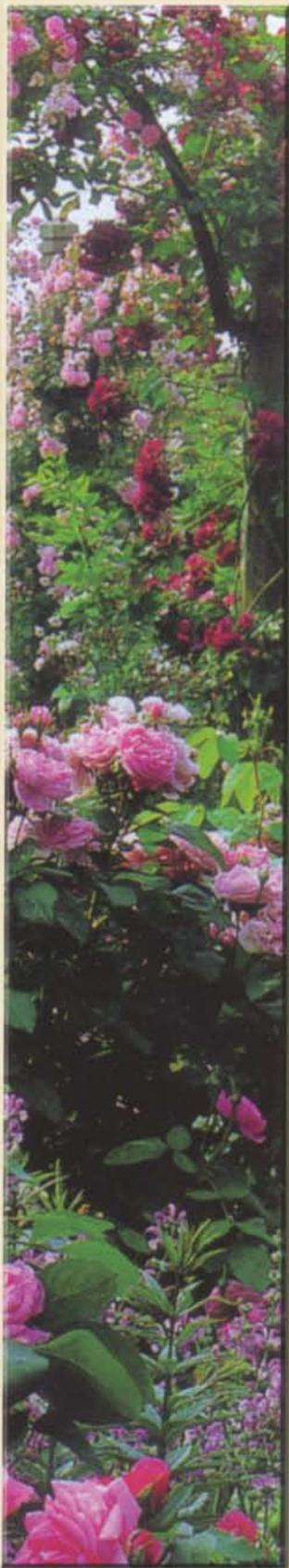


# BROSICRUCIAN BEACON



June 2006





ADMITTEDLY life isn't a perfumed rose garden all the time. Yet, for some it almost could be. For such people, everything seems to flow so harmoniously, and whilst not necessarily materially wealthy, they radiate an inner wealth of achievement, happiness and peace of mind which is the envy of all. So how do they do it?

Well, the one thing they all seem to have in common is both the courage and ability to take charge of their destiny by *actively directing* their lives! Examining their *needs* rather than their *wants*, and *true values* rather than *passing fads*, such people realise that more than anything else, they need to rely upon their *own insights* rather than those of others. They come to their *own conclusions* rather than accept the conclusions of others. And above all, they take their *own decisions* in everything and for better or worse, *are happy to live with the consequences!*

The *Rosicrucian Order AMORC* assists people to find within themselves their own, personal "*higher wisdom*," something which exists as a potential in all human beings. Developing this inner understanding can lead to what sages and avatars of all ages have referred to simply as "*Illumination*," describing it in often embellished terms as a state of joy, perfection and achievement beyond our fondest hopes.

Gaining this knowledge and experience is not something one can read about and learn from books; it involves a *series of practical steps* one needs to follow in order to master one's daily thoughts, words and actions. Instruction in these steps and their related techniques is what the *Rosicrucian Order AMORC* is about. Its approach to inner development has brought happiness, peace and success into the affairs of thousands of people in the past, and you too can benefit from it.

To find out more, write to the address below, requesting a *free* copy of the Rosicrucian introductory booklet entitled "*The Mastery of Life*." There is a whole lot more to life than meets the eye, and mastering your life is much closer than you think.

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## COVER SPREAD

“Water Blossom”



# Thoughts from the Editor

by Bill Anderson, FRC



## Respect and Reciprocity

*I try to treat whoever I meet as an old friend.  
This gives me a genuine feeling of happiness  
It is the practice of compassion.*

**The Dalai Lama**

**I**N BRITAIN, THE MAJOR POLITICAL parties have adopted what has been termed the “respect agenda.” They are hoping to make a lot of capital out of it, and believe it will resonate with large sections of the public. There is even a “Respect” website, where the stated aim is to get citizens to work together to build a society where we respect each other and communities can live in peace

together. As the website also points out, respect cannot be learned, purchased or acquired; it can only be earned. But is this true? Can’t it also be learned? What state is our society in when this is an item of national concern?

Respecting others is by no means a new idea. The *Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*, the Fourth Rosicrucian Manifesto published in 2001 states the following: “Considering our ontology,



we think that human beings are the most evolved of all creatures living on earth, even though we often behave in a shameful manner not befitting this status. The reason that we hold this privileged position is because we are endowed with self-awareness and free will. We are therefore capable of thinking and directing our lives in whatever way we choose. We also believe that each human being is an elementary cell of one and the same body, namely that of all humanity. By virtue of this principle, our conception of humanism is that all human beings should have the same rights, be given the same respect, and enjoy the same freedoms, regardless of the country of their origin or the nation in which they live."

Gene research tells us that the races on Earth share 99.9% of same genes, so in reality your colour or race doesn't matter. We are all children of the same family. The idea that one race or colour is "better" than another is shown to be a fallacy. Many people in the world still need to learn to respect others. I will return to this later.

### Dominion

The growing realisation of the interdependency of nature and man, acceptance of the active spirituality that permeates the entire physical world and its inhabitants, and the realisation that all living things rely for their very existence on the munificence of the earth itself, are beginning to permeate all levels of society. Western culture, currently the dominant one on the planet, sees the world, the earth and seas as a vast reservoir of natural food and mineral resources to be exploited for human gain. They have used scripture as a justification for this exploitation quoting *Genesis* where God gives man "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." But the word "dominion" from the Latin *dominatio* originally implied a relationship of reciprocity between a lord and his servants, not the right to do as one pleases. Would an omnipotent God have given mankind the right to destroy His creation?

It is interesting to note that there are only three languages in the world with a specific mode of expression that could be termed a "respect language:" Japanese, Javanese and Nahuatl, better known as the language of the Aztecs. The *Rosicrucian Code of Life* has this to say about

respect: "Respect the laws of your country and strive to be a good citizen. Also, Respect all religious and philosophical beliefs, providing they do not undermine human dignity. Do not uphold or support fanaticism or fundamentalism, whatever form it may take. In living your faith, ensure that you yourself are neither dogmatic nor sectarian."

Fundamentalist sects in their narrow outlook teach that their adherents are right and everyone else is wrong, that somehow they are the "chosen people." What a lot of nonsense!

***Colour or race doesn't matter. We are all children of the same family.***

God does not need the help of anyone to do His will. This shows a lack of respect not only for others but also for God himself. Some sects even advocate violence as a means of helping God perfect his plan. But would a creator really want to destroy his own creation? Manichaeism, an ancient Persian religion, had an answer to this: it was the god of evil who was responsible! This way of looking at the world influenced the various Gnostic sects that grew up around the same period, and also influenced the mainstream religions.

John McNally has written: "To maintain their power and credibility, religious leaders often disparage those who challenge their precepts instead of engaging in logical discourse with those who dissent. Zealots fervently revile those who reject conventional religion and accuse them of being creatures with no morals or reverence. I suggest the opposite is true. If one acts in a righteous and moral manner out of fear of retribution by some omniscient and omnipotent being, that person's demeanour is coerced by the threat of eternal damnation. Conversely, if one acts in a righteous and moral manner out of empathy for his fellow beings and because it is rational to do so to achieve harmony with the forces of nature, that person is acting from a vantage of altruism and logic. His motives are inspired by true morality and common sense."

Modern business methods stress respect for the customer. The customer experience, be it the satisfaction they gain or respect they feel, is a crucial factor in establishing loyalty for your company. While it is hard to determine the monetary value of that experience, it is critical to be aware of trends and common practices within



and across industries and how your company compares. Businesses have identified the great difficulties that can arise when they do not deal with people on a face-to-face basis, an increasing trend in this century. The customer is in danger of becoming merely a name, a number or just a voice on the other end of a phone. After a while, you don't even think about them as being human, just another interruption to your busy schedule. If you do not see them face-to-face, and see them for what they are, other human beings like yourself, it is not easy to see the problem from their perspective, a prerequisite to respect.

There are many different reasons why objects warrant respect. Some are dangerous or powerful, and so respect can be like fear, awe

*Respect is acknowledging the intrinsic value or significance of something.*

or submission. Other things have authority over us, so respect can be like obedience. But respect is most commonly thought of as a mode of valuing. In particular, respect is one mode of experiencing and acknowledging the intrinsic value or significance of something. Respecting something, at least for some kinds of respect, is to appreciate it as having worth or importance. Thus, we can respect things we don't like or agree with, such as our enemies or someone else's opinion. In this regard, respect is like esteem and admiration, veneration and reverence, and love and honour, while regarding something as utterly worthless or insignificant or disdaining or having contempt for it is incompatible with respecting it.

### Rituals of Respect

I recently read a book called *Rituals of Respect* by Inge Bolin. It offers a fascinating insight into the world of the ancient Andean civilisations of South America. Not everything was destroyed following the European conquest. High in the mountains are communities that still retain the thought patterns of their ancestors and who live their lives in harmony with nature as their ancestors did. The book tells the story of a community characterised by relationships of mutual dependency and obligation, dictated by an all-encompassing spiritual context that accepts the need to recognise and honour the forces of nature and its inhabitants in return for good fortune in the everyday world.

The Andean peoples shared a holistic

conception of the universe. They recognised the opposing forces innate to the cosmos and tried to ensure that these forces remained in symmetrical balance. Balance in its widest sense is observable throughout the cosmos. The Andean peoples integrated human, natural and spiritual life into their total conceptual experience. Their world provided them with their physical and spiritual necessities, promoting interdependence between the human and supernatural spheres. The natural and spiritual were not considered to be separate. They treated everything with sensitivity and concern. It is an ideology much to be admired, one that promotes generosity and hospitality and that profoundly respects all forms of life.

Respect was the moral code that permeated all thought and action. The Andean peoples were aware of the tremendous importance of respect, without which they felt that society could not be sustained. Of course this outlook on life was not just confined to the cultures of the Andes, it can be found throughout the world. In recent times, I wonder how many of the problems in Iraq and Afghanistan could have been solved with an understanding and respect for the dignity of the peoples and cultures of these countries?

In this book rituals are identified as an essential part of everyday life in the Andean communities. All rituals, whether religious or secular, share the suspension of normal time and its substitution by a special time-space setting. A second important property of Andean ritual, also concerned with its encompassing worldview, concerns the concept of cosmic order. In Andean conception, the universe is suffused with opposing beneficent and dangerous forces. Whereas Western religious belief seeks to resolve similar confrontation through total defeat of the forces of evil, the dualistic Andean state of cosmic order involves mediation of the opposing forces to create a condition of harmonious balance.

The focus of all ritual and celebration centres on respect. Respect is believed to be the essence of life, and like the life force itself, it knows no boundaries. Respect is owed to other human beings, to animals, to the deities like Pachamama, the Earth-Mother; to the Apus, the mountain abode of ancestral protective spirits, and to all sacred places, including rocks, springs, lakes and meadows.

In their rituals every gesture and movement



was performed with great dignity and elegance. Every ritual carried an expression of respect for others. Only where there is respect, they believe, can people find a way to live and act together. They believe we must adjust and continually readjust to accommodate the various positive and negative forces within the cosmos. People's offerings, their thoughts and their efforts are meant to reinforce the positive, to give hope to a life so harmonic and serene, yet so vulnerable. In their rituals, the music, the songs, the dances, the drinks, everything is offered to the deity. Every movement and gesture expresses respect for people, the gods, and the very earth on which they tread.

### **Karma is the Essence of Reciprocity**

*"Juan brings the dishes to us holding them with both hands. I come to learn that this gesture means: I offer this food to you with all my heart. In appreciation, the gift of food is also meant to be received with both hands."* When I read this I immediately thought of the way that Rosicrucians offer thanks before they start to eat food.

The *Rosicrucian Code of Life* exhorts us thus: "Before each meal, give thanks to God for the good fortune you have in being able to eat, and think of all those who do not have the privilege of eating their fill. When alone or in the company of other members of the Order, place your hands above your food, palms down, and say a symbolic invocation either mentally or aloud. If this is not possible, then you will find Rosicrucians holding the plate in both hands, whilst making the silent invocation." This is reciprocity in action.

In her book Inge Bolin described how she engaged in reciprocity, the hallmark of Andean life: "We were offering and asking, giving and taking. With graceful gestures that convey respect, generosity and reciprocity, gifts are exchanged among the participants. Each act in the ritual is performed with elegance and finesse. There is no sense of rushing."

Respecting others should come as second nature to a Rosicrucian.

The attitude of the Andean peoples towards animals had a special significance. They would enter into dialogue with their gods on behalf of their animals, whereby the bonds between people, animals and the spirit of nature were renewed to ensure that respect, love and harmony prevailed among all forms of life. The welfare of

the animals determined the people's well-being, as with all agricultural and herding societies. They showed feelings of love and respect for their animals. They believed that animals were not to be dominated or looked upon as mere resources. They had to be respected in their own right, and the relationship was built on perfect reciprocity, perhaps something worth thinking about in the age of factory farms.

### **Rosicrucianism and Respect**

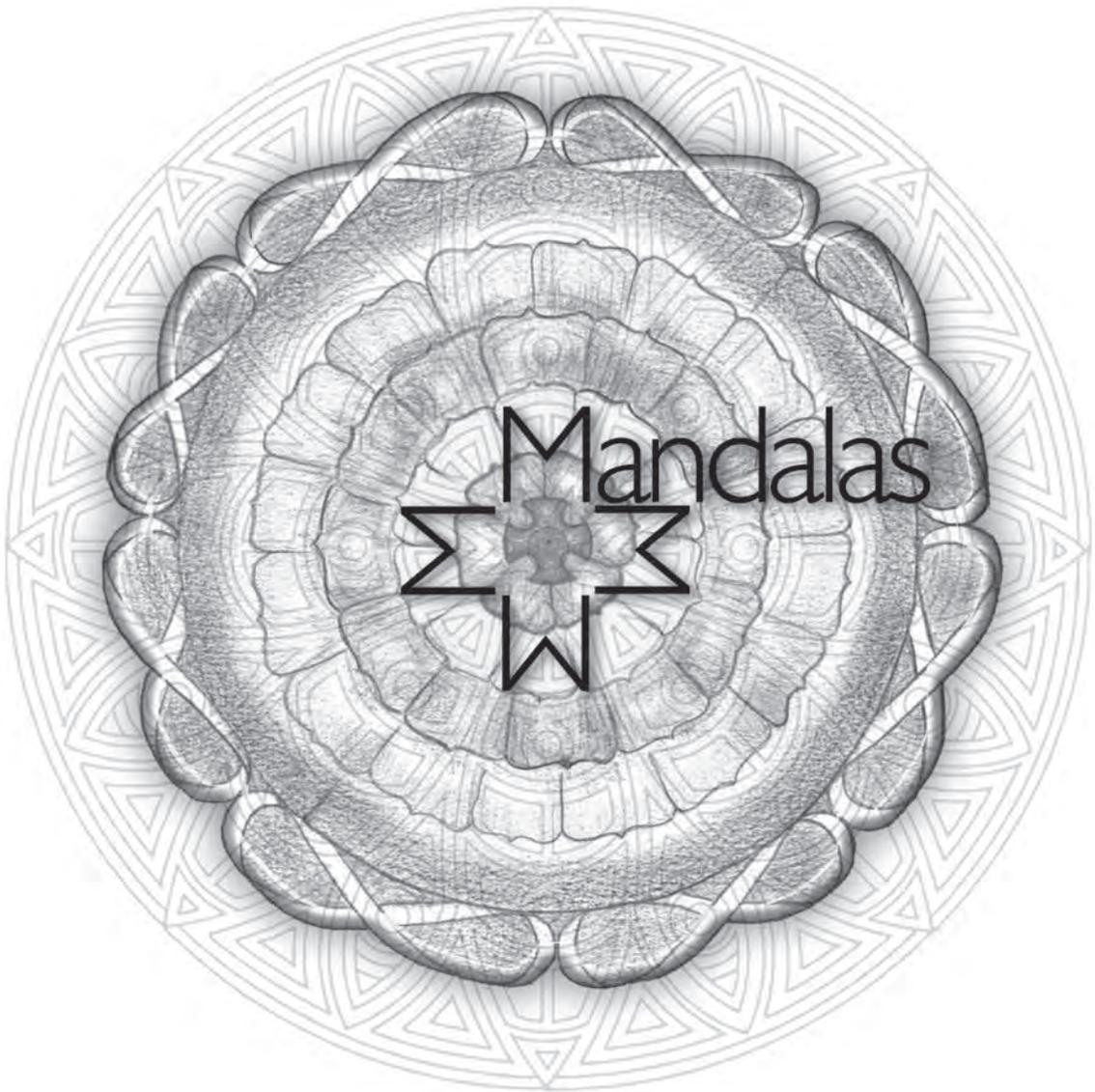
The *Rosicrucian Declaration of Human Duties* lays out what every Rosicrucian should respect. In fact, respecting others come as second nature to a Rosicrucian: "I contribute to Peace when I look upon all men and women as my brothers and sisters, regardless of race, culture, or religion." This statement is from the *Rosicrucian Contribution to Peace*, but throughout the Rosicrucian teachings, the message of respect is continually reinforced. One excellent thing about being a member of a worldwide organisation like the Rosicrucian Order AMORC is that you know that you will be accepted as an equal wherever you happen to be in the world. There are organised Rosicrucian groups not only in all of the world's great cities, but even over a thousand miles up the Amazon, as well as in small towns throughout Africa.

Everyone on this planet lives inside a biosphere where everyone and everything is dependant on something else. As humans, we are not something intrinsically special, but we are different, we have consciousness. We have the free will and ability to choose how we behave, and what we do. Let us make this choice wisely. Let us show respect to all forms of life, living a life of reciprocity, giving and receiving. After all, this has been the way of the world since time began; it is just that so many have forgotten it in the "me-first" era. It is time to relearn respect for life and the universe.

