

— ROSICRUCIAN —
BEACON



December 2020, Vol 30, No. 1





Find your Deeper Self

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

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

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


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

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

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


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

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CONTENTS

A Listening Place - by Marguerette Gilmore	2
I am Unique - by Sue Robertson	5
Uluru - by Carol Mason	6
The Roerich Pact & Banner of Peace - by Leanne Mitchell	8
Consciousness - The Final Frontier - by Bill Anderson	10
Relaxing Properly - by Almeira Sutton	17
Turn the Page - by Fraser Lawson	19
Plato's Doctrine of Ideas - by Bill Farley	22
The Three Refuges - by Charles Tease	26
Salvation: The View of a Mystic - by Walter Albersheim	28
The Benevolent Dandelion - by Jack Coggins	31
Life is a River - by Abaan Abu-Shumays	34
Yalda - by Roshan Ushah	36
Silent Messengers of the Beautiful Land - by Mary Jones	39
Lost Splendour - by William McKegg	41
The Influence of the Mystical Life - by Robert Daniels	46
The Compost Heap - by Annette Fields	48

ISSN 0966-033X

Published quarterly by the
English Grand Lodge for Europe,
the Middle East and Africa of
THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER®
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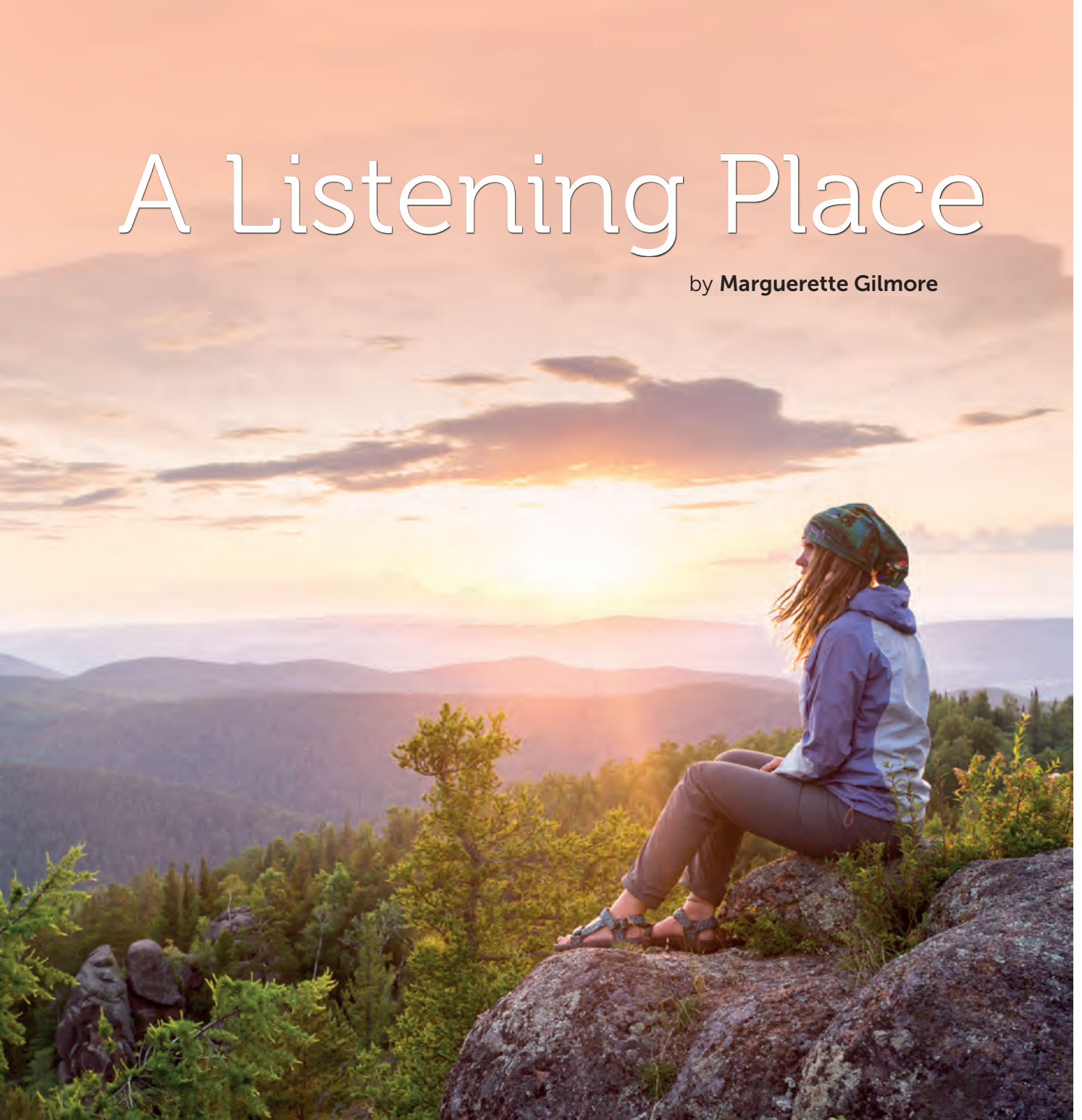
Cover spread

Winter Wonder



A Listening Place

by **Marguerette Gilmore**



Within everyone is a quiet, serene centre where one can go to garner strength, regain composure, to find answers and grow in spiritual stature. This is our soul centre where we commune with the God of our deepest understanding, known to Rosicrucians as the *“God of my Heart.”* It is important that we go there every day to seek renewal and guidance. In this period we find strength

and serenity to meet and conquer life’s challenges and to move up the ladder of spiritual experience and maturity on which we ascend slowly but surely.

There are a few who can sit or stand in a crowd and be able to shut out the noise and confusion and “go apart” to this quiet place and, right there and then, listen to the directions from the Infinite Mind. But most of us need to really go apart in body as well as in mind and find a place





of quiet in order to hear the inner voice of holiness. To most of us, the stilling of our mundane thoughts is difficult enough without the added confusion of outside noise and activity. So, to us it is important that we have a physical place to go to, a place that is peaceful and beautiful, and where we can be alone so that it is possible to really hear when the Cosmic speaks.

Others Can Do It

It is well known that Edison used to slip away and find a quiet spot for a moment of rest, sometimes stilling his conscious mind to the point of sleep. Only a few minutes were necessary, and he would return to his work and co-workers with answers that astonished him as well as others, combined with a new enthusiasm and strength with which to work.

Many outstanding people are able to do this, to find just a corner somewhere where it is quiet and they can have a few minutes alone and be able to retreat to this serene centre deep within to seek, to listen, to find. But the most ideal sanctuary is one to which we can go regularly, a place of beauty and serenity, a place that invites meditation, that in itself will start the process of stillness and peace within us.

I know one woman who has a certain path through the woods where she walks, and whether during spring, summer, autumn or winter it is on this path that she is able to listen to the Cosmic and find her answers. She walks here every day, sometimes standing amidst wild

flowers and the fragrance of wet bark and fresh leaves, and sometimes in snow. And it is here that the God of her heart speaks to her, guiding her in making decisions, in overcoming grief and in growing in love and stature.

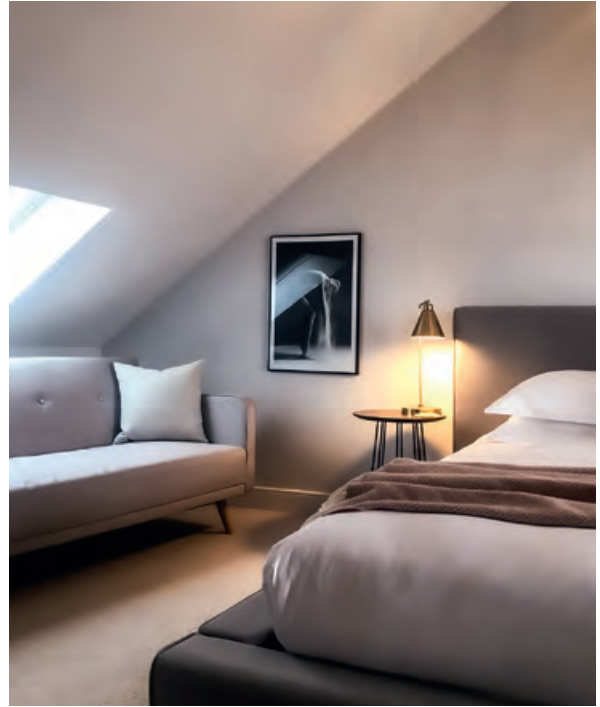
I also know a person who has no lovely woods in which to walk and yet he finds peace and stillness while sitting by a certain window overlooking city buildings. He calls it his "*listening window.*" Here he has come to attune with the Cosmic and to recognise the '*voice of God.*'

...the most ideal sanctuary
is one to which we can go
regularly, a place of beauty
and serenity.

Another woman I know rises at 03:00 in the morning because time is the important element in her meditation. The Cosmic communes with her in the quiet solitude of very early morning when the house and world are asleep and she is undisturbed. I am sure she sits in the same spot each day for this communion.

I feel fortunate that I live in the mountains and can sit on a high place overlooking valleys, jagged rocks and fresh green trees. And I "*lift my eyes to the hills from whence comes my strength.*" Just the beauty alone in my





'listening place' creates so much awe and adoration of God that mundane feelings and thoughts, petty grievances and small fears have a way of slipping quietly out when I go there. Peace and goodness well up in me, and gratitude is spontaneous and overwhelming.

Your Sanctuary

If you want a sanctuary and have no place to go, find one spot that is secluded, perhaps your own bedroom. Hang a lovely painting on the wall and permeate the room with love and feelings of peace. Sit there daily and dwell on the Cosmic. Ask and listen. Let this room become so imbued with your best that upon entering it you will instantly feel the quietness and strength there. Even the walls will soak up your love and higher thoughts and reflect them back to you.

In this spot you will find it easier to shut out the petty worries of the world and become quiet. You will find it possible to retreat all the way to the core of yourself and tap the cosmic power waiting in that quiet, serene centre. And at times when you feel the pressures becoming too great, or an emergency or grief assaults you, then you can quickly retire to your listening place. You will realise at these times how really important it is to have this sanctuary from the world: this place that has become sacred to you.

In your sacred place, you will more easily than

anywhere else, quieten the turmoil inside you, return to the reality of God, and restore your real self; for here you will have established a mental and spiritual pattern so crucial to the establishment of harmony, balance and a peace that surpasses all understanding. However important our sanctuary is to us in times of stress, remember that it is during the mundane, ordinary hours of less consequence that we do the real labour of transforming our holy space to a sanctuary of great love, strength and comfort. We must develop the habit of giving love and strength whilst in this place to all we've met or encountered in our lives, and to do so unconditionally.

If you want a sanctuary and have no place to go, find one spot that is secluded, perhaps your own bedroom...

It is so important therefore that we never neglect our daily retreat to this sanctuary, for minute and invisible though they may seem, the rewards from our listening place come to us daily in growth and guidance, and in stored-up strength, which we receive continually after "going apart" for no other purpose than to listen to the God of our understanding.





I am Unique

by **Sue Robertson**

No two snowflakes are identical to each other in every respect, no two fingerprints exactly alike, and no two flowers are precisely the same. It takes little observation to note that no two people are ever exactly the same as each other in every way. Even identical twins differ from each other, and yes, even Dolly the Sheep is different from her “mother”.

Although I am part of everything, I know am unique, in a league all of my own. I am a rare human being without a likeness of myself. There has been no one in the past exactly like me; nor will there ever be another precisely as I am. I am different from everyone else. Although I am keenly aware of my uniqueness, I am overawed at the immense diversity of life.

Sure, I have some physical likeness to my parents, my brother and sister, and of course to my ancestors. Perhaps my build, my size or my features may resemble some of theirs, but there is another part of my nature

that can never be duplicated. It is different from all others. The difference lies in the way I think and the way I respond to life’s challenges and experiences. Maybe the real difference lies in the “something” that entered me at birth and will leave at death. Maybe the difference is my soul.

The richness of life’s experiences, which comes to us all, makes us different from one another. And from life to life, how could we possibly ever be exactly the same. Our environment, our friends, and the problems we face as we go through life, act and react upon our lives and make up our uniqueness. Fortunately, our Creator has grouped the flow of life into species of compatibility, where despite our obvious differences, and because of our recognisable similarities, we can communicate with each other, love each other, and grow in each other’s company.

Each one of us is a rare and unique human being. What a magnificent and rare universe we are in.



ULURU

by Carol Mason



THE SO-CALLED 'red centre' of Australia looms large both in the psyche of Australians and of many overseas visitors too. In terms of our exploration into the nature of a place and its capacity to offer portals into the inner self and the knowledge that lies therein, it has no equal. Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock, lies on the land like a heart, spread in all directions, creased, bloody but pumping with life.

Esoterically, it has the reputation as a place of great spiritual outpouring. This is not only the view of the local Aboriginal population, but also of various groups who see it as a symbol of the Earth's energies in the land. This could explain the migration of many who, decamping from their coaches and cars, bow down before it as the sun rises and sets, enjoy dinners with champagne in front of it and gaze with wonderment at the rare rain falling in great cascades from it. We can deduce then, as students of esoteric and spiritual things, that there is indeed something going on there and, as a magnet, it attracts great numbers of souls, who wish to acknowledge it.

It's a wonderful place but many who go there actually miss the point. In fact, the rock is something that can be listened to, for the silence within it has been heard by many. The experience of silence is the main attribute of this area of Australia, mostly untouched by the scream of cars and jet engines and the frantic pace of life that the major cities experience. It is the silence that creates the portal, for when one truly listens, all can be heard.

Sacred Rock

The rock itself is an enigma. It is monumental and yet accessible. It lies in an area of land that is flat for at least a thousand kilometres to the west of it and an expanse of arid grassland to the north of it. There's nothing like an enigma to stimulate the human need for exploration, the need to know. The great land in the centre, believed to have been a lake at one time, has created for Australia

an idea of the sacred; both for the Indigenous and other Australian people.

