

— ROSICRUCIAN — BEACON

June 2021, Vol 30, No. 3



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. Its purpose is to instruct and guide you in learning how to live a good life, and it does so with great care for its wellbeing.

Your Self knows why you are here and what you are meant to accomplish. It knows what your chances are of attaining the goals you have set for yourself, and whether they are beyond your reach or are fully attainable. Your deeper Self is a veritable slumbering genius, eager to help you express your hidden talents with great refinement and sophistication. 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 that we would expect only of the most accomplished of humans.

You can discover how to access this high level of achievement and embark on the definitive, true journey of your life simply by learning how to commune with your deeper Self. If you're searching for a way of accomplishing the most fulfilling and rewarding things in life, in a fair and ethical way, then learn from the wisdom of your own inner perfection.

To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order and how it can help you achieve your most treasured goals, find us at one of the following...

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Cover spread

Humming, buzzing, flapping...,
willing participants in summer's
Great Dance of Life.

Reflections on Gratitude

by **Claudio Mazzucco**
(President and Imperator of AMORC)



Somewhere in the world, a man wakes up one morning; and as it has been for many years, he starts his day's activities. He checks his diary and thinks over all the events he will devote himself to in the next 12 to 14 hours. A busy schedule, with many commitments, programmes and meetings. He must remember to talk to the lawyer, have lunch with a client and meet with the Board of Directors for important company decisions.

Barely awake, he remembers even the small mishaps of the previous day, the moments of anger or frustration for a project not completed, the crisis in the relationship with his wife or children, and so on. A normal life we could say. Ah, he scrawled on his diary that he also had to see the doctor to collect the test results from a few weeks earlier following a minor ailment. Nothing to worry about, just routine checks.

But then the unexpected happens. He realises something's wrong from the doctor's expression as he starts to explain how medical science has developed, that there are many treatment options, and that statistics show survival is 'quite' high in these cases. And in an instant all the priorities and commitments of the day, all those thoughts and worries, all the family tensions that bothered him every day, suddenly take on a different dimension. Life itself takes on a different dimension. The scale changes abruptly and security is gone.

He is filled with a sense of loneliness because, for the first time, he realises that the life that animates him is the only thing that really counts, and that this experience is by its very nature, solitary. In an instant his understanding of life takes on a clarity it never had before, and he feels remorse that he had not noticed this before.

This story is at the same time both imaginary and



real. It is repeated thousands of times a day around the world, and most of us will have known someone who has had a similar experience. Therefore, it is real. In a hypothetical exercise I put myself in the position of a man who lived this experience and the first thing that came to mind was a feeling of gratitude towards things we don't normally think of as important, the simplest of things. For me it is gratitude to the Rosicrucian Order which gave me the chance to see my life through a different lens, the same reality through renewed eyes, revealing a multitude of values otherwise obscured from my vision.

Thinking that the days are always the same, that they do not bear within themselves the seeds of a new future, that every moment is not full of untapped potential that await our consciousness to become real, really impoverishes our lives. But being aware of the fragility of our material existence, fleeting and transient as it is, of our vulnerability and the fact that we will all leave one day unexpectedly..., such thoughts make us grateful for life, grateful for the people who are close to us, grateful for day and night, our friends, the spiritual values passed on to us, the things we have that bring us comfort, and the things we will never have..., grateful for the moments of happiness that make us like children again, and the moments of pain that lead us to draw on our hidden reserves of strength...; for all these things we feel such immense gratitude.

Thinking about death is not a neurotic act; not wanting to think about it rather constitutes a true neurosis for our society, and perhaps even the most important factor in the impoverishment and aridity of our time. Being thankful therefore is the necessary response, and rationally the most appropriate for each day that is given us to live in this world. Whoever I am with, I feel truly privileged, but to go home and see my family, my grandson, this is a true gift. Seeing friends and laughing and joking with them, is a real blessing. And extinguishing the candles after meditation in my private sanctum is a reminder of my true nature, so that I never forget that all this is given to me as a gift, and that the only feeling that I can possibly feel is precisely that of Gratitude.

The work we do in the Rosicrucian Order is noble, for it helps people become aware of the life that flows through them, thereby allowing them to achieve wider, clearer visions of the nature of their existence. The letters we receive from members of the Order and the meetings we are privileged to have with them, regularly attest to this. Please close your eyes now, and hold in your mind for a few minutes an intense feeling of gratitude..., and then ask the God of your understanding to help you to inspire others through your kindness, compassion and understanding to express the same gratitude you have been blessed to experience today.





by Lynn Hodgkinson

In Search of Unity

And a man said, Speak to us of Self-Knowledge.
And he answered saying:
Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and nights.
But your ears thirst for the sound of your heart's knowledge.
You would know in words that which you have always known in thought.
You would touch with your fingers the naked body of your dreams.¹

Life is a journey. It is a quest: but for what? For thousands of years we have been looking for anything which affords some respite from daily vicissitudes. It is a personal search for something which will bring resolution to the conflict of circumstances which arise periodically throughout our human existence. One minute things are going

well; the next, things change. There doesn't seem to be such a thing in life as 'living happily ever after.' From the moment early humans tried to reconcile daily survival with the challenges of a seemingly hostile environment, right through to our present day scramble for satisfaction and fulfilment, the very same forces are still very much at work in our lives.





In nature, the resolution of opposites is always an energetic process...

Raymund Andrea wrote as follows about *“the opposition and struggle of forces within us on our journey through life...”*

If life itself from early years to late is not a conflict of opposites, I do not know what else it is. I think that the more you study your own life with insight and impartiality, you will find this conflict of the opposites operating right through it.²

How do we resolve the seeming conflicts in life; this endless treadmill of change, sometimes offering happiness, sometimes posing challenges? We know deep down that there is a purpose to it all, and that there must be a solution. Let us take a closer look at the nature of these forces which are at work at all levels of our existence, and in seeking to understand the dynamics of change and cause and effect, perhaps we can discover a place of resolution.

The Dynamics of Opposition

There are clues all around us. Nature expresses the same principles and laws which operate in our personal lives. Seeming opposites are actually part of one unity, or to put it simply, they are two sides of the same coin. In the following quotation, Jung uses the image of a natural symbol as a means of resolving opposites:

In nature, the resolution of opposites is always an energetic process: she acts symbolically in the truest sense of the word, doing something that expresses both sides, just as a waterfall visibly mediates

between above and below. The waterfall itself is then the incommensurable third. In an open and unresolved conflict dreams and fantasies occur which, like the waterfall, illustrate the tension and nature of the opposites, and thus prepare the synthesis.³

Nature, the *“Liber Mundi”*, is a great teacher. It is rich in natural symbols. The clues to the mystery of our physical existence lie at the very heart of its operations. Equally, the laws of material science can be taken as guides in the comprehension of some kind of a universal plan.⁴

Nature, the ‘Liber Mundi’, is a great teacher. It is rich in natural symbols.

If we take for example the concept of polarity, this is a broad concept which can be applied to many things: atoms and molecules, living cellular structures, electrical fields and electromagnetism. Atoms are constantly gaining and losing electrons, fluctuating between being negatively or positively charged, attracting and repelling each other. As molecular structures change, energy fields are ever in a state of flux. Even a seemingly constant electrical current or magnetic field is produced by the constant interaction of charged particles, giving rise to forces of attraction and repulsion.





Your joy is your sorrow unmasked...Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed...You are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.⁵

Change is a movement from one thing into another. It is a constant alternation between something that is not, and something that is. It is a progression. It is movement.

Being and non-being create each other.
Difficult and easy support each other.
Long and short define each other.
High and low depend on each other.
Before and after follow each other.⁶

The broad concept of polarity can be applied to many things.