*Kindness to the young,  
Generosity to the poor,  
Good counsel to friends,  
Tolerance with enemies,  
Indifference to fools,  
Respect to the learned.*

**Sheikh Abdullah Ansari of Herat**





*by Loretta Williams, SRC*

**A** FEW YEARS AGO I CAME ACROSS a word that was unfamiliar to me, so I promptly looked up its meaning. That word was *Mandala* from the Sanskrit meaning *disk* or *circle*.

Characterised by a centre, symmetry and cardinal points, mandalas are circular images that are drawn, painted, modelled or danced, and occasionally dreamed. The simplest mandala is the circle with a dot in the centre. To the ancient Egyptians this was the symbol of the life-giving sun and the universe, the god Ra.

The majority of drawn and painted mandalas are characterised by a circle and a

cross in one form or another, but you can also find circles within circles, triangles or squares. Beautiful colours are harmoniously used. Describing material and non-material realities, the mandala appears in all aspects of life: the celestial circles we call earth, sun and moon for example, as well as conceptual circles of friends, family and community.

Mandala drawings have existed in all lands and among all peoples. They appear as a universal and essential symbol of integration, harmony and transformation. The integration of worship, knowledge and beauty is a significant feature of the mandala, enabling it to convey a





*A snowflake mandala for January.*

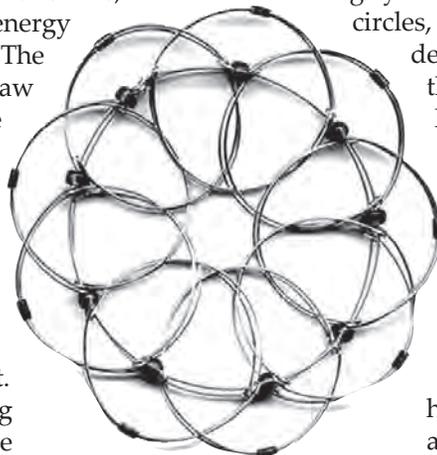
teaching to the person who is receptive.

### Law of the Centre

The principle of the mandala lies in the *centre* from which the form-creating energy flows. The esoteric centre is eternal and the energy flowing from it maintains itself through transformation.

The centre is supreme and occupies the innermost place within the concentric arrangement, radiating outward. What can be called the *Law of the Centre* is a basic principle of nature. It is a source of power and energy, wisdom and life, continually pouring forth its energy and continually self-renewing. The mandala's one constant is this Law of the Centre. The centre is the beginning of the mandala as it is the origin and beginning of all form and processes.

Everything has a central point, with all life and all diversities emanating from it. Whatever path is taken, it always leads back to this eternal point. The centre of each person's being and the centre of the mandala are essentially the same, having only one centre from which all life is vitalised, no matter what varieties of outward manifestation may exist. It represents wholeness and can be seen as a model for the organisational structure of life itself, a cosmic diagram reminding us of our relation to the infinite, the world that extends both beyond and within our bodies and minds.



*Mandalas are usually drawings or paintings, but can be almost anything circular in which people express themselves. This is a type of mandala that every time you move something, you create a different design, and creating new designs all the time will help you forget stress and problems.*

Mandalas can be seen everywhere in nature: in every cell, in every eye, in every snowflake, rock crystal, crystals of various metals, in the cross-section of a tree, in a spider's web, in the diffraction pattern of beryl, in the human body and in the universe itself.

### Circles

Many man-made things represent mandalas. All around the world sacred structures are evidence of this principle including pyramids, temples, mosques, pagodas, kivas and stupas. Native American tipis are circular, and the tipis in a village are arranged in a circle.

Other good examples are fractals, the sand paintings of the American Southwest tribes, astrology charts and the stained-glass rose windows found in Gothic cathedrals. The circles of all life are held together in concentric patterns. Men and women can be viewed microcosms with the flow of energy through the inherent "mind" of each psychic centre.

### Visualising Mandalas

Now, if you were to begin thinking about this subject, allow your subconscious mind free rein. Draw mandalas. Depict your self, your life story, using symbolism, colours and circles within circles, which represent the stages of development of consciousness. Just think of the myriad possibilities. For all intents and purposes, the mandala is infinite.

Let me finish by telling you of a dream I once had. I heard a man's voice say: "An atom has exploded." I looked into the sky and saw a beautiful golden mandala; its beauty and presence filled my heart with intense joy. When I awoke, I made a drawing of this vision: as within, so without.

The one energy, ever pouring forth from the centre, is reflected in our outer creative life. This power will fill our creative being as abundantly as we will permit. We grant our permission consciously and deliberately when we attune with the centre and ask this Light to flood our being.





# The History of Incense

*by Ralph M Lewis, FRC*

**M**OST OF OUR CUSTOMS AND habits have their origin in our physiological and psychological nature. This is especially true in regard to that which either gratifies us or which we experience as unpleasant. The sentient experiences of early humans were

the fundamental guide in their day to day living. Though we can well presume that primitive man had no concept of the nature of good and its opposite, yet those sensations that were pleasing to the senses were the preferred state and those contrary, were avoided. Thus the selection of food, for example, was guided by the nature of its



succulence and sweetness; and that which pleased the sense of smell was likewise categorised as having a special agreement.

With the advance of polytheism and anthropomorphism, humanlike qualities were attributed to the gods that were conceived in these ancient times. Whatever substances and materials were found gratifying to humankind, the gods likewise desired the same and were thought to be irritated by that which was found offensive. It was then necessary to continually placate the gods if a propitious relationship was to be maintained.

Special foods, herbs, barks and plants having an agreeable odour were offered to the gods in sacrificial rites. Such a practice was the beginning of magic and primitive religion. If certain areas were consecrated to the worship of the gods, such as the natural elements, the sky, earth, and stars, which were glorified as supernatural beings, fragrant flowers were strewn upon the ground or placed on altars. This, it was thought, made the gods conducive to the appeal of the worshippers.

The earliest of these odoriferous substances used in this manner were frankincense and certain gum resins extracted from trees and plants. The ancient Jewish historian, Josephus, relates that in the Hebrew rites "thirteen ingredients and sweet smelling spices..." were used. According to Pliny, the Roman naturalist (23-79 CE), the majority of fragrant substances were the product of trees in Arabia that were held sacred.

The original purpose of material pleasing to the sense of smell, as said, was generally for use in magical and religious rites. The bodies of the dead were scented with aromatic oils and decked with flowers. The oils were mixed with other ingredients to compose a form of perfume. The ancient Persians believed the evildoer was punished in the afterlife by being sent to a region of evil odours. In other words, what was offensive to the living was thought to be more so after death, as a retribution for evil committed during life. This equates with the concept of the evil-smelling odours and fumes said to exist as a form of punishment in the Christian concept of Hell.

### Visions of Paradise

Conversely, the idea that paradise has a pleasant odour is found in the Jewish, Christian, and



Pharaoh Ramesses III offers incense and libation to Ptah while the god stands in his shrine.

Gnostic writings. The abode of the gods must be a region, it was believed, pleasing to the sense of smell. The pleasurable state in the afterlife was therefore a reward.

Aside from their primary purpose as an offering to the gods, aromatic materials were used for practical, symbolic, and mystical purposes. Scented woods were used in cremation to neutralise the strong odour of the burning body or of burnt sacrifices, especially in hot climates. Where this is done today, as for example in India

*It was believed that the soul of the dead ascended to heaven by the smoke of incense burnt on its behalf.*

and Sri Lanka, the scent is usually the same in all cremation rites because of the customary use of similar materials. The odour is strong and, once experienced, always suggests the nearby burning of a human body. In fact, the scent has a cloying sweetness.

A further symbolic concept concerned the smoke ascending from the burning of aromatic plants and resins; it was thought to bear the words of prayer to the gods, who were pleased by





*Burning incense in front of a Hindu temple.*

the odour. Moreover, it was also believed that the soul of the dead ascended to heaven by the smoke of incense burnt on its behalf. It is psychologically interesting to note that early humans sought some tangible bond between their finite material substance and the infinite, or the invisible region where they believed the gods dwelt. The smoke at first was not symbolic, but thought to be an actual medium for the transmission of the prayer.

In early Jewish thought, incense was also connected with prayer. In Psalms 141:2, we find: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up my hands as the evening sacrifice." In Revelations 8:3, we read: "Incense rises with the smoke ... And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Again in Revelations 8:4: "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." In Christian thought, incense has likewise been regarded as symbolic of prayer. It also typifies the preaching of the faith.

### **Incense in Egypt**

In Egypt, incense offerings were made to the god Ra that he would "draw the soul up to the heaven on the smoke of the incense." Probably the earliest reference to the use of incense for any religious purpose appeared in the notice of a king of the Eleventh Dynasty, Sankhkara Mentuhotep III (c.2004-1992 BCE). He sent an expedition for aromatics across the desert to the Red Sea, to the "Incense Land of Punt." This land was situated in the region of modern Somalia.

On the walls of temples of the kings, on the west side of the Nile opposite modern Luxor, can

be seen representations of kings offering incense. "He holds a censer in one hand and in the other throws little balls of incense upon it, praying to the god to accept it and give him a long life." At funerary rites, incense was used to purify the deceased; fine grains were twice offered to the mouth, eyes and hands, one for the North and one for the South.

Fragrance was thought by the Egyptians to have a divine quality. The goddess Isis had a wonderful odour, it was believed, which she could transfer to others. This odour had beneficial qualities and perhaps was assumed to have healing value as well. Osiris was believed to be able to transfer his odour to those whom he loved.

Apparently, the importation of the ingredient of incense and its compounding was quite a thriving industry in ancient Egypt. It is related that immense quantities of incense were used. During the rulership of Pharaoh Rameses III it was reported that, "1,938,766 pieces of incense were used during the thirty-one years of his reign." Seemingly, all of the gods were delighted with the odours which were offered to them. Even the statues of the gods were censured with fragrant substances.

### **Incense in Other Cultures**

Philo, the Jewish philosopher, relates that the four ingredients of the Hebrew incense represented the four elements, that is, air, earth, fire and water, and therefore the universe. Herodotus, Greek historian (485-423 BCE), says that in Babylonia 1,000 talents of frankincense were offered on the great altar of Marduk, the god of Heaven and Earth, at his annual feast. Herodotus also referred to a land where incense was placed upon bricks. This probably refers to Babylon, as most of the great structures in that city were made of mud brick and bound with bitumen, an asphalt-like substance, which bubbled up naturally in that petroleum-rich land. The incense was burned as a ritual, accompanied by incantations, prayers, and the predictions of oracles. Somewhat similar household ceremonies were held, with incense burned on bricks as an offering to Marduk, the sun, moon, stars and so on.

The ancient Hindus used sandalwood as a principal ingredient of their incense. They used it both in their temples and their homes in the performance of sacred rites. The fire was fed with the consecrated wood, sandalwood and other aromatic woods. Such is common practice today



in India for cremation. Its odour can be detected out in the Ganges River when floating by the burning ghats (steps) at the river's edge where the funeral pyres are built. In the Hindu literary work, the *Ramayana*, the poet describes a solemn entrance into his grandfather's capital: "...the city was adorned with garlands, and exhaled the odours of frankincense and sweet smelling perfume." However, such were not indigenous to India but were brought principally from Arabia.

Among the Tibetans, the ritualistic use of incense was like that of the Roman Catholic Church. In a monastery in old Tibet we have witnessed monks censuring their high altars while chanting, similar to the practice in Catholic churches. The incense and censer were also used in Tibet in connection with the initiation of a monk and in the daily rites of the monasteries, which the author has observed. Early Buddhism was opposed to external rites and ceremonies. In fact, the later external development of ceremonies by one school of Buddhism brought about a schism resulting in a different presentation of Buddhist teachings. Therefore, incense was apparently unknown to the practice of early Buddhism but in later times it became generally used in certain ceremonies. Perfumes and flowers are also placed before the image of Buddha.

The philosopher Pliny stated that the people of Greece only knew the smell of cedar and citrus, "...as it rose in columns of smoke from the sacrifices." Later, it was more extensively used

*Incense perpetuates a mystical and esoteric symbolism.*

in varied rituals. It is related that Alexander the Great, while making sacrifices to the gods, once flung so much of the incense in the fire that his fellow companion, Leonidas, cried out: "You may use incense in this manner when you conquer the countries where it grows!" Alexander, after conquering much of Arabia, where incense was produced, sent a great quantity of the ingredients to Leonidas, and jovially admonished him to be more liberal in the future when paying honour to

the gods; Alexander was convinced that the gods amply repaid his generous gift to them.

The Phoenicians, after the battle of Arbela, followed Alexander in his march to India, solely for the purpose of trade. "They loaded their boats of burden with the gum of the myrrh ... which it yielded in such abundance as to scent the whole region with the fragrance."

Though many religious offerings of the Romans were sacrifices of living things, one of the most important of the bloodless sacrifices was incense. It eventually became an essential function of every rite, and was burned on high altars or in braziers.



*Incense burning in China hasn't changed for centuries.*

Though incense is used extensively today in the rituals of the Catholic Church, one of the early Church fathers, Tertullian (155-230 CE), inveighed against it. He declared: "Not a penny worth of incense do I offer." And Athenagoras, a Christian philosopher

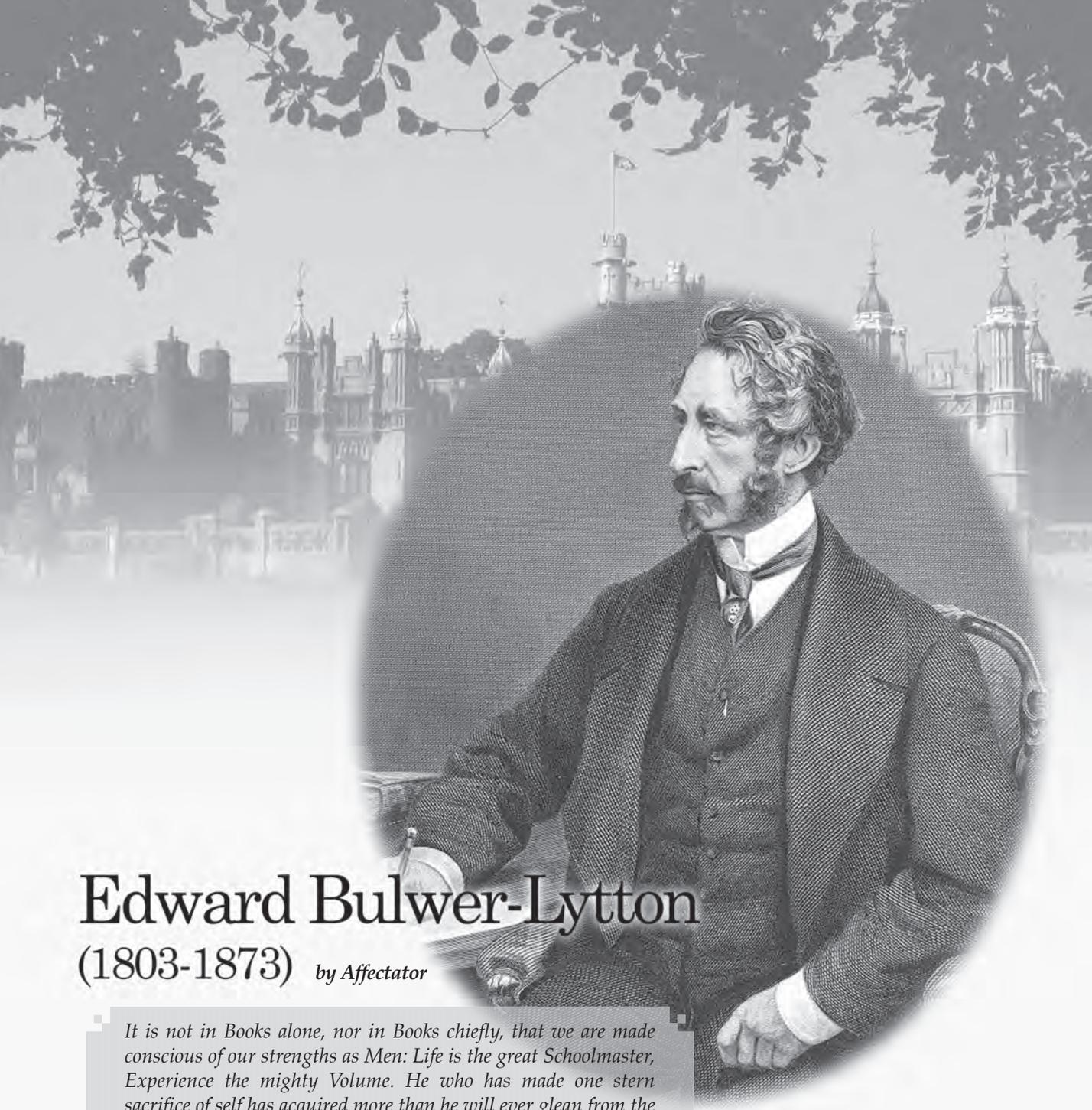
of the second century, said that God did not require the sweet smell of flowers and incense. However, incense is now used by the Roman Catholic Church at the solemn mass before the *introit* (the first variable part of the mass) and also at blessings, processions, burial rites and so on. It's also used ritually in many churches of the Anglican Communion, "the symbolic rite typifying prayer."

### Symbolism of Incense

Aside from its practical uses as a means of dispelling offensive odours or for religious rites, incense perpetuates a mystical and esoteric symbolism. To the mystical adherent, the symbolism becomes an objective form of his subjective idealism and sentiment. The burning, the scent, the smoke have no import in themselves; they simply portray the spirit of the thoughts and emotions of the user.