The sacredness of a place is in many respects a primaevial view, for evolution demands we move on. And yet the Indigenous Australian peoples relationship with the land still has much to teach those steeped in the western esoteric tradition that we can learn, through it, to love the earth again. Let's take a look at aspects of this geographic and geologically very special place on the planet. The sun is unrelenting, parching the land almost every day with extremely high temperatures, and the land itself is uncompromising. Air simmers and sweeps sand and stones into all aspects of your being. The nights are dark and cold in winter and this combines with the great, vast and endless space to create a primordial soup of consciousness where you are at the very beginning of all things, where you are being made.

The rock itself is an enigma.

The elements comprise everything we are, and by becoming aware of them within the body and without in the atmosphere, an understanding and acceptance develops that we are one and the same. In this way, the experience of the desert as a dry, arid place, exposes us and allows us to throw off the physical body and the desires of the mind. For in any desert there is only you, and something else!

For those who seek a path through the desert of unknowing, every physical journey has its counterpart in the soul. Find a sacred place and acknowledge the creation of it and the eons of time that it has taken for us to see it as it is: as a way out of the mire into a place that resounds with light and perpetual spring.

It is the silence that creates the portal, for when one truly listens, all can be heard.





The Roerich Pact & Banner of Peace

by Leanne Mitchell

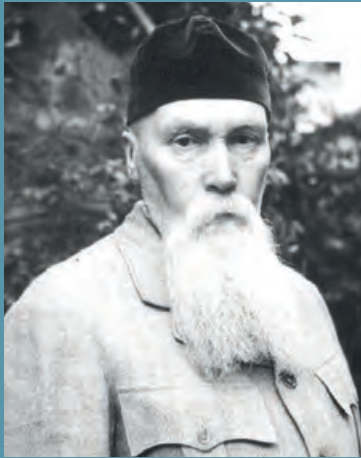
NICHOLAS ROERICH was involved throughout his career with the problems of cultural preservation. As a teenage amateur archaeologist in the north of Russia, he unearthed rare and beautiful ancient artefacts, and he realised that the best products of humanity's creative genius were almost always neglected, or even destroyed, by people themselves. In the early part of the 20th Century, he travelled through several historic towns in Northern Russia, making paintings of their crumbling walls and deteriorating architecture, and went on to appeal to the Russian government to maintain and restore these priceless links to the past.

Later it was the devastations of the First World War

and the Russian revolution that spurred his own efforts. He came to realise that the cultural heritage of each nation is in essence a world treasure. And his idea of cultural heritage broadened to include more than just the physical remains of earlier cultures, the buildings and art, for example, but also the creative activities, the universities, the libraries, the hospitals, the concert halls and theatres. All must be protected from the ravages of war and neglect, for without them life would be nothing but a rude and ignorant time on earth. It became clear to Roerich that an international effort was required. During the 1920s, he composed a treaty with the assistance of international legal experts. It became known as *The Roerich Pact*.

The Roerich Pact and *Banner of Peace* movement





Nicholas Roerich



50 years of the Roerich Pact



Delegates of Second international conference dedicated to the Roerich Pact. Bruges, August 1932.

The banner of Peace symbol - Roerich described the circle as representing the totality of culture, with the three dots being Art, Science and Religion.

grew rapidly during the early 1930s, with centres in a number of countries. There were three international conferences, in Bruges (Belgium), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Washington DC (USA). The Pact itself declared the necessity for protection of the cultural product and activity of the world, both during war and peace, and prescribed the method by which all sites of cultural value would be declared neutral and protected, just as the Red Cross does with hospitals. Indeed, the *Roerich Pact* was often called the *Red Cross of Culture*, and just as the Red Cross is embodied in a protective sign and banner, so does the *Roerich Pact* also designate a symbol to be displayed on a banner, the *Banner of Peace*. This Banner, flown at all sites of cultural activity and historical value, would declare them neutral and independent of combatant forces.

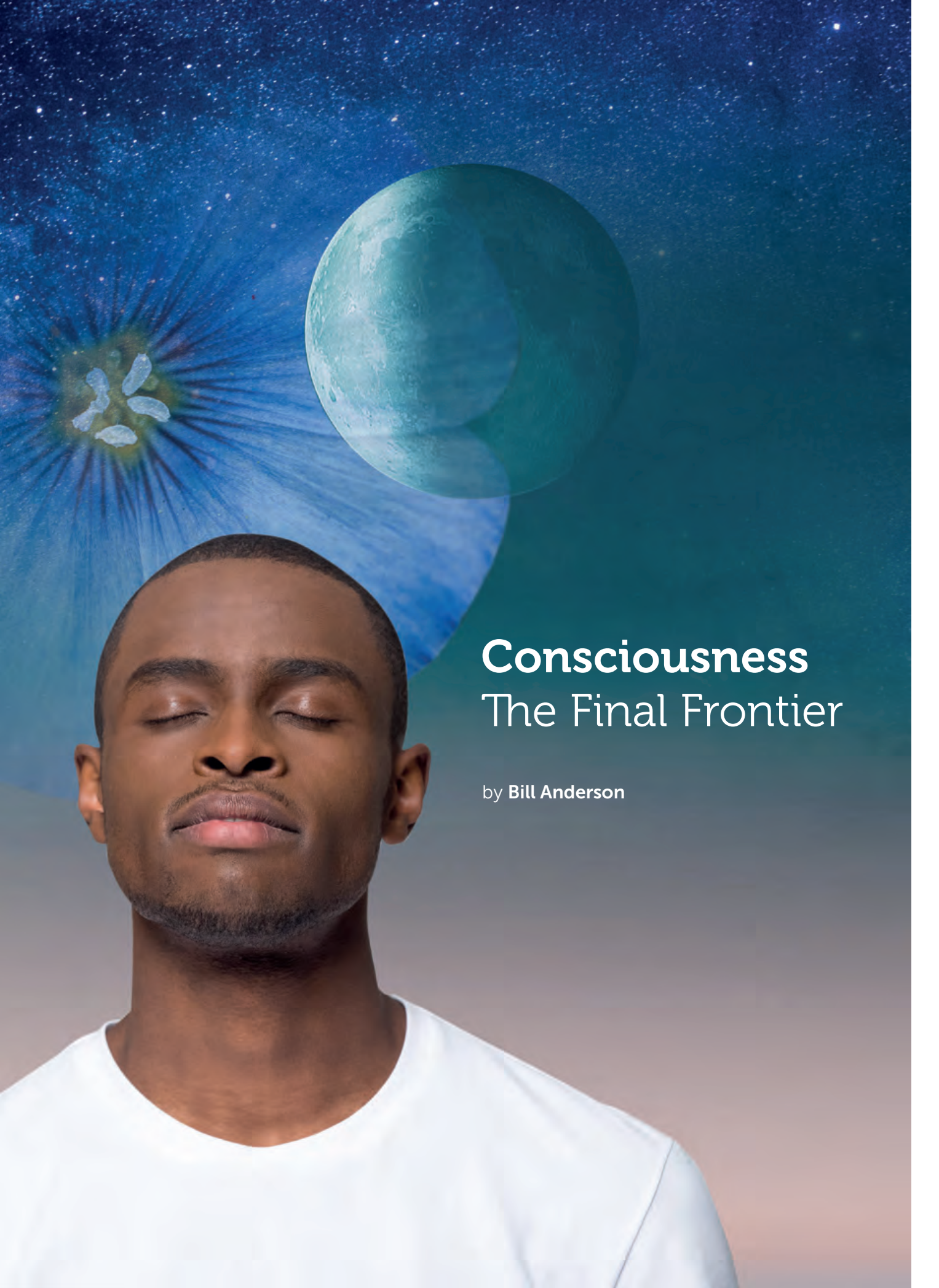
The Banner of Peace symbol has ancient origins. Perhaps its earliest known example appears on Stone Age amulets: three dots, without the enclosing circle. Roerich came across numerous later examples in various parts of the world and knew that it represented a deep and sophisticated understanding of the triune nature of existence, an essential element of Rosicrucian philosophy. But for the purposes of the Banner and the Pact, Roerich described the circle as representing the totality of culture, with the three dots being *Art, Science* and *Religion*, three of the most embracing of human cultural activities. He also described the circle as representing the eternity of time, encompassing the past, present and future. The sacred origins of the symbol, as an illustration of the trinities fundamental to all religions, remain central to the meaning of the Pact and Banner today.

The Roerich Pact was first agreed to by twenty-one nations of the Americas and signed as a treaty in the White House, in the presence of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, on 15th April 1935 by all the members of the Pan-American Union. It was later signed by other countries too. The year 2005 saw the 70th anniversary of the signing of the *Roerich Pact*. The history of international treaties shows us how many of them were relevant and applicable to the times in which they were signed, but then lapsed into irrelevance. The *Roerich Pact* however, has kept its heart and its life, and is linked to the needs of today's chaotic world as much as ever.

There is no greater value to a nation than its cultural past, present and future.

In so many countries, we see a deterioration of cultural values and a disregard for the right of cultural treasures to have their own continued existence, forever protected and unimpeded. We see destruction of life, property and the inheritance of the creative genius of nations. We can only hope that a greater awareness of the importance of humanity's cultural heritage will increase, rather than deteriorate. There is no greater value to a nation than its cultural past, present and future.





Consciousness The Final Frontier

by Bill Anderson

AT THE beginning of each episode of Star Trek we heard the words: *Space, the Final Frontier!* While this may sound reasonable, in my lifetime we've landed on the Moon, sent probes to Mars, obtained wonderfully detailed pictures of parts of Pluto and the other planets in the solar system, as well as sent the two Voyager spacecraft out through the Heliopause and on into interstellar space.

To my mind, space is looking less of a barrier, less of a final frontier nowadays, though I believe that for humankind there is indeed one final frontier, namely the enigma that is *consciousness*. The study of consciousness offers us the chance to get to the core of what it means to be human and what our species is destined to accomplish. Once we enter that inner core of human accomplishment, and fully understand our own inner workings, the whole universe will reveal itself to us, with former mysteries at last clearly understood.

Searching for Wisdom



"In each of us there is another whom we do not know" – Carl Jung.

When I did undergraduate studies in philosophy, the lecturers taught that there were only two approaches to consciousness: either you believe consciousness can be explained in conventional scientific terms, or you believe that consciousness is something magical and mysterious that science will never understand. I found neither of these views satisfactory, for they both smacked of the 'all or nothing' approach, something that assiduously avoided a middle ground or the possibility that elements of the view on the extreme opposite of one's own, may have some valid points worth investigating.

I love the scientific approach to everything, but can't see that it has yet come close even to yielding a satisfactory explanation for the phenomenon of consciousness. But I certainly look forward to the day when we'll be able to study consciousness just like any of the other sciences. The day will come, of that I am sure, but for now at least, I must have some believable concept of what it is that

thinks within me, i.e. what is the thinking part of me?

Many Rosicrucians believe that every person possesses a soul which in some mysterious way causes consciousness to arise when a suitable brain, body and neurological system is ready to be the 'fired up' with Vital Life Force, and ending up with a conscious, living being, capable of thoughts and emotions, and bearing our name.

"The key to human progress lies in the evolution of consciousness." This extract from the *Rosicrucian Code of Life* highlights the age-old search to understand what consciousness actually is and how it comes into being. The Rosicrucian teachings maintain that consciousness, all types of consciousness, is an attribute of the soul, calling it the mental aspect of life which includes sensation, realisation and reasoning of which the active principles are imagination, aspiration and inspiration. It is central to human life and open to the outer and inner worlds.

**The key to human progress
lies in the evolution of
consciousness.**

The teachings further relate that the expression of divine consciousness in humans has its own unique faculties, and perceives things within its own domain of functioning. The spiritual consciousness is the inner self whereas the physical consciousness only deals with the material world. Consciousness, life force and mind are therefore related, and enter and leave the body together.¹

Ancient Greek Thought

The earliest indication we have of an attempt to understand consciousness can be found in early ancient Greek thought, examples of which are presented in the 5th Degree of the Rosicrucian Order's study curriculum. These examples clearly point to doctrines which later became known as panpsychism, which begins its search for truth by asking *what exists*, what *causes existence* to appear, and what causes existence to appear in the form it does.

The Greek philosophers asked *"What is being?"* and then then went on to discuss what is and is not *'real'*. For the first time in history, people were asking themselves if what was real was in fact different, very different, from what humans perceive it to be. And that, to the best of our knowledge presaged the first beginnings of true scientific enquiry.





What makes us human may not be uniquely human after all – *David Attenborough.*

One of the first Pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece, Thales of Miletus in modern-day Turkey (c. 624–545 BCE) argued for the attribution of mind that tends towards a universal mind. The argument depends on the idea that beings with minds are *self-movers*. Thales noted that magnets and, under certain circumstances, amber, can move themselves, and concludes that they therefore possessed minds and thus consciousness. Of course we know today that magnets and negatively charged pieces of amber possess nothing remotely similar to what we understand mind to be; but it marked the first time that such things were even thought of.

The Pre-Socratic philosophers were struck by a dilemma: either mind is an elemental feature of the world, or mind can somehow be reduced to more fundamental elements. If they opted for the view that mind is an elemental feature of the world, then they had to account for the apparent lack of mental features at the fundamental level. Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (c. 500–425 BCE) flatly denied that elements can emerge from more basic features of reality and instead advanced the view that *‘everything is in everything.’*

However, Anaxagoras’s views on the mind are complex. He appeared to believe that everything has a portion of *mind* (the Divine Mind in modern terms) in it but did not go so far as to assert that everything had a mind. He envisioned the world as composed of a myriad of substances, but these were ordered and regulated by the single over-arching principle of *nous* (mind). *Nous* was a unifying, cosmic mental force that was interwoven

with the movement and actions of different elements. The mind that is ubiquitous is not just some amorphous, abstract mind, but essentially like that of animals, that is, an animated soul or spirit. What was striking about these early attempts to formulate an integrated theory of reality is that the mind and particularly consciousness kept arising as special problems.

Mental Alchemy

Alchemy is not only the origin of systematic experimentation and chemistry but also the first attempt to create a cohesive science of consciousness. Those early philosophers of nature treated mental contents as objective phenomena, and they believed the universal operations used in their laboratories could transform a dark leaden mind into a shining golden one.