The constant push and pull of opposites is the foundation of our entire vibratory existence. Heraclitus said: *“War is the father of all.”* From grains of sand to the highest Himalayan peak, from a red blood cell to a distant galaxy, the same opposition of forces is taking place everywhere. It has been expressed by humans throughout the ages: we witness it in the passing down of creation myths and legends, classical stories of conflict and epic journeys, symbolic of the natural principles at work in the universe, and of a process of transformation.

Opposition generates motion, change and a striving towards equilibrium. In music terms, we can express this in the passing of a discord into a concord during the course of changing harmony. This results in a release of tension, and a sense of remission. But such remission is only temporary.

How does this relate to our daily lives? We see the same principles at work in our human experiences. On the subject of Joy and Sorrow, Kahlil Gibran said they are inseparable:

We spend our lives trying to escape the endless cycle, the fluctuations in circumstances. We seek to understand, to gain some control over it all, some kind of permanence. In doing so, we set off chain reactions of causes and effects. We no longer continue along what Isaac Newton would call a continuing path of inertia. We begin to actively initiate change.

The Causes of Change

As long as we are breathing, living and conscious, time exists for us. It is our consciousness of time which makes us experience change without and within. Aristotle says, in his *“Physics”*, that there is no such thing as empty time; it is not possible for time to pass without anything happening. In the *Physics*, Aristotle explores the processes of change in nature. He acknowledges that there is something which remains constant, even though the form changes. Matter is simply changing the expression of its nature.




You are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.



Change rests in the potential of one thing to become another.





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We see a baby grow into an adult, a seed grow into a mature plant, an acorn into an oak tree. It is as though the baby, the seed and the acorn were working towards their respective mature forms from the very beginning. Does this mean that the idea or the pattern of these mature forms are inherent in the child, the seed and the acorn? One wonders if the acorn dreams of being an oak tree.

Aristotle also notes that natural objects, as opposed to artificially produced ones, can cause change from within. Change rests in the potential of one thing to become another. It involves the contact between active and passive, the agent of change and the recipient of the impulse to change and move towards another expression.⁷

**Our experiences are generated
through the law of cause and effect.**

We are initiating and activating change when we seek answers. Something inside prompts us to act, to investigate. The ultimate end of our journey of change is understanding, for then the treadmill will stop and the oppositions of life will reach a place of resolution. We can begin by recognising the outer signs that speak to us in our lives.

Our experiences are generated through the law of cause and effect. We can go back to yesterday morning, or we can go back to the beginning of time: either way, we are journeying towards the unity and peace that we seek. Like the inner template that changes the baby into an adult, something inside us is guiding us to fulfilment. The Tao Te Ching perfectly expresses this:

*In the beginning was the Tao
All things issue from it;
All things return to it.
To find the origin, trace back the manifestations.
When you recognise the children
And find the mother, you will be free of sorrow.*

The Unity of One

We can reconcile oppositions when we recognise that they are part of the Whole. In that Eastern symbol of universal order, the mandala, all the parts and elements are unified into one expression. As we gaze at it, all form, movement, space and time are crystallised, and we are at peace.

As humans, we find ourselves upon a world stage. We are players and participants. Every event, every thought, word and action has relevance in our unique journey towards the Unity of Opposites that we seek. The first steps on that journey are taken when we recognise our connection with the rest of humanity.



Rudolf Steiner, in his book *“Reincarnation and Karma”*⁸, asks how we can find a way of mediation between the mysterious power within each person and the global conscience of humanity. He quotes Vaclav Havel, then President of Czechoslovakia, who spoke at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland 4th February, 1992.

...the human spirit is made from the same material as the spirit of the world. Man is not just an observer, a spectator, an analyst or a manager of the world. Man is a part of the world and his spirit is part of the spirit of the world. We are merely a peculiar node of being, a living atom within it, or rather a cell that, if sufficiently open to itself and its own mystery, can also experience the mystery, the will, the pain, and the hope of the world.⁹

Happiness Grows as We Grow¹⁰

In his introduction to *“The Cloud of Unknowing”*, Laurence Freeman relates that the Greek philosophers said it takes a lifetime to be happy. In India, there is a tradition where one must pass through all the experiences of life before entering the ashram.¹¹

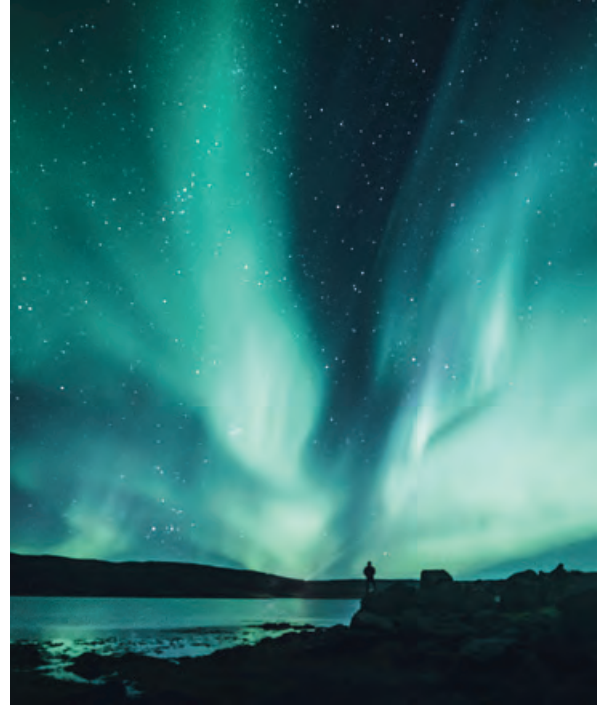
The stages of life are not signs of decline and fall but of an unfolding capacity for fullness of being...we grow into happiness as occurring along a spectrum which begins in the totally outer-directed active life and arrives finally through solitude in the state of contemplation.¹²

The ultimate step on our journey is realising our connection with the entire Cosmos. As we rise above the ebb and flow of events, the rise and fall of harmonies and dissonances, we can recognise that it is all part of the same symphony. All change ceases when we contemplate what Aristotle described as the *“first cause”*, or the *“unchanged changer”* or *“self-changing changer.”* The endless succession of causes is no more, for here, at last, is a place of Unity.

The Tao is called the Great Mother:
It is empty yet inexhaustible;
It gives birth to infinite worlds;
It is always present within you;
You can use it any way you want.¹³

Footnotes

1. *“The Prophet”* by Kahlil Gibran.
2. *“The Conflict of Opposites”*: 1960 Lecture published in *“The*



The ultimate step on our journey is realising our connection with the entire Cosmos.

Way of the Heart” by Raymund Andrea.

3. Extract from *“C.G. Jung Collected Works 1955-6”* – *“The Conjunction”* appearing in *“Jung on Alchemy”* publisher Routledge 1995.
4. Erwin Watermeyer: *“The Significance of Newtonian Mechanics”* -- Rosicrucian Digest April 1942.
5. *“The Prophet”* by Kahlil Gibran.
6. Tao Te Ching.
7. For a useful summary of Aristotle’s *“Physics”*, books 1-8, refer to <https://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/aristotle>.
8. *“Reincarnation and Karma: Two Fundamental Truths of Human Existence”* by Rudolf Steiner. Five Lectures in Berlin and Stuttgart March 1912. Anthroposophical Publishing Co. 1960. Translation copyright Rudolf Steiner Press.
9. Vaclav Havel (1936-2011), statesman and playwright, was the last President of Czechoslovakia from 1989 until the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992 and then as the first President of the Czech Republic from 1993 to 2003.
10. Quotation from Laurence Freeman’s Introduction to *“The Cloud of Unknowing”*, original text rendered by Evelyn Underhill.
11. A special place of spiritual worship and meditation.
12. Quotation from Laurence Freeman’s Introduction to *“The Cloud of Unknowing”*, original text rendered by Evelyn Underhill.
13. Tao Te Ching.