The glow of the fire symbolically depicts the zeal and devotion of the adherent to his cause. The fragrance, the agreeable scent, is symbolic of the harmony of transcendent pleasure. Finally, the smoke represents the ascension of the consciousness, the projection of the finite nature of man to the infinity of the Cosmic.





# Edward Bulwer-Lytton

(1803-1873) *by Affectator*

*It is not in Books alone, nor in Books chiefly, that we are made conscious of our strengths as Men: Life is the great Schoolmaster, Experience the mighty Volume. He who has made one stern sacrifice of self has acquired more than he will ever glean from the odds-and-ends of popular philosophy.*

**T**HUS DID THE LONDON-BORN Rosicrucian Edward Bulwer-Lytton allude to a fundamental teaching of the Rosicrucian Order, an ideal which he personally exemplified in his life's work; the mystical law of development through service.

Bulwer-Lytton had strong ties with London. He was born in Baker Street and spent his childhood in nearby Nottingham Place. In 1827 he married at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, settling three years later in Hertford Street off Park Lane. Residing mainly in the City until



inheriting Knebworth House, Hertfordshire in 1843, most of his working life was centred in London and he was buried at Westminster Abbey.

An eloquently outspoken critic of the materialism of the age in which he lived, Bulwer-Lytton pitted himself against what he called, *"the hollow, sensual, sharp-witted, self-wrapped world – the world that is all for this life, and thinks of no future and no God."*

### Channels of Service

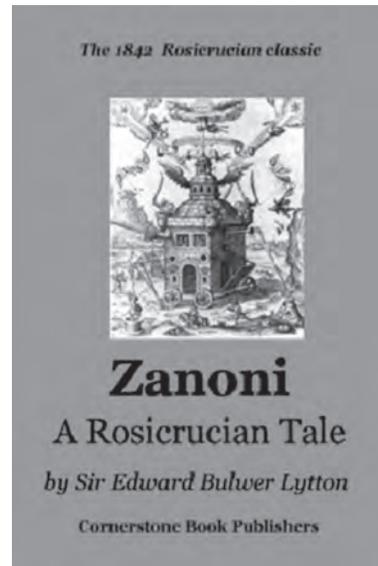
The channels of service through which he operated to this end were many. Best remembered as a novelist, he was also an active Member of Parliament, playwright, poet, journalist, magazine editor, essayist, historian and translator of the classics, social reformer, philanthropist and esoteric philosopher. He was usually engaged in several of these fields simultaneously, even completing one or two full-length novels each year.

The fullness of his life is further evidenced by his leisure accomplishments. He travelled widely and was skilful at riding, boxing, fencing and whist. He sacrificed time and money, both precious to him, and ultimately his health and domestic happiness, in an uncompromising effort to implement the exalted principles of the Rosicrucian Order that he served with dedication to the end of his life.

Bulwer Lytton's profound understanding of life was not acquired painlessly. At the age of 21 he meditated for one night by the grave of his lover. Later he wrote of this experience: *"What I suffered in one long, solitary night I will not say. At dawn I turned from the place, as if re-baptised or reborn. I recovered the healthful tone of my mind, and the stage of experience and feeling through which my young life had passed contributed largely to render me whatever I have since become."*

At about this time he entered Cambridge University where he laid the academic foundations for his wide-ranging skills. In the Debating Society he developed a powerful oratorical ability which was to serve him well in Parliament. After graduating in 1826 he toured the Continent, devoting much of his time to study, returning to London in April 1827.

Four months later he was married, but his widowed mother did not approve of the match and cut off his allowance. He therefore had to



*This modern cover illustration emphasises the Rosicrucian nature of this work, depicting the "Invisible College" of the Rosicrucians.*

resort to a life of literary drudgery working for the popular periodicals of the day: *"the graveyard of much genius"* he called it. However in 1828 the success of his first novel released him from this monotony and in 1831 he entered the House of Commons as a supporter of the Reform Bill. Disraeli was already a close friend and wrote that Bulwer-Lytton was *"one of the few whom my intellect comes into collision with benefit."*

He resigned from Parliament in 1841 to concentrate on literature but re-entered the Commons in 1852, serving as Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1858 until his elevation to the Peerage as the first Lord Lytton in the following year.

### Parliament and Literature

Bulwer-Lytton was a much more influential politician than might be supposed. Although he attended the House regularly, he spoke only occasionally, but always with great effect. His political efforts were directed mainly out of the limelight, but a pamphlet which he prepared in 1834 was essential to his party's unexpected win at the General Election of that year. He refused the offer of a Government post in 1835 as he did not wish to work exclusively in the field of politics.

In Parliament, Bulwer-Lytton naturally took an active interest in cultural matters but also spoke on Irish affairs, the Crimean War, reform



of the Factory and Poor Laws and other social measures. With his friend Charles Dickens he formed the *Guild of Literature and Art*, to benefit impoverished artists and authors. After the two friends had raised a considerable sum of money

*In true Rosicrucian tradition, he instilled subtle germs of mystical thought in his readers.*

to establish the Guild financially, Bulwer-Lytton personally carried through Parliament the Bill to legally incorporate it.

Despite the success of his political endeavours, and of his work in the various fields previously mentioned, it was as a novelist that he did the most to raise the consciousness of his contemporaries. Furthermore, these writings have continued to elevate men's thoughts down to the present day.

Bulwer-Lytton is acknowledged as a pioneer of the didactic or instructive novel. He utilised the medium of romance to draw attention to the social ills of the day, and in true Rosicrucian tradition, to instil subtle germs of mystical thought in his readers. Most of his novels were best-sellers and his compelling artistry ensured that many people who would not read formal essays on serious topics would have the message of depth and truth brought to them through the medium and force of popular fiction.

Even today, his novels make pleasant reading on a purely objective level, as he took care to meet the conventional criteria of the genre: fascinating stories, coherent plots and skilful development of themes. One can also not help but be impressed by the author's deep psychological insight and dry wit.

It is evident that Bulwer-Lytton's parliamentary activities were compatible with his aims in literature. Of the edifying aspect of his novels he said: "*I direct myself to the Conscience that reigns elder and superior to all Law, in men's hearts and souls; I utter boldly and loudly a truth, if not all untold, murmured feebly and falteringly before – sooner or later it will find its way into the judgement and the conduct.*" In this manner, he worked to raise public opinion which would eventually call for the passing of more enlightened laws by Parliament, where he was personally on hand to

help in framing appropriate measures.

A speciality of Bulwer-Lytton was the historical romance, of which *The Last Days of Pompeii*, published in 1834, is the most famous. These works were not undertaken without the most thorough historical research. But the realistically vivid portrayal of events in these works leads one to speculate as to whether he might have projected his consciousness back in time (consciously or unconsciously) and psychically experienced some of the scenes as they really happened. The author's admission that the "intuitive spirit" was his means of acquiring such descriptiveness possibly lends weight to this supposition.

But Bulwer-Lytton did not entirely neglect the didactic approach in these historical works; he usually chose periods that were analogous to, and hinted at, the imperfections of contemporary society. And this approach is most pronounced in *The Last of the Barons*, which was set at the time of the Wars of the Roses.

### The Mystical Novels

Although those who are interested in Rosicrucian mysticism can study most of Bulwer-Lytton's works with benefit, there are three novels in particular in which the degree of mystical interest is especially high: *Zanoni*, *A Strange Story* and *The Coming Race*.

*Zanoni* was published in 1842 and, like all high art, is capable of personal interpretation on many different levels. The author denied that there was any unique meaning to the narrative, saying: "*I cannot disentangle all the hues that commingle into the light I seek to cast upon the truth,*" leaving each reader to "*guess at such truths as best please to instruct him.*" However, the introductory chapter gives the thesis for the theme of *Zanoni* as being Plato's teaching of the four ways through which the soul personality progresses to union with the Divine. Therefore, it is safe to assume that, in its most profound aspect, the story is concerned with symbolising the true mystical path of initiation and reintegration.

The aptly titled *A Strange Story*, dating from 1861, was written at the request of Dickens for serial publication in his magazine. Bulwer-Lytton described it as "*a Romance which conducts its bewildered hero towards the same goal to which*





Portrait of Bulwer-Lytton with facsimile signature.

philosophy conducts its luminous student." From the mystical viewpoint this "goal" is self-integration, but many subsidiary meanings are also conveyed, all subject to personal exposition, and important mystical and psychic principles are strongly alluded to.

*The Coming Race* appeared in 1871 and was the author's penultimate novel. A genuinely prophetic work, it is concerned essentially with human evolution. Utopian in form, it is also an early example of science fiction and Bulwer-Lytton did not miss the opportunity to satirise the social attitudes of his contemporaries.

### Man of Vision

Like all advanced mystics, Bulwer-Lytton was an originator well ahead of his time in his

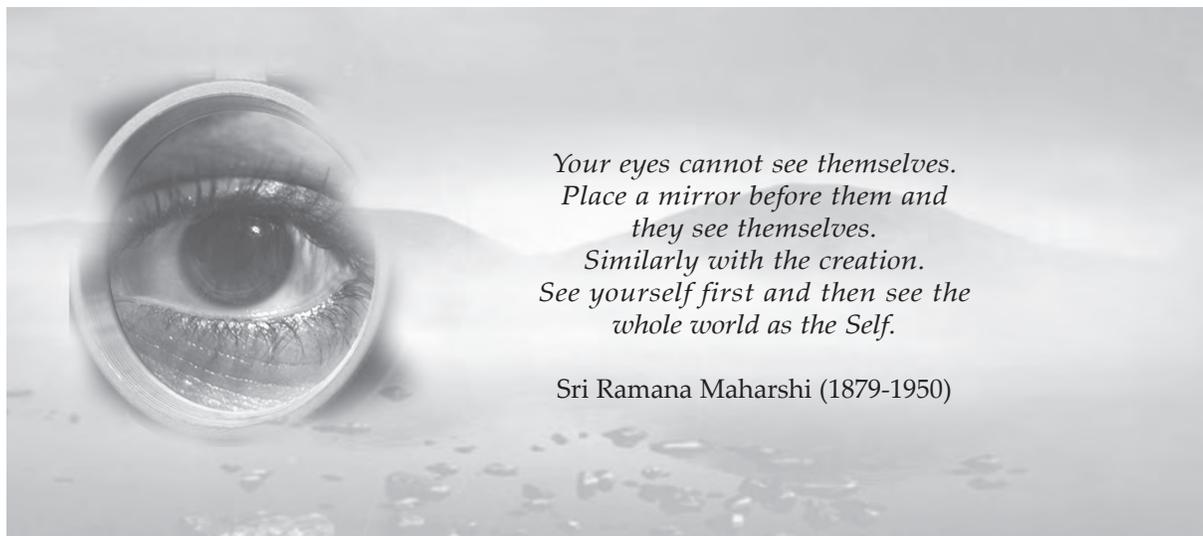
thinking. He was a pioneer and he knew it, though in a most humble way. He expected and got vehement and venomous criticism. But he took it with unyielding resolution because he realised that he was easing the path for those who would follow the truth he had discovered.

In his writings he planted seeds of constructive thought in the minds of his readers which have had a far-reaching influence on the evolution of humanity. Other writers, at home and abroad, heeded his innovations and followed his example. Bulwer-Lytton did not attempt to hide his light. He *lived* his mysticism openly, declaring the truth with assertiveness and authority in a steady and continuous effort to give of himself in service. That he was fully conscious of his mission in life is apparent from the following words<sup>1</sup> which he wrote as a true Rosicrucian:

*"The opinions I have put forth are not in fashion at this day. But I have never consulted the popular, any more than the sectarian, Prejudice. Alone and unaided I have hewn out my own way, from the first to the last, by the force of my own convictions. The corn springs up in the field centuries after the first sower is forgotten. Works may perish with the workman; but, if truthful, their results are in the works of others, imitating, borrowing, enlarging and improving, in the everlasting Cycle of Industry and Thought."*

### Footnotes

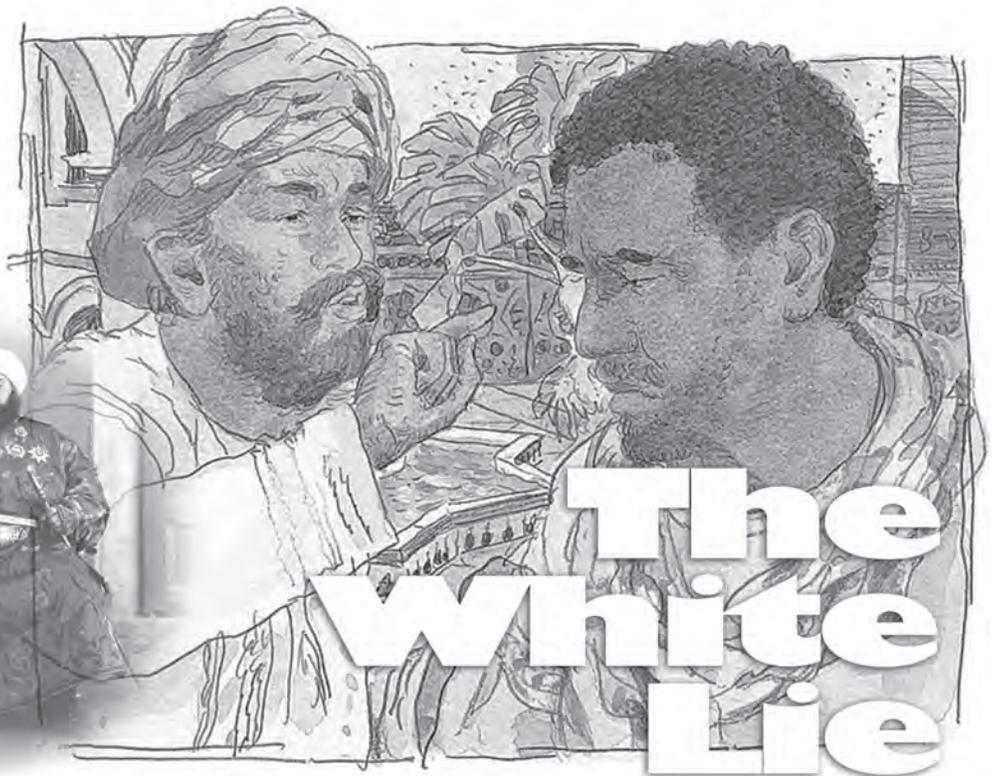
1. From his preface to the 1845 edition of *Night and Morning*, Volume 1.  
This article was originally published in the 1980 Year Book of the London Chapter of AMORC.



*Your eyes cannot see themselves.  
Place a mirror before them and  
they see themselves.  
Similarly with the creation.  
See yourself first and then see the  
whole world as the Self.*

Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950)





by Pensator

**A**BD AR-RAHMAN III, THE CALIPH OF al-Andalus, was staying at his *munya*t or pleasure villa called *an-Na'ura* just outside of his capital city of Córdoba.

His holiday was interrupted by the return of one of his generals from the wars against the Christian kingdoms in the north of Spain. The general had brought a high-born captive with him to present to the caliph. This captive had caused many problems in the northern marches, and now found himself within the caliph's power. He expected only the worst.

The caliph was sitting in audience surrounded by his viziers. Unlike the eastern Muslim lands, the viziers here were more like a councillor than a prime minister. Angry at the great trouble the captive had caused him, the caliph was determined to punish the foreigner who had been thrown down before him. "Put him to death!" he ordered.

The captive had been expecting it, and up until then had been silent. But now that death was certain, he gave up all hope and cursed the caliph, using the foulest words in his native tongue. He was like a cat, spitting and screeching at dogs who are at its throat. The caliph, not knowing the language, did not understand what the captive was screaming, but he knew that one or two of

his viziers were familiar with the tongue. "What is he saying?" he demanded of them.

The viziers looked at each other. Then, one who was good-natured, replied: "Commander of the Faithful, he is quoting from the Koran." "Indeed?" said the caliph. "From which verse?" The vizier went on: "From the verse that speaks of the paradise which awaits those who control their anger and forgive, for Allah loves men of goodwill."

"I see," said the caliph, thoughtfully. He turned to the now silent captive. "You have done well to remind me of that. I will control my anger. And I will forgive you. You can go free."

"That was disgraceful!" muttered another vizier, an enemy and rival of the one who had replied to the caliph's question. "People of our rank should speak nothing but the truth, particularly before the caliph." The caliph overheard. "What was that?" he asked. "Commander of the Faithful!" protested the second vizier. "I am sorry, but you were told a lie by that vizier! The captive was certainly not quoting from the Koran. The truth is that he was pouring foul abuse and the filthiest of insults upon you!"

The caliph frowned at this. "Then I prefer his white lie to your truth!" he said. "I think that your truth came from a heart bent upon mischief. His lie came from a good heart, and good has come of it, as you have seen."



# THE HUNA



## *Pathway to our Inner Selves*

*by Glenn Cronick, FRC*

**T**HE ANCIENT HAWAIIANS BELIEVED that within each of us there dwell three very distinct beings or selves. That is not to say that there are separate entities within us, but instead, three distinct aspects of consciousness. Each self possesses unique characteristics and is related to the other selves. The harmony or disharmony between these selves is responsible for all human happiness or unhappiness. We are consequently endowed with a responsibility to learn the nature of these aspects of consciousness or selves, their interactions, and to develop skill in creating

harmony among them. Thus, it is squarely in our lap to promote unity within our consciousness.

The mystical healers of Hawaii, the Kahunas, gave each aspect of consciousness a name. They called them *Unihipili*, or Low Self, comparable to the subconscious; *Uhane*, or Middle Self, comparable to the objective consciousness; and the *Aumakua*, or High Self, which is the Cosmic Self or God within.

Each self possesses a unique physical dwelling place within the material reality. The Unihipili dwells within the region of the diaphragm, but has a presence throughout the



entire body. The Uhane dwells within the region of the head or brain, while the Aumakua dwells above the head and is connected to the body, specifically the Unihipili, by a chord of *aka* or spiritual substance.