The Hermetic philosophy behind alchemy taught that our thoughts and feelings are the thoughts and feelings of the whole universe, and that intrinsic perspective generated deep insight into the structure of mind. Alchemists viewed consciousness as a natural force that could be harnessed through a marriage of logic and intuition, a union of objective and subjective realities. Like modern seekers of a unified field theory, alchemists sought one true philosophy of universal principles that were as valid in Nature as they were in their own minds and souls, and in the One Mind of the Cosmos. The resulting ideas on mind and matter leads to a truer understanding of the Philosopher’s Stone – not as an object but a state of mind.²



Panpsychism

“What makes us human may not be uniquely human after all” – David Attenborough.

Panpsychism is the view that all things have a mind or a mind-like quality. The word itself was coined by the Italian philosopher Francesco Patrizi in the 16th Century and derives from the two Greek words *pan* (all) and *psyche* (soul or mind).

The word ‘*panpsychism*’ literally means that everything has a mind. However, nowadays it is generally understood as the view that mentality is fundamental and ubiquitous in the natural world. As a concept it maintains that at least some kinds of micro-level entities such as cells have mentality, and that instances of those kinds are found in all things throughout the material universe.

Panpsychism is a modern term but which has a long and venerable history in philosophical traditions of both East and West and has recently enjoyed a revival in philosophy. For its supporters panpsychism offers an attractive middle way between physicalism on the one hand and dualism on the other. The worry with dualism, the view that mind and matter are fundamentally different kinds of thing, is that it leaves us with a radically disunified picture of nature, and the deep difficulty of understanding how mind and brain interact. And whilst physicalism offers a simple and unified vision of the world, this is arguably at the cost of being unable to give a satisfactory account of the emergence of human and animal consciousness. Panpsychism, strange as it may sound on first hearing, promises a satisfying account of the human mind within a unified conception of nature.

Some philosophers have argued that literally every object in the universe, every part of every object, and every system of objects possesses some mind-like quality. Other philosophers have been more restrictive, arguing

that only certain broad classes of things possess mind, or that, at least, the smallest parts of things, such as atoms, possess mind.

Modern Considerations

Where does consciousness come from? What if consciousness is not something special that the brain does but is instead a quality inherent to all matter? It was Erwin Schrödinger who said: *“Consciousness cannot be accounted for in physical terms. For consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It cannot be accounted for in terms of anything else.”* Let’s have a look at more modern views. In his book *Duration and Simultaneity*, the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) wrote:



Henri Bergson

What we wish to establish is that we cannot speak of a reality that endures without inserting consciousness into it. ... It is impossible to imagine or conceive a connecting link between the before and after without an element of memory and, consequently, of consciousness.

Recent developments have gone some way to reversing the aversion to panpsychism that has dominated Western philosophy in recent times. From the 1970s onwards, hostility to metaphysics slowly withdrew, and many philosophers in the analytic tradition now accept the inevitability of metaphysics. And towards the end of the 20th Century and into the 21st, the continuing failure of physicalists to come up with a satisfying account of consciousness has led many to look for alternatives.

...there is nothing
dead, or senseless in
the universe, [even]
Space-Time itself
being animated.

-- Samuel Alexander --

The stuff of the world
is mind-stuff.

-- Arthur Eddington --



As a result of both of these things, a significant and growing minority of analytic philosophers have begun seriously to explore the potential of panpsychism, both to provide a satisfying account of the emergence of human consciousness and to give a positive account of the intrinsic nature of matter.

In the standard view of things, consciousness

Consciousness, for the panpsychist, is the intrinsic nature of matter.

exists only in the brains of highly evolved organisms, and so consciousness exists only in a tiny part of the universe and only in very recent history. But according to panpsychism, consciousness pervades the universe and is a fundamental feature of it. This doesn't mean that everything is conscious. The basic commitment is that the fundamental constituents of reality, perhaps electrons and quarks have incredibly simple forms of experience. And the very complex experience of the human or animal brain is somehow derived from the experience of the brain's most basic parts.

Consciousness, for the panpsychist, is the intrinsic

nature of matter. There is just matter, on this view, nothing supernatural or spiritual. But matter can be described from two perspectives. Physical science describes matter 'from the outside,' in terms of its behaviour. But matter 'from the inside' is constituted of forms of consciousness.

What this offers us is a beautifully simple, elegant way of integrating consciousness into our scientific worldview, of marrying what we know about ourselves from the inside and what science tells us about matter from the outside.

There is a profound difficulty at the heart of the science of consciousness: consciousness is unobservable. You cannot look inside an electron to see whether or not it is conscious. But nor can you look inside someone's head and see their feelings and experiences. We know that consciousness exists not from observation and experiment but by being conscious. The only way we can find out about the consciousness of others is by asking them: I cannot directly perceive your experience, but I can ask you what you're feeling.

We should also consider that all living things may have a form of consciousness. It need not be the same as our own. As an example, it is known that plants will open and close their flowers in sunlight and close them in darkness. This may indicate a rudimentary form of consciousness. Likewise, trees are thought to communicate through their roots.



Some philosophers have argued that literally every object in the universe possess some mind-like quality. Trees are thought to communicate through their roots.



Human beings can see beyond the restrictions of Planet Earth to the stars and thus our consciousness grows. However, if we look at a colony of ants, each ant will have its own consciousness but simultaneously a group consciousness; bees likewise. Their consciousness is different from ours, you may even say more restrictive for what can they know of the rest of the world, never mind the universe. They operate and thus are conscious of their own sphere of activity.

In the oceans we find differing levels of consciousness, from the very basic, through species like the octopus which is said to be very intelligent, to dolphins and whales whose brain capacities we are just beginning to discover. They communicate with a language, but again what can they know of the land or the universe at large? How does consciousness expand?

Cosmic Consciousness

“We are the Cosmos made conscious and life is the means by which the universe understands itself” – Brian Cox

If we’re willing to admit that consciousness pervades the universe wherever there is life, then the next step is the Rosicrucian concept of Cosmic Consciousness.³ Christian Bernard, in his book *Rosicrucian Reflections* asks the question: *“What is Cosmic Consciousness?”* His answer is that it is an essence, an attribute of the Universal Soul which manifests in every living organism *“from the tiniest living creature to the most developed human being.”*

It prompts living beings to evolve towards perfecting their own nature. We have to learn to know ourselves and to reach the deepest part of our beings. In his concluding remarks, the Emperor Emeritus states that when we have succeeded in experiencing Cosmic Consciousness, we will have fulfilled our consciousness of the Cosmic, of the Divine.



Each ant in a colony of ants will have its own consciousness but simultaneously a group consciousness; bees likewise.



In the oceans we find differing levels of consciousness. We are just beginning to discover the brain capacities of some ocean creatures like dolphins.

Scientific Revolution

In the *New Scientist* magazine of 2nd May 2020 there was a feature article written by Michael Brooks. He discussed the mathematical model of consciousness, quoting Johannes Kleiner from the Munich Centre for Mathematical Philosophy who stated: This could be the beginning of a scientific revolution. He was commenting on mathematicians who were working on consciousness and that what they are uncovering seems to suggest that if we are to achieve a precise description of consciousness, we may have to ditch our intuitions and accept that all kinds of inanimate matter could be conscious – maybe even the universe as a whole.⁴

This scientific revolution has been a long time coming. Philosophers have pondered over the nature of consciousness for a couple of thousand years, largely to no avail. Then, half a century ago, biologists got involved. They have discovered correlations between the activity of brain cells and individual instances of experience known as qualia.⁵ They suggested that particles or other basic entities might have simple forms of consciousness that combine to make our own.

Are there different levels of consciousness? We are all aware that our level of consciousness differs between





The people of South American Andes believed that inanimate objects had a form of consciousness and they therefore treated them as almost godlike: rocks, mountains, streams.

when we are awake and when we are asleep. We have seen previously how all living things on this planet have some form of consciousness, even if we are unable to understand it; just like the Europeans in the Pre-Columbian Americas. Our brain contains, at last count some 90 billion neurons and yet how it functions is still a mystery⁶.

Unravelling the Mystery

“The earth is a very small stage in a great cosmic arena.”
– Carl Sagan.

We are wanderers through time and space. I’ve been fortunate to have travelled widely and found a few places on Earth that seemed ‘special’ to me. But what does that mean? What was there about those particular places that made me feel they were special as opposed to almost everywhere else. I would suggest that in these spots my own consciousness felt an affinity with the consciousness of that particular place.

The people of South American Andes believed that inanimate objects had a form of consciousness and they therefore treated them as almost godlike: rocks, mountains, streams. Who are we to say that they were wrong and that they were in fact more spiritually aware in their mountain fastnesses than we are. When the conquistadores first arrived they simply did not understand, they were unable to attune or even

comprehend the majesty of consciousness.

In my day-to-day life, whenever I first see the sun or the moon in the morning, I bow my head and welcome them into my consciousness each day. If I see a particularly beautiful vista in the countryside, I do the same. It is a way of showing reverence for the consciousness of the Cosmic, of which we are all a constituent part.

Since our Rosicrucian teachings tell us about Panentheism, where everything in the universe is contained within ‘God’ or the ‘Cosmic’, it is not such a leap to believe that this whole is as conscious as we are.

*Who can sing all songs, and speak all languages.
Who can count all the stars and all the pebbles in
the sea? Why, only a Latvian Daina!*

Endnotes

1. *The Rosicrucian Manual* - 1972 edition.
2. *The Roots of a Science of Consciousness in Hermetic Alchemy* by Dennis William Hauck, Ph.D in the *Rose+Croix Journal* Vol. 11 (2016).
3. “*Rosicrucian Reflections*” Chapter 9.
4. “*Here, There, Everywhere*” in *New Scientist*, 20 May 2020, pp. 40-44
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6. “*Your Conscious Mind*”, ISBN: 978-1-47362-962-2.



by Almeira Sutton

Relaxing Properly



We all have an appreciation of the value of relaxation..., stop everything, look around, take in the ambience, put your feet up, calm down..., and relax! What could be better? Sounds easy, but it's surprisingly more difficult than we would believe.

RELAXATION is usually considered an involuntary act affecting only the nerves and muscles of the body, a sort of default state to which we revert as soon as we stop 'work.' We all know of course that it's not quite that simple, for 'work' is seldom the sort of thing one can stop by merely flicking a switch. It's like a big machine that needs to follow a set shut-down procedure before it can reach a state of inactivity where proper healing 'maintenance work' can begin. And that takes time..., time we usually don't have. It's little wonder therefore that so many people fail to relax sufficiently to benefit from their rest periods. It's not that they don't get enough time to relax, just that they've never learnt how to reach a state of true relaxation in the time allocated to it. The mind and brain are constantly on the go,

and that's where the problem really lies. Relaxing the body is the easy part, relaxing the mind..., that's the real challenge!

Suppose you have the ability to lie down or sit in a comfortable chair and 'let go' as it were, relieving all tenseness in the muscles and nerves. Isn't it true that if your mind is at work on a problem, your muscles and nerves will unconsciously become tense again, thereby defeating the purpose of your intended period of relaxation? To verify this, you only have to think about how you feel first thing in the morning when you wake up. Some days you feel especially rested and refreshed; on other days you wake up feeling as though you spent the night climbing rickety high-rise buildings; and perhaps you also feel the onset of another dull, throbbing headache..., again! We usually attribute such things to something physical, like over-eating



the evening before, not taking our blood pressure tablets, or not making up from a row we had with the person we love the most. Of course there is always some physical cause, but the fundamental, underlying reason we get up feeling so tired is of course that we didn't rest properly.

Sometimes our muscles feel tired and flaccid, almost hurting from underuse, because we don't use them properly, or hardly at all. Often we recall many superficial dreams, some just bothersome, like climbing rickety high-rise buildings, while others are real nightmares or those miasmatic 'rubbish dreams' we all have on occasion. And you'll remember that your sleep was not peaceful, because you woke up several times during the night. At this point you should think back to the previous evening and try to recall what state of mind you were in when you retired. What were you thinking about when you went to sleep? Did you end the evening with residual angry thoughts about the latest outrages in the American elections? Or were you quite rightly deeply upset by news of another massacre of innocent civilians in some totalitarian state? There are so many awful things happening, we are spoilt for choice what to get really upset about.



Not letting go of your worries before retiring can lead to a restless night's sleep.

True relaxation cannot involve the body alone.

The chances are you spent too much time worrying about the cares of the past 24 hours, fretting about how awful the world has become, or how you are going to cope with the massive amount of work facing you at work the next day. And above all, you didn't take time to calm yourself down before retiring. Nor did you leave all your worries behind and appeal inwardly and earnestly to the

God of your Heart for release from them for the duration of the night. Did you make a deep and sincere request to the God of your experience for true rest and repose during the coming period of sleep? Did you offer up a prayer of thanks for the sheer privilege of being alive, no matter what your present challenges? And did you sincerely and with heartfelt emotion forgive all who have tried to harm you or from whom you have taken offense during your life?

It is my conviction, based upon experimentation and

Once the mind is calm, the rest follows effortlessly and automatically.



So many awful things are happening, we're almost spoilt for choice what to get upset about the most.

a lot of introspection, that true relaxation cannot involve the body alone. And that of course means *first and foremost* that we must make peace with ourselves, the inner part. All else flows from that peace of mind, for physical relaxation is after all merely a cessation of 'work', while mental relaxation, counterintuitively *requires* 'work' just to get started and headed in the right direction. Once the mind is calm, once we are at peace with ourselves and all in the world, the rest follows effortlessly and automatically, and the healing of a good night's rest will follow as sure as day follows night. *Take care of your self!*





Turn the Page

by Fraser Lawson

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

WE DON'T actually write the story of our life do we? It would use up far too many pens and paper, not to mention harm to the environment! But we can to some extent keep a daily 'diary' in the form of recalling each day the key episodes of what happened that day in as much detail as our stamina permits. It works up to a point, it sharpens the mind, and we find we're able to recall things in great detail weeks or even months later. But it's more work than most of us would care to be bothered with, so it's as well to just live our episodes, one day at a time, remember as much detail as we can, and hope the episodes we've missed

will find their way into the great 'Book of Life', readily available for inspection some day, some time, some place, maybe even in another incarnation.

