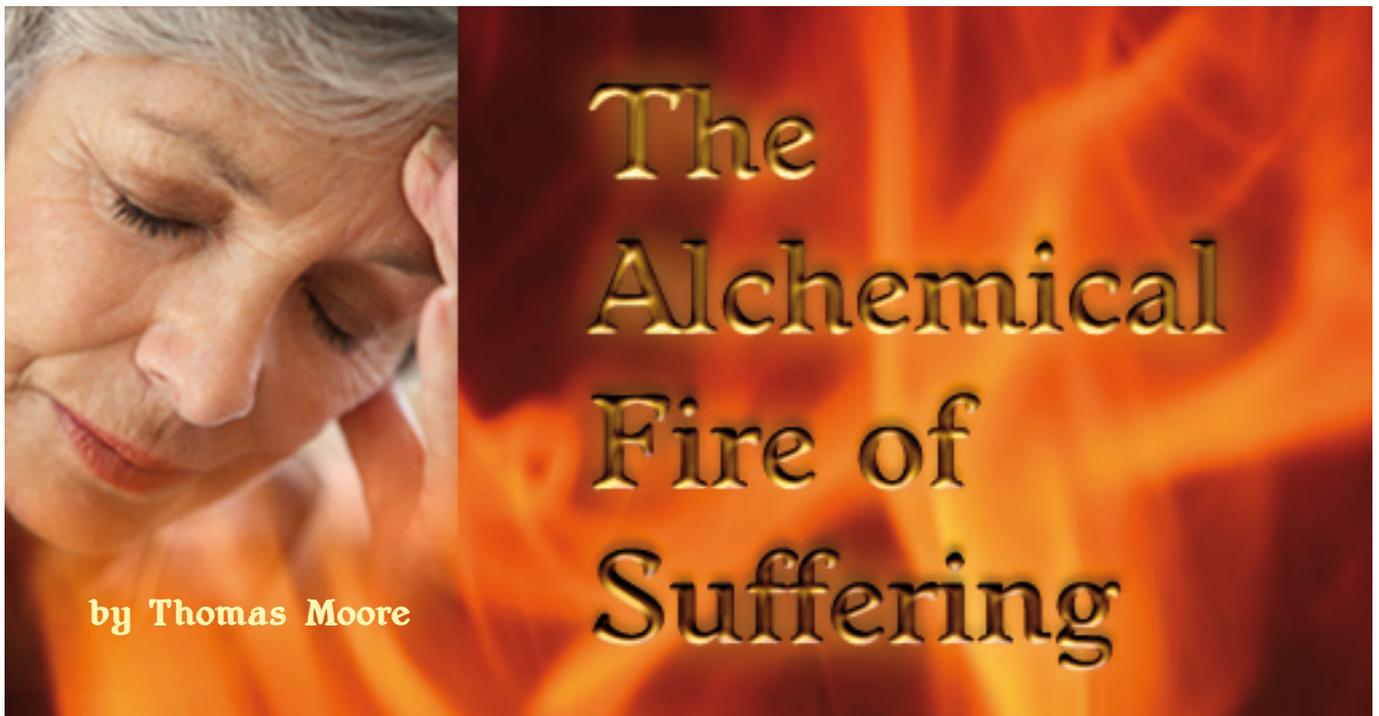


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With an even pressure, rub the wand clockwise around the rim of the bowl to ensure an even tone.



Many people find the rich blend of harmonic overtones, which the bowls produce, have a direct effect upon their psychic centres. Playing the bowls can have an immediate centring affect on the body. The tones set up a response that creates a balance between the right and left sides of the brain, a balance known as 'synchronisation'. Focusing on the subtle sounds of the bowls attunes one into the universal sound of OM.