### The Unihipili

The Unihipili is the *subconscious* aspect of consciousness. It can be accurately called the esoteric self, since its realm is the inner dominions. It is the creative imagination, the Master Within. This self is intensely powerful, controlling the involuntary processes of the body and generating energy for all physical functions. The Kahunas likened this Unihipili to a powerful animal, part of primal nature, and in need of training, discipline and guidance. However, it is imperative to be aware that in fact it cannot be controlled; it resists control and responds instead to emotionally charged gentle guidance. This Unihipili is the seat of the emotions, habit and memories, both personal and impersonal, from past and present incarnations. It is the centre of psychic happenings and can reach out to other beings via the chords of *aka*, or spiritual substance, created when interacting with other beings. It possesses a direct line of communication with the Aumakua or Cosmic that the Uhane does not possess. In fact, it is through the Unihipili



*A modern Huna Teacher.*

*The ancient Hawaiians believed that within each of us there dwell three very distinct beings or selves.*

that we reach out to God in prayer and receive a response. It is within the realm of dreams, where symbols are the language of choice, that both the Unihipili and the Aumakua communicate with the Uhane or waking consciousness.

The Unihipili uses deductive reasoning; taking a premise assimilated within its being and methodically manifesting the consequences of that premise in the greatest detail via the power of the Aumakua, the constant beliefs we feed this subconscious, through the objective self, are perpetually being presented to the cosmic self for manifestation in daily life. Consciousness is

highly creative. Thus, it is critically important to be aware that our perceived realities that have become solidified as beliefs will manifest in some aspect. This Unihipili is constantly amenable to suggestion, though in varying degrees depending on our emotional and physical circumstances, and must be fed healthy and constructive perceptions. This is the function of the Uhane.

### The Uhane

The Uhane is the *objective* aspect of consciousness and can best be described as the exoteric self, since its primary domain is the material reality. It is conscious of the five physical senses, uses language, pictures, and is the seat of reason. The Uhane is in perpetual communication with the Unihipili, presenting information and perceptions gathered about the material universe. Thus, the Uhane tends to create beliefs regarding its experience of reality. It passes this information on to the Unihipili through emotionalised thought, both habitual and fleeting. However, habitual emotionalised thought creates the most powerful and lasting impressions within the Unihipili, which are in turn presented to the Aumakua for manifestation.

Since the Uhane uses inductive reasoning, it can create a premise not in keeping with material reality. It can completely misinterpret reality, which can be quite problematic. The Uhane possesses an immense will power that the ancient Hawaiians advised must be used to wisely guide the Unihipili, feeding it with constructive premises and positive emotions in order to bring forth a harmonious reality, the experience of miracles and the overcoming of challenges. Lastly, it is important to note that the Uhane can direct its awareness both outwardly, such as when it is involved in some physical activity, or inwardly, when contemplating a particular subject or during meditation.

### The Aumakua

The Aumakua or *cosmic self* is the creator of reality. The Kahunas called this self "the god" but did not see it as the Supreme Creator. Instead, it was believed to be an ancestor or highly evolved spirit



possessing both male and female qualities sent to aid and guide an individual towards greater evolution and happiness. This “god” is able to accomplish anything, being an utterly trustworthy and faithful spirit, vehemently dedicated to the individual’s well-being. To accomplish a goal, this cosmic self may see fit to contact the cosmic selves of other persons, and other more evolved beings, going so far as to contact the Supreme Creator. Again, after accepting a premise from the Uhane, the Unihipili passes that belief on to the Aumakua for manifestation. The Aumakua continually accepts the emotionally charged premises given to the Unihipili and uses that information to create our individual reality. Thus, every thought, word and deed is a powerful prayer that manifests after its kind; as we sow, so shall we reap. Thus, it is of utmost importance to feed the Unihipili quality emotions and beliefs that are positive, constructive and faith-filled in nature.

Bear in mind that all three selves are in constant communication with one another, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Also, be aware that only the Unihipili can contact the Aumakua directly. Uhane contacts the Aumakua by way of the Unihilipi. When emotionalised-thought is experienced by the Uhane, this thought is impressed upon the Unihilipi, which in turn

*All three selves are in constant communication with one another.*

is presented to the Aumakua for manifestation. The stronger and more persistent the thought, the more clearly it will manifest.

### The Ha Prayer Rite

As Rosicrucians, it is our constant desire and challenge to improve the quality of our consciousness, and thereby hew out a more desirable reality for our experience and for the benefit of others. The Kahunas of Hawaii pursued the same end and used prayer as the main vehicle of achievement. Modern students of Huna, as the study of this knowledge is called today, have named this formula of prayer the *Ha Prayer Rite*.

The Kahunas believed that before a prayer can manifest and reality reconstructed, the path of realisation must be cleared. They believed that guilt, whether actual or imagined, would block the connection between the Unihilipi and Aumakua, neutralising our consciously directed



*This symbol, called Kahanu, brings down the light in a wave by connecting the Kahuna to the source of all light, as a brilliant sun just above the top of the symbol. It is used to fill the body with light, opening up the circuitry. It means: “The wave of light that makes you gasp.” (Copyright © 1997, Advanced Neuro Dynamics. All rights reserved.)*

and emotionalised prayer. All habitual negative emotions have the same tendency and must be replaced with positive emotions. Thus, you must forgive yourself for wrongs committed and make amends, whether physical or spiritual. For the ancient Hawaiians, the only sin was to deliberately seek to harm another. Also, we must talk to our Unihilipi or subconscious and convince ourselves of the worthiness of our desire. This would include taking into consideration individual moral beliefs regarding the consequences of our fulfilled desire. It is like preparing soil for a garden. Once the soil is turned, filled with fertile matter, and freed of stones, the seeds can be planted. Likewise, once the path is cleared of spiritual stones, we can begin to plant our prayers.

### Visualisation

The Kahunas believed that once we decide precisely what we desire to see manifested, it must be clearly visualised. It is important to note that some students have a difficult time “seeing” something in their mind’s eye, with detail and life. Consequently, it must be remembered that visualisation includes word pictures or what I call “word visualisation.” I have experienced amazing results through verbally describing my desire in all its detail, while keeping emotionally charged as to its eventual manifestation.

Once we visualise our desire, in whatever way is best for us, we must back it up with emotion. The Kahunas saw this act in itself as



transference of one's desire to the Unihipili for eventual presentation to the Aumakua for manifestation. Without emotion, the desire is dead and your seeds will not germinate. All persistent emotionally charged thoughts manifest themselves in some aspect. So one can see the importance of truly desiring what one is asking for. It is often the case that we ask for something that we do not sincerely want, but feel we should want. Thus, our desire is tepid and will reap little or no result. We must truly desire what we present and with great emotion. While presenting prayer, the Kahunas would engage in directed deep breathing to still the mind and charge the Unihipili with *mana* or life force energy. This was an important way to raise energy levels of the body so that great emotion could be conjured.

The best time for presenting this emotionally charged desire to the Unihipili is during a time of balance. During the waking state the Uhane, or objective self, dominates, while during our sleeping state the Unihipili, or subconscious self, dominates. Thus, hypnagogic (sleep inducing) and hypnopaedic (sleep learning) states are ideal for such contact. Excellent times also include meditation and during simple or elaborate ritual,



*The ancient Hawaiians believed that within each of us there dwell three very distinct beings or selves.*

*While presenting prayer, the Kahunas would engage in directed deep breathing to still the mind and charge the Unihipili with mana.*

in which the body and mind are relaxed, yet alert. If the Unihipili is too much to the fore we will lack the vitality to make the presentation, and if the Uhane is too much to the fore we will be too awake and stimulated for the presentation to get through. Thus, an ideal state of relaxation and alertness must be cultivated. One can often experience this after a hot bath or shower, a large meal or following intense physical activity.

### **Back It Up With Emotion!**

Once the emotionally charged request has been made, the desire must be dropped from the

mind. The process can be likened to planting a garden once the soil has been prepared. We must choose the seed, prepare the soil, plant the seed, water the seed, then allow it to grow and prepare for harvest. If we were to dig up the soil to watch the seeds germinate, they would never develop. We must water the soil with faith, trust and expectancy, allowing the seeds to grow and develop.

Whatever your desire, it can manifest. First, decide precisely what you desire. Second, prepare the soil, by clearing the path of communication from guilt and doubt. Third, present the desire in a relaxed state of balance between the objective and subconscious selves, with an emotional charge and enthusiasm. Fourth, you must drop the desire from your mind until you make the presentation to the Unihipili again. The presentation can be made repeatedly until you feel the impression has been adequately accepted by your subconscious. You see this expressed in devotions and consecutive day rituals. Lastly, you must water this desire with faith and expectancy. and

trust that once the Unihipili accepts the desire and presents it to the Aumakua for creation, it will manifest, according to the laws of nature.

If this short presentation of the Huna knowledge has piqued your interest, I encourage you to look further into this psycho-religious construct.

It is my sincere wish that all your worthy desires manifest with the greatest ease and resulting happiness. I wish you all Peace Profound.

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# How Dreams Come True

by Britta Kantzer, SRC

*Earth is crammed with heaven,  
and every common bush is afire with God.  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,  
whilst the rest sit round plucking blackberries.*

-- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1806-1861

**L**ET ME SHARE WITH YOU AN experience of how dreams came true for me. Throughout my life I was fortunate enough to live in a house with a garden. I so loved to watch the changing of the seasons, and never tired of seeing the play of light and shadow among the trees, listening to the rustling of leaves in the wind.

Each morning I awoke to birdsong in the trees and it filled me with awe and joy. I felt a deep sense of connection with Mother Earth when my hands have worked the ground and I smelled the fragrance of roses. And every year when Spring came, I sensed anew the deep wonder of the sweet mystery of life.

## Downtown

How much I would miss a garden became clear

when I moved downtown into an apartment. Some of the apartments, like mine, had a small balcony, though these were hardly big enough to sit on.

To make the best out of my new place, I used to tell myself that this was a good opportunity to experience a different kind of living, like so

*In my mind I visualised an elaborate picture of my dream garden and imagined how I would love to be in it.*

many others who have never owned a garden. At least I will never feel lonely I thought, as I could hear people around me day and night. Wouldn't this way of living afford a great opportunity for practising tolerance and good will to all?

In time, I came to enjoy the view of the



different roofs, noticing the large variety of chimneys and the way the sunshine played on the brick walls of the tall buildings. But now and then, I remembered my different gardens and realised how much I missed them. And then I felt an ache in my heart that simply would not go away.

### The Terrace

Across the street there was another apartment building. Only one apartment in that building had a terrace with a small area for a garden. A few dried out bushes and plants were there, quite a sad sight. Every time I looked at these dried out bushes I yearned to go over and suggest that a little garden be built.

In my mind I visualised an elaborate picture of my dream garden and imagined how I would love to be in it. But at the end of my visualisation I used to tell myself that there were enough beautiful public gardens in the city that I could always visit. I didn't need to have my own garden to enjoy nature. But, unbeknown to me, my visualisation had set events in motion.

Time passed, spring came and the misery of the dried up plants on the terrace opposite my windows always looked the same. Then one day, all of a sudden, a man appeared and started working on the terrace, digging and labouring hard all day long for almost a week. I wondered what took him so long as the terrace was not large. Had he sensed my heartfelt plea to do something with this terrace? I wondered what the result of his work would be.

For quite some time I couldn't see much difference; the dead bushes were gone and everything appeared quite empty and tidy. At least one thing comforted me; he hadn't concreted over the terrace. I went on a journey for a couple of weeks and when I came back and looked through my windows on to the neighbouring terrace I caught sight of fresh greenery everywhere. What a joy to see something growing and alive between all these walls!

Again time passed, I went away on another trip and returned late one night. The next morning, I couldn't believe my eyes. Through my window I saw on the terrace, the most wonderful natural garden anyone could imagine. It was spread out right before my eyes, almost as if it was meant for me to have the best of all views of it and to be able to fully adore and praise it. It was exactly the kind of garden I had dreamt of. Everything

was in full bloom with a large variety of different shapes of evergreens and perennials. All kinds of multicoloured wild flowers added an extra sparkle, and in the centre was the most wonderful pink flowering bush of a kind I had never seen before. Everything looked so healthy, fresh and colourful, that I can hardly find words to describe it. It was one of the prettiest little gardens I have ever seen.

Unfortunately, the owners of the terrace won't enjoy it much, I thought, as they have no windows looking on to their garden. Nor will people walking on the street see it, only a neighbour or two. I really was the only one who could see it all the time. The way my windows faced the terrace, I was the only one to benefit the wonderful sight of this garden. It seemed as if it was created just for me to enjoy.

Nowadays, the first thing I do each morning is to greet and open my heart to the sight of the flowering garden. And when I'm in bed at night I leave my shutters open so I can see it from my bed with the pink-flowering bush right there before my eyes until I fall asleep.

### Law of the Triangle

I had never seen anyone using the terrace until yesterday. A man appeared and took great care to water the flowers and bushes. I waved my hands to catch his attention and called "Hello" across the street until he caught sight of me. I told him that his flowering garden was such a joy to me and that I had always owned a garden myself and now missed it so much. I told him that the garden he had built looked exactly like the kind of garden I would have wished to have and that I wanted to thank him with all my heart for his good work.

The man was very surprised to hear me say this and seemed so pleased that he called his wife to come out. He told her what I had just said, and then he shouted across the street: *"I'm a gardener, you know. When I built this garden I knew we ourselves would not get to see much of it but I thought, maybe it will bring joy to someone else!"*

To tell this story of how a dream came true and how, among walls and stones, a rose would bloom, has taken more space than I thought it would. But it illustrates to me how the power of visualisation, coupled with strong emotional attachment, can produce results that were not initially anticipated but which have such a positive and beneficial effect on us.



by John Michael Greer

# An Introduction to the



# Corpus Hermeticum

*Although many modern Rosicrucian students have heard of the Corpus Hermeticum, they may be unfamiliar with its content and the impact it had on the European Renaissance. It is indeed the foundation document of early modern Western occult philosophy and beyond; the term "occult" being used here is in its historical context since the word "esoteric" was not used at that time. The author sketches the historical lineage of the Corpus Hermeticum followed by a summary of its content and a concise outline of its significance for this historical period.*

**T**HE FIFTEEN TRACTATES OF THE *Corpus Hermeticum*, along with the *Perfect Sermon* or *Asclepius*, are the foundation documents of the Hermetic tradition. Written by unknown authors in Egypt sometime before the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, they were part of a once substantial

literature attributed to the mythic figure of Hermes Trismegistus, a Hellenistic fusion of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth.

This literature came out of the same religious and philosophical ferment that produced Neoplatonism, Christianity and the diverse collection of teachings usually lumped together



under the label *Gnosticism*, a ferment which had its roots in the impact of Platonic thought on the older traditions of the Hellenised East. There are obvious connections and common themes linking each of these traditions, although each had its own answer to the major questions of the time.

The treatises we now call the *Corpus Hermeticum* were collected into a single volume in Byzantine times, and a copy of this volume survived to come into the hands of Lorenzo de Medici's agents in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Marsilio Ficino, the head of the Florentine Academy, was pulled off the task of translating the dialogues of Plato in order to put the *Corpus Hermeticum* into Latin first. His translation was printed in 1463, and was reprinted at least 22 times over the next century and a half.

The treatises divide up into several groups. The first (CH 1), the *Poemandres*, is the account of a revelation given to Hermes Trismegistus by the being Poemandres or "Man-Shepherd," an expression of the universal Mind. The next eight (CH 2-9), the *General Sermons*, are short dialogues or lectures discussing various basic points of Hermetic philosophy. There follows the *Key* (CH 10), a summary of the General Sermons, and after this a set of four tractates: *Mind unto Hermes*, *About the Common Mind*, *The Secret Sermon on the Mountain*, and the *Letter of Hermes to Asclepius* (CH 11-14), touching on the more mystical aspects of Hermeticism. The collection is rounded off by the *Definitions of Asclepius unto King Ammon* (CH 15), which may be composed of three fragments of longer works.

### The Significance of the Hermetic Writings

The *Corpus Hermeticum* landed like a well-aimed bomb amid the philosophical systems of late medieval Europe. Quotations from the Hermetic literature by the Church Fathers (who were never shy of leaning on pagan sources to prove a point) accepted a traditional chronology which dated "Hermes Trismegistus" as an historical figure to the time of Moses. As a result, the Hermetic tractates' borrowings from Jewish scripture and Platonic philosophy were seen, in the Renaissance, as evidence that the *Corpus Hermeticum* had anticipated and influenced both.