Our daily episodes will involve tragedies, farces, adventure stories and hopefully some comedies too. But whatever they *actually* are, the *reality* for us is that they are *our* life experiences, lived and experienced within the mini-universe that wraps around our perceived reality. Whether pleasant and enriching or unpleasant and demeaning, the episodes of our life are the *interpretations* we make of the *underlying actualities* that impinge upon our consciousness throughout life. And in a sense, they can



be viewed as what we fundamentally are, namely a record of all our thoughts, words and actions, in excruciating detail, something known in the East for thousands of years as “*karma*.”

So, because we are in that case the ultimate authors of our lives, each life is what we made it to be. And because we are the primary reason for the existence of our life story, regardless of the stage-props around us, like friends, enemies, jobs, etc., we’re ultimately the ones responsible for how our lives turn out to be. A quick apology here: I know it may sound ludicrous and hard-hearted to have this view of human life, for there are, after all, countless things that happen to us that even the most philosophical and forgiving person can’t agree fits into the concept of us being ‘*to blame*’ for everything we experience. That’s true, but only a true master of life could discover and fully understand the entire chain of causes and effects that have brought us to where we are, and calmly understand the intricate nature of our entanglement with the pleasant and unpleasant events for which we are ‘*to blame*.’

But here’s the thing...! We shouldn’t just sit idly by watching our life episodes unfold and get recorded for posterity while all the time, what’s happening is ‘*dictated by circumstances*’ or ‘*forced*’ upon us by others. If you habitually meekly submit to what *others* want you to do, and never do what *you* want, you’ll always be miserable and never as creative as your life was intended to be. You’ll be nothing more than a puppet manipulated by people



Each new day is unmade, uncreated, a blank page on which to write a new story, exactly as you want it.

who aren’t happy just to control their own lives, but find it necessary to exert their control over the lives of others too.

The strong and aggressive will always exert their strength and power where there’s a vacuum. It’s the way of Nature after all. But every person is part of a much greater Whole, and innately has the same potential to be as creative as all others. Given enough time and effort, success or failure is ultimately a human decision. Make the decision yourself!

New Day

Regardless of the past, each new day is the same for everyone. It’s unmade, uncreated, a blank page on which to write a new story, exactly as you want it. No matter if you’re young or old, healthy or unhealthy, rich or poor, each new day is yours to create as you want it to be! Banish all negative, selfish, limiting thoughts, for they will guarantee failure. Whatever advantages people had over you yesterday, leave them behind, the time is gone, they’re not worthy of further attention and you have the same blank page as all of us do. Today is before you, it’s unshaped, welcome it with open arms and a supreme sense of a positive, happy episode just waiting to be discovered.

**Banish all negative, selfish,
limiting thoughts, for they will
guarantee failure.**

Within you slumbers the creative spark of the Divine incarnate, so discover that unfathomable holiness and allow it to manifest through you. This ‘job’ of yours is important, so get started! The first step is to control and order your thinking. Too many of your past failures were self-created through your obsession with negative attitudes, blissfully unaware that your uncharitable thoughts were the catalyst that brought you to a state of unhappiness. The unhappy consequences of your own negative thinking will be presented to you repeatedly until you finally realise that you are self-inflicting punishments that could so easily be avoided simply by adopting more positive attitudes. When you start holding positive, kind, charitable thoughts about others, your life will start changing for the better. The pain we experience as a result of negative attitudes is Nature’s way of teaching us what is bad for us and what is good for us.

It’s a matter of willpower to control our thoughts. It’s just as easy to think that you’ll succeed as it is to think





*You attract to yourself what you mentally create around you.
Positive attracts positive.*

that you'll fail. It's a lot more pleasant to think well of a person than to harbour thoughts of animosity towards the person. It's no more difficult to think that you'll feel better than to think that you'll feel worse. You just need to decide whether you want happiness and good things to happen today, or unhappiness and disappointing experiences. Remember, you create. Whether or not you enjoy the sense of being responsible for your own actions and inactions, you will be responsible for them regardless. So, get used to the idea of having to control your thoughts.

Attraction

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

The fact remains that attraction is a basic and inviolable law of nature. You'll attract whatever dominates your thoughts and attitudes, for you created it that way. If you think negative thoughts about someone or something, you'll attract negative circumstances; like clockwork, it will happen. It's an absolute certainty: negative attracts more negative, positive attracts more positive. All dreams and desires you have that are compatible with natural laws, *are possible!* That is why you can and must create a better future for yourself, day-by-day, by guarding your thoughts and ensuring you have only charitable thoughts always!

Attunement

The third step is attunement. Within you resides the wisdom and power of the Divine, that supremely efficient and effective *'creative spark'* of God. Learn to subdue your ego and let the unlimited, temporarily imprisoned power resurface and take the driver's seat of your life. It thinks only positively, it thinks only of success, and it possesses the ultimate of confidence and refinement of action. It does everything that is good and constructive, and refuses to do anything that's destructive or contrary to natural law. That inner wisdom is by far the greater part of you, the 99% that you have yet to discover.

Realise that you are a unique expression of the Divine, and there is special work that you, and only you, can do for the world. What a challenging and tremendous thought! But how will you attune with this power? How will you find out that you're *'meant'* to do? *'Who am I to be so honoured?'* I can hear you think. Watch it, that's a negative thought! It's not difficult to practise attunement. Nothing positive is ever placed beyond our reach. We simply need to find a quiet place and dismiss our dominating ego. Then..., remember the biblical exhortation "*...be still, and know that I am God.*" No further instructions are necessary.

Decision

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

Let it be known that you'll not allow any negative thoughts to come into your mind, you'll not be party to any evil or destructive plans or activities, and you'll do your utmost to see only the good in every person you come in contact with. You'll be surprised to discover how many will be attracted to you and will want to join you in your determination. The law of attraction will not and cannot fail!

Some previous pages in your book of life may be less than satisfactory, and you may even be ashamed of them. But don't dwell on them, for you lived those pages as you then understood life, and your understanding has matured so much since then. The future is before you, ready to be created by you on the remaining blank pages of the Book of Life. So, *turn the page*, start anew to create a better, happier, more fulfilling life.



by Bill Farley

Plato's Doctrine of Ideas

The one remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.
-- Percy Bysshe Shelley, from "Adonais" --

AS A COGNISANT, thinking being, you are a vibrant unit of energy occupied largely with percepts¹ and concepts regarding your environment, your place in the universe and the *Ultimate Reality* or great *First Cause*. This 'mind-energy' is constantly weighing, comparing and making judgments, whether consciously or unconsciously. And on these judgments depend the resulting decisions involving your Will and the Action that resulting from it.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant once wrote:

Objects of the senses are perceptible by us only as they appear and not as they really are. In the same way, objects which are beyond our apperception are not objects as far as our theoretical knowledge is concerned.

All attempts to obtain a comprehension of the transcendental by means of the reason be definitely renounced. Agnosticism denies any possibility of attaining transcendental truth by means of reason [alone].



How then can we attain to the transcendental, the super-physical, the real, what lies behind or above the changing phenomena of the material world? How can we sense the noumenon² behind the many manifestations of the physical world? To advanced thinkers and mystics like Socrates, Plato and Jacob Boehme, cognition of the real is immediate. Through Cosmic attunement a person can pass beyond the veil which separates the 'uninitiated' from the world of Reality.

As Boehme wrote after his last Illumination:

In a quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a University, for I saw and knew the Being of all things, the Abyss and the Byss [sic], so I did not only wonder but exceedingly rejoice.

And we are told that the Buddha...

...knew by direct cognition the laws behind the phenomena revealed by the senses. He perceived an ordered Universe, the smallest movement definitely caused and itself the cause of action, and he perceived that when these are understood, power follows as a necessity.

Becoming

In the higher interpretation of a mystic, facts which heretofore seemed dull and lifeless take on an added lustre of wonder and achievement, a living reality. Thought is vital and progressive, and consists of a continuous series of judgments, a constant tearing-down and building-up in the light of newer knowledge and experiences, as Hegel so ably demonstrated in his famous "doctrine of *Becoming*." All scientific disciplines are simply segments of the great circle of the knowable universe, and scientists everywhere are devotedly toiling to reveal hidden treasures of knowledge..., what mystics consider to be the very laws that uphold the universe..., laws that proceed from a primary and ultimate "*First Cause*."

As the philosopher Baruch Spinoza wrote...

We do not see the law of inverse squares, but it is there and everywhere. It was there before anything began, and will survive when all the world of things is a finished tale.

And from the great French philosopher Henri Bergson we read...

Reality is fundamentally a spiritual activity.



In our journey toward the heights of Illumination there are many milestones; and we who are endeavouring to travel along that pathway, have realised many marvellous manifestations of psychic phenomena hitherto hidden and unsuspected.





In the luminous Cosmic garden, vibrant with architectonic and prismatic harmonies “...a light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread..., the soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers near”, and one senses part of the divine plan of the great Cosmic Mind of the Universe.

For those who have committed themselves to lives of inner spiritual discovery, how well they understand this definition! It is, to use one of Plato’s phrases, “*a priceless pearl of philosophy.*” As opposed to the purely mental processes of thought, the mystic’s immediate cognition of realities is inspiring and illuminating. And as the writer Clifford Bax says...

The purpose of the mystic is the mightiest and most solemn that can ever be...; for the central aim of all mysticism is to soar out of separate personality up to the very consciousness of God.

In our journey toward the heights of Illumination there are many milestones; and we who are endeavouring to travel along that pathway, have realised many marvellous manifestations of psychic phenomena hitherto hidden and unsuspected. When one is able to perceive super-physical phenomena, one knows that one has made at least some progress on the Path. And this knowledge, however slight, motivates further development which will open a doorway of infinite possibilities, and may lead to the very footstool of Divinity.

Cosmic Attunement

Plato, we are told, attained that greatest of human attainments, a state of being known to modern mystics simply as “*Cosmic Consciousness.*” To him, ideas were real, and many who have worked through their Rosicrucian mystical studies have realised the validity of Plato’s “*Doctrine of Ideas.*” Up to this time, for most of us, this

doctrine may have been only an interesting hypothesis, an unproven theory. But if experience is knowledge, then the experiences we have had in mounting the first steps of the Rosicrucian path, have given us a clearer conception of Plato’s meaning than years of book study and philosophical speculation could otherwise have done.

When one is able to perceive super-physical phenomena, one knows that one has made at least some progress on the Path.

Through Cosmic attunement, all the subtle forces impinging on the sensitive nerve centres of the human organism give us varied and multitudinous visions of the land-beyond-the-veil, the veil which separates our objective consciousness from our subjective consciousness. Who, for example, that has been privileged to enter the Cosmic Garden can doubt that it is the archetype of all the particular manifestations of gardens on the physical plane? In that luminous garden, vibrant with architectonic and prismatic harmonies “*...a light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread..., the soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers near*”, and one senses part of the divine plan of the great Cosmic Mind of the Universe.

With Cosmic attunement we are enabled to penetrate beyond the veil and sense the Ideal as opposed



to the Real, which manifests on the earth plane as Actuality, or the objective phenomena of the physical world. The Idea of the Supreme Mind is creative and manifests first on the super-physical plane as thought-forms or, as Plato calls them, Ideas; and later, on the physical plane, as the objective phenomena of all the outward manifestations of nature.

With Cosmic attunement we are enabled to penetrate beyond the veil and sense the Ideal as opposed to the Real...

The Cosmic Mind

Plato's *Idea* is the eternal, the ideal, the universal, the prototype, the noumenon..., and all physical phenomena are but the temporal and particular. "*As above, so below*", thought is creative. Let us take a portrait painted as a concrete example of the creative power of the human mind. What is the power behind this picture? Surely not the pigment, not the canvas, not the brush..., these are but instruments in the guiding hand of the artist who brings to fruition his Idea, his idea of colour, form, proportion and harmony, plus the personality of the sitter.

In the realm of abstract qualities or activities of the soul such as goodness, justice, temperance, beauty, truth and so on..., for this seer of the invisible, there is a norm or pattern inherent in the human mind and deriving from the Universal Mind, against which, and with which, one judges all particular manifestations of these qualities.

These transcendental Realities or Ideas are eternal conceptions in the Cosmic Mind. And it is only by refining, by a constant process of dialectical inclusion and exclusion of definition, that we may hope to attain to an approximate comprehension thereof. This inward dialectic is the birth-right of every individual, and its spokespersons are the two inner voices which are never silent, but are constantly defining, analysing, weighing, judging, accepting or rejecting, by the power of reason vouchsafed to us by the Divine Mind.

The Human Mind

Are we not all sparks of the Divine Fire? Are we not individual souls depending upon, and drawing inspiration



from, the great Oversoul of the Universe? And can we not by loving search, partake in some measure of the ineffable wisdom, and approach in thought to the intellectual beauty of perfect justice, perfect truth, and the other virtues?

Are we not all sparks of the Divine Fire?

In his *Dialogues*, Plato makes his beloved Master, Socrates, "*...that old gadfly who brings souls to birth*", the arbiter and judge of all the definitions of abstract qualities brought forward by his listeners. For Socrates, the human mind and reason are much more worthy of study than the physical world around us, and this is expressed in his famous dictum, "*Know Thyself*." He himself professes to know nothing, but only to be a lover of wisdom. And he occupies himself with the eternal verities, those Ideas of all the intellectual abstractions which form the subject-matter of Plato's *Dialogues*. For Plato, as for Socrates, the supreme *Idea* is the *Idea of the Absolute Good*, or *God*, the essential unity in-variety of all that *IS*.

Endnotes

1. **Percept:** The representation of what is perceived; a basic component in the formation of a concept.
2. **Noumenon:** The intellectual conception of a thing as it is in itself, not as it is known through perception.