Initiations & The Ancient Mysteries

by Marion Tassie

The family of Osiris. Osiris in the middle, with Horus on the left and Isis on the right.

Figures: Wikimedia / Rama

Throughout all ages there have existed unique, inspired minds who have given their lives to the search for universal truths, sparks of wisdom that applied to all humans and which were from time immemorial referred to simply as *Light*. The acquisition of this Light has become more commonly known to us in modern times as *Initiation*; for every new element of universal truth realised by a person is tantamount to a rebirth or regeneration of some part of that person's being. From the moment that new realisation has sunk in, the person has undergone an initiation.

All initiations involve two intangible human qualities: self-analysis and aspiration. Because of an intense need to analyse ourselves and the environment that surrounds us, we learn to navigate ourselves through the world in ever more efficient ways; and in this way, we incrementally contribute our efforts to the advancement of humanity and to the progress of society.

Reason

Most of our natural potentialities are already within us long before we realise it. With these innate abilities just below the surface of objectively conscious thought, we sometimes accomplish things that surprise us, even though we have no idea how we managed to accomplish what we did. Think of an analogy of someone lost in a great forest who, in despair, finds and sits down on a wooden chest whose contents they never bothered to examine. Time passes and their need to eat, drink and protect themselves from the elements grows. Had they only opened the wooden chest they are sitting on, they may well have got all they needed.

In another analogy let us consider someone who, on a hill, leans against a rock, complaining about their fate and the lack of possibility to improve their life. Little do they know that the inert rock behind them contains a



mineral of great value and use to society, but due to their ignorance and lack of curiosity they are simply unaware of it. Self-analysis does more than reveal our hidden abilities; it also reveals our limitations, the things we are not yet able to accomplish, and not likely to accomplish short of much more effort.

It shows how far we are from those ideals of perfection we intuit and perceive as being virtually within a hand's reach. But sometimes our self-analysis also indicates, with great precision, exactly what we need to do in order to bring into the clear light of day ever more of those hidden talents that we already possess. Self-analysis derives from our personal experiences and from those that we have learned from others. Through them, by appealing to reason, we can discover our strengths and weaknesses. We can therefore say that reason is the fundamental factor underlying self-analysis and ultimately feeds in to the occurrence of any initiation we undergo. There are always rational, logical reasons behind the unfoldment of any new realisation we have, and this applies as well to initiation.

**Reason is the fundamental factor
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of any initiation we undergo...**

Aspiration

Initiation also has its source in a second quality, that of aspiration. Aspiration is formed by the feelings and desires of our higher intellect, as opposed to the ancient, biologically driven passions of the body. An aspiration is satisfied by the realisation of a pre-established, often long wished for need or ideal. While our ability to reason during a time of deep self-analysis reveals to us what we lack, a long-held aspiration obliges us to seek an answer to the need encompassed in it, and to rise beyond our current state. Consequently, any ritual or ceremony, in whichever way it is conducted, is a true initiation if it gives rise to the following:

- A realisation of the need to look within ourselves.
- The emergence of inspiration and idealism in us.
- A sacred commitment or a promise to ourselves or to others to seek to fulfil our aspirations.

Etymologically, the word initiation derives from the Latin term *initium*, and it is therefore the initial step of a process of preparation and learning, the effectiveness of which depends on three fundamental elements.

- Firstly, by the effectiveness of the education received. Any corpus of knowledge has behind it the momentum and strength of the tradition that formulated it. In other words, its value depends on the authority of the source from which it originates.
- Secondly, whoever receives the knowledge, whatever its effectiveness, must be worthy of it. Otherwise, it will be wasted and nothing of consequence will happen.
- Thirdly for the knowledge to be beneficial, certain conditions are important, particularly relating to time and place. Profound knowledge cannot be received at just any time. An appropriate solemn and meditative harmonium with the circumstances are essential for their successful assimilation. Otherwise it will be as seed fallen on barren ground and nothing of consequence will happen.

For several ancient cultures there was as well one other important factor. They believed it was necessary to separate the arcane knowledge they were prepared to transmit to their initiates from access by the profane world. In other words, secrecy was essential. The reason was that the average person, lacking sufficiently developed abilities to reason and understand their knowledge, as well as lacking any aspirations to higher ways of living, could not appreciate the full gravity of the knowledge that was being offered to them.

Such people were not ready to receive and productively use the knowledge that was on offer, and receiving such knowledge would merely have profaned and cheapened what must have been viewed as sacred truths. The refined knowledge and treasured teachings of ancient cultures were therefore reserved only for a select few, and were transmitted only in the form of ritually performed initiations. Consequently, only those deemed worthy of becoming keepers of the sacred knowledge would be invited into the mysteries.

The Mysteries

The so-called '*Mysteries*' of the ancient world consisted of a wide range of knowledge ranging from how to productively grow crops, to how to run the machines of state, to how to run one's personal life. Over time, they





Shaman or angakok, as the healers of the Greenland Eskimo tribes were called, during the ceremonies transmitted to the initiates magic formulas that made them possessors of specific powers.

developed into two distinct categories, and we can find traces of them today in most initiations of the many orders and fraternities, even if modern candidates do not recognise them.

The first category is the ceremony by which an individual or group of individuals bestowed 'power' on another individual for a defined purpose. For example, the shaman or *angakok*, as the healers of the Greenland Eskimo tribes were called, during the ceremonies transmitted to the initiates magic formulas that made them possessors of specific powers. In cultures further south, for example in the fertile crescent, including Egypt, those powers were to make the rain fall, to cause the Nile river to rise sufficiently during its season, to cause the harvest to sprout grow and be ready to harvest at the best times, to treat common illnesses, to deal with mortuary duties in solemn and respectful ways, to deal with potential enemies to defuse potential hostilities, etc. According to the high priest or shaman, the power to do these things was often transmitted materially, for example through amulets or small icons of specific protective gods, or specially polished stones, special feathered headresses, and many other things believed to possess magical powers.

The second category of ancient initiation consisted of ceremonies which were an integral part of the social life of the nation, region or local tribe. This category was by far the most important. A simple explanation is that in tribal society people of the same age or sex generally had the same interests, occupations and similar tastes. There was therefore a tendency to group the various classes according to their functions or abilities. The old were in one group, the young in another, the childless, the single, the sick or the deformed in still other groups. Early people thought that the passage from one group to another constituted an initiation, the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Of course, most of the changes depended

on physiological causes: for example, it was the advent of puberty that made a boy become a man, or in the case of a woman it was pregnancy that brought about certain psychological changes. However, it was thought that when a boy reached manhood it was necessary at the same time to give him a certain magical power to carry out his duties as a man. Ceremonies were therefore held to initiate young men into their new status in society, and the new functions and powers associated with that status was explained and transmitted ritualistically to them.

Only much later was a distinction made between specialised groups of workers in the highly developed professions, arts and crafts on the one hand and ordinary workers on the other. The craftsmen wanted to protect the secrets of their profession, and for this reason they formed guilds which one entered by initiation. By way of example, in the 13th Century, many cities in northern Italy were independent sovereign states in every way. Each city, surrounded by a certain territory, was a world of its own. They were often hostile to each other and each had its own army. And if they had a coastline, they had their own navy too. Venice and Florence are well-known examples of such city-states.

During that period Venice and especially its island of Murano became famous for its glassmaking, far exceeding the rest of the world in the quality of its work. The secrets of glass blowing were first transmitted from father to son, then, with increasing demand, it was necessary to increase production and initiate other people into the secrets of the trade. The apprentice therefore began as a neophyte and was in due course initiated into glass blowing and had to swear an oath never to reveal the secrets of the trade to people outside the profession.