The Hermetic philosophy was seen as a primordial wisdom tradition, identified with the "Wisdom of the Egyptians" mentioned in *Exodus*

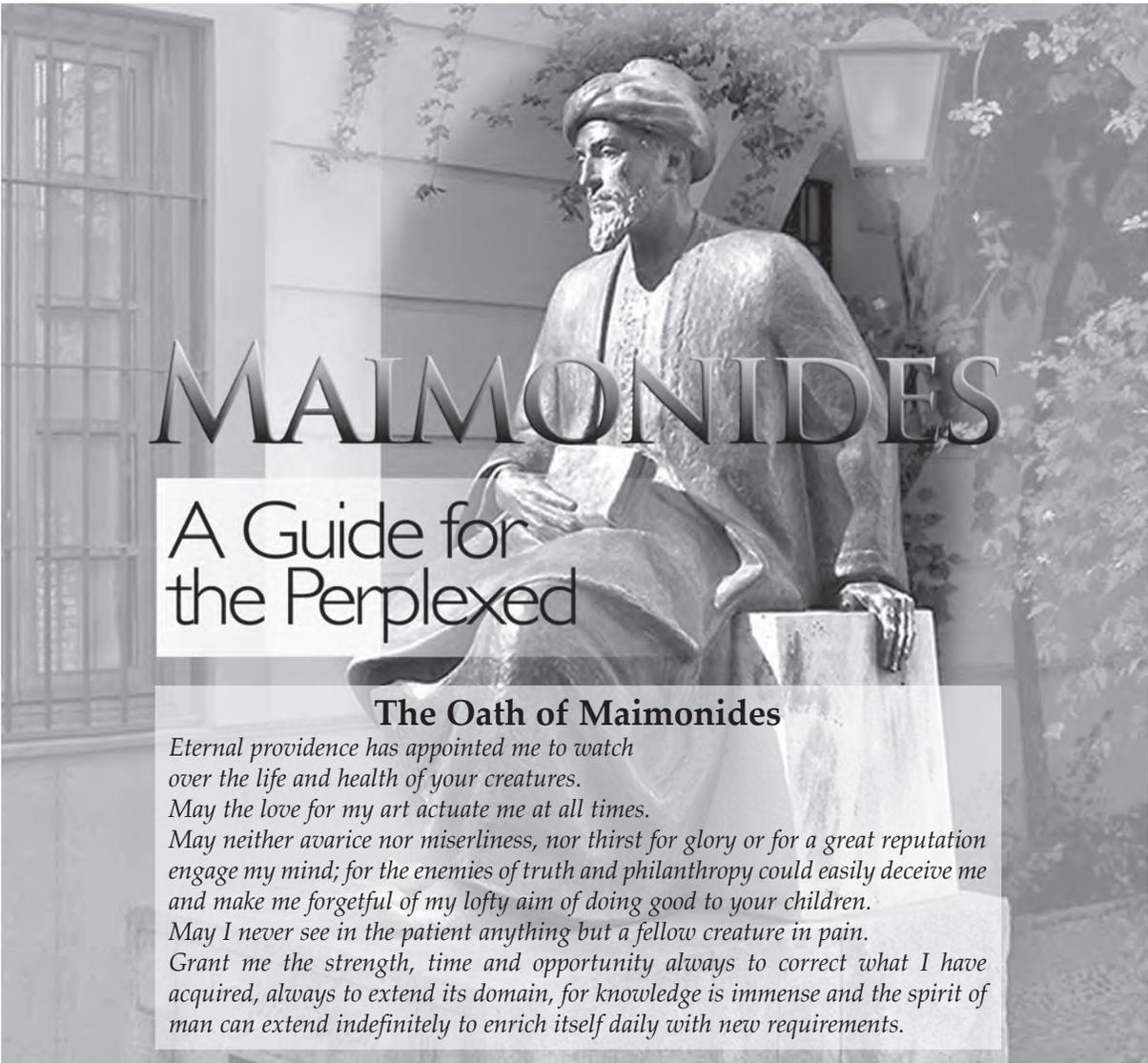


and lauded in Platonic dialogues such as the *Timaeus*. It therefore served as a useful club in the hands of intellectual rebels who sought to break the stranglehold of Aristotelian scholasticism on the universities at this time.

It also provided one of the most important weapons to another major rebellion of the age, the attempt to re-establish magic as a socially acceptable spiritual path in the Christian West. Another body of literature attributed to Hermes Trismegistus was made up of astrological, alchemical and magical texts. If, as the scholars of the Renaissance believed, Hermes was an historical person who had written all these things, and if Church Fathers had quoted his philosophical works with approval, and if those same works could be shown to be wholly in keeping with some definitions of Christianity, then the whole structure of magical Hermeticism could be given a second-hand legitimacy in a Christian context.

Of course this didn't work, and the radical redefinition of Western Christianity that took place in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, hardened doctrinal barriers to the point that people were being burned in the 16<sup>th</sup> century for practices that were considered evidence of devoutness as recently as the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The attempt though made the language and concepts of the Hermetic tractates central to much of post-medieval magic in the West.





# MAIMONIDES

## A Guide for the Perplexed

### The Oath of Maimonides

*Eternal providence has appointed me to watch  
over the life and health of your creatures.*

*May the love for my art actuate me at all times.*

*May neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation  
engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me  
and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to your children.*

*May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain.*

*Grant me the strength, time and opportunity always to correct what I have  
acquired, always to extend its domain, for knowledge is immense and the spirit of  
man can extend indefinitely to enrich itself daily with new requirements.*

*by Mary Jones, SRC*

**D**URING THE RULE OF THE Berber Almoravid dynasty, Moses Maimonides, known to his contemporaries and the Muslim world as Musa ibn Maymun, was born on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1138, the eve of the Passover holiday, in Córdoba in Andalusia, southern Spain. He was the son of the outstanding scholar Rabbi Maimon ibn Yusuf, a judge of the rabbinical court of Córdoba. His family home, a book-filled Moorish-style house, stood near the Guadalquivir river.

At that time there were few material differences between Muslim, Christian and Jewish lives; they all spoke Arabic and lived

peacefully together. Jews and Christians both wrote Arabic poetry, composed and played Arabic music and served, sometimes in high positions, in the government. It was only later, under the Almohad dynasty, that the Jews were corralled into the area of Córdoba still called the Judería.

His first playmate, when he was scarcely three or four years old was called Ali. At an early age therefore, he learned the rudiments of the Arabic language, which became his native tongue and which was renowned throughout the Western world as the language of science and culture, with Córdoba as a pivotal seat of learning.

The years passed peacefully until





*The Guide for the Perplexed was completed in 1190 and was originally written in Arabic. This manuscript is of the Hebrew translation made by Samuel Ibn Tibbon (died c.1230). It was produced in Spain, around 1350. The text is written in a cursive Spanish hand and adorned with some two hundred illuminations, displaying mostly floral and vegetal designs in vibrant colours. (British Library: Collections)*

Maimonides was of the age to celebrate his Bar-Mitzva. This was a joyous and happy time for him, though all too quickly, this changed due to the illness of his mother Rebecca. She became increasingly feeble in spite of the great care taken by Ali's uncle, Abbas, the Mufti of Córdoba. Abbas prepared the medicinal plants for Rebecca although it was Maimonides who brought and administered the medicine to her. Her illness proved too strong however and she passed away without much suffering.

It was this sad event that persuaded Maimonides to become a doctor, and brought to the fore in his mind one transcendent question: What becomes of the soul? This formed the basis of his mystical quest and became a driving force for the rest of his life.

### Advent of the Almohads

*If you're finding the good at fault,  
you're in the dark all alone.  
If you can't see the kindness of others,  
there isn't much hope for your own.*

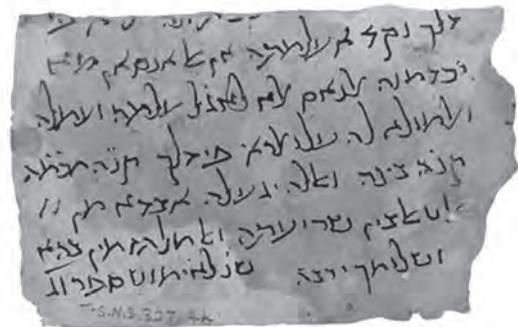
There was another event that troubled the Jewish community at this time and that was the threat

of invasion by the Almohads. The Almohads (*al-Muwahhidun* or Unitarians, believers in the unity of God) were another Berber dynasty from North Africa who had conquered Morocco and al-Andalus by 1150.

Their founder Ibn Tumart taught that God was pure spirit, absolute and one. He proposed the complete separation of the sexes, the banning of music and musical instruments and the abandonment of luxury. The guardians of his doctrines were known as the *Talaba*, interestingly reflecting the recent past of Afghanistan and its Taliban regime. The Almohads made Seville their regional capital in Spain, while Marrakech remained their capital and centre of power in North Africa.

With them however, came a strict regime of religious reformation. Maimonides' father Rabbi Maimon contacted the Jewish community in Fez in Morocco, considering it an intellectual haven and a possible place of exile. He needed to send a message, and it was Kadir, the son of Abbas, who was just about to depart for Fez, who carried it for him.

Maimonides was an avid reader and years passed during which he studied hard at medicine. His medical writings show a profound knowledge of the ancient Greek authors in Arabic



*A rare fragment of a short, previously unknown message by Maimonides in Judaeo-Arabic. It measures 11.7 x 7.3 cms and the text is written on paper in semi-cursive Judaeo-Arabic. The reverse of the leaf contains some honorific titles, presumably intended for the recipient (Solomon ben Yefet?), and five words in Arabic that are difficult to decipher.*

*It reads: "...in this; and I have already indicated that a man is respected by people only for his knowledge and his deeds, and the Lord has said: 'Get wisdom, get understanding' [Proverbs 4:5]. May God make him [i.e., you] ever one of the seekers of the law and those who adhere to it [see Psalms 119:31 and 44], as it is said: 'May this book never cease to be, etc.' [Joshua 1:8]. May your well-being increase."*

*(Translated by Avihai Shviti of the T-S Geniza Research Unit at [www.lib.com.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/GF/44/](http://www.lib.com.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/GF/44/)).*



translation as well as Muslim medical works. But he also had time to reflect on esotericism and spirituality, the Talmud and the Torah being the two pillars on which he based his researches.

On the day of his majority, he suddenly left the family home and went to Samuel, the rabbi who had officiated at his Bar-Mitzva. There he stayed in a small house near his mentor while pursuing his medical studies in collaboration with the local sufis. After two years he returned to his family in Córdoba.

Kadir returned from his long journey with the awaited response. The information confirmed their worst fears: the Almohads, having taken Fez, were already at Gibraltar from where they intended to conquer northwards into the Iberian Peninsula. Rabbi Maimon therefore took the decision to leave



The tomb of Maimonides in Tiberias, Israel.

Instead of fleeing to the Christian north, as many Jews did, they went south into the heart of Almohad territory. The first stage took them from Córdoba to Granada where Maimonides met al-Mansur, a celebrated and much respected Sufi doctor. A letter from Abbas brought them acceptance by al-Mansur, who suggested they take lodgings in a house near his own, as the transmission of his alchemical knowledge would take several weeks.

During this time, David used his natural talents for business to negotiate help for the onward journey. When they arrived at Almería, not yet occupied by the Almohads, their first job was to find a ship that would take them across to Morocco. Thanks to the important commercial traffic with Tangier, they were able to journey on quickly. The decision to voyage into the heart of Almohad darkness was taken because, for educated Andalusians, the Islamic world was that of civilisation and light. It was the culture in which one could read Aristotle, and was the home territory of the language of civilised Jews of recent memory.

The journey from Tangier to the great city and intellectual centre of Fez lasted about ten days (1160). The warmth of the reception in Fez by Judah ibn Shoshan and his friends assuaged the rigours of the journey and ushered in a happier time, albeit one in which they outwardly had to pretend to be Muslims. He introduced Maimonides to Jewish and Muslim scholars with whom he would continue his education. Very quickly, Maimonides made contact with Ali ibn Hajj who had been recommended by his friend Abbas in Córdoba. Maimonides forced himself into a tough regime of study of medicine under Ali, as well as a profound study of the Talmud, as well as his own afternoon consultations. His first works: the *Book on Logic* and the *Treatise on the Jewish Calendar* were written here. He also began his *Kitab al-Siraj* or *Commentary on the Mishnah*.

Some weeks later, Kadir decided to visit his father in Córdoba. It was a dangerous journey and they fervently hoped they would see each other again. A year later, Rabbi Maimon remarried, and Maimonides became the godfather to the child born of this union.

One freezing morning in December, some

*Maimonides was introduced to Jewish and Muslim scholars in the city of Fez.*

Córdoba with his family; but when? Samuel ibn Shoshan, who had written the reply from Fez, estimated that it would take the Almohads two to three years to arrive at Córdoba. During the following year, Maimonides continued to work with Abbas and the sufis. His studies made him fluent in both Arabic and Hebrew, and he participated in secret meetings with a sufi, during which they studied and commented on the philosophy of Aristotle.

**From Córdoba to Fez**

*Soul opens inside you on beauty,  
then tells you to seek in the world  
and ignore its flaws.*

The family left Córdoba in April 1148, a time of year when nature is truly at its best, making it that much more difficult to leave. It was Kadir, together with his servant Rashid who acted as guides. Sarah and Leah, two servant girls who were attracted to Maimonides and his brother David also went along. Abbas looked after all the arrangements and procured some tents, ten donkeys and five horses for them. On the eve of their departure, Maimonides' father offered his house to Abbas, sure that one day it would be passed on to Kadir.





*The statue of Maimonides in Córdoba, Spain.*

Almohad troops came looking for Maimonides to treat their prince, Omar, who was bedridden near Mèknes. Maimonides was already widely known as a great doctor and healer, and having no option but to go, he went to the prince and treated him for five weeks. Omar regained his health, and in order to thank his doctor, he offered him a large sum of money. Maimonides refused, preferring to ask Omar to protect his family and all the Jews of Fez. Omar agreed to the former request, but declined the latter. The new Caliph Abu Yakub Yusuf, wanting to show that he was a “propagator of the faith,” had Judah ibn Shoshan, leader of the Jews of Fez, executed on charges of reverting to Judaism after converting to Islam. It was a dangerous time for Maimonides and his family when they too were suspected of apostatising from Islam.

In 1165 therefore, Maimonides and his family decided to leave Morocco and headed for Palestine. Thanks to a pass that Omar sent to Maimonides, they were able to leave Fez

and made their way to Ceuta, further along the Mediterranean coast where they rested a while. It was here in Ceuta that Maimonides met one of his correspondents, the young scholar and physician Joseph ibn Aknin, who was to become his spiritual son.

On 18<sup>th</sup> April 1165, the family left on a fast ship calling at Syracuse in Sicily. David, who was always on the lookout for business opportunities, went into the town to make contact with the locals. In a tavern, he met some Christians who were looking for a good doctor to heal their king. David had the king taken to the ship where Maimonides looked after and healed him. Following this, Maimonides received a document dictated to a scribe, the text of which stated: *“By the grace of God, in the year 1165, the 25<sup>th</sup> day of April, I deliver to Moses ben Maimon and his party a pass to Jerusalem. The Very Christian Richard the Lionheart orders that everyone aids them on their journey and by any means.”* Whether this story is true or not is debatable, but legend has it that in later years Richard the Lionheart did ask Maimonides to become his own personal physician, but Maimonides declined the offer.

## Egypt

*Man’s wisdom is in what he writes,  
good sense at the end of his pen.*

*And using his pen he can climb to the height  
of the sceptre in the hand of his king.*

Some days later, the ship continued its journey and on 16<sup>th</sup> May, arrived at the port of Acre in Palestine. From there they quickly reached Jerusalem, which at that time was in the hands of the Crusaders. Thanks to their pass, they were

***The Sultan named Maimonides his chief physician and asked him and his family to move to Fustat, close to the royal court.***

able to spend a few days in the city and also visit the Wailing Wall.

It was impossible to stay there indefinitely, and they did not want to return to Acre. So they decided to travel to Egypt, where there was an important Jewish community. They journeyed by ship to Alexandria in 1166 and were received at an enthusiastic reception. Under the Fatimids, Egypt enjoyed an economic prosperity and cultural vitality which even eclipsed that of contemporary



Baghdad. During the voyage to Alexandria, Maimonides prepared the outlines of his magnum opus *Dalalat al-hairin* or *The Guide for the Perplexed* which was written in Arabic. It was in Alexandria too that Maimonides finished and published his *Commentary on the Mishnah*.

After their arrival David, with his customary celerity, found them all a comfortable house where they thought they were destined to remain. But once again sadness overtook them. Maimonides' wife died in childbirth, giving birth to a daughter called Rebecca in memory of his mother. But the latest news from Morocco and Spain did not make the situation any better, for the number of forced conversions to Islam had dramatically risen. Joseph ibn Aknin had been forced to convert to Islam on pain of death. However, this sad news only made Moses work all the harder. His fame as a doctor grew until it reached the ears of Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt (1171-1193) via his Vizier al-Fadil who was cured by Maimonides.

After the last Shi'ite Fatimid Imam-Caliph al-Adid died, Saladin, the Kurdish vizier and general, abolished the Fatimid caliphate and became Sultan under the aegis of the Sunni Caliph in Baghdad. He called on Maimonides to come and treat his favourite Yasmina. The diagnosis came quickly; Yasmina was asthmatic, an illness Maimonides knew well and also knew how to treat. The medication worked better than was hoped and a few months later Yasmina became pregnant. The Sultan named Maimonides his chief physician and asked him and his family to move to Fustat, a suburb of Cairo close to the royal court. In 1171, Maimonides was also named *ra'is al-yahud* (Arabic) or *Nagid* (Hebrew) i.e. national administrator of the Jewish community in Egypt.

A happy period now began in Maimonides' life. Kadir, his friend from Córdoba, came over to join them. He brought with him a manuscript telling of the latest discoveries of his father Abbas in alchemy and medicine. Maimonides, by now in his forties, married Rachel, the daughter of the sultan's librarian. From this union came a son whom they named Abraham. It was at this time that Moses edited his works *Commentary on the Mishnah* and *The Guide for the Perplexed*. But the period of happiness came to an end when Maimonides' brother David died at sea on the way to India in 1174. A few years later Maimonides was pleasantly surprised by



*A page from a medieval edition of the Sefer Madda (The Book of Knowledge) forming part of his religious law work, the Mishnah Torah. It is pictured here with a modern edition.*

the arrival of Joseph ibn Aknin in Fustat. In the more tolerant land of Egypt, he was able to practise his own religion.