The Three Refuges A Buddhist Chant

by Charles Tease



“Buddham saranam gacchami
Dhammam saranam gacchami
Sangham saranam gacchami”

What we in the West call *Buddhism* is more properly known as *Buddha Dharma*, the “*Path of Awakening*.” The historical Buddha, *Prince Siddhartha Gautama*, is believed to have lived between the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. Renouncing all his worldly goods, he is said to have spent six years searching for enlightenment. Having achieved this, for the rest of his life he taught a proven way for others to follow. The Buddha stressed that each individual was responsible for their own life and should not look to a superior Being to take that responsibility away from them.

Buddhists have many chants in which they voice the principles of their beliefs. It is well known how effective the human voice is in creating the right mental and physical condition for spiritual work. The *Three Refuges* chant

quoted vocally expresses the aspirant’s desire to approach the heart of their beliefs. Also known as the “Three Jewels,” it can be taken as a basic definition of what a Buddhist is. The language above is Pāli, in which the earliest known Buddhist texts were written.

Translation of words from Sanskrit-derived languages into English can pose some difficulty although the student of philology can soon identify some correspondences in the Latin roots of words, indicating a common ancestry in the ancient past. The Refuges are *Buddham*, *Dhammam* (Dharma) and *Sangham*. The “m” endings denote the accusative case in Pāli, which has eight cases as opposed to six in Latin and four in modern English, where they are becoming rather confused. Changing the word order, the translation of the above is as follows:-



I go to the Buddha as refuge.
I go to the Dhamma as refuge.
I go to the Sangha as refuge.

A synonym for “*refuge*” is “*sanctuary*” from the Latin word *sanctum*, a sacred place, which possibly expresses the spiritual aspect a bit better. It’s said that the Buddha is large enough to encircle the universe and small enough to fit in your heart. And that sanctuary is literally at the heart of the teachings of all the great spiritual leaders. No good looking up to the skies; the kingdom of Heaven is within! Let us now look at the individual lines of the chant.

Buddham saranam gacchami:
I seek refuge in the Buddha.

The historical Buddha proclaimed that anyone could become a Buddha, an enlightened being, by following his way. All religions attempt to teach us to see the light and turn away from darkness, but Socrates’ simile of the cave gives an idea of the reaction we in the West can expect from the world if we do make some progress into the light. “*They would say that his visit to the upper world had ruined his sight, and that the ascent was not worth even attempting.*”¹ On the other hand Buddhists are positively encouraged to follow the Way, and the road has been charted with all the joys and pitfalls clearly set out.

Dhammam saranam gacchami:
I seek refuge in the Path.

The word *Dhamma* (*Dharma* in Sanskrit) has several meanings. It is the body of teachings, the *sutras* given by the Buddha. It’s the pattern set out by him, the vibratory

rate we might say, at which we can approach the portals of enlightenment without suffering the fate of Icarus, (*Sampaati* in the Indian tradition), who flew too close to the sun. It’s also the path to be travelled, the way of the mystic. Along the way the student must burn off all the impurities in their thoughts, actions and deeds to fuel their progress. Nobody else can do it for them.

Sangham saranam gacchami:
I seek refuge in the enlightened brotherhood.

The *Sangha* is the body of Buddhist monks and nuns living the life and studying the teachings in gradual progression towards enlightenment, the community of disciples of the Buddha. In a wider sense it’s everyone who has entered on the Path.

The Rosicrucian Égrégore

Rosicrucians are familiar with the concept of *Sangha* and have a word for their own version of it. This is the *Égrégore* of our Order, which has been defined as “*a hierarchical expression of group consciousness.*” We are told that when a group of people come together for a common purpose, the resultant group consciousness is much greater than the sum of the individual contributions

This is one of the great advantages arising out of attending an affiliated body. Much more than that, the *Égrégore* is the essence of every Rosicrucian who ever existed, and is available to each of us for attunement and guidance. And that really is a worthy refuge!

Endnote

1. Plato, *The Republic*, Part 7.



SALVATION

The View of a Mystic

by Walter Albersheim



WITH THE current surge in many countries of radical fundamentalism, many Christians believe that the concept of redemption or salvation is essential not only to their faith but to all other religions as well. But is this necessarily so? Early religions seem to have consisted mainly of magical rites designed to propitiate or coerce nature spirits. Even in Judaism, from which Christianity sprang, there was initially no thought of redemption.

The ancient Hebrews believed their god *Yahweh* could become angered and punish individuals or entire nations. But he could also be appeased by repentance, by obedience, by right living and right faith. There was no official belief in personal survival, neither in eternal bliss

nor in eternal damnation from which one had to be saved. Survival was not an individual matter, but consisted in the continuance of the nation, the tribe, one's children and children's children.

The inner need for salvation arose usually under conditions of widespread suffering and despair. Conditions like this were especially prevalent in the Middle East under Roman rule and in war-torn ancient India, where life was hard for all but a few rulers, but brutally harsh for the lowest caste. When times were hard, salvation, either in the negative form of liberation from suffering, or in the positive form of heavenly bliss, was hoped for in some transcendental '*Beyond*.' This came to be considered as a special grace reserved for those who had the right





knowledge and faith. And all others, by implication, either ceased to exist or were eternally damned.

Christianity, and to a greater degree Islam, depicted the rewards of the faithful and the tortures of the disobedient in primarily material terms: streets of gold, jewelled garments, rivers of milk and honey and sensuous female companions for the Good, with serpent fangs and hellfire reserved for the Wicked.

The concepts of original Buddhism on the other hand were more sophisticated. The illusion of individual, personal existence itself was regarded as the prime evil that you had to overcome in order to become free. Final liberation could only be attained by renouncing all desires and cravings, because these were the chains that tied all living beings to the wheel of rebirth and new suffering. Every selfish thought, every passionate action, brought its own automatic punishment by forging new links to the chain of Karma.

According to the original texts, the Buddha, meaning the *Awakened One*, the One who had attained full insight, was merciful enough to teach his noble truths to personal followers and to found an Order that could perpetuate them and to help many to become free like himself. But after one lifetime of teaching, he withdrew from this world and attained the final liberation of Nirvana in Death.

This initial version of Buddhism was too austere for the downtrodden, unlearned multitudes. So, his followers created the new image of a "*Compassionate Buddha*" who renounces his own *Nirvana* and voluntarily returns to earth, time and time again, to preach his message until every last living creature is saved.

Who Is To Be Saved?

Comparing the two interpretations of salvation, with that

of Christianity and Islam on the one hand and Buddhism on the other, both ask: *Who shall be saved, and how?* The monotheistic religions of Jerusalem and Mecca have their own particular answer: *Only those humans who believe in a particular personal God and obey his commands will be saved.* These commands include belief in certain articles of faith: In Christianity, literal belief in the *Bible* and in Jesus, through whom alone salvation comes. In Islam, it comes through belief in the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, as laid down in the *Koran*.

Both these religions believe in only two lives: the present one on Earth and an eternal afterlife. And they *exclude all animals*, with the Roman Catholic Church specifically going out of its way to state that *animals have no souls*. From the mystical point of view, Buddhism is much more inclusive and merciful. It promises ultimate salvation to all creatures, and even in the popular versions that include heavens and hells, these places of reward or punishment are regarded only as interludes or way-stations on the long journey toward liberation. Since Buddhism, like its closely related ancestor Hinduism, believes in transmigration, all animals must also be saved: the tiger and the lamb, the ant and mosquito!

The difficulty of this all-encompassing hope is obvious when you think about it. If you need untold eons even for humans to overcome their selfish passions, what eternities must pass before every microscopic insect attains human nature and perfection! The problem becomes even greater when we realise, as mystics, that life has no lower limit. There is life in plants, in viruses, in every one of the hundreds of billions of cells in each human or animal body, and in every one of the countless atoms and sub-atomic particles that compose our oceans, primaevial rocks, and the fiery interior of the stars themselves.

Must every one of these be saved just to vindicate the goodness of God? Even if we believe that the world, or indeed the entire universe, will exist long enough to accomplish universal salvation, the problem of suffering



cannot be solved in this way. We know that even among advanced mystical students, the fraction attaining Cosmic Consciousness in any one lifetime is small. If life is really a *"vale of tears"*, if suffering prevails, is it fair that most creatures must undergo eons of life's suffering before attaining ultimate peace?

Now, let us re-examine the foundations of this gloomy view! As mystics, we believe that divine consciousness pervades the universe and all life within it, *"from atom to archangel."* If this is true, and this is an important point, no one needs salvation because no one is, or ever was, separate from God or the Cosmic. We know that there is suffering and death all over the world, but we believe that the joy of living is stronger than death. Every living thing clings to life, except some self-conscious humans.

Each vibrating atom dances to the *"music of the spheres"* in ignorance of the certainty that it will be destroyed by collision or transmutation. Countless fish swim in the seas and lakes. They breathe, feed and procreate up to the instant that they are swallowed by bigger fish or caught to feed humans or animals. As the round of life goes on through joy and fear, through birth and death, who would dare to call that, which Nature and the Cosmic made so universally and so passionately desired, undesirable?

The feeling of alienation, of being forsaken by God, arises only in the self-conscious mind of humanity. We should accept this soul-suffering as a badge of honour: It proves that the Cosmic Mind is using us as its instrument; that by realising and knowing our own Self we have become mirrors of the glories and imperfections of the ever-evolving universe. In the midst of suffering, the



mystic is free at any moment to achieve Peace Profound by recognising the Divine Mind within him or her and surrendering that little *personal self* to that *Greater Self*.

What Then of Salvation?

At the end of their age-long quest, master mystics who have attained permanent illumination may at last outgrow the need for personal, individual existence. They may become entirely submerged in the Cosmic Consciousness in the same way that a drop of water will eventually be re-absorbed in the boundless ocean.

But this is not something to be proud of! They will only achieve through conscious effort what countless raindrops over the oceans are doing every day, and have done through all ages, without conscious effort. Our need therefore is not to be saved, it is only to realise that salvation was ours from the day it all began, and remains so to this day.





The Benevolent Dandelion

by Jack Coggins

NATURE IN its wisdom made the dandelion one of the most abundant of all herbs. The temperate and cold regions of both hemispheres are its habitat: Europe, Central Asia, North America, and the Arctic and south temperate areas. We find them everywhere: in meadows, fields, lawns, along roadsides and pavements and almost any other place not shaded from the sun.

The dandelion is nearly impossible to eradicate. Anyone who has tried to remove a dandelion from their lawn must have thought that nature erred by allowing this 'nuisance weed' to overrun almost the entire populated world. Still, it exists, so there must be a special purpose for the lowly dandelion. In reality, it is a veritable ruler in the plant world, for it belongs to the composite family, the *Compositae* or *Asteraceae*, making up around 1,100 genera and more than 20,000 species, including the dandelion, daisy, lettuce and marigold to name just the most well-known. Plants from the composite family are *Eudicots* and

are considered to be the most highly evolved of all plants. I hope that this article will give you added respect for the humble dandelion.

As Food

In times of need, food is where you find it. Since the dandelion is found almost everywhere, it is one of Nature's means of assuring a constant food supply for humans, animals, birds and even bees. Actually, its scientific name, *Taraxacum*, is an Arabian version of the Greek word, *Trogemon*, meaning edible. Once, when insects destroyed the entire harvest on the island of Menorca, the inhabitants lived on dandelion roots instead of their customary bread. Still, as a nourishing food, in many countries it has for centuries been wisely employed as a food source.

Both wild and cultivated varieties are used. The young, tender leaves, abounding in vitamins and minerals, are excellent for making delicious green salads. Often they



are cooked like spinach and served with butter or vinegar; mixed with other greens they are less bitter-tasting. Also, finely chopped dandelion leaves can be used in sandwiches. Here are some reasons why it might pay us nutrition-wise to include dandelion in our daily intake of food:

In an experiment for the *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, H. B. Stiebling discovered that, of those plants tested, the least iron was found in melons and apples. Dandelion, watercress and spinach contained the most. Iron helps ward off tiredness and breathlessness. It is an all-important factor in the manufacture of red blood cells which carry oxygen to vitalise tissue and help carry off waste carbon dioxide. It is well known that iron deficiency is a major health problem throughout the world. It is estimated that between 10 and 25 percent of people in the West that are admitted into hospitals have insufficient amounts of this vital, vitalising mineral. And in poorer countries, where food is less abundant, the percentages are higher.

Simple anaemia is the medical term meaning inadequate amounts of iron in the body-system. Established cases should always be given medical treatment, of course. When we eat dandelion for a source of required iron, however, we are taking a definite step toward preventing the debilitating symptoms of anaemia. We are also enabling our bodies to make use of the wonderful energies we associate with oxygen, energies that keep us healthy, vibrant and active.

Iron is also directly related to the proper functioning of plant chlorophyll which, in conjunction with light, manufactures the plant's food supply. When a plant is deprived of adequate iron, its leaves turn abnormally



yellow and its value as human food degenerates. It is logical, therefore, to believe that when iron content is high, as in the dandelion, there will be a superabundance of plant food that will become human nourishment when assimilated.

Another reason for the excessive vitamin and mineral content of dandelion may be its long, tapering taproot which often penetrates deeply into the earth. Experiments indicate that some plants absorb minerals from different soil levels. The peanut, for example, absorbs calcium near the surface; other minerals are taken in at deeper points. The dandelion's long

taproot naturally gives it access to more elements and may very well enhance its absorption of them, especially those that can be obtained best from deeper levels.

The root itself is a unique form of food. Sliced, it is a tasty contribution to salad. It is also used to flavour soups and stews and to make broth. When fried like parsnips the roots should be young and succulent and gathered preferably in winter when their ordinarily bitter sap becomes thick and sweet. Other uses for the root include the making of a health drink and as an adulterant for coffee. For these purposes, the root is dried, ground and usually roasted. It affects the flavour of coffee much in the same way as chicory.

There are numerous reasons for the belief that dandelion roots are uncommonly nourishing to humans. For one thing, they are the storehouse for energy that enables the dandelion to make its early appearance each spring. This energy-material is manufactured during one growing season, saved throughout the winter, and then used the following spring for early flower-production. For this reason, it is generally believed that dandelion roots are a double-charged source of human nutrition. Greek Mythology relates that Theseus, who had energy and strength to slay both the bull of Marathon and the monstrous Minotaur, was fed this food by Hecate, the moon-goddess.