Today, in our modern society, we still have some



Marriage, a social initiation, is a ceremony which brings about certain legal benefits.



rites equivalent to public initiations, and which integrate the principle of the transmission of power. For example, the average citizen who seeks certain legal benefits must participate in ceremonies that amount to a social initiation. Marriage is one of them. It is a right conferred upon two individuals through a ceremony which is equivalent to initiation. The same can be said for adoption. The person who wishes to become a citizen of another country must pass a ceremony in which the powers of citizenship are conferred.

Like everything else, initiation has followed a process of evolution, and humanity has continued to seek some advantages through it, initially only material or physical, but later also moral. Through initiation, men and women have sought to establish better relations with the gods. They hoped to learn how to calm the gods down and how to win their favour. They hoped to understand what the gods expected of them and what behaviours were right or virtuous. This knowledge was revealed to them in the form of ritual dramas, that is, initiations which consisted of sacred representations.

Preparation for Initiation

To receive these initiations, the candidate had to prove themselves worthy of knowing the Mysteries, and often had to go through a stage of moral preparation. In ancient Greece, for example, all perjurers, traitors and criminals were excluded from initiations into the Mysteries. Ancient Egypt had an even more selective method: only those called could participate in the ceremonies. One of these,

In ancient Greece, all perjurers, traitors and criminals were excluded from initiations into the Mysteries.

the Court of Osiris, was intended to reveal how the god Osiris, in his heavenly court, weighed the souls of men and women to determine if they were worthy to enter the afterlife. Only those who were deemed worthy to participate in this ceremony were called.

The structure of most initiations, especially the Mystery initiations of the past and numerous current esoteric initiations, follows four definite forms. They all have these four main elements, even though the actual activity and function are different.

The first form is known as the separation ritual. The candidate or neophyte is informed that they will undergo a transition of the soul, or that through the rites and symbols of the ceremony they will be induced to become aware that their way of life is destined to change, that they will abandon old thoughts, preparing themselves for something new and different.

During this ritual of separation, which suggests a change from an old life to a new one, they may be told that they will have to separate from their family and previous relationships for some time. They may have to take a vow of celibacy or promise to remain celibate up to a certain



Judgment scene from the 'Book of the Dead'; The Court of Osiris, was intended to reveal how the God Osiris, in his heavenly court, weighed the souls of men and women to determine if they were worthy to enter the afterlife.





Muslims, if given the chance during his or her existence, will try to go to Mecca to enter the sacred precincts of the Kaaba and attend the sacred rites.

age. They may be asked to isolate themselves from the outside world for a short period of time. In other words, they may have to live alone, in meditation in a deserted place, until they reach a certain level of development. Or they may have to disguise their personality in a certain way and lead a simple life. During this rite-of-passage they can be subjected to a symbolic burial, that is, be lying in a trunk or coffin to show that they have nullified their past and left behind all the old ways of living and thinking.

The second form is the ritual of admission. By means of initiation the candidate is led to understand that they are entering a higher plane of thought and consciousness. This ritual can give the impression of being born again. A symbolic representation of this passage foresees that the initiate is made to lie down on the ground, and then raised to their knees and, finally, to their feet, as if they were growing up. The transition from a dark to a strongly lit room can also be a factor, symbolising the exit from the old world of superstitions and fears, which is believed to have been left behind, to a world of peace and new wisdom.

Such a symbolic admission into a new world sometimes takes the form of what is known as the ritual of circular walking. It consists of drawing a circle on the floor of the temple or in the place where the initiation takes place and placing the candidate in the centre. A second, larger circle is drawn around the first circle, in which lighted candles are placed. At this point the mask covering the candidate's eyes is removed and they must cross the line that separates the two circles. This represents a transition from a limited world to an unlimited or enlightened one. Plato, referring to the initiations into the mysteries of his time, says: *"Death is an initiation."* He meant by this that death simply consists of a change or process of initiation, by which we leave our present existence to enter a new realm.

The third form is known under the name of manifestation of sacred effects. During this part of the

initiation ceremony signs are revealed to the candidate representing truths, precepts, names of the degrees they have passed through or will pass through and the symbolism of the order.

The fourth and final part is the return ritual, which is the part of the ceremony during which the candidate is invited to realise that they are returning to the physical and profane world from which they started. They are taught that because of the experience they have gone through, when they return to existence, the circumstances will no longer be completely the same. Generally, they will be obliged, to some extent, to change the conditions of their daily life in order to resonate at the level of the ideal that has been revealed to them during initiation. Furthermore, during these re-entry rituals, they are given a distinctive sign, something physical, which represents the degree reached. Although they live among the profane again, from this sign it can be understood that they have acquired some privileges.

For example, every true Muslim, if given the chance during his or her existence, will try to go to Mecca to enter



Muslim pilgrims in traditional clothes.





Nut, Egyptian goddess of the sky in the tomb of Ramses VI.

the sacred precincts of the Kaaba and attend the sacred rites. It is a difficult journey. The faithful must go there by participating in a caravan or by organising their own journey, if sufficiently rich.

Ihram is a sacred state that Muslims enter and remain in during the special rituals and events that are required to complete the Hajj. The state is entered by following certain cleansing rituals and wearing the correct dress. Ihram is also used to refer to the ceremonial clothing that has been chosen with the purpose of completing Hajj and must be worn by all men and women. Ihram and Hajj is a time of total equality, Ihram clothing removes all societal representations of wealth or social differences and ensures that both men and women renounce the temptations of vanity and the world.

We know from esoteric sources that the ancient Essenes, after their initiation, wore white clothes upon returning to society. White was the symbol of the purity they had known and experienced during their initiation and was a reminder of their new obligations and the transformation that was believed to have taken place in their consciousness.

Let us now consider in their totality some of the ancient initiations or, as they were called, The Mysteries.

Egypt

The oldest of all is perhaps the cycle of Osiris or as they are

better known the Osirian Mysteries. They were called that because they dealt with the birth, life, death and rebirth of Osiris. In these mysteries, the doctrine of immortality was presented to humanity for the first time. According to Egyptian mythology, the goddess Nut married the god Geb. They had four children: two brothers, Osiris and Seth and two sisters, Isis and Nephthys. According to legend, all the lands of Egypt were entrusted to Osiris. He behaved like a truly magnanimous divinity: it is said that he instituted the laws that allowed mankind to govern themselves, and that he transmitted to them the art, agriculture, irrigation technique and numerous improvements that brought comfort and well-being. He also taught them to worship the gods, that is, he introduced religion.

Seth became jealous of mortals' affection for Osiris, so he hatched a plan to eliminate him. He secretly obtained the measurements of the body of Osiris and had a decorated wooden chest made to fit exactly the dimensions of his brother. With the assistance of 70 conspirators Seth then gave a great banquet, inviting Osiris as guest of honour. During the party Seth, in a joyful way, said that he would give the decorated chest to those who would lie down inside it and which perfectly fitted his measurements. All the members of the assembly, aware of his intentions, tried to lie down in the chest but, of course, none of them fitted exactly except Osiris. His measurements corresponded to perfection, and while he was lying there, those present rushed, closed the lid and nailed it down tightly. The chest had become Osiris' coffin. Thus, Seth became king of Egypt.

Seth then ordered that the chest be thrown into a tributary of the Nile, which was in flood at that time. Drifting down the river, eventually it reached the



Isis, wife of Osiris.



Mediterranean Sea and washed ashore on the beaches of Byblos, in ancient Phoenicia, now Lebanon. The legend goes on to say that a large Tamarisk tree sprouted around the chest hiding it completely. One day the king of Byblos discovered the tree and had it cut down to make a support column for the roof of his palace.

The death of Osiris had thrown the cosmos into chaos. Isis, having learned what had happened to the body of Osiris, her husband-brother, went searching for him. She went to Byblos in disguise and eventually got the Tamarisk tree and freed the chest, with the body of her dead husband in it, and took it back to Egypt. She laid the body of Osiris down on the sand in the marshes of the Nile delta, where one night Seth, walking in the moonlight, came across the body of his brother and in a fit of anger completely dismembered the body and scattered its parts all over Egypt.