### Philosopher and Mystic

*Your manuscript shines like inlays of emerald, its margins arranged like a robe well-embroidered; a feast for the eyes like a tree's first figs, its scent like myrrh on the perfumed bride.*

In his magnum opus, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, an enduringly great book, Maimonides tries to reconcile those who are philosophically minded like the dedicatee of the book, Joseph ibn Aknin, with those who wish to remain religious Jews. The work comprises three books.

In the first he begins with an analysis of the descriptions of God in the Hebrew Bible, showing how they are to be taken allegorically rather than literally, e.g. God's Hand, God's Eye, etc. He then argues that God cannot be accurately described using language. He reasons against the various Islamic contentions about the nature of God by their theological schools and then includes several arguments for the existence of God.

In the second book, he considers the creation of the world and Aristotle's demonstration that matter is eternal. He then goes on to analyse the nature of prophecy and the need for ethical perfection by a prophet.

In the third and final book he begins with a philosophical analysis of the most mystical section of the Bible: the description



of the heavenly chariot at the beginning of the book of Ezekiel. He treats this entire section as an allegorical representation of Aristotle's thinking in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. He then moves on to the consideration of the problem of evil, which comes from the material nature of the world, and then to the nature of Divine

*His Guide for the Perplexed spread throughout the Mediterranean world and received an enthusiastic reception.*

Providence and an analysis of the book of Job. Then he considers the 613 commandments from the Torah of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which regulate the



*Map of medieval Spain and surrounding area.*

social and religious life of the Jews. The book concludes with an analysis of the varying forms of human perfection.

The book may not be what it seems, for it is full of inconsistencies. But this may well have been deliberate, in order to disguise the fact that Maimonides' views were heretical and that the reader needed to read between the lines to understand the full meaning. Indeed, the title of the work may in some sense reflect these obscurities. The Vizier al-Fadil confirmed that Maimonides had never actually converted to

Islam when the Almohads were forcing it on Jews and Christians alike, so there was no danger of him being killed for apostasy.

A number of kabbalists over the centuries have seen the *Guide for the Perplexed* as a work of mysticism. They argue that even given the introduction and all the contradictions contained in the book, Maimonides could not have been ignorant of the kabbala, as he was well informed about all other areas of Judaism. And they point to the fact that his son and grandson both wrote mystical treatises. One of the greatest medieval kabbalists Abraham Abulafia even talks about the 36 kabbalistic concepts enunciated within its pages.

### Jihad

*I quartered the troops for the night in a fortress  
which soldiers destroyed long ago.  
And they fell asleep at its walls and foundations  
while beneath us its masters slept on.*

During this time Saladin was building a powerful army. In 1187 he attacked the Crusaders, using as a pretext the violation of a treaty concluded the previous year with Renaud de Châtillon, the Prince of Antioch. The decisive Battle of Hattin in early July 1187 near Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee, was the beginning of the end for the Crusader states in the Middle East.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October of the same year, Jerusalem fell to Saladin's forces. Unlike the Crusaders' bloodbath of all Muslims and Jews following their conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, Saladin, being magnanimous by nature, spared the lives of the vanquished. He decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and freely practise their religion as "people of the book."

A few years later, Saladin was looking for a new way of firing up the popular imagination. He proposed to conquer Iraq, where he had been born, and the neighbouring regions. But his vizier and Maimonides proposed something different. Now that he had accomplished the Jihad of the first degree by the re-conquest of Jerusalem, why not go for the Jihad of the second degree; that of the soul and spiritual elevation? They suggested he organise a peaceful religious crusade, this time to the three holy cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. If he was to create an immense popular movement, it would have the added advantage of making people forget about their everyday



cares. After going on the journey, they would all be able to add the name *Hajj* to their own name. Usually only those who had made the required one journey to Mecca in their life could do this.

By now, Saladin was Sultan of Egypt and Syria and he instructed his vizier, al-Fadil, to proclaim that the sultan was going on this pilgrimage, and that as many of his subjects as possible were to join him. While Saladin was away, Maimonides used the time to complete *The Guide for the Perplexed*, and by the time Saladin returned, the book was finished.

Written in Arabic, it soon spread throughout the Mediterranean world and received an enthusiastic reception. Samuel ibn Tibbon, one of the most erudite rabbis of Syria wrote to Maimonides praising him and asking to translate his book into Hebrew. Maimonides agreed and asked him to bring his translation to Cairo first before he published it.

Saladin, now approaching his 60<sup>th</sup> year, finally contracted malaria. This time, Maimonides had no cure, and Saladin died on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1193 at Damascus in Syria with Maimonides' friend, the faithful Vizier al-Fadil at his bedside. It is said that when the imam, reciting from the Koran, reached the words, "*there is no God but God and in him do I put my trust,*" Saladin smiled, upon which his face cleared and he surrendered his soul to god. Saladin's chosen successor as sultan was his son al-Afdal, who governed Syria from Damascus for his father. He also enjoyed the full confidence of the Vizier al-Fadil, while another son al-Aziz governed Egypt, and yet another son az-Zahir governed Aleppo.

### Death of Maimonides

Due to ill health, Maimonides never read the translation of his book into Hebrew, and he passed away on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1204. The Sultan al-Afdal ordered three days of mourning for all the people, Muslims, Jews and Christians of Egypt and Syria and decreed that Maimonides, now revered as the "second Moses," should be interred in the Holy Land.

Maimonides had been supremely educated and was heir to the long tradition of Andalusian intellectual freedom. Having lived all his life in the Dar al-Islam, the Muslim world, he was deeply attached sentimentally to al-Andalus and died in exile far from his home, tinged with bitterness.

He had mastered nearly everything then



*The Mishnah Torah (British Library: Collections)*

known in the fields of theology, mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, ethics and medicine. Known from then on to the Jewish people by the acronym RaMBaM, i.e. Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, he symbolised a high spiritual and intellectual achievement. All the great rabbis of the realm were consulted and they proposed that he be buried in the holy Jewish city of Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, for this was the birthplace of the great kabbalist Rabbi Simon bar Oharai. The sultan had a text penned by ibn Aknin and the rabbis engraved its in gold on his tomb:

*From Moses to Moses  
There has never been another Moses.*

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**T**ACH OF US IS AWARE THAT THE function of breathing is vital to the body and to the sustaining of life. It is the source of precious energy, the life essence we use to sustain ourselves and grow within our physical and psychic environments. Breathing provides the cells with oxygen and permits the cells' waste product, carbon dioxide, to be eliminated. In fact, the lungs actually expel 25% of all bodily waste, which is a very high percentage when you consider that we do not usually think of the lungs as an excretory organ. Breathing also affects our immune function, mental clarity, vitality and energy levels.

### Defining Breathing

For obvious reasons, the breath has long been associated in the human mind as the life essence which is drawn into us with our first breath and departing from us when we die. Indeed, the classics of Oriental medicine describe the vital life force as being taken into the body with the breath, followed by the lungs' extracting this vital substance from the air, thereby making it available for use by the body.

The ancient Chinese were not the only civilisation to associate the breath with the vital life

force. In ancient Greece we have the word *pneuma*, meaning both "spirit" and "breath." In English we borrow this word intact and define it as the vital life force.

From Latin comes the word *spiritus*. This one word was used to express breathing, the breath of life, soul, mind, spirit and (the association here is quite interesting) courage. From *spiritus* we have the words inspire, aspire and expire; words not only relating to physical processes but also to the heart and soul of the human.

The early dynasties of ancient Egyptian, predating both the Greek and Roman civilisations, referred to the breath as *sahu*. This word was variously used to denote the breath, the soul or the higher self. *Sa* was the term for the "divine fluid," the substance which gives life to man.

The Vedic tradition of ancient India, flourishing at roughly the same time as the old, middle and new kingdoms of Egypt, refers to *atma*, meaning both the breath and the soul. This ancient word, related to the ancient Greek word *atmos* (breath), survives virtually intact in the modern German language as the verb *atmen*, meaning "to breathe."

Also from the Sanskrit comes the word *prana*, meaning both the breath and the life force



which is common to all living things. Pranayama is a system of breathing techniques used in many yoga disciplines. The practice of pranayama is also used to awaken kundalini, the divine fire and feminine aspect of the divine principle. Kundalini is usually represented as a coiled snake, residing at the base of the human spine.

### Rhythm of Breathing

Of course, breathing techniques are used in many disciplines for healing work and even for projection of the psychic body. It is therefore interesting to note that there is a mechanism in the skeletal system of the body called the "cranial-sacral pump."

*Cranial*, of course, refers to the bones that make up the skull, and *sacral* refers to the sacrum, the triangular bone at the base of the spinal column. The word sacrum incidentally, comes from the Latin *sacer*, "sacred," which is an intriguing cross reference to the seat of the kundalini energy. This pump mechanism creates the circulation of the cerebral spinal fluid which bathes the nervous system structures with nourishment, carries away waste and provides a cushion for these precious organs.

It is none other than the steady rhythm of inhalation and exhalation that causes the pumping of the cerebral spinal fluid to occur. The subtle motion of the breath rocks the sacrum and the temples of the skull gently and minutely, causing the flow to occur. The temples are actually two sides of the same bone which passes through the entire width of the skull.

The Huna tradition, which is preserved in Polynesian culture and is familiar to us as the doctrine of the Kahuna, the legendary masters of the elements, uses the breath to accomplish miracles and to move creation. The drawing in of the breath and thereby the vital life force, is known to them as *mana*.

The word *mana* means to sacrifice, empower, revere, love and greatly desire. It also refers to authority, skill and capability. It is the root for the words truth, worship, ideas, meditation, confidence and time. It is mana which opens communication between, and then integrates, the emotions, the intellect and the higher self. It is then, through the breath that the expression of life is begun, sustained and refined.

### Breathing More Efficiently

Approaching breathing from a more practical and

physical point of view, we find that our breathing habits are generally far from the ideal of perfect efficiency. Usually, the physical act of breathing is taken completely for granted. It is assumed that by virtue of the action of the inhalation and exhalation of air, breathing is being done correctly. Unfortunately, with time, tension, poor postural habits and restrictive clothing, we lose the natural breathing patterns that are spontaneous during early childhood.

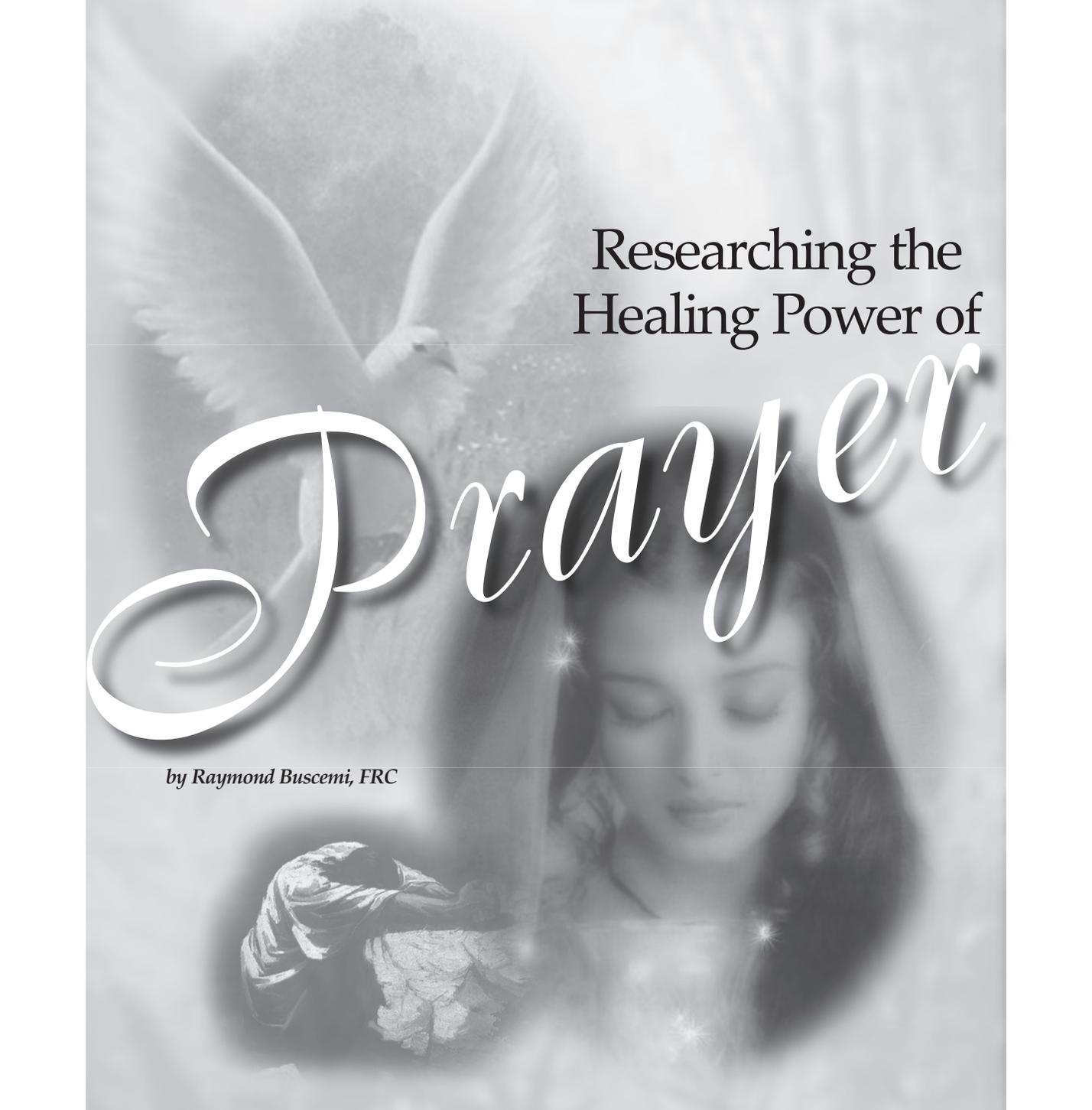
The breath should be taken in and let out efficiently, and to do this, we must use each lung entirely. The lungs are fairly large and fill the chest all the way from the collarbone down to the bottom of the rib cage.

If you place your hands over your chest and breathe normally, you should feel the rise and fall of the chest. Usually however, only the upper chest and shoulders move your breathing. You should in fact feel this expansion and contraction over your entire chest, along the sides, and over a portion of the back. The fuller the expansion of the lungs, the correspondingly greater the amount of vital oxygen is taken in, and the greater the amount of debris is removed from the lungs with the exhalation. The deep, prolonged inhalation of a yawn is the automatic response of the body to the build-up of carbon dioxide waste in the bloodstream, caused by shallow breathing.

Breathing also affects our visual acuity, as anyone holding the breath until he or she sees spots can testify! It is also related to our emotional well-being. Our emotional state has an impact on our breathing rate and volume. Imagine for a moment the quick, ragged breathing of anger, and it is clear that emotion affects breathing. Conversely, if you mimic this or any other emotion's breathing pattern, you can begin to create the physical and psychological changes that occur with that emotion.

Breathing in a natural unrestricted manner is an important and easy means to improve many facets of the physical, psychological and spiritual makeup of the human being. It is our choice to use this understanding to our fullest capacity to improve our health, increase our mental clarity, and structure our physical and emotional well-being. First comes breathing, then comes life. Without breathing, we have no life. Therefore, take care with your breathing, and do all you can to do this correctly.





# Researching the Healing Power of

# Prayer

by Raymond Buscemi, FRC



OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS THERE has been a meteoric rise in the number of clinical research studies examining the effects of prayer on illnesses such as breast cancer, HIV/AIDS and glioblastoma, a form of brain cancer. Modern studies of the phenomena of healing through prayer are rooted in the pioneering work of Sir Francis Galton, whose 1872 treatise laid the foundation for much of the work that has followed. In terms of research, prayer is often

grouped under the rubric *Distant Healing* or *Non-Local Healing*.

## Distant Healing

Distant healing refers to an eclectic body of healing techniques that do not include physical contact between healer and patient. The recipient of the healing does not need to be present, or even in the same geographic region during the course of the treatment. The daily meditation practised by the Rosicrucian *Council of Solace* is a form of



distant healing. Underlying the practice is the belief that positive energies can be guided toward those in need of assistance, and while the work of the Council itself is metaphysical in nature, its effects manifest in the physical realms of health, well-being and peace of mind.

## Prayer

Prayer, which finds its root in the Latin word *precari*, to beg, is the best-known form of distant healing. Prayer is generally thought of as coming in three forms:

1. *Intercessory*, where you ask God or some other divine being to intervene on your behalf.
2. *Supplication*, where you ask for a specific result, e.g. healing, work, etc.
3. *Non-directed*, where you celebrate the works of God.

Prayer is common across all religions, cultures and traditions, which makes it particularly suitable for cross-cultural studies. Within such studies, emphasis is placed on the efficacy

*There is also a variety of healing techniques in addition to prayer that are forms of distant healing.*

of direct, supplicatory prayer, rather than on intercessory prayer. The power of a particular deity or manifestation of Godhead is beyond the ethical and scientific scope of distant healing research.

There is also a variety of healing techniques in addition to prayer that are forms of distant healing; some are embedded in a cultural-religious tradition such as Buddhism, Judaism and Christian Science, while other techniques are practised independent of such a tradition. A common factor underlying each approach to distant healing is intentionality; the conscious focussing of your will in order to achieve a desired outcome.

Faced with an inordinate amount of scepticism and outright hostility in the scientific community, intentionality studies examining the efficacy of distant healing have been held to rigorous research standards, and positive results have at times been downplayed. The caution comes as a result of methodological reviews highlighting potential design flaws inherent in this type of research. One of the most salient factors in the research is the ability of researchers to construct a

study that ensures that the subjects do not know whether or not they are being prayed for. This is necessary in order to eliminate the power of the subject's hope or positive expectations having a bearing on the results.