Called by some modern scientists "*a weird substance*" this food is neither starch nor sugar. In many respects it is like both; for, although it possesses characteristics of starch, it is still soluble like sugar. It is readily transformed into fructose, a form of sugar. Actually, every part of the dandelion plant can be eaten for food and is considered a tonic as well as nutritious. Even the flowers are used to make wine, or they may be added to any salad to beautify and increase food value.



Dandelion, watercress and spinach contain high amounts of iron.





Medicinal Qualities

Dandelion is also used in medicine as (1) a means to increase the secretion and discharge of urine from the body, (2) a strengthener of the stomach, (3) a promoter of the discharge of bile from the system. It is excellent for the prevention and cure of scurvy which is caused essentially by a lack of Vitamin C. Dandelion is considered one of the safest and most useful herbs for liver malfunctions. It is also thought to be valuable to the heart.

A Dutch physician and chemist, Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738), claimed that daily eating of dandelion will remove the severest and most obstinate obstructions of the viscera. This is also a very old remedy for curing indigestion when caused by a torpid liver. In her book, *Green Medicine*, C. F. Leyer states that dandelion as part of the diet can dissolve chalky deposits symptomatic of rheumatoid arthritis.

According to the Macmillan Medical Encyclopaedia, the fresh milky substance in the flower stalks is used for the treatment of warts. Generally, the beneficial actions of dandelion are described as (1) alterative, changing for the better, (2) aperients, mildly laxative, (3) hepatic, increasing bile secretion, (4) stimulant, increasing organ activity, (5) diuretic, aiding in secretion of urine, (6) tonic, strengthener.

Naturally, the wisest way to use dandelion for medicine is preventatively, that is, by eating it in small amounts daily, for its valuable health factors, before we have any specific need.

Industrial Value

Acting as food and medicine does not end dandelion's valuable services to us. It has also met the needs of modern production. In Russia and Argentina, for example, dandelions of a particular variety were cultivated for their latex which was made into rubber. In silk-producing countries, dandelion leaves are sometimes substituted for mulberry leaves as food for silkworms.

Probably one of the most important, but little-known functions of the dandelion is that of its supplying large amounts of nectar and pollen to bees during the crucial time when they are rearing their brood. For this reason, its appearance in early spring is of the greatest importance to beekeepers and the honey industry.

Above Duality

In a plant contributing so much to human welfare, yet appearing so unpromising, it is not surprising that we find a set of unique characteristics. For instance, the dandelion has given up sex altogether. Its ovaries are in no way fertilised; every fruit and every new generation are wholly products of virgin birth. Without sexual processes there can be, of course, no mixing of hereditary factors. Therefore, scientists tell us that in a hundred million years from now the dandelion will be very much the same as it is today. Nature has, in essence, said to the dandelion: *"You are fine as you are. There is no need for any change or improvement. I'm satisfied!"* She shows every evidence of seeing to it that her perfect plant survives too.

Many kinds of other plants, for example, would vanish if the wind or insects to carry fertilising pollen were suddenly not available. The dandelion, being sexless, requires neither one for reproducing itself. Slicing off the leaves just beneath the earth's surface in an attempt to destroy the plant merely encourages it to grow. Nature seems to have tried to make it as independent of outside factors as possible. Even its seed distribution is largely autonomous.

The flower, which is really not a single flower but many tiny flowers, develops into the commonly-known blow ball. These are very beautiful, but they serve a more practical purpose. If you take one apart carefully and examine it, you will observe that it is composed of many, individual parachute like parts. There is a sort of shaft with a tiny fruit at one end and tufts of hair at the other. Each fruit contains one seed which is sometimes carried for miles in the wind by its tiny, natural parachute. The slightest breeze gives it motive power. Most plant seeds simply drop to the ground, but the self-sufficient dandelion gets around on its own.

Even its long taproot seems intentionally designed to give it additional hold upon the earth. Many have despaired of ever completely removing it from their lawns. Even when the lawn fails, the dandelions continue and thrive. The truth is, this humble plant is better prepared to survive than we are! We may not have unravelled the whole mystery wound up in the common dandelion. One thing, however, is certain: this meek-looking citizen of the plant kingdom has truly inherited the earth!





Life is a River

by Abaan Abu-Shumays

LIFE IS A self-sustaining river. Such a comparison between life and a river may sound superficial, but let's look more closely at the sojourn of the river and the sojourn we call life. For like life, the river is a teacher who holds many answers for those who observe, listen and learn from its rushing waters.

The classic story *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse, illustrates this point in a vivid manner. It relates the story of a young man called Siddhartha (based on the life of *Gautama Buddha*) who meets a ferryman living by the river. Siddhartha has spent years searching for the answers to life's truth and purpose. The ferryman encourages him to listen to the river and find its secrets. Siddhartha learns from the river

...how to listen, to listen with a still heart, with a waiting, open soul, without passion, without desire, without judgement, without opinions.

And once he asked the ferryman...

Have you also learned that secret from the river, that there is no such thing as time?

To which the ferryman replied...

Yes, the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and in that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past, not the shadow of the future.

To this philosophical statement Siddhartha responded...

That is it, and when I learned that, I reviewed my life and it was also a river, and Siddhartha the boy, Siddhartha the mature man, and Siddhartha the old man, were only separated by shadows, not through reality. Siddhartha's previous lives were also not in the past, and his death and his return to Brahma are not in the future. Nothing was, nothing will be; everything has reality and presence.

The river holds many other secrets. It begins its lonely journey at the fountainhead and meanders



through unknown terrain. It gathers soft petals as well as hard debris. It overcomes resistance and finally reaches its destination, the ocean. Life's odyssey is also solitary. Individual souls come to planet Earth, travel on strange roads, strive to conquer obstructions, and depart from this world alone. During this journey, life accumulates happiness as well as sorrow. Many have tried to solve life's mystery. Most never stop searching for a purpose, an identity and an ultimate goal.

The Youthful River

At its source, the trickling water making up the rivulet's life force is as pure, clean and beautiful as an innocent child. The stream grows fast, quickening its flow. It struggles over big boulders or finds a route around them. The gushing overflow of the youthful river reminds us of life's enthusiasm and vibrancy. Occasionally, the water brims over, depicting life's excitement and intensity. But the stream never gives up. It is always looking for ways to continue on its mission.

The mature river runs deep and remains clear and fast flowing. It nurtures the earth and the vegetation. Animals, birds and humans come to its banks to quench their thirst, thus partaking of its life-sustaining qualities. Colourful fish take refuge in its bosom. The beauty of the river lies in its secret of never expecting or asking anything in return, and enjoying the pleasure of such unselfish giving.

The river is as ever changing and colourful as life. Its many hues of aquamarine blue, emerald green, deep mysterious purple, crystal white and muddy grey all seem to reflect the many moods of life itself. The river glows from within, but it also absorbs the colours of its environment and grows more beautiful with fiery red sunsets and tranquil silvery moonlight. Then, too, the sounds of life's music emanate from the river. Its waves flow in harmony with its surroundings. They virtually dance to music, moving from a slow stately larghetto to the moderate tempo of andante, to the brisk allegretto and the rapid prestissimo.

The Turmoil of Life

Yet a river may depict another side of its nature; an aspect that can be frightening. The rapids epitomise the daily hustle and bustle on the racetrack of life. The whirlpool indicates confusion that plagues life from time to time. The torrents of a flood or deluge reflect life's anger and frustration. Sadness, loneliness and tears are revealed in a river that loses its way in a desert. Then, there are the backwaters that caution against the stagnation that sets in with pollution of body, spirit and mind.



Yet, even though the river uncomplainingly carries its burden of debris and pollutants, it does not want to remain sluggish with its burden for too long. It leaves this burden behind when it realises that its energy is being drained, resulting in a reduced flow.

The river has a goal to reach the sea. It does not let the negative aspects of the environment deter it from its goal. Even when trapped within the boundaries of a man-made dam, the river continually looks for weaknesses in the structure so that it can gain its freedom and continue on its course towards its destiny. Contained too long, the river will grow increasingly angry and frustrated, its gentle flow changing to a terrorising flood if it can find release. It does not wish destruction, but is unable to contain the energy that seeks free movement.

Exhilaration

The river seems to feel the exhilaration that awaits it when it is united with the sea. It knows that the union with the ocean is not its end, but a new beginning. The water will change to rising vapour, become rain and fall again to form a new river. The river recognises and understands that in the universe, unity for all life exists.

The river instils the art of giving without expecting, and knowledge about self as it relates to the entire universe. It teaches self-reliance and perseverance in reaching a goal. It emphasises the importance of freedom and self-expression. Most importantly, the river is a constant reminder that all should rejoice in the thought that at the end of life's journey, there exists a promise of a magnificent union with the Creator. The river strengthens belief in eternal life and in the universal law of change.





YALDA

Winter Solstice in Persian Culture & its Relationship to Christmas

by **Roshan Ushah**

THE WORD “*Yalda*” is believed to be Syriac in origin, having been imported into the Persian language by Syriac Christians. It is taken to mean “*birth*.” The *Shab-e yalda* (*Night of Birth*) is celebrated in the northern hemisphere at the winter solstice on 21st December (mid-summer in the southern hemisphere). Yalda, in different guises, has been celebrated in countless cultures for thousands of years. The ancient Roman festivals of Saturnalia (after Saturn, the god of agriculture) and Sol Invictus (the solar deity) are among the best-known in the Western world.

In most ancient cultures, including Persia, the start of

the solar year has been chosen to celebrate the victory of light over darkness and the renewal of the Sun. Light, day and sunshine were assumed to be the signs of order and the form of *Ahura Mazda*; whereas night, darkness and cold, were seen as the signs of *Ahriman* (the evil spirit). Watching the changes in the length of days and nights made people believe that light and darkness, or day and night, are in continuous battle. Light’s victory resulted in longer days whereas the victory of darkness meant longer nights. The increase of warmth and light of the sun following the first night of winter (the longest night of the year) was perceived then as the re-birth of the sun.





Persians would burn fires all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of Ahriman.

In The East

The Persians adopted their annual renewal festival from the Babylonians and incorporated it into the rituals of their own Zoroastrian religion. The last day of the Persian month of *Āzar* is the longest night of the year, when the forces of Ahriman are assumed to be at their peak while the next day, the first day of the month of *Dey* known as *Khōr-e ruz* (the day of the sun), belongs to Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom. Since the days are getting longer and the nights shorter, this day marks the victory of the sun over darkness. The occasion was celebrated in the festival of *Deygan* dedicated to Ahura Mazda, on the first day of the month of *Dey*.

The word Yalda is taken to mean *Birth*.

Fires would be burned all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of Ahriman. There would be feasts, acts of charity and a number of deities honoured and prayers performed to ensure the total victory of the sun that was essential for the protection of winter crops. There would be prayers recited to Mithras and feasts in his honour since Mithras is the Immortal, responsible for protecting the light of dawn. He was the preserver of Truth and Cosmic Order.

One of the themes of the festival was the temporary subversion of order. Masters and servants reversed roles. The king dressed in white would change place with ordinary people. A mock king was crowned and

masquerades spilled into the streets. As the old year died, rules of ordinary living were relaxed. This tradition persisted until the Sassanid period, and is mentioned by the famous Muslim scientist *al-Biruni* (973-1048), amongst others, in his recordings of pre-Islamic rituals and festivals. Its origin goes back to the *Isinnu Akitu*, the Babylonian New Year celebration, which took place at the spring equinox. These people believed the first creation was order that came out of chaos. To appreciate and celebrate the first creation they had a festival and all roles were reversed. Disorder and chaos ruled for a day and eventually order was restored and succeeded at the end of the festival.

In The West

Ancient Egyptian and Persian traditions merged in ancient Rome, in a festival called the Saturnalia, dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture. The year ended with a great holiday of peace and goodwill that started on 17th December and lasted for several days. The Romans exchanged gifts, had parties and decorated their homes with greenery. Following the Persian tradition, the usual order of the year was suspended. Grudges and quarrels would be forgotten and wars interrupted or postponed. Shops, law-courts and schools were closed. Everyone dressed in loose holiday clothes and wore soft caps on their heads, recalling the paper hats we wear at Christmas dinner. Rich and poor became equal, masters waited on their slaves at meals. There were merriments of all kinds.



The Romans exchanged gifts, had parties and decorated their homes with greenery.



Parents gave toys to their children. Families went to the homes of friends and other family members. Candles and lamps were lit to chase away the spirits of darkness.

Another related Roman festival celebrated at the same time was dedicated to Sol Invictus (the Invincible Sun), originally a title of the god *Mithras*, whose cult was imported by Emperor *Aurelian* into Rome in 274 CE. *Sol* was made the state god with his birthday on 25th December. A world state needed a world religion and Aurelian wanted to weave together the main religious strands of east and west into a united, cosmopolitan and universal faith. However, with the spread of Christianity, the Christmas celebration became the most important Christian festival.