Isis, when she found out, wept bitterly. Her pain offered material to many famous tales in ancient Egypt. Once more she tried to recover the body and eventually, she found all the body parts. She anointed Osiris' body with precious oils and performed the rites of embalming for the first time. In so doing, she restored Osiris to eternal life. She did this by blowing the breath of life into the mouth of Osiris who, receiving that breath, resurrected and became a living being again: not of this world, but of another, higher one. This was the basis of the Opening of the Mouth ceremonial performed on all the dead thereafter.

Osiris' son Horus later decided to avenge his father's death. Interestingly, this tale of the two brothers, Osiris and Seth, is the oldest story in the world. Thousands of years ago in Egypt this story was entitled *"The Tale of the*

Two Brothers." The first translation was completed by the Egyptologist Charles Moldenke. It is interesting from a historical point of view to consider that the biblical story of Cain and Abel, as now recognised by scholars, probably dates back to the Hebrew period of exile in Egypt.

The legend of Osiris was represented as a mystery especially during the annual pilgrimage to the ancient city of Abydos, performed during the Egyptian month Khoiak (mid-September to mid-October.) As the 10-day drama unfolded under Anubis Mountain and around the Terrace of the Great God, the priests called the Kheri-Hebs, explained to the candidates for initiation the meaning of each of its parts. This drama was sometimes performed in the processional valley or in the moonlight in large boats on the sacred lake. Often it took several nights to run through the whole ceremony and the candidate was not allowed to progress until they fully understood the previous ceremony

We can still see the scenes of the play that took place between the 21st and 30th of Khoiak. Each day witnessed a particular festival that included purifications, processions, feasts, and erection of obelisks and pillars that symbolised Osiris' resurrection.

It was explained that Osiris represented the creative forces of the earth, virtue and goodness and that his brother Seth was the manifestation of evil. Think of Osiris as the black land of fertile Egypt and Seth as the red land, the ever-encroaching desert. The two forces were constantly in conflict in the world. It was revealed that although Osiris had led a good life and tried to help others, there had been no justice for him on this earth, but that we could be rewarded for our merits even in a future life. We should not therefore have expected to receive a just reward on earth for all our deeds. Eventually it was shown how Osiris was resurrected and how he enjoyed an afterlife.

We also know that in order to prepare for this initiation the candidate had to abstain from food and water for a short time; they had to shave their head, and that the performance of the play required several nights.

Greece

There is another ancient initiation that interests us. It is known as the Eleusinian Mysteries because it took place in the Panhellenic Sanctuary in Eleusis in ancient Greece. It lasted about eight days in a period of the year that corresponds to the days from 15th to the 23rd of the month of Boedromion in September or October in our calendar.

These mysteries had two main characters: Demeter and her daughter Persephone, goddesses of agriculture. The oldest version represented the sufferings suffered



Priests of Anubis, the guide of the dead and the god of tombs and embalming, perform the opening of the mouth ritual.



by Demeter following the kidnapping of her daughter Persephone. Later, the plot was developed in order to convey knowledge about what happens in the afterlife, and to introduce the notion of immortality. This was done by comparing humans to vegetation. They demonstrated how plants wither and die during the winter but are reborn during the spring which gives them a new life, a new power; they resurrect from the earth in all their former strength and glory. It was taught that, once our days on this earth are over, we must wither to be resurrected in the Elysian Fields, the ancient equivalent of paradise.

In ancient chronicles it is said that the candidates had to walk a long distance to go to the place of initiation in Eleusis, and that they had to walk in single file. We also know that during the ceremonies a tau cross was drawn on their foreheads, that is to say a cross in the shape of a capital T. They were given acacia twigs as a symbol of immortality, perhaps because the acacia leaves close to the touch and then reopen, thus representing the alternation of birth and death.

Rosicrucian Initiation

Now we ask ourselves what is the nature and purpose of Rosicrucian initiations? Firstly, a Rosicrucian initiation, in general, is similar in spirit and purpose to any true esoteric or mystery initiation, although its functions, development and symbolism are naturally different. Each initiation manuscript of the Rosicrucian Order bears the following quotation: *“Initiation transmits the purpose to the sphere of reason and the spirit of introduction to the mysteries to the sphere of emotion.”* This phrase, as we shall see, is precisely the key to Rosicrucian Initiation.

The previous initiations, which we have considered, referred to the sphere of reason. In other words, their purpose was to present humanity with new knowledge and to produce experiences of a noetic quality. They were designed to convey knowledge of their various existences, of the afterlife, of the nature of the gods, of virtue etc.

But reason is not sufficient to master

existence and humans, if they want to be happy, must not depend solely and exclusively on it. Otherwise, humanity would be reduced to a kind of calculating machine. Justice, for example, would be just a set of man-made rules, stripped of compassion and understanding. What we could do for each other would depend only on necessity and calculation. Human goodness and kindness of heart would remain dormant.

Esoteric initiation seeks instead to make the individual aware of the content of his/her soul; to try to help them express it so that it is as much part of their consciousness as other things in life. It aims to make the intelligence of the soul not a simple philosophical principle or a ritual in a mystical drama, but a reality for each and every one of us.

We can therefore say that a Rosicrucian initiation is the process that allows us to get in touch with our inner consciousness, to experience Cosmic Consciousness. The goal of Rosicrucian Initiation is the awakening of the inner consciousness of our being. Everyone has this consciousness, but unfortunately in most people it is dormant. This is the reason why Rosicrucian Initiations, since their origin, have been conceived to guide our objective consciousness in order to free and bring to the fore the inner or subliminal consciousness.

Therefore, when we are objectively participating in Rosicrucian ceremonies and listening to certain vocal sounds or burning incense, we are also stimulating our psychic centres and awakening the soul consciousness within us. All of these things create the mood and emotional release that allows the soul to express itself. It is more than certain that conditions such as peace, the sense of humility and order that we experience in the course of a Rosicrucian Initiation are just as satisfying for the soul as food and drink are for the body. The Rosicrucian Initiation strengthens the ego, the true Inner Self, by stimulating its development, just as study develops and stimulates the neuron connections in our brain.



Left: A votive plaque known as the “Ninnion Tablet” depicting elements of the Eleusinian Mysteries, discovered in the sanctuary at Eleusis (mid-4th Century BCE).

Image: Wikimedia / Marsyas



Rosicrucian Convictions

by **Christian Bernard**

Imperator Emeritus of AMORC (1990-2018)

From your birth to this day, you have learned and developed your own philosophy. There are words, ideas and feelings that resonate in you more than others do. While our tastes have a very broad spread, where the arts are concerned..., whether that be music, painting, sculpture, or even cooking..., our way of living, working, spending our holidays etc. differs greatly from one society, one family, and one individual to another. The same goes for our political, moral, and spiritual convictions.

Forasmuch as I have written this piece as a

member and former head of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, I will pass on to you my main convictions: mystical, philosophical and humanistical. They are 7 in number, but the list of them could have been much longer, so rich are the Rosicrucian teachings. Here, then, are some reflections which seem fundamental. Proceeding from them, we can construct pillars of convictions which rise up to infinity. We can discuss, philosophise and advance as far as our mind allows us to, and then obtain, as well, as much as our heart can receive.



I know that all Creation emanated from that absolute Intelligence called “God”, and that it is fulfilling a Cosmic Design.

I know that humans possess a soul issuing from the Universal Soul, and that this is what makes them living and conscious beings.

I know that all humans are kindred souls having the same origin and destiny, making humanity a single spiritual family.

I know that the soul incarnates at the moment of birth when the child inhales for the first time, and that it leaves the body with the last breath.

I know that humans are pure and perfect in essence, and that it is from ignorance, and ignorance alone, that they must be freed.