One of the most prevalent and long-standing criticisms brought against distant healing research is the near-impossibility of creating a "control group," the group of research subjects who go without treatment for the length of the study. This is due to the near-ubiquity of generalised prayers for well-being made by various congregations and families. Psychologists and researchers may in fact be moving closer to studying non-human subjects as a way of ensuring more scientifically rigorous controls on the design and outcome markers for the studies.

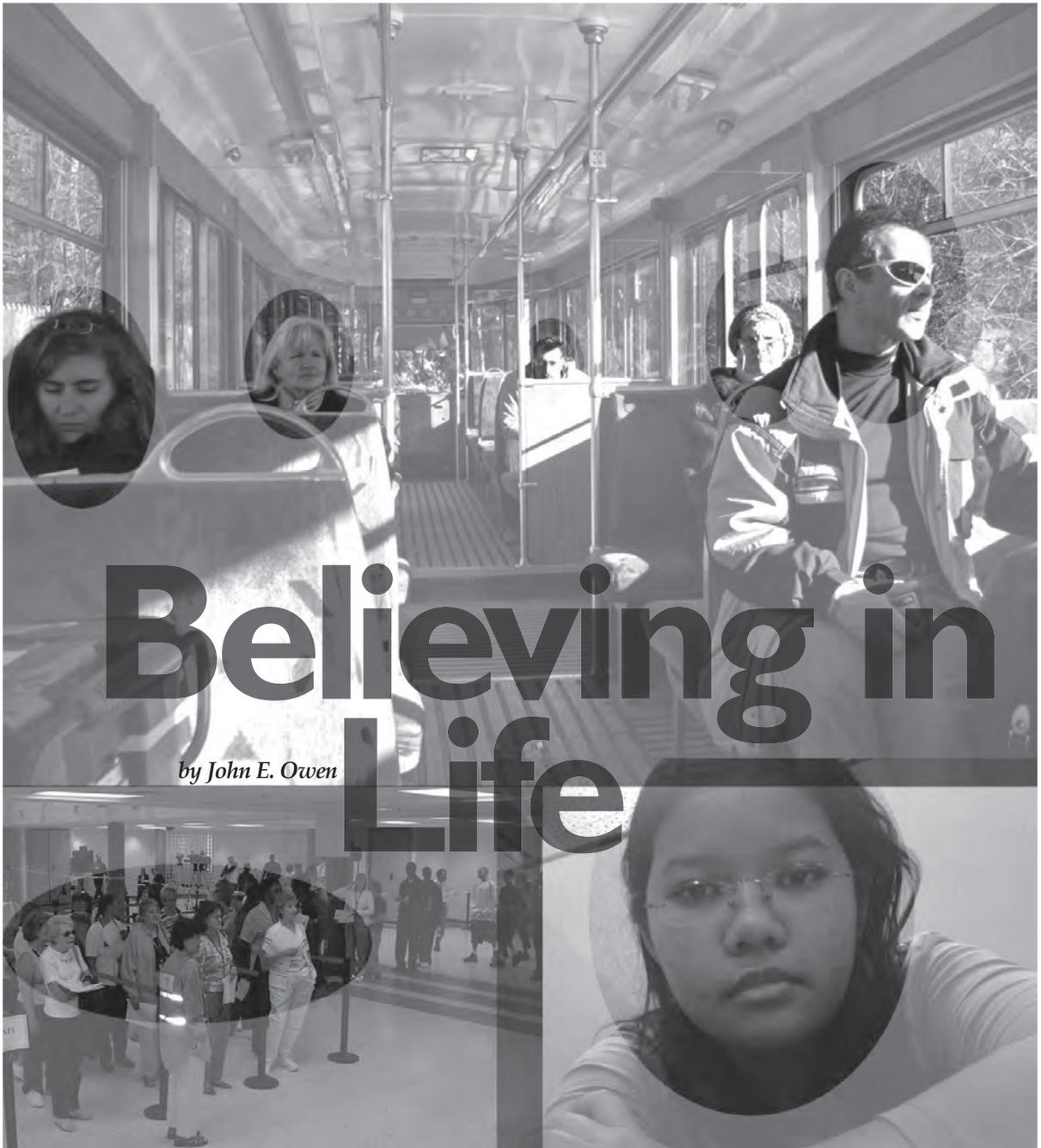
## Health-related Benefits

Although conclusive proof linking distant healing techniques to effects on the body is yet to be found, there does not seem to be enough data to warrant and inspire more research. Similar studies examining religiosity, positive expectations and spiritual-community involvement have all found positive correlates with health and well-being.

Whether or not distant healing through prayer or focussed energy work has a similar pronounced effect on human well-being is still under investigation. Much of the research into the health-related benefits of spirituality and religious observance has highlighted the individuals' immersion into a faith community as one of the most critical ingredients.

Some research has indicated that intentionality works on a cellular level, affecting bacteria, blood cells and other components of the human immune system. Distant healing research is attempting to isolate the mechanism by which healing through prayer occurs, and then to investigate whether or not such practices can be taught to health care workers as well as to lay people. Current research projects have also established ties between members of the scientific community and various schools of healing as well as spiritual traditions. While these communities clearly have a vested interest in discovering the mechanisms by which distant healing may work, the contact between the two worlds of science and religion may also impact each other in new and unexpected ways.





# Believing in Life

by John E. Owen

**H**AVE YOU EVER WATCHED THE faces of people as they go to work in the morning or as they stand in a queue? Often it's not a happy sight. Many people today are living in a state of mental apathy, indifference and cynicism. Life means little to them. They live in a land of dead dreams and see the future in blank if not bleak terms. For thousands, a good motto would be: "What's the use?" Because

they've never had much out of life in the past, they don't expect much for the future, and for them, life has long since become a dull routine of working, eating and sleeping.

Have you met people like this? The world is full of them. They are the ones who don't *expect* much from life, and there you have the key to their mode of thinking. They have closed their minds to the possibility of anything interesting ever happening to them, of ever achieving anything



unusual, of seeing any new places or of having exciting new experiences.

### Being Positive

Fortunately the world is not peopled entirely with this type. Others exist who realise the psychological fact that all things are possible if you believe they can be, if you keep your mind open to the tremendous possibilities in life and in yourself. Some individuals have broad horizons, a keen sensitivity to what life can mean, not because they have more money or more education, but because they *believe* in life and its possibilities. You have met this sort too. They are not afraid to try the new way; they are receptive to fresh ideas; they go out of their way to meet new people, to make new friends, to see far vistas; they have a great sense of *the possible*.

If they have travelled, it is not necessarily because they are wealthy but because they *believed* that the benefits of travel were possible for them. And they acted on that belief. If one wants to travel, the first thing to do is to know that it is possible. One's horizon can be wonderfully expanded by even a few days spent in new surroundings. And this world is so full of exciting places and strange people that there is something almost tragic in never leaving one's own backyard.

You can't help feeling rather sorry for all the people who have never seen the English Lake District, the Scottish Highlands, the view of Paris from the top of Notre Dame or the Alps of Switzerland and the wonders of other foreign lands. But you feel really sorry for those who never *expect* to see these and a thousand other places, those who subconsciously assume that the glamour-spots of the world are not for them because they say they cannot afford it, or they cannot get away, or for some other reason.

How do they know they can't see these places? If we really believe in the possibilities of life and act on that belief, then nothing is impossible. That is a fact which many people demonstrate and prove every day of their lives. Travel is only one example.

### Being Negative

Some people long for education and they *believe*

in their power to expand mentally. Somewhere, somehow, they find what they want and their outlook and world of ideas grow and expand. Often they lacked the chance in youth for the royal road to learning. But even with the advent of the internet and its wide possibilities for learning, there are still thousands of people merely accepting themselves mentally as they are and never taking advantage of the opportunities for growth and learning that are all around them.

Others long for friendship but never seem to believe in their own power to draw friends. And as they don't believe, they never make any

creative effort to be friendly. One person forges ahead towards his or her ambitions while others look on, never for a moment daring to believe that similar success could be theirs. Or they try to pretend to themselves that those who have achieved success aren't really happy, as if the captain of a ship were not as happy as one of his deck-hands! And their own excuse for lack of success is that they are "not cut out for it," or "circumstances are against them." You know all the excuses.

How do they know these things are not for them? If there is something one *wants* to do or has an urge to do, that urge in itself is a potential sign of one's ability in that direction. It is a plain fact that we all go after what we really want. If we don't achieve what we thought we wanted, it is usually the case that we did not want it badly enough. What we actually wanted was to take the line of least resistance, which has brought us exactly to where we are now. If we really believed in the possibility of achieving the thing of which we dreamed, we would do more in a positive way to get it.

### Expectation

We can get only what we *expect* from life, no more. The psychological troubles of most people, their pessimism, feelings of inferiority and doubt, stem from the fact that they don't expect much of life and as consequence, don't exert themselves sufficiently or in the right ways to accomplish anything of consequence.

To keep one's mind open to the future, to be awake to the possibilities in oneself, to be willing to pay the price in experience and effort; this is more than most people are willing to do. And then of course, "circumstances" are to blame

*Have a great sense of the possible.*



for their failure to achieve what they vaguely wanted and hoped for, instead of seeing that their own lack of faith in themselves and their innate abilities was largely responsible.

If you believe that the future has nothing for you, then frankly, it hasn't. If you can't see (i.e. plan and visualise) good things such as better

*If you believe that the future has nothing for you, then frankly, it hasn't.*

health, better financial circumstances, improved education, greater knowledge, wider travel, and more love and friendship ahead, then they are not likely to be there. But if you believe that these things are actually possible and then work for them tirelessly and according to a discipline and plan, these things can come to pass in your life too. The most crucial point is to accept the possibility of these things happening. Knowing that they are possible amounts to half the journey already.

This is not philosophy or theory. It is life as you must have seen it lived. Have you ever known a happy or successful person who did not in large measure embody the faith that was in him, one who believed in the larger potentialities of life and who acted on his belief?

### Visualising

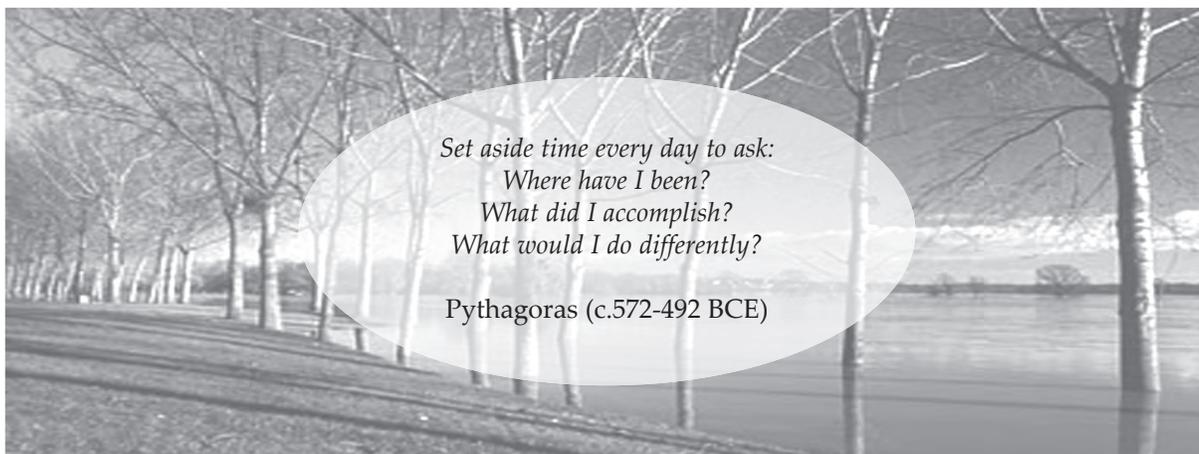
It sounds very simple, but if there is something you want, you must first of all *believe* in its possibility. Being possible is not a guarantee that it will happen in your life, but it is the crucial first step. The possibility you see can be hugely strengthened by regularly *visualising* its outcome.

And if you act in this manner and use every opportunity as it arises, that brings your goal closer.

But following a fundamental law of life, you must also consider carefully whether or not what you are seeking is fair and just. Will it hurt anyone else? Will it be to the detriment of others? If the answer is yes, forget it; for the karmic compensation which will arise from pursuing and perhaps succeeding with your goal, is many times greater than the pleasure you will derive from having attained what you set out to reach.

At the very least, what you seek should in some measure benefit others too. If it benefits you and your interests alone, think twice, three times, nay 20 times, before you proceed. For great danger lurks where selfish interests dominate. But assuming there is something in it for others and assuming your endeavour will not harm others, even if you don't get precisely what you set your heart on, you may come to see, in the experience of striving after it, that fundamentally you wanted something else all the time. And such insight would be invaluable for future attempts at getting what you want; for it would make you more clear-sighted about your ultimate aims and purposes. But in any case, if you don't *believe*, you won't get anything worthwhile.

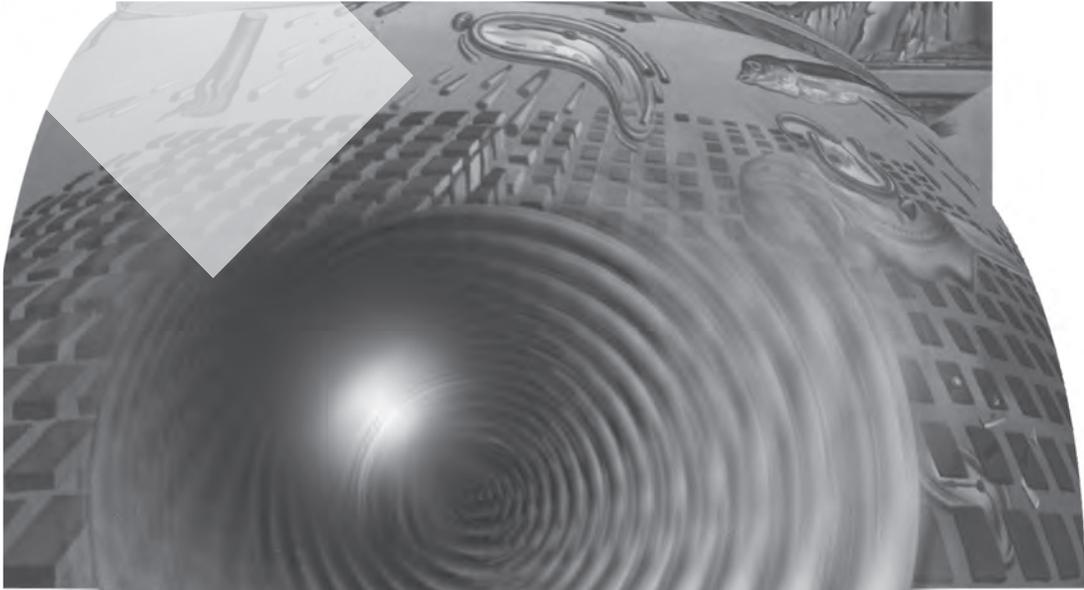
So try to have your mind open to all the new and exciting things that life has to offer. Keep a sense of the possible, knowing that what you want can be yours if you really have the faith to believe in yourself and of course know in your heart that it is a just cause. Of course you must plan, work and act on your belief in the possible, but that is all a part of believing, isn't it?



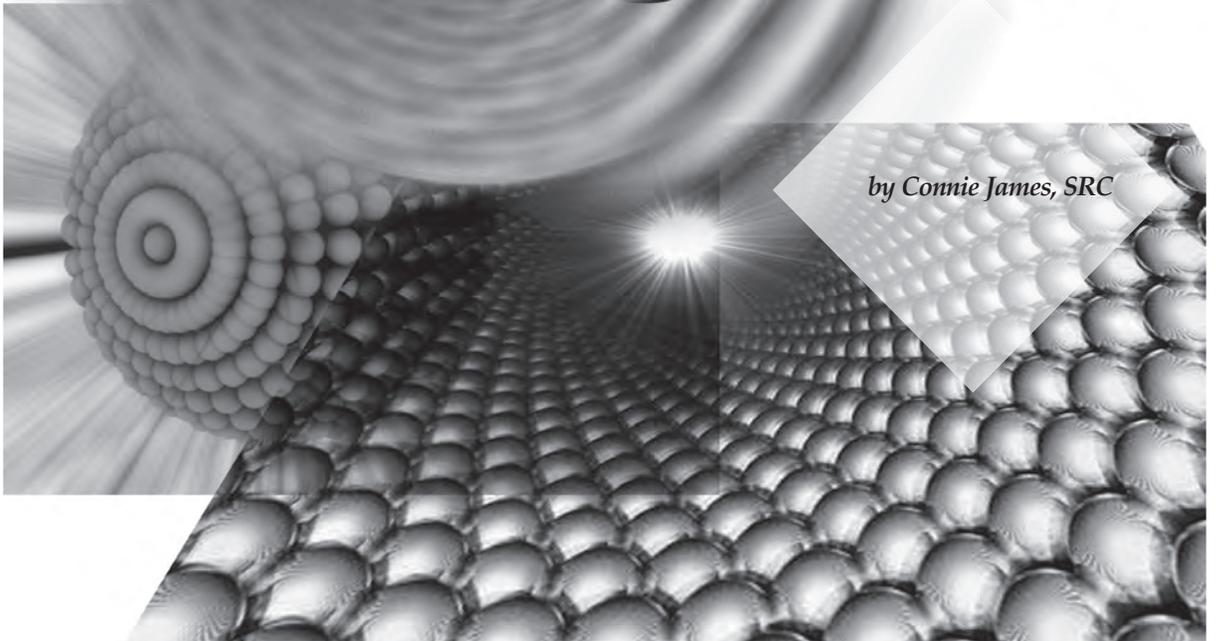
*Set aside time every day to ask:  
Where have I been?  
What did I accomplish?  
What would I do differently?*

Pythagoras (c.572-492 BCE)





# On Imagination



*by Connie James, SRC*

**I**MAGINATION IS THAT ELUSIVE quality of mind that agrees with our emotional nature. At first, we may carefully and gently probe the depths of memory until an aggregation of experience comes forward, or we may stretch our consciousness into boundless space. There

we can link imagination to the beauty of ideas bathing in a sea of formless matter.

## **The Magic of Imagination**

Ideas of like or unlike vibration will flow in boundless measure, and the magic of our imagination will create new original ideas. This



period of attunement will broaden the emotional part of our consciousness. If these ideas become an inspiration, we will become a servant of mankind, for a veritable Pandora's box of good will be opened. This will flood the world with new beauty, and a genius that has the potential of becoming the prelude to form in art, poetry and humanitarian achievement.

In the realm of imagination we discover the key to all potential form, the supply to fashion the objective world with fresh original beauty. The mind, in its ever-widening search for originality or in its exploration of the universe, cannot find the answers beyond our consciousness or beyond our own realisation, until we use our own gift of imagination. Here we can expand beyond our objectivity and find the inroads to the Cosmic where the streams of consciousness flow in unceasing motion. The trinity of imagination, inspiration and aspiration sets the pace in our ascent to wisdom.

Imagination without limit, marching through consciousness with an indefinite rhythm, is like an unpainted canvass, an introverted vision surrounded by all-consuming ideas slowly gathering substance; something to be moulded into definite vibrations by the power of our will.

Imagination gradually coalesces with inspiration until they become a harmonious whole producing aspiration and activity, and from this union, the world of form comes into being. The creativity of consciousness with its constructive power resident within itself is thus revealed to us, and we finally realise that we are a co-creator of Divine Mind.

### **The Invisible Becomes Visible**

Memory cannot be ignored in this vast effort of consciousness, for located in the storehouse of the subconscious are found the growth, the experience and the memories; the evolution of consciousness. Our memory is like a preface

to imagination, something to provide its ideas born of experience and providing, as it were, the springboard for newer action and greater achievements.

Our imagination draws on memory at the beginning, but if it breaks away and proceeds beyond this limitation and accepts the challenge

*Imagination gradually coalesces with inspiration until they become a harmonious whole.*

to surge forward to penetrate the infinite fields of ideas awaiting recognition and promotion, consciousness will expand. The ideas, through the imagination to create on the infinite plane, will ultimately enter into the world of matter, and the invisible becomes visible.

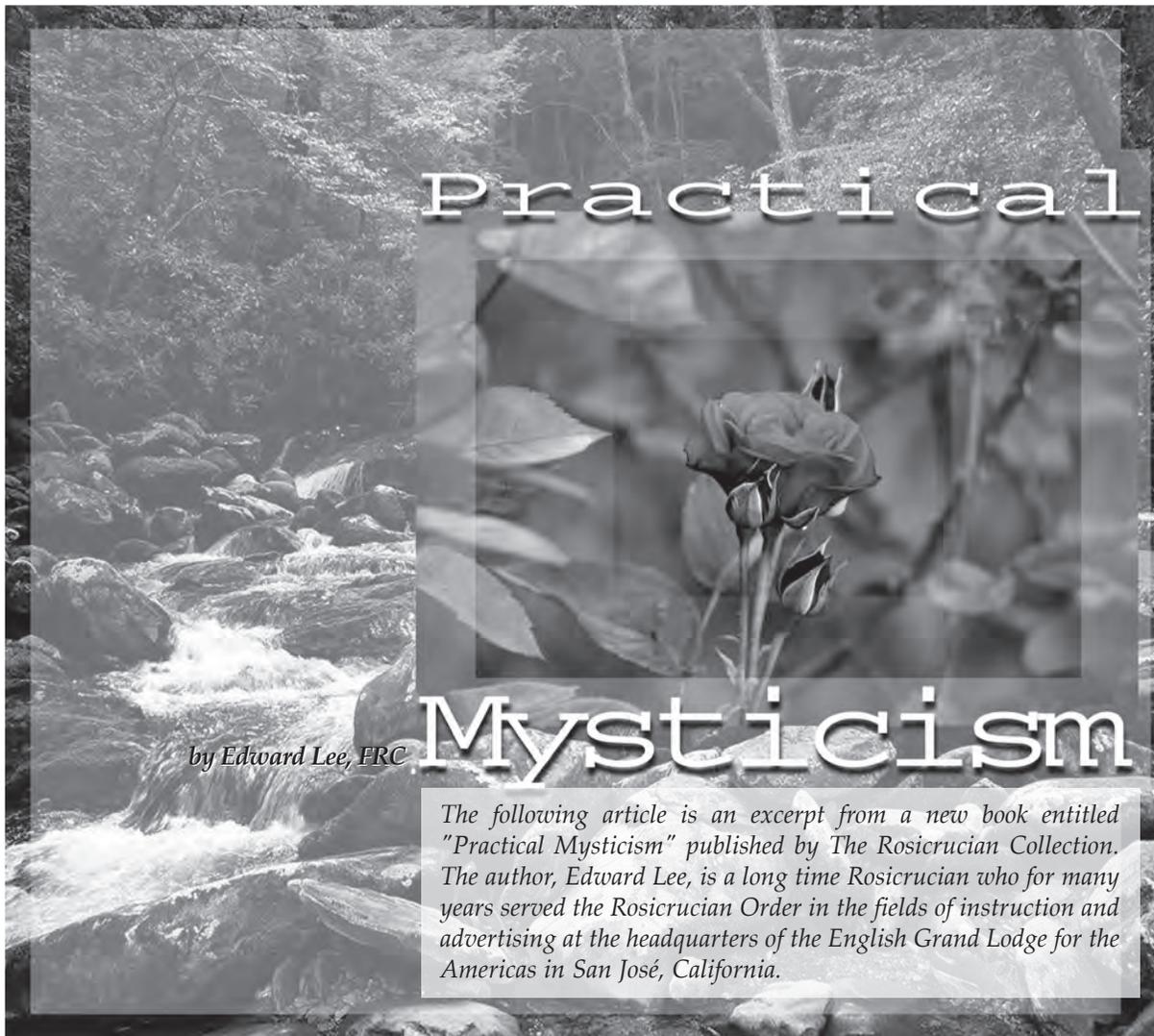


Here is the blueprint or plan laid out for mind to evolve. This is, in the main, the sphere of activity to produce form, to gather the particles of spirit into visibility. First the energy must be given an impetus and a design to be carried out to begin its symphony of form. It is imagination with its corresponding creative power that gives rise to the impetus, and when it does it enters into partnership with the Cosmic.

The routine of living with nothing beyond the ordinary gives way to new awareness and radiance, and life comes out of the shadows like a thing reborn.

Contrary to the opinions of the uninitiated, imagination needs no apology. It is grounded in the invisible essence of creation, never ceasing its work in consciousness, correlating ideas and moulding them into wholeness. Ideas are the raw materials to be mined and forged through imagination. We must cultivate it, expand it and recognise it as a divine gift. Therefore we become inspired and approach more nearly the plan, or design, of the Cosmic. There we will find the keynote of all creation.





# Practical

# Mysticism

by Edward Lee, FRC

*The following article is an excerpt from a new book entitled "Practical Mysticism" published by The Rosicrucian Collection. The author, Edward Lee, is a long time Rosicrucian who for many years served the Rosicrucian Order in the fields of instruction and advertising at the headquarters of the English Grand Lodge for the Americas in San José, California.*

**T**HE QUESTION IS OFTEN ASKED: "I want to offer some mystical viewpoints to my friends in order to help them with various problems; but how do I effectively give advice?"

Let's first clear up one area of concern before moving into the realm of advising others. There seems to be a somewhat prevailing opinion among the general public that the Rosicrucian Order is some kind of secret organisation, and that its members are prohibited from discussing it with non-members. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, students of AMORC may definitely discuss the Rosicrucian point of view with friends and family.

They are in fact encouraged to discuss at length, if they wish to do so, the concepts and

principles they are taught. Serious students study weekly lessons in the form of monographs. They contemplate the thoughts and ideas in these lessons and sometimes attend a local affiliated group where they share ideas with friends. Furthermore, they are encouraged to apply the teachings in everyday life. Most of the topics that friends and acquaintances want to discuss concerning mysticism are not new to the average student. For instance, if someone uses words like *karma*, *reincarnation* or *soul*, the student is not lost and can in all probability talk sensibly on any of these subjects.

## Rosicrucian Study

The membership guidelines of AMORC do not allow non-members of the Order to study the Order's private teachings except in the manner



prescribed by and at the pace recommended by the Order. The only reason for this is to maximise the student's chances of understanding and internalising the principles embodied in the Rosicrucian teachings. A person who is willing to commit him or herself to a serious study of mysticism, only has to join the organisation in order to gain full access over a period of time, to the full corpus of these teachings.

A person who has studied for any length of time within the Rosicrucian system, soon realises how much is constantly being digested and made a part of his or her own thought patterns as a result of judicious reflection upon these ideas, relevant exercises, meditations and practical applications of the teachings. The ability to see problems in a new or brighter light is being intensified. The unconditional love and concern for others is also greater. And the desire to help others in some way becomes paramount. But how can a person help?

### Giving Advice

Ralph M. Lewis, the late president of the Rosicrucian Order, spoke in a lecture on a related subject. Referring to giving a precautionary warning to others, he suggested that if we know of an impending dangerous event about which we have concrete or intuitive knowledge, and a friend is directly involved, we should go ahead and inform that person as best we can under the circumstances. We should let the person know that we are purely and simply attempting to be of service. We should not be overbearing or create the impression that we are alarmists. A sane and rational explanation of our feelings to that person will "...cause him to think. He may, however, take no heed and may disregard the whole incident as imaginary and ridiculous. But you have done your part."

In the above example, I referred more precisely to advising others, i.e., giving words of caution and warning. I mention this to differentiate between humanitarian admonishment and the desire to give advice, to counsel, or to give instruction to our friends and family. But now we enter a rather sensitive subject and our personal motives and qualifications for giving advice need to be examined very thoroughly indeed. Moreover, did that person ask for help? Is he doing anything in his life to help himself? And does the student have courage and humility to

refer the individual to another, more qualified person?

One school of thought says a person should *never* give advice, under any circumstances. That viewpoint may well be summed up by the American author Edward Newton, who said: "*Only when a man is safely ensconced under six feet of earth with several tons of enlauding granite upon his chest, is he in a position to give advice with any certainty, and then he is silent.*"

We may be tempted to say that such a viewpoint is rather extreme and that its author may very well have gone overboard in his refusal to give advice. But if we put ourselves on the receiving end of incessant advice, we may be a bit more sympathetic with Mr. Newton. For instance, how often has a well-meaning person said to you: "*If you want my advice, I would go right over there and tell that person a thing or two!*" Have we actually taken that well-meaning advice? How about the people who are constantly giving you advice in the form of platitudes and clichés such as, "*a stitch in time saves nine,*" or "*two heads are better than one,*" and so on. Honestly, isn't it true that your psychological reaction on such occasions is to do just the opposite?

Unwanted or unsolicited advice will usually fall on deaf ears. And such advice is even more completely rejected if the person to whom we give the counsel notices that we are presently suffering under a similar condition. It is akin to an overweight person giving advice to another overweight person on how to diet. The admonishment, "*Don't do as I do, do as I say,*" just doesn't work. People need a good example to go by. And this brings us to another area of giving advice.

People who have overcome some test or trial in life or have obviously improved themselves in some manner are often looked up to for constructive guidance. For example, a person who has spent a great deal of time in trouble with the law and who subsequently turns his or her life completely around and becomes an outstanding citizen in the community is in an excellent position for giving advice to youthful offenders or recent parolees. In other words, that person has gone through the fire and knows exactly how to encourage and perhaps guide another person in similar circumstances. Of course, this help he or she may give hinges upon the fact that the young offender wants assistance.



## Advising Responsibly

Similarly, if you truly know what you are talking about in the realm of mysticism, speak clearly, openly and with authority on the subject matter, or at least couch your explanations as being your best understanding of the subject. In other words, it would be a mistake for example, to attempt a *personal* description of *nirvana* while never having experienced it, whereas making it clear that it is “your understanding” that such and such takes place in such a mental and spiritual condition, is an entirely different matter. Rosicrucians would generally say something like “*I believe this state of consciousness is one of the main goals of the aspiring mystic,*” but seldom reveals details of this from his or her personal experience, unless that experience is both wide-ranging and deep.

As an aspiring mystic, you are free to explain how at some time in the future, you personally hope to reach the exalted state of awareness known as *nirvana*. But you do not boast about having intimate knowledge of it unless this is absolutely true. And even then, you remain silent unless the situation and your intuition specifically warrants it. If *nirvana* is not within your realm of individual experience, be sure that your listeners are crystal clear on this point and that your descriptions of it are purely explanatory in nature and based on what you have heard and read about it. Outside of that, make it clear that your opinions are theoretical or at best, intellectual speculation. We serve the interests of universal truth best when we humbly admit a lack of knowledge rather than attempt to fabricate an explanation that we don't fully understand ourselves. In this way, people learn more from us and respect our honesty for being forthright.

The ancient Greek philosopher Thales demonstrated both wit and wisdom when asked what was difficult. He answered: “*To know one's self.*” When asked what was easy, he replied: “*To advise another.*”

## Motives

This leads to still another pitfall to avoid. Ask yourself, “*Why am I so eager to give advice to others?*” Be brutally frank and pose several questions to yourself: “*Am I attempting to establish a reputation as a learned counsellor? Am I looking for prestige, fame, admiration, love? Is this not all just a big ego trip?*” True, there is and must be a very

real element of self-gratification, or better still, personal enjoyment, derived from the fact that we are able to help others to help themselves. But if conscience tells us that the predominant reason for giving advice is self-glorification, rest assured that our pearls of wisdom will fall on deaf ears. Furthermore, there will most certainly be those who will intuitively perceive our motives for what they really are, so try and avoid even a hint of self-exaltation.

Yet the question still remains: how best do we give advice short of taking over responsibility for another's life? Consider the following scenario. A friend approaches and begins to talk to you about a problem. Naturally, you are sympathetic and attentive to this person. You may say that you are very sorry to learn of his or her situation and you hope things will work out to a satisfactory conclusion. Remember, some people simply need an understanding shoulder to lean on; they may not be seeking advice at all, but simply understanding. Furthermore, they may not have given you the entire picture of the situation, so your counsel would in such circumstances be incomplete.

## Listening

Some people just want to “get it off their chest,” as the saying goes, and they may consider your advice as being uncalled for. You may say something like “*Is there anything I can do to help you?*” But be careful: you must be completely sincere when you ask, “*Can I help?*” A half-hearted gesture is certain to be recognised and refused. And if the situation is one where there is no way to assist, then it is pointless to offer advice.

I suggest that as you will be in a relatively passive mood while the person is speaking, you make an unspoken suggestion to your inner self. Ask yourself, “*Is there a way to help this person?*” And you must really mean it! As the person continues talking, chances are there may arise within your consciousness an avenue of thought, a plan of action, or a piece of advice to give to that person. How will you know that it is constructive advice coming from your greater self within? You will know by the fact that there will be no doubt in your objective mind at that moment as to the correctness of the instruction. Furthermore, your emotional nature will respond to the advice from within in an agreeable manner. In other words,



you will somehow feel good about the plan or thought. It will seem clear and perfectly obvious to you that it is exactly what should be done or said. But the problem now is how to suggest this to the other person.

### Be Encouraging

It is best if we can get that person to ask for advice before we give it. If an individual personally requests assistance, then that person has already placed him or herself in a receptive frame of mind, and he or she may be more readily helped. Half the job is done. So, you might consider asking your friend with the problem, point blank: "Would you like me to suggest a way forward?"

A more roundabout way of doing it would be to say you believe you know of a way to alleviate the situation. Say something like "I just thought of something that might help you. Would you like to know what it is?" In all likelihood, curiosity will prompt the person into listening to what you

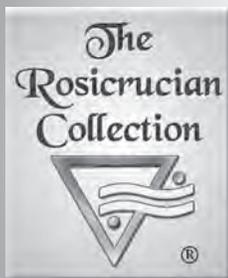
have to say; so when you get the opportunity, present your idea clearly and definitely.

### A Word of Caution

Let me provide another word of caution: Just because the idea comes from your inner self is no reason to insist that the other person follow your advice. Say what you have to say and let it go at that. If the idea is truly inspired, then at least your good advice will have been planted. The person may not immediately see the wisdom of your words, but perhaps eventually your friend will. Don't push however, or you will lose all.

The primary goal of dedicated students of mysticism is self-improvement. That, in itself, is a never ending task. Setting good examples enables us to help others in an unspoken way, for our way of thinking and doing things might well be noted by others and appreciated. In other words, good advice may also be given *silently* through our thoughts and actions in daily life.

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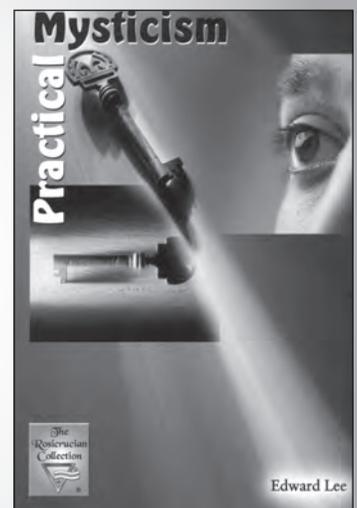
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# UK Convention 2006

UK National Convention  
University of Surrey, Guildford  
29th June - 2nd July 2006

## Return to Basics Fundamentals of the Rosicrucian Order