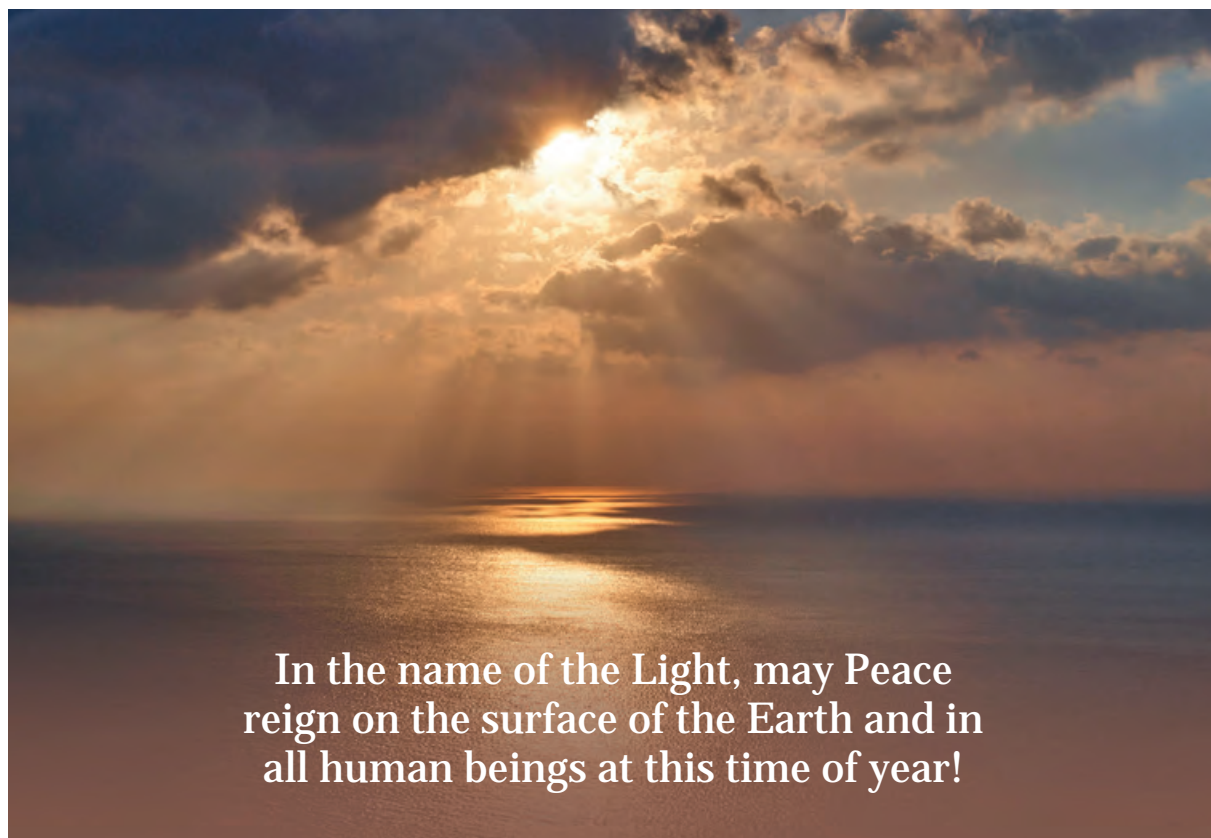
By the 3rd Century CE, various dates from December to April were celebrated by Christians as Christmas. January 6th was the most favoured day because it was believed to be Jesus' Epiphany (still celebrated by some Orthodox Churches as Christmas). However, in 350 CE, 25th December was adopted as Christmas in Rome and, gradually, almost the entire Christian church converted to that date, which incidentally coincided with the winter solstice and the various pagan festivals, *Dies Solis Invicti*, *Saturnalia* and *Mithras*. Many of the rituals and traditions of these pagan festivals were

incorporated into the Christmas celebration and are still observed to this day.

Time of Renewal

With the conquest of Islam the religious significance of the ancient Persian festivals was lost. But it is still considered a time of renewal. Today, in Iran, Yalda is merely a social occasion, when family and friends get together for fun and merriment. Different kinds of dried fruits, nuts, seeds and fresh winter fruits are consumed. The presence of dried and fresh fruits is reminiscence of the ancient feasts to celebrate and pray to the deities to ensure the protection of the winter crops.

The winter solstice of 21st or 22nd December is the longest night of the year. In Iran, the night of *Shab-e yalda* celebrates the birthday or rebirth of the sun. This night may be considered unlucky in Iran, but from this particular day forward, Light triumphs as the days grow longer generating more light. Modern Rosicrucians also celebrate this time of year with their Festival of Light in December, where, following ancient tradition, we send positive thoughts to all mankind and visualise the deep bonds of friendship between men and women of all races and nationalities.



In the name of the Light, may Peace
reign on the surface of the Earth and in
all human beings at this time of year!



Silent Messengers of the Beautiful Land

by Mary Jones



The Inuit lands stretch all the way from western Alaska through the Canadian Arctic: the Yukon, Northwest Territories and the Inuit territory of Nunavut, through northern Quebec to Greenland, also known as *Kalaallit Nunaat*. It is a vast area, reaching all the way to the North Pole, and has been their land for millennia. It encompasses a vast and powerful landscape seeming to stretch to infinity in all directions.

For those who find themselves there, often the only sound they can hear is the sound of their own footsteps, their breathing or an occasional gust of wind. Here, in the deepest sense, they can be alone. With an unobstructed view of the horizon in all directions, they can reflect on the insignificance of their presence in this timeless land.

Among the strangest but most important objects created by the Inuit are the *Inuksuit*. The term *Inuksuk* (the singular of *Inuksuit*) means: “to act in the capacity of a human.”¹ It is an extension of *Inuk*, meaning “a human

being.” It refers to the ancient stone figures of the Arctic, which were placed in the land by the ancestors of the Inuit, while others, according to legend, were placed there before the Inuit ever arrived.

These stone figures were placed both on the temporal and spiritual landscapes. They had many practical functions: they were employed as hunting and navigational aids, co-ordination points or indicators and message centres. In addition to their earthly functions, certain *Inuksuk*-like figures had spiritual connotations, and were objects of veneration, often marking the threshold of the spiritual landscape of the *Inummariit*, the Inuit who knew how to survive on the land, living in their traditional way. Some *Inuksuit* indicate the location of a safe harbour or a dangerous passage; where migrating animals would be at certain times of the year; a spring hidden from view or a natural shelter. The ones of most interest to me were objects of veneration or places of power.



The Spiritual Landscape

To the Inuit way of thinking, we are all made of the same stuff, the hills, sea and the *Inuksuit*. We all possess a spirit; only the way we are temporarily arrayed separates us and that in essence, mirrors the Rosicrucian teachings.

Inuksuit can also act in a spiritual capacity, to indicate a place of death, a place where life is renewed, or a place where spirits reside. They can be places where judgements or decisions are made or where celebrations and festivals are held. They also function as instruments of astronomy, to indicate the best way home, to point to the position of the mainland from a distant island, or to point to the North Star: *Niqirtsuituq*. Being a physical manifestation of a spiritual power and objects of veneration, they mark the thresholds of the spiritual landscape.

To the Inuit way of thinking, we are all made of the same stuff, the hills, sea and the *Inuksuit*.

The Inuit had separate names for different types of arcane *Inuksuit*. There are those which may have been created to cast a spell; those that are said to be able to transform into other entities; those believed to contain a spirit; those believed to possess spiritual power; an arch under which the shaman healed or protected a person; those that were entrances to places of power, such as a sacred site; those which acted as doorways through which a shaman entered the spirit world, and others where a shaman would receive their powers upon initiation. The only outward clue to the spiritual significance of a site lay in the meaning of its name, which reflected its personality or spirituality rather than its appearance.

The Inuit maintain that places of power have a path leading to and away from them. These invisible pathways can also be found within places of power: their locations being rarely revealed. When approaching a place of power, it is important to know where the pathways are for entering, crossing and exiting. Not knowing the exact pathway to an object of veneration within a place of power can leave you wandering about on a temporal landscape, according to the Inuit.



Spiritual Journey

We landed at a wonderful site in an area called *kangisurituq*, or the Great Inlet [*Andrew Gordon Bay*.] This is an ancient site where it is believed a strange people lived. Elders spoke of it to their children as a place where they must be very careful. Such a place of power was referred to as *aglirnaqtuq*, where strict custom is to be observed, a place where spirits abide. We walked about, careful not to tread upon graves so ancient as to be hardly visible. We discovered all manner of objects; stone shelters, food caches and two large ceremonial circles. But what held us in wonder and admiration was a stone portal. I had seen such an object only one time before. We were on the threshold of the very doorway, the *tupqujaq*, through which a shaman entered the spirit world.¹

There is a mysterious place where the midwinter moon festival and other celebrations were once held. Its name is so ancient that it is difficult to translate. But it is a place from which you return to Earth refreshed, it is a place where life was celebrated. Just being there induces a state of mind beyond dreaming. It is like a window through which you can see into things as never before. When you are alone here, the only living thing, you are far away from earthly things and filled with peace. This sense of peace fills every corner of your mind. It is more satisfying than any joy you have experienced in your conscious life.

Endnotes

1. *Inuksuit*, by Norman Hallendy, British Museum Press, 2000, ISBN: 0-7141-2549-0.



Lost Splendour



Ireland

by William McKegg

INVARIABLY at the end of each epoch, there comes a great upheaval. It would seem that the Cosmic endows certain cultures with various powers and watches to see how they use those great gifts. If for good, the power remains; if perverted, the power is taken away and bestowed elsewhere. Although great political upheavals occasionally occur to set matters right, it is obvious that the Cosmic is principally concerned only with our spiritual welfare, in the progress of our Real Self. This is very evident in the way all truly creative artists work. Their creations, whether in music, philosophy, poetry or paintings, appeal to our Inner Being, stir its smouldering spark once more into flame, giving us a renewed desire for higher knowledge, for hidden wisdom and an incentive to attain it.

The entire 19th Century was one of Romance. It was an era of music, art and

literature. It aroused the dormant senses and prepared us for what the present time has brought us. After almost a hundred years of inspired creations, by which the Inner Being was aroused, it was heard at the close of the period, the approach of the new age. Many writers, poets and artists sprang into notice, revealing in their respective works great truths that aroused the minds of the masses.



George William Russell

In Ireland, this heraldic note was discerned in the writings of a group of intellectuals headed by *Lady Gregory* and *William Butler Yeats*, who formed a literary society and established the Irish National Theatre in Dublin, from which later sprang the famous Abbey Theatre. The writers and poets of the *Celtic Renaissance* restored to the minds of the people of Ireland the legends and mystic lore of old which were being crushed and forgotten by materialism.



However, one person stands out from the rest. He was *George William Russell*, known over the world as the poet and artist “Æ”. An illuminated mystic, he possessed spiritual knowledge for which his poetic and artistic talents were but material mediums. His paintings awakened and stirred the senses of all who beheld them and his mystic poems spoke to the soul.

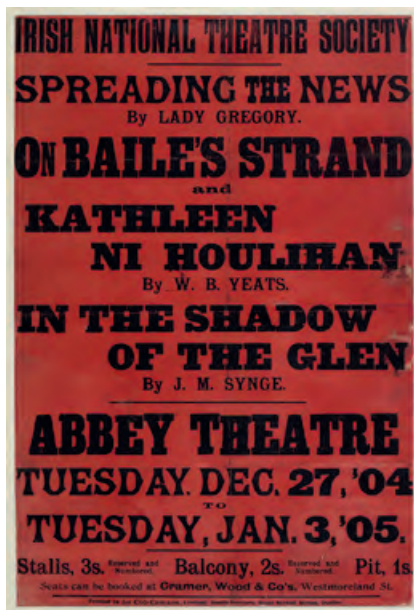
Early Days

Russell was born in Lurgan, County Armagh, in 1867. A poor boy and mostly self-educated, he started out in life as a clerk in an accountant’s office in Dublin and joined the Irish Agricultural Society in 1897. During his spare time he wrote poetry. Though he painted for his own amusement, he did not take his painting seriously until he was about 40, and even then regarded himself as an amateur artist. Nevertheless, he reveals in each talent vast truths, that is, our strivings to return to the Ancestral-Self, visions of another world, the Light of which turns the light of this world to gloom. He portrays the spirits of the ancestral gods of *Finn* and *Cuchulain* and *Ossian*, the Great Heroic Ones of Irish legends, now dwelling in *Tirnan-Og*, the Land of Immortal Youth.

His adoption of Æ as a *nom de plume* came about in a startling manner. While still a young man spending some time in the country, he had painted a picture of the First Man, a picture full of mystical meaning, but he could not think of a title for it. He writes...

Something ancient and eternal seemed to breathe through my fancies. I asked myself what legend I would write under the picture. Something beyond reason held me, I felt like one who is in a dark room and hears the breathing of another creature, and himself waits breathless for its utterance, and I struggled to understand what wished to be said, and at last, while I was pre-naturally dilated and intent, something whispered to me: “Call it the Birth of Aeon.” The word ‘Aeon’ thrilled me, for it seemed to evoke by association of ideas, moods and memories most ancient, out of some ancestral life where they lay hidden.

One day, back in Dublin Æ went to the library



Poster from the opening night of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

at Leinster House to ask for an art journal. While waiting for the librarian to get it for him, his gaze fell on a book lying open on a table nearby. The first word in it to catch his eye was “*Aeon*”, a name used by the Gnostics to designate the first created being. He went on to relate...

I trembled through my body. I trembled because I was certain I had never heard the word before, and there rushed into my mind the thought of pre-existence and that this was memory of the past. I believed then, and still believe, that the immortal in us has memory of all its wisdom, or as Keats puts it in one of his letters, there is an ancestral wisdom in men, and we can if we wish, drink that old wine of

heaven. This memory of the spirit is the real basis of imagination, and when it speaks to us, we feel truly inspired and a mightier creature than ourselves speaks through us.

Plato said that the soul, when coming down to earth from the Ancestral-Self to inhabit a body, flashes across the universe in a chariot of golden fire, and during that heavenly ride sees, knows and hears all things. Imagination is later the keynote to memory for every soul born in life, and from imagination spring all creations.

Meditations

From an early age Æ had been stirred inwardly by the loving mystery of the Earth Mother. He discovered that just as there is a divine image within each body, so too is there an essence of divinity within nature. Several experiences had made him aware that this was so, and he realised that there was an Inner Being within him. By developing the latent powers of what he called his “*Real Self*”, he could become a possessor of Nature’s secrets, see into the “*Many-Coloured World*” and maybe even see beyond into the highest World of all. He began to stir his psychic senses, meditating and allowing his Real Self to function. In this he persisted and finally achieved results. Describing an early experience, he says...

I felt a fiery heart throb, and knew it was



personal and intimate. It started with every sense dilated and intent, and turned inwards, and I heard first a music like bells going away, away into that wonderful trader-land whither, as legend relates, the Danaan gods withdrew. Once, suddenly, I found myself on some remote plain or steppe, and heard unearthly chimes, pealing passionately from I know not what far steeples.