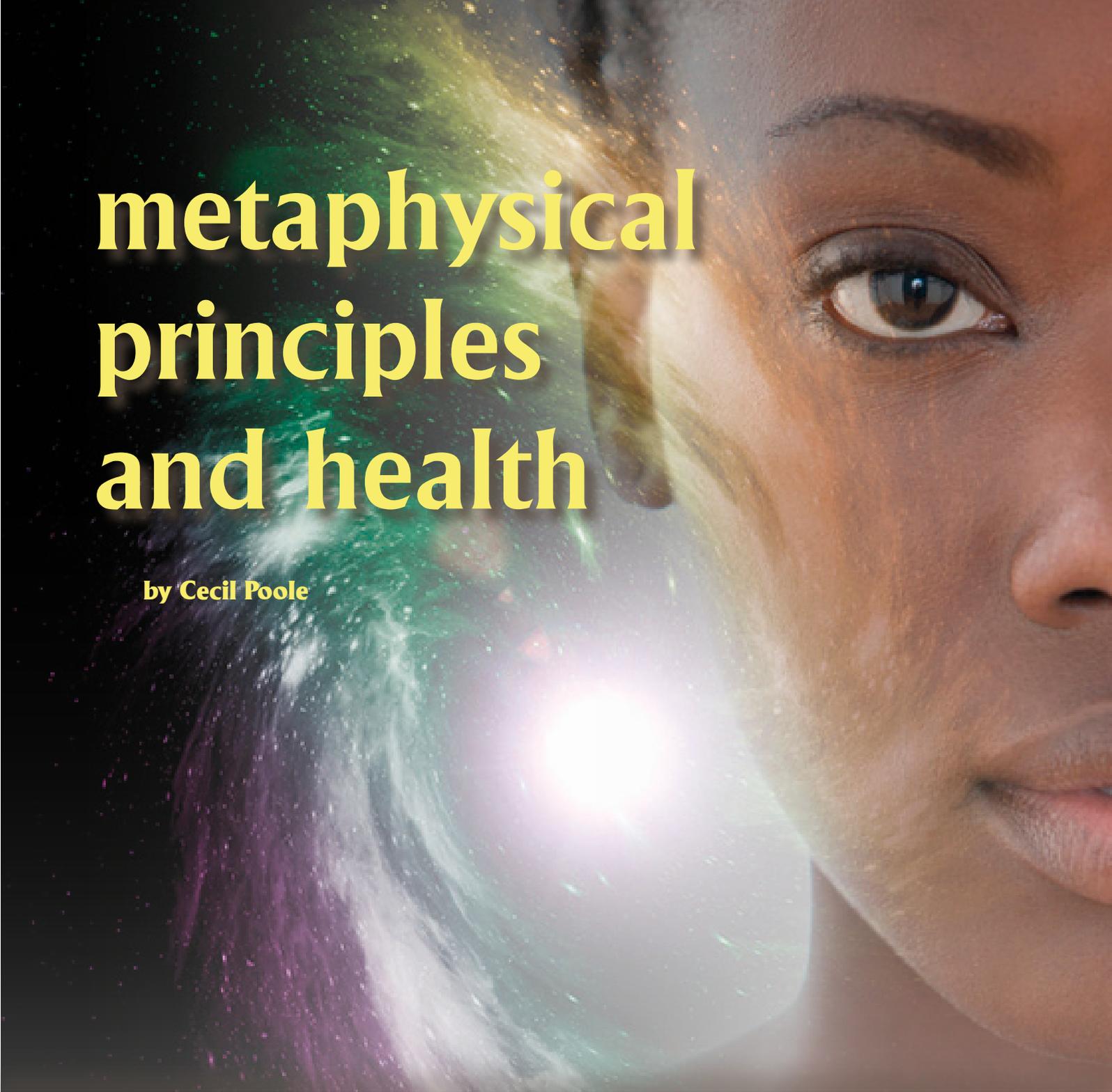
AN ALCHEMICAL FIRE turns base metals into gold. But, allegorically speaking, what's the fire, what's the dross and what's the gold? The answer is that fire is suffering, the dross is bad habits and gold is perfection. Really, you ought to be thankful for the coming of the fire, for without it the purification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

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

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

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

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metaphysical principles and health

by Cecil Poole

FOR SOME THE WORD 'metaphysics' conveys only a vague meaning, despite the fact that it has been defined many times. It is clear that to understand and use metaphysical principles, it is first necessary to have definitions and meanings clearly in mind.