I know that the soul is immortal and that it survives the demise of the body, so that death is only a passage, a transition, toward another form of existence.

I know that Nature is the most beautiful and sacred of sanctuaries, for it is the expression of divine laws and takes part in Cosmic Evolution.

in the universe. This requires studying these laws, which Rosicrucians do through their teachings.

I know that humans possess a soul issuing from the Universal Soul, and that this is what makes them living and conscious beings.

Just as you have your own conception of God, you have your way of feeling, imagining, or visualising the soul that has been giving you life since you first incarnated on the earthly plane. It has known other lives, other emotions, other joys, and other sufferings. Therefore it is not one personality, but several. When you meditate, let the memory of them come to you.

I know that all human beings are kindred souls having the same origin and destiny, making humanity one single spiritual family.

Since we all are kindred souls, the links uniting us are very real, and that is why, even thousands of miles away, we can feel emotions when an important event has taken place, even without having been informed of it, without being there, and without being directly involved. We are the threads of the same fabric, and the wefts of our lives are interlinked. Our union is therefore spiritual, human and fraternal. When it is required, come to the help of your fellows as soon as you can.

I know that the soul incarnates at the moment of birth when the child inhales for the first time, and that it leaves the body with the last breath.

This, then, sets out these 7 principal convictions, to which I would like to add some comments.

I know that all Creation emanated from that absolute Intelligence that is called God, and that it is fulfilling a Cosmic Design.

Some say that God has no image, others that humans are in the image of God. We all have our own conception, our image of the Divinity. Beyond the idea we have of it, let us strive to live in perfect harmony with our God within, the God of our heart. Let us regularly become conscious of our divine origin and go back up to the source, by means of meditation and prayer.

From a mystical point of view, God is the Intelligence at the origin of the whole of Creation and all it contains on the visible and invisible planes. While it is impossible to know Him as such, we can, and even must, learn to respect the laws by which He manifests in humans, in nature, and



From the Rosicrucian point of view, it is therefore at the moment of birth, and not conception, that the soul enters the child, making them a human being in their own right. Conversely, it is at the moment of the last breath, when death occurs, that the soul leaves the body for good. All the religions and traditions are agreed on this point.

While death is an important moment, and departing from the world and other people is often heart-rending, the same is true, on another plane, of birth. In his initiatory novel *The Bluebird*, Maurice Maeterlinck describes this moment perfectly. As we traditionally call the body the *'Human Temple'*, we can picture the moment of birth in the following way:

Let us visualise a magnificent edifice such as were built in Ancient Egypt and Greece. On its forecourt there are children waiting. Their faces are untroubled and bright, and they are preparing to leave one world for another, not without regrets, but aware that they must incarnate once again. The hour of departure has come, and they must go back to their *'temple'*, the one through which they will live new experiences and go through other trials. Their souls will be sheltered in this temple which they will inhabit during their earthly incarnation. They move forward with confidence and take their place in it. They are born or reborn into another life. Never forget that you yourself are a child in progress!

I know that human beings are pure and perfect in essence, and that it is from ignorance, and ignorance alone, that they must be freed.

To keep this purity safe and to attain the perfection that we must, is a huge undertaking. It is said that perfection is not of this world, and what is more, no mystic would have the audacity to claim they had acquired it. Yet it is within us, and we must every day draw deep within our being to manifest it. We have been endowed with the faculties of judgment, intuition, and self-protection. Without claiming perfection or denying ourselves the right to make errors, we should strive to be aware of what we are capable of, and of this latent perfection which is in progress. In our behaviour each day, we can, and should, be getting closer to it.

**Never forget that you yourself
are a child in progress!**



I know that all humans are kindred souls having the same origin and destiny, making humanity a single spiritual family.

I would like to clarify one thing about this principle of perfection. One day, a journalist I was talking to said the following to me: *"Sir, I am always wary of perfection and those who claim it!"* He was alluding to Nazism and the so-called perfect race. I had never considered the subject from that angle, but I often think about our conversation. And so, lest there be any misunderstanding between us, I emphasise the fact that I am referring to the mystic, utopian even, aspect of the perfection that is to be attained. This is not about physical, racial, or social perfection. This principle must be put on another level. Therefore put your mind at rest if you feel you are a long way from the model of the perfect human, and like yourself as you are. Be clear about your imperfections, but know how to appreciate your qualities as well. And what goes for yourself also goes for the view you take of others.

Ignorance is the absence of knowing..., knowing the divine laws, meaning the natural, universal, and spiritual laws; knowing others, which brings about tolerance; and lastly, and above all, knowing self. While a lack of so-called *'intellectual'* knowledge is no obstacle to our evolution or to a happy life, a lack of common sense, or of instinct or intuition, often..., if not always..., brings about mistakes in our daily lives, catastrophes even, whether that be to do with material things or with relationships.

When we do not know about others, in all of their aspects, we run the risk that intolerance, failure to understand, rejection, isolation, and many other negative feelings may arise within us. Conversely, when we know



about others, or want to find out, we open up intriguing horizons, immerse ourselves in a permanent 'fountain of youth', and stimulate our creativity. Knowing about others is sharing, giving, joining in, uniting, and bonding. But this bonding with others is only possible when it has already happened within us, and that is where knowing self comes in.

Know your self and you will know the universe and the gods.

This saying sums up humanity and the divinity that is within us. To know oneself, is first to accept oneself as we are, then make an uncompromising assessment of ourselves, while making every effort to correct our foibles. The image that comes back from the mirror is very often far from being perfect, but that should not discourage us, quite the contrary. This knowledge we have of ourselves can enable us to progress, to continually learn, day after day, trial after trial. Let us welcome and serve knowledge..., for ourselves, for others, for God.

In terms of this particular conviction as stated, I therefore propose that you reflect on one trait of your personality that you would like to change, so that you may take another step towards perfection. And since God, through the intermediary of your inner Master, is in you, ask Him to help you to perfect yourself and make the commitment to do everything to achieve this. Ask for His help, also, in being alert and receptive to all forms of knowledge which might enable you to one day reach this goal.

I know that the soul is immortal and that it survives the demise of the body, so that death is only a passage, a transition, toward another form of existence.

The immortality of the soul..., whether referred to by the Egyptians and Greeks of antiquity, the faithful of current religions, mystics generally, or Rosicrucians in particular..., is a universal principle which is present in different forms in all religions and all traditions. From the mystical point of view, death is a passage, a '*transition*', from the earthly world to the spiritual world. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the separation from loved ones is a very painful trial. This passage..., which might also be called


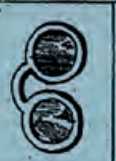







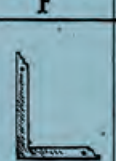




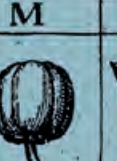




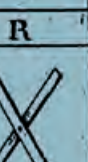
'the return...', has, since time immemorial, always been accompanied by a ritual aimed at helping the deceased to cross the threshold to the beyond in the best conditions possible.

I know that Nature is the most beautiful and sacred of sanctuaries, for it is the expression of the divine laws and is taking part in Cosmic Evolution.

How would we be able to incarnate, manifest our divinity, unfold our soul, fashion brotherly links with our kindred souls, and evolve towards perfection, if we were no longer able to be hosted by the Earth? We all have the duty to preserve her, respect her, and love her. Let us make keeping her safe a priority, and act every day to this end. Our planet is not only a masterpiece of Creation; she is also humanity's temple, and the bedrock of our spiritual evolution; she therefore deserves our greatest respect.

And so, I have passed on to you some of my convictions. If you agree with them, they may become your own. But I encourage you, above all, to find your own convictions, and to enter them in the book that is your consciousness. Do not fail to open it up regularly. We are so quick to forget!



			
A	B	C	D
			
E	F	G	H
			
I	L	M	N
			
O	P	Q	R
			
S	T	V	X

Characteres Arithmetici in hac arte.

Memory & Visualisation

by Harold Halberstadt



Images: Visual Alphabet, Robert Fludd / Wellcome Collection.

Nowadays, having a good memory has declined in importance with the advent of computers. Who needs to remember the absurdities of English spelling when we have Spellcheck? Want to know some fact or other, why of course..., ask Alexa! And if you're less lazy and want greater accuracy, look it up in Britannica on the internet. There's one thing that's still easy to forget: that is that life wasn't always quite so simple. In the Middle Ages, most of our modern methods of collecting and storing information hadn't even been imagined, not even by a Nostradamus.

Forget about computers, memory chips or cards and similar high-tech approaches. Even old-fashioned mundane devices like filing cabinets and index cards were completely unknown in medieval times, and even paper was unheard of in the West. Rather, parchment made from sheepskins was used. With a sheep, you could eat the meat, wear the wool as clothing and write on the skin, an obnoxious thought to modern susceptibilities. In those days, parchment was so expensive that it was often laboriously scraped clean after short-term use so that something else could be written on the same sheet.





Ancient Greek poet Simonides of Keos.

Still, limits on material resources tend to bring out the more resourceful qualities of human nature. With few ways to replace or supplement memory, the educated looked instead for ways to amplify it, to learn how to use its strengths and work around its weaknesses, just as we work on our strengths to amplify our visualisations. In the process, the people of the Middle Ages made use of one of the most remarkable facets of medieval and Renaissance culture: The Art of Memory.

The Origins of the Art

The ancient Greek poet Simonides of Keos (556- 468 BCE), according to legend, invented the Art of Memory when he was hired to recite verses at a symposion following the food at a banquet. As was the usual fashion of the time, he started off with a few lines in honour of the gods, in this case Castor and Pollux, before settling down to the serious business of praising his host. The host, piqued at this diversion of flattery, gave Simonides only half the amount agreed upon and told him he could get the rest from the deities he had praised.

Shortly after, a servant came up to Simonides and told him that two young men on horseback had come to the door, asking for him. The poet went outside but no one was there. As he stood looking around puzzled the roof of

the banqueting hall collapsed behind him, crushing the arrogant host and all his dinner guests. Castor and Pollux, traditionally pictured as two young horsemen, had indeed paid their half of the fee!

These kinds of stories were commonplace in ancient Greek literature, but this one has an unexpected moral. When the bodies of the dead were recovered, the story continues, they were so mangled that not even the victims' families could work out who was who. Simonides found, however, that he could picture the banquet hall in his mind's eye and remember the order in which the guests had been sitting. This allowed him to identify the dead, and as he pondered his aptitude for memorisation, it gave him the key to the Art of Memory.

Visual Images

That key is the use of visual images in an ordered, spatial arrangement. Human memory recalls concrete images far more easily than abstract ideas, and it remembers an ordered chain of associations more accurately than a random assortment. Just as Simonides could remember the guests at the ill-fated banquet by picturing them in the setting of the banquet hall, masters of the Art of Memory in the centuries that followed turned the information they wished to remember into striking visual images and arranged them against fixed architectural backgrounds in order to memorise them quickly and effectively.

These methods, which became part of the standard training for orators and scholars in ancient Greece and Rome, spread widely and reached dizzying levels of efficiency. History records of one famous practitioner, the Roman orator Hortensius (114-50 BCE), that he sat through a daylong auction and then recounted from memory the item, purchaser and price for every sale item of the day. Textbooks of rhetoric generally included a discussion of the Art of Memory and it was by way of several of these books that the Art survived the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West.

During the Middle Ages, these techniques were revived and brought into widespread use. The practice of the Art of Memory was seen as an act of prudence, one of the seven cardinal virtues. Monks and friars, especially members of the Dominican Order, were encouraged to put it to work in countless ways. Later still, with the coming of the Renaissance, the Art of Memory became a common accomplishment of the educated.

In the hands of Renaissance practitioners like Giordano Bruno (1548-1600 CE), the traditional methods of memory gave rise to new and intricate systems. The arrival of printing and of cheap plentiful paper barely cut into its popularity and it was only with the coming of



17th Century rationalism and the advent of true scientific enquiry that it finally fell into obscurity.

A Different Way of Thinking

The techniques of the Art of Memory may seem strange to people today. This is a measure of the difference between modern and medieval ways of thought, between our current habits of thinking in abstract, verbal and mathematical terms, and the more symbolic, concrete and experiential consciousness of an age when written documents were few and visual images had a far more important role in communication. The idea of representing slander, for example, by the image of a woman being bitten by a snake that issues from her own mouth, may seem bizarre nowadays, yet symbolic images of exactly this kind played a central part in medieval language and art, and in the Art of Memory as well.

When using the Art, the information to be remembered was turned into a striking symbolic image. That image might be beautiful, repulsive, hilarious or even shocking, but it had to be memorable, and it had to contain a clear reference to the information being memorised. Puns, double meanings and every kind of wordplay, could be put to use in this connection. Another common habit was to devise an alphabet of images using either the shapes or the names of objects to refer to each



Giordano Bruno

letter of the alphabet. Thus, a figure representing a word beginning with the letter V might stand in front of a forked tree or carry a fox (in Latin, vulpes) under its arm.

Each of these images was then placed in order against a known setting, usually the inside of a familiar building. Students would commit as many buildings to memory as they could and use each one to store a different sort of information. Each building would be divided up into loci or “*places*”, which were specific spots where a memory image could be put. Every fifth place might be marked with a Roman numeral V or a hand, every tenth one with an X. As a point of fact, it’s from the use of the Art of Memory in rhetoric that we still say “*in the first place*” when going over the points of an argument. So, once the images were placed in their settings, the practitioner of the Art simply had to walk through the building in his or her imagination, taking note of the figures there and recalling their meanings.

As the Art spread through medieval and Renaissance culture, this architectural approach remained the most common way to recall places, though other systems came into use as well. Some masters of the Art took the heavens as their architectural memory, placing figures on the different planetary spheres and the constellations. Others worked out ways of creating imaginary buildings for memory use or developed complex systems of rotating circles in which every position created a different set of loci.

All of these techniques may seem to us rather strange or even pointless, but in an age when few could read, the mind recalls images better than ideas, especially images with an emotional charge. Memory uses chains of association rather than logical order to connect one memory with another (such as mnemonic tricks like string tied around a finger), and memory follows rhythms and repetitive formulae. It is for this reason that poetry and music are much easier to remember than prose. By combining all of these factors with training and practice, the Art produced a memory that worked in harmony with its own strengths to make the most of its own potential.

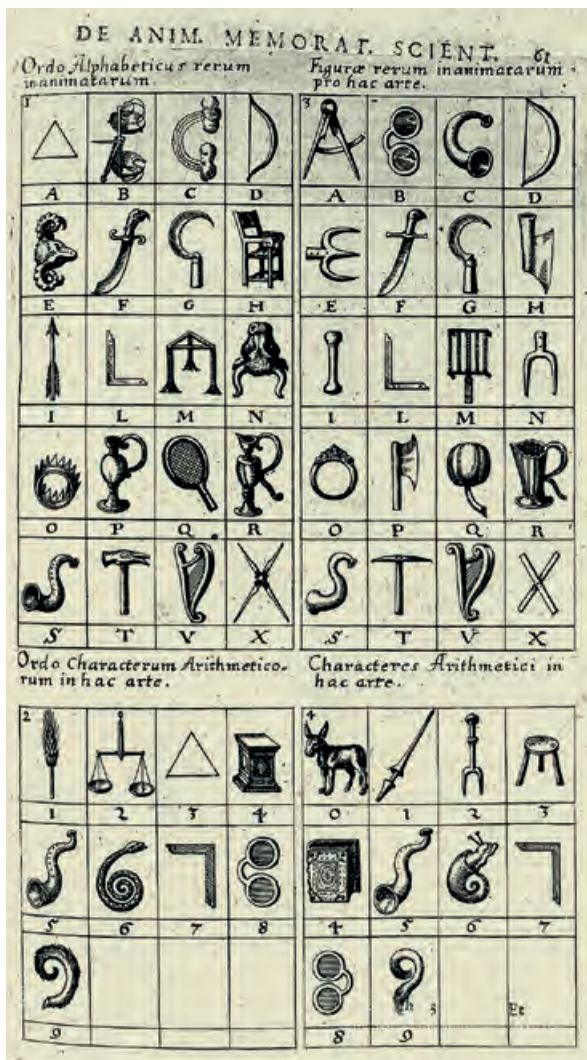
The Art in Action

Out of interest and to make some sense of these strange, medieval techniques, let’s look over the shoulder of a student of the Art as he begins the construction of a set of memory places and images.