One day, drawn by some inner impulse to meditate at an unusual hour, I found quick oblivion of the body. I rose through myself and suddenly I felt as if I had awakened from a dream. Where was I, and in what city? Here were hills with glittering temples and the ways, so far as I could see, were thronged with most beautiful people, swaying as if shaken by some ecstasy running through all, as if the Dark Hidden Father was breathing rapturous life within His children.

Æ delved into the mystical philosophy of the East and later formed and became head of the Hermetic Society in Dublin, gathering with some friends in a shabby room at night after a day's hard work had been done.

Painting and Poetry

He painted many pictures but he never allowed any of his pictures to be sold for a high price. He often let wonderful creations go for mere trifles, even giving some away. He affirmed that a poor man who sees the Truth in any work of his should be given as much chance as a rich man to purchase it. Many of these hung in his home in Dublin. Cornelius Weygandt, in



Bathers by A.E.

Irish Plays and Playwrights (1913), speaks of them.

The pictures are of Irish landscape; of the 'Other People'; of heroes and heroines of Ireland's prehistoric days; of souls that have yet to be born; of souls that have passed through incarnation after incarnation, never to rise above an animal existence; of souls whose every rebirth has taken them to higher spirituality and that now wait to pass along the path of liberation into that of immortality from which they shall never be born again. These visions came to him as the visions whose presence he recorded in his poetry, in all places, as he left the office and looked down the sun-gilded street at close of day, as he wandered in the mountains under the stars with peasants who had 'second sight'; as he talked with fellow Hermeticists in meeting rooms in back streets whose shabby interiors grew rosy gloom as the talk turned on mysteries.

Imagination

As with his friend W.B. Yeats, Æ was an ardent admirer of William Blake, the great poet and artist. In fact, his own mystic paintings compare with those of Blake, just as those of Blake in their time had a resemblance in style to Raphael and Michaelangelo, whose works he in turn venerated. Like Blake, Æ never used models, claiming that his own imagination afforded him all he required to produce on canvas. He can place an imaginative group of people and, as he wills, so do they move their positions until the desired effect is achieved. Of this, he says...

There may be a figure sitting down and I think it would compose better if it was turned in another direction, and that figure will obey my suggestion, not always, but at times it will; and again and again when I, who paint almost entirely from what is called imagination and who never use models, watch a figure in my vision [and] it will change its motions as I will it.

Imaginative art is the gift of every true artist and can be obtained only when the artist is himself a mystic and can reveal to man the Real in nature, instead of imitating the Unreal like a photographer. As a young boy, Æ beheld the "Real" and throughout his life, attempted to disclose its revelations to others. Of his efforts he writes...



I have sought to paint landscape as if it had no other existence than as an imagination of the Divine Mind; to paint man as if his life overflowed into that imagination and to paint the Sidhe [a Celtic pagan tradition that honours the gods of Ireland] as mingling with his life, the unity of God and man and nature in one single being; an almost impossible idea to convey in paint.

On another occasion he remarks...

If I rightly understand our mission and our destiny, it is this: to restore to other men the sense of that invisible; that world of our immortality. As of old our race went forth carrying the Galilean Evangel. We shall first learn and then teach that not with wealth can the soul of man be satisfied; that our enduring interest is not here but there, in the unseen, the hidden, the immortal, for whose purposes exist all the visible beauties of the world.

He knows that by revelations of that invisible world through symbolic paintings and mystic poetry, man may sense a glimmer of his spiritual consciousness and hear the call of his Ancestral-Self. Æ's belief that all his creations are but memories of his *"Lost Splendour"* may be glimpsed in his first volume of poems, *"Homeward: Songs by the Way"* (1894). In the preface he says...

I moved among men and places, and in living I learned the truth at last. I know I am a spirit and that I went forth in old time from the Self-Ancestral to labours yet unaccomplished; but, filled ever and again with homesickness, I made these homeward songs by the way.

The poetry of Æ, like his paintings, has in it nothing of the world. It is pure, with the pureness of silver flame, of celestial fire. It has been said that it is too transcendental and ought to be a little more mundane. Alluding to his verse, he says...

The act which is inspired by the Holy Breath must needs speak of things which have no sensuous existence, of hopes all unearthly, and fires of which the colours of day are only shadows.

Many-Coloured Earth

It is when we attain that complete fusion and Oneness with the Infinite that we come to realise what Æ reveals



Æ. was an ardent admirer of William Blake, the great poet and artist.

Image – God blessing the seventh day, 1805

in his poetry and paintings. With the *"unity of God and Man and Nature"* we gain comprehension of the *All*. By stirring our psychic faculties, we open the windows of the soul to Cosmic Light which pours in, flooding our being with splendours of its own majesty, endowing us with the power of vision and of imagination, enabling us to create our own light. As Æ writes:

I know that all I met was part of myself and that what I could not comprehend was related by affinity to some yet unrealised forces in my being. We have within us the *Lamp of the World*; and Nature, the genie, is Slave of the Lamp, and must fashion life about us as we fashion it within ourselves.

Our faculties readjust themselves, and do the work we will them to do. The dark caverns of the brain begin to grow luminous. How quick the mind is now! How vivid is the imagination! We are lifted above the tumult of the body! We rise within ourselves as a diver, too long under water, rises to breathe the air and see the light. This vision brings its own proof to the spirit, but words cannot declare or explain it.

Visions led me to believe with Plato that the earth is not all what the geographers suppose it to be, and that we live like frogs at the bottom of a marsh knowing nothing of that Many-Coloured Earth which is superior to this we know, yet related to it as soul to body. On that Many-Coloured Earth, he tells us, live a divine folk, and there are temples wherein the gods do truly dwell.

The poet gives us a vivid picture of the Many-Coloured World, which he discovered when he was still a poor struggling clerk in an accountant's office.



My dream-world was selfshining. Light was born in everything there at dawn, and faded into coloured gloom at eve, and if I walked across my lawns in darkness, the grasses stirred by my feet would waken to vivid colour and glimmer behind me in a trail of green fire; or if a bird was disturbed at night in my shadowy woods, it became a myriad jewel of blue, rose, cold and white, and the leaves tipped by its wings would blaze in flakes of emerald flame.

Mystical Writings

Katharine Tynan, Irish poet and novelist, and a close literary friend of Æ, alludes to him in her memoirs entitled “*Twenty-Five Years:*”

He is of the world, unworldly, the world’s stain has never touched him; without religion, yet profoundly religious; the peace of God which passeth understanding lies about him. He finds gods in the earth and the air, rather, I would say, he finds God; and his life unconsciously has cast incense on the altar of the Unknown God.

He told me a story the other day of a friend of his who somewhere in the wilds of America became friends with an old Indian. He told him of all the marvels of the world, wireless telegraphy, radium, men flying in the air, speech kept long after the speaker was dead. ‘Wonderful! Wonderful!’ said the Indian. ‘Tell me more.’ At last the narrator paused, wearied. ‘The white man is very wonderful,’ said the Indian. ‘Can he do this?’ He stopped, lifted a handful of dust and threw it in the air; stretched himself upwards, and then delicate flames ascended from his hands and his feet and his hair; his body shone in the air; he was a living jewel from head to foot. Then the glory faded. There was only an old Indian. ‘Can the white man do that?’ he asked.

Just as this story of the old Indian’s mystic powers causes one to pause and think over it, so do the poems and paintings of Æ. They hold the mind with their mystic force and beauty. In his book, *The Candle of Vision* (1918), there are a few brief paragraphs which reveal at least one great principle known to all Rosicrucian students as one of the great truths about the divine attributes in man.

There is nothing incredible in the assumption that every cell in the body is wrapped about with myriad memories. He who attributes least mystery to matter is furthest from truth, and the mightiest

who conjectures the Absolute to be present in fullness of being in the atom. The works of the Magician of the Beautiful are not like ours and in the least fragment, His artistry is no less present than in the stars. We may enter the infinite through the minute no less than through contemplation of the vast.

Visions

It has been suggested by some that Ireland is a remnant of the lost continent of Atlantis and that her people are descendants of its survivors. In visions, Æ beheld pictures of those ancient times. He relates of a vision...

There above me was an airship glittering with light. It halted above the valley while a man, grey-bearded, very majestic, his robes all starred and jewelled, bent over and looked down upon the battle. The pause was but for an instant, and then the lights flashed more brilliantly, some luminous mist was jetted upon the air from many tubes below the boat, and it soared and passed beyond the mountains.

Five or six years later, Æ beheld a similar vision.

I was again on high places, and this time the apparition in the mystical air was so close that if I would have stretched out a hand from this world to that I could have clutched the aerial voyager as it swept by me. A young man was steering the boat, his black hair blown back from his brows, his face pale and resolute, his head bent, his eyes intent on his wheel: and beside him sat a woman, a rose-coloured shawl speckled with golden threads drawn over her head, around her shoulders, across her bosom and folded arms. Her face was proud as a queen’s, and I long remembered that face for its pride, stillness and beauty. I thought at the moment it was some image in the eternal memory of a civilisation more remote than Atlantis and I cried out in my heart in a passion of regret for romance passed away from the world, not knowing that the world’s great age was again returning and that soon we were to swim once more beneath the epic skies.

The world’s great age is returning, as the creative artists who appeared at the end of the 19th Century proclaimed, among them, Æ. We who foster and develop our *Inner Light* can see in vision and imagination the great marvels about to be revealed to all humankind.





Influence of the Mystical Life

The mystical life has an influence all of its own. Nothing can compare to the beauty, peace and harmony pervading the heart and mind of one who comes under this influence.

by **Robert Daniels**



WE ARE ALL influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Our environment, which we ourselves have helped to create, has had much effect upon us all, but the greatest influence is through our own thoughts and conduct. What we think and what we do makes us what we are. Our character is always being moulded, for better or worse, by our thoughts and the predominant feelings we experience each day. Therefore, we must come to realise that our success in life and the state of happiness or well-being we experience, can be and *is* determined by ourselves each moment of the day.

If we do not actively decide upon our own future and exercise proper control in directing the affairs of our lives, then we are permitting other people, friends, relatives and others, to determine what our future should be. We must, therefore, make our own judgements and decisions that will affect our daily lives for the better. Even though we may make mistakes, we come to realise that every experience is important in moulding our character and helping us to grow a little wiser each day. We will also come to realise that the decisions we make from moment to moment will enable us to truly become the master of our circumstances.

As we consciously step into the mystical life, we begin to see the greatest possibilities that lie before us.

Changes

When we enter into the arena of mystical thought and philosophy; when we allow ourselves to become immersed in the mystical life; when we look at life with all its manifold meaning, we experience definite changes in our inner lives. To enter into the mystical life constitutes a great change. It is like living in a pleasant valley for many years, then one day climbing a nearby mountain, for the first time seeing and experiencing the tremendous panorama that lies all about us. As we consciously step into the mystical life, we begin to see the greatest possibilities that lie before us. It is like pulling aside a veil that has obscured our view for many years.

This expansion of consciousness does not happen by chance, our long history of past lives has decreed the moment of our entrance. It comes after years of aspiration,

and not a little confusion about the meaning and value of life. It is to be expected that our first inquiry would be a cautious one but once we have placed ourselves firmly on the esoteric path, in search of the truth of life, there can be no turning back. Our former lives have not always served us best, so we are looking to the newly realised possibilities and potentials of which we have been afforded a glimpse. We have decided to embark on life's greatest adventure to seek the light that only mysticism can reveal.

Once we are well into our studies, the influence of the mystical life makes its mark upon us, refining, purifying, enhancing, beautifying and spiritualising our character. The changes are slow to take effect, but over the years the impress of the spiritual life begins to grow within and radiate from us.

A Guiding Influence

There is a guiding influence in our lives, often unseen and unknown that leads us through the turmoil of life into a new way of thinking. The deeper issues of life confront us more often as we enter the mystical life, but we see them with greater clarity. Only when we truly understand life and all it means to us do we come to know its mystical side and its great importance to our consciousness.

The light of the soul within radiates with a new and greater brilliance as the mystical life leaves its mark upon us. The qualities of character we develop distinguish us from those who show no thought for the higher and finer things of life. Yet we have a duty to use our influence for good in the lives of other people.

We can often be surprised at the good we can achieve when we endeavour to render some useful service to others. The mystical life compels us to express ourselves and to give of ourselves that others may benefit. As the influence of the mystical life falls upon us we develop an attitude of quiet introspection and calmness that pervades our personality. Through the practice of meditation a deep sense of love grows within and is reflected in our everyday thoughts.

As we raise our thoughts, our consciousness experiences an attunement and harmony with the inner self. The God consciousness within is then expressed in sublime feelings of love and compassion for others. Love is a key to this attunement, for when we truly express feelings of love all thought of self is put aside so that the greater self within can be experienced and understood.

This is the mystical life, the search for an understanding of all that life truly means on the physical, mental and spiritual planes. When we enter into this life with feeling insight, we will come to realise the significance and beauty of all things.





The Compost Heap

by Annette Fields

COMPOST is the term gardeners give to the heap of rotting vegetation and manure they use as a nutrient source for growing vegetables and other plants. It teams with life in the form of worms, bacteria and all manner of wonderful little bugs. It is the broken down forms of once living structures that aids in the growth of new living things; and in this sense it is the crucial ingredient of the cyclic nature of all plant life.

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

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

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

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



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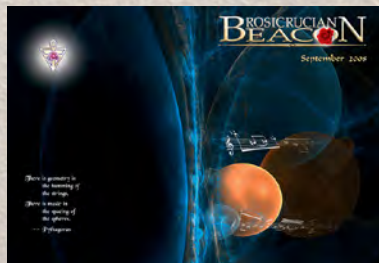
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As steals the morn upon the night,
And melts the shades away:
So Truth does Fancy's charm dissolve,
And rising Reason puts to flight
The fumes that did the mind involve,
Restoring intellectual day.

-- Charles Jennens (1700-1773) --
(orig: Shakespeare's "The Tempest")