As the study of Being, i.e. fundamental causes and processes, metaphysics is based on the belief that regardless of the apparent multiplicity of expression which we see in the universe about us, there is somewhere and in

some condition one thing which underlies all others, which has value above all other things, and which is the fundamental expression of the force that causes the universe to exist. This final or ultimate reality is the concern of metaphysics.

There is an underlying relationship between the highest purpose of the universe, that is the ultimate values of creation, and the health or well-being of each individual who is a part of it. To understand this, we must first determine our position in relation to the universe.

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The Universe and Us

The human individual is sometimes described in esoteric literature and, as far as that is concerned, in orthodox and scientific literature, as being a microcosm as compared with the macrocosm, which is the universe as a whole. In certain ways, depending upon the point of view, we are each a minute copy or representation of the entire universe of which we are a part. The individual duplicates on a much smaller scale the forces, elements and energy that pervade the entire universe. Therefore, it would seem logical to conclude, if we accept these statements as facts, that what affects the universe as a whole should affect each of us; and logically, the reverse would also be true.

There are some who claim to be able to demonstrate the truth of this statement through their own experiences. Some people seem to be much more closely in 'attunement' with conditions external to their bodies. For example, there are those who are apparently able to anticipate changes in the weather; while others can anticipate manifestations of other forms of material phenomena.

This attunement between us and the rest of the universe is capable of improvement. We should all be able to adjust ourselves better to the factors around us. If a complete and satisfactory adjustment could be made, the result would be a state of harmony between ourselves and the rest of the universe. It would include the physical world and the creative mind of God in all forces. Should this condition be brought into existence, we would have, as referred to in the Rosicrucian teachings, *absolute harmony*. And if such a state prevailed in, through and about us, surely well-being, health and happiness would be our lot.

In view of these considerations regarding the universe and our place in it, we are able to understand more clearly the connection between metaphysical principles and the health or well-

being of the individual. The connection is the manifestation of a relationship between the forces that exist in us and throughout the universe.

These 'forces', which from the standpoint of Rosicrucian philosophy are considered idealistic and therefore of a non-material nature, are manifestations of the ultimate reality sought by those who study metaphysical principles. The life force and the forces in the universe related to it, if not manifestations of the ultimate reality itself, are at least results of it and pervade all things whether living or not.

Mere knowledge of the existence of these forces does not produce well-being or indeed change a person who is ill

into a healthy individual. Many factors enter into the question of why an unhealthy condition or state of illness should come to be; so many factors that we cannot here attempt to consider them all. It is obvious, however, that the physical condition of an individual deteriorates when harmony no longer exists. This can be as a result of wrong thinking, wrong living, or, to sum it up, lack of conformance to the law and order of nature.

Three Basic Classifications

Knowledge alone cannot save us, not even the knowledge that re-establishing a condition of harmony will do away with ill-health. We must cope with these conditions through the various methods of healing that have been devised and discovered. Today, therapeutic systems fall into three basic classifications concerning:

1. The chemistry of the body
2. The structure of the body,
3. The content of the mind.

All have some bearing upon the re-establishment of harmony with its resultant individual well-being.

Whether we resort to healing by manipulation, that is by changing the position

"If absolute harmony prevailed, health and happiness would be our lot."

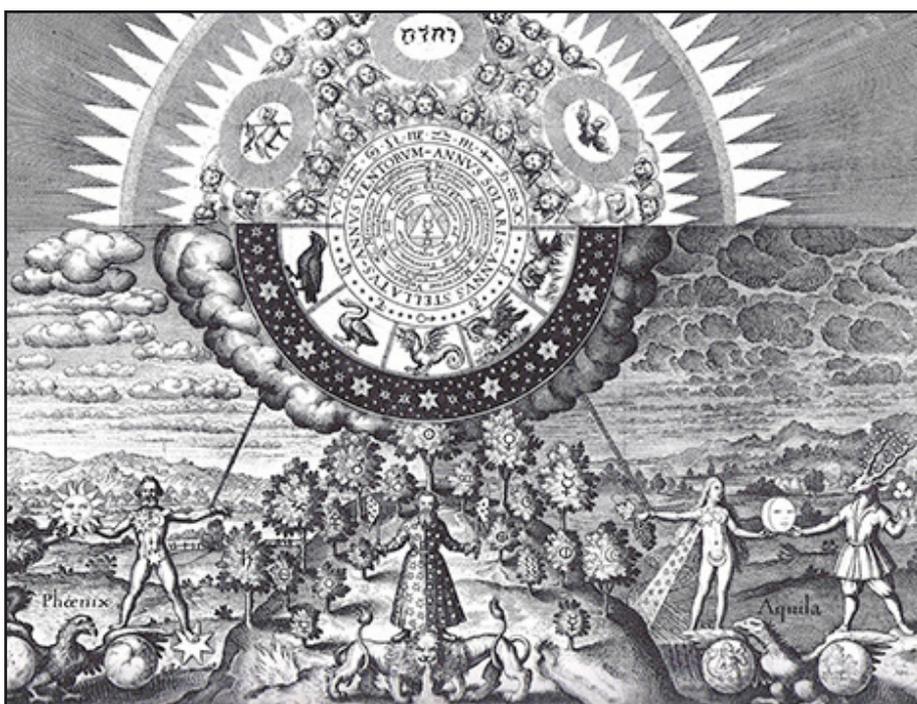
of the body or parts of the body by pressure, movement or surgery, or whether we resort to chemical treatment by introducing certain chemicals into the blood stream for the purpose of varying the chemical content of the body, or whether mental healing is the process followed, each can do its part. No particular one is the final or absolute method of adjusting all human ills.

All are important, and mental healing is certainly not the least, but rather, should be considered the most fundamental because once we have the proper mental attitude formulated we are in a better position to avail ourselves of the advantages of other systems.

In skilled hands, each system has its place, and once a condition of imbalance has come into existence, the most useful of these processes, as may be determined by a competent physician, will aid in re-establishing the desired harmonious state. It is important to realise that in certain cases any or all of these therapeutic processes have value and that one alone may not be enough. Therefore, to apply mental or metaphysical principles to a condition or disease, is not always sufficient in itself, especially in cases of long standing. If we maintained a proper balance between the psychic and physical parts of our being, metaphysics and mental forms of therapeutics would be enough. Unfortunately, in our lifetimes we have deviated from that plan and must now return to it step by step through the same means by which we lost a state of harmony and balance.

The part that metaphysical principles can play in the lives of each of us is to learn, through teachings

The individual duplicates on a much smaller scale the forces, elements and energy that pervade the entire universe. Here the idea of man as a microcosm set in a vaster macrocosm is wonderfully portrayed in Johann Daniel Mylius' *Opus medicochymicum*, of 1618.



such as the Rosicrucians offer, the proper ways of directing the physical and mental forces of our bodies so that they may be the most conducive to health and well-being. The knowledge and practical application of these laws are important even if their success is only slight.

Such success is a small miracle in itself because it causes us to return to our natural position in relation to the rest of the universe. The proper study of metaphysical principles gives an individual a comprehension not only of the ultimate reality in the universe but also of an ultimate value and purpose in his own life, which, if in accord with the universal purpose, establishes a closer tie with the creative force of the universe as a whole.

Such a concept will contribute to the totality of individual health and well-being. A philosophy of life which gives a value to stand on and a purpose to work toward is sometimes far more important than the immediate physical condition in which we find ourselves.

The understanding of self, of the peace of self, and the relationship of self to the rest of creation, is the foundation upon which not only health is established, but also the foundation for all activities of the individual, social and otherwise.

Some Aspects of Mysticism

by Madeleine Cabuche

IT HAS BEEN SAID that the mystical doctrine relates to the relationship and potential union of the human soul with ultimate reality and that the mystical school is a school of learning by becoming.

The mystic claims that the average person is only half alive: the greater part of his being is dormant because it has never been taught or allowed to function properly or to realise its full potentialities. The mystic discipline sets out to remedy that.

The keywords are *Light, Life* and *Love*; and by these we have to transmute all that is negative, and therefore 'evil' in our lives to that which is positive and good. We strive to overcome the 'I' of self not by mortification or subjection (which is merely an inversion), but by enlightenment; seeking to outgrow rather than to suppress it.

We can never be self-satisfied or complacent because each advancement made, only serves to emphasise how much further we have to go.

Gradually, as Rosicrucian students, we become aware of certain profound principles from an inward discovery or revelation. Initially, we commence by a search for truth. Purity of motive must be the underlying factor in this search, for unless we apply it to all things, thought, purpose, self-analysis and outward dealing with others, we cannot even begin to glimpse truth as a reality.

Many things can be learned intellectually but it is not until we feel and know them throughout our whole selves that they become real and can then exert a positive influence in our lives. There is such a frail dividing line between

thinking that we understand a thing and really understanding it; yet, to effect the transition between the two states is, for many people, an apparent impossibility. That is the reason why we have often to experience tragic or unpleasant things in life: they serve to rupture the outer shell that separates the intellectual understanding from that complete understanding which permeates the whole being.

Without purity of motive one cannot understand oneself; if one cannot understand oneself it is impossible to understand others, then life becomes full of complexities and distortions and the truth totally obscured.

Understanding brings its own 'shorthand' of expression. Colette, the famous French writer, was once giving water to tulips drooping in a vase. Her innate tenderness and compassion, which covered all aspects of God's creation, extended to the flowers dying for lack of water. 'Maurice!' she cried to her husband, 'There is only one creature.' There, in a sort of 'shorthand,' the entire thing was said.

God's love runs through all, is manifested everywhere, and those who have eyes to see, recognise it in both the animate and inanimate worlds; in earth and rock, in plant and animal as well as in the human. God is love, sounding and resounding in every particle throughout the universe. It is a mystical experience and can only be conveyed to those who have had a like sensation. A love that is both personal and impersonal, reflecting the All and taking us back again, in thankfulness, to the Source.

Discipleship on Trial

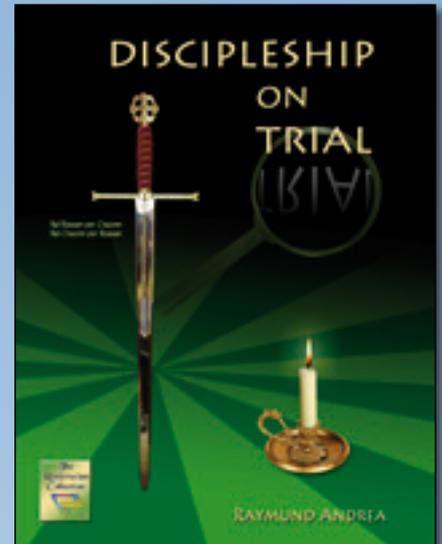
by Raymund Andrea

THIS BOOK WAS written against the backdrop of the darkest days of the Second World War. The momentous events of two world wars in the space of 25 years had markedly affected the psyche of nations and brought humanity to a crossroads in history.

What was also facing a crossroads was "discipleship," a concept the author eloquently develops in this book. No longer could spiritual and esoteric orders remain safe behind their outdated traditions and theoretical musings. A time for radical transformation had arrived, but few had embraced it.