Illustration of one of Giordano Bruno's less complex mnemonic devices.





*Visual Alphabet of Robert Fludd, 1574-1637.
Wellcome Collection (<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/s85fzfhq>)*

Imagine then young Brother Anselm as he stands one evening in the cloistered garden of the Abbey of St. Alban. A novice, he has just started the arduous task of learning Latin. The Art of Memory is also part of the curriculum and he has chosen to use memory to make learning Latin easier.

He turns slowly around, staring at the old grey stone of the cloister arches, the tiled roofs above, the herbs and flowers all about, committing the whole image to memory. There are seven entrances to the garden; a Latin noun can take seven different cases and remembering all of them has bedevilled his early lessons. He decides to begin with that.

First is the nominative case. He thinks of white-haired Brother Martin, easily the abbey's most devout monk, beginning the sign of the cross, "In Nomine..." That forms his first memory image; he imagines Brother Martin on his knees in the first entrance, eyes turned up to Heaven, to fix the picture in his imagination.

Next is the genitive case. The first image that comes to mind makes Brother Anselm turn bright red; he murmurs a prayer against sinful thoughts and replaces it with a picture of Adam and Eve, the progenitors of humankind in the Bible and Koran. This image he places at the second entrance.

The next two, the dative and accusative cases, are easy enough. Dative makes him think of the great calendar of saint's days in the abbey library. To suggest the initial letter, he puts this in the arms of thin and weakly Brother Daniel, who staggers under the burden. That makes him feel guilty, although not quite guilty enough to change the picture, and so for the accusative case he uses a lurid picture of the Devil, the accuser of humankind, pointing a clawed finger at him as if to remind him of his sins. And so on...

He runs through the images once again in his imagination, making sure he has remembered all of them, and then leaves the garden in time for Vespers. Every day thereafter, he walks through his growing collection of memory places in his imagination, noting the images to make sure that each one still calls its meaning to his mind. With practice, he finds that the images remain clear and meaningful for months at a time, even if he leaves them unvisited; he also finds that if he wants to use the seven entrances for something else, the seven cardinal virtues, for example, all he needs to do is construct different images in those places and visit that portion of his inner kingdom. By that time, though, he will be well on his way to mastering the Art.

Memory

The human brain is a vital component in memory. It's said there's a distinction between short-term and long-term memory. If you think about it, most of our memories must be fleeting, but these transient memories are absolutely essential to the process of understanding the meaning of events. These days we refer to it as the working memory.



Working memory has a crucial role in understanding spoken and written language.

Life would be difficult if we couldn't reliably store and recall lots of commonplace facts. During the Middle Ages this is the reason why the Art of Memory took hold. Think of the Norse sagas which reminded people of their own or family history and events, and the effect they had on the psyche of people at that time.

The Art of Memory was a difficult skill to acquire but once learned, never forgotten. This is the skill we all need to obtain and practise when we begin our visualisation. The memories of two people experiencing the same event will be different, so during visualisation you must make your recalled memory as real as possible.

The Art of Memory was a difficult skill to acquire but once learned, never forgotten.

Can you help your brain stay healthy as you age by doing things that challenge your mind? Could that also help you avoid memory loss, or even prevent or delay dementia such as Alzheimer's? Scientists need to do more research to find out for sure, but a number of studies show there are benefits to staying mentally active.

Here's what we know about the impact of exercising your brain. Can brain exercises help delay memory loss or dementia? When people keep their minds active,



Games, puzzles and other types of brain training may help slow memory loss and other mental problems.

their thinking skills are less likely to decline, medical research shows. So, games, puzzles and other types of brain training may help slow memory loss and other mental problems. One study involved more than 2,800 adults 65 and older. They went to up to 10 hour-long brain-training sessions for 5 to 6 weeks. The sessions focused on tactics for these skills:

- Memory
- Reasoning
- Speed of processing information

People who took the training showed improvement in these skills that lasted for at least 5 years. They also improved at everyday tasks. What types of brain exercises should we do? That varies from person to person, but the main idea is to keep your brain *active* and *challenged*. You could start with something as simple as the experiments in the monographs, which you should practice time after time. You can also...

- Learn something new, such as a second language or a musical instrument.
- Work on crossword, Sudoku or other kinds of puzzles.
- Play online memory games or video games.
- Read, write or sign up for local adult education classes.

The Uses of the Art

In today's world of terabyte hard disks, flash drives and million volume research libraries, learning the Art of Memory may seem about as relevant as studying the best way to make clay tablets for writing. Still, the Art of Memory is one of the best ways there is to enter into the spirit and consciousness of the Middle Ages. To practise the Art even a little, is to venture back into a world where living memory was the chief means of information storage, where imagery and spoken language made up the fabric of human communication, and where one person could quite literally store the sum total of human knowledge in his or her own head.

It also has its practical side. The methods of the Art of Memory work so much better than ordinary rote memorisation, that even a little experience with the Art can make a startling difference. Anything from shopping lists to class notes can be remembered quickly and efficiently, and you aren't likely to leave your memory at home when you go to take a final exam! So, sit down, close your eyes and consider this popular medieval practice. See how useful it can be in helping with your visualisations.





Hypertension

by Roshan Ushah

The modern Rosicrucian Order is not a primarily healing institution. It is a point needing re-emphasis from time to time, for the first-generation Rosicrucians of early 17th Century Europe did indeed consider healing as one of their primary duties, and to perform those duties free of charge. Considering the primitive nature of medicine at that time, good healthcare was a rare luxury available only to the privileged classes.

With the advent of modern medical science however, the emphasis of the Rosicrucian Order has moved away from healing as one of its primary goals, to providing education for people to discover, or re-discover, the innate spiritual nature which exists to varying extents in all people..., rich or poor, good or evil, well-educated or illiterate. While healing is a high and noble calling, it is today only one aspect of learning among a whole spectrum of subjects explored within the Rosicrucian teachings.

This article will however delve into the subject of

Hypertension (better known as *High Blood Pressure*) which is currently a growing scourge in most parts of the world. High blood pressure readings occur when the force of blood coursing through the body's arteries, veins and capillaries presses against the walls of our blood vessels with consistently higher pressure than it would be when in conditions of good health. This makes the heart work harder to pump the blood around the body and can contribute to hardening of the arteries, stroke, kidney disease or heart failure.

The Technical Part

Blood pressure readings are calculated using one number 'over' another: systolic blood pressure over diastolic pressure. The blood pressure monitor shows measurements in millimetres of mercury 'mmHg.' Everyone's blood pressure will be slightly different, and you would need to discuss with a medical professional as





to what is safe for you. A good blood pressure range for adults comes in between 90/60mmHg and 120/80mmHg and a reading of 140/90mmHg or above is classified as high blood pressure.

Knowing these numbers can help make you more aware of your health and may help you to stay on top of your blood pressure. Your blood pressure can rise and fall