During the two great conflicts of the period, statesmen led the way in adapting to a rapidly changing world while many esoteric aspirants were tied to worn out slogans of esoteric philosophy and secrecy, and proving themselves utterly incapable of bringing about the changes needed.

Forcefully advocating a disciple "warrior spirit," Andrea does not imply militancy for its sake alone, but encourages a "fighting mentality" to be used in the service of others.



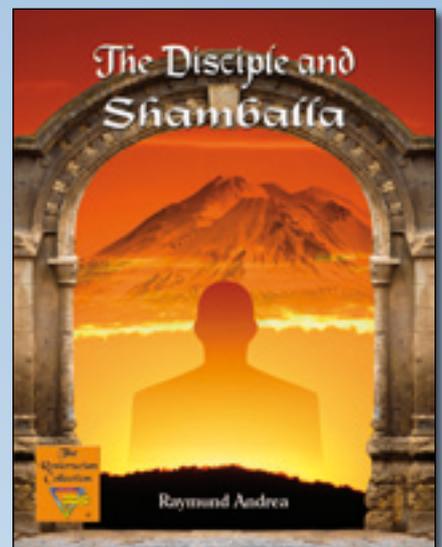
The Disciple and Shamballa

by Raymund Andrea

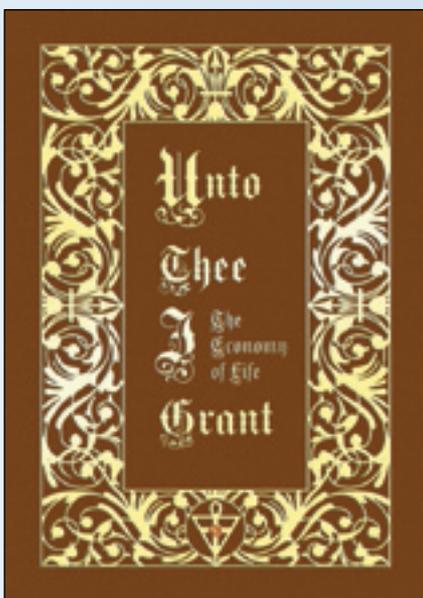
WRITTEN IN 1960, Andrea's last major work gives an unsurpassed account of the highest altitudes of the "mystic way," the universal path of spiritual enlightenment. One cannot help but be moved by the gentle urgency of his spiritual devotion to the highest realms of holiness.

Through proximity to the spiritual realm of Shamballa, the humble soul overcomes the "nemesis of Karma" and draws upon the source of infinite creative power to accomplish a remarkable transformation. Andrea outlines the life of the advanced student who has passed through a hidden portal to a secret inner life of instruction, far from the comforts of the armchair mystic. The living experience of such a person is replete with trials and tribulations that serve as catalysts for ever greater advancement and achievement.

Mental creation through visualisation and the application of will is a crucial part of the technique of spiritual advancement given by Andrea. When applied correctly, an inner alchemy is begun as the student increasingly comes under the numinous influence of Shamballa. The student's life from that moment on is redirected wholly and exclusively in accordance with the holy will of inner Master.



Unto Thee I Grant



ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED in English in 1750, this book has for over 250 years held pride of place on the bookshelves of many seekers of spiritual enlightenment. Translated from a set of Tibetan manuscripts, and possibly originally meant as a "guide-to-good-living" for Tibetan monks, even a cursory read convinces one that the chapters were compiled by a person (or persons) of high spiritual intent. The inspiration it has given to generations of seekers continues to this day. The simple, down-to-earth points of advice are timeless and as valid today as when they were first composed, possibly over a thousand years ago.

You can open this book on virtually any page and derive inspiration for the day from the two or three paragraphs you will read there. It is a wonderful and worthwhile companion for life.

FULLY INDEXED. Search for and find page references for all the most commonly used words and expressions.

The book consists of two parts: Part 1 is in the archaic English of the mid 18th Century, and Part 2 is in modern English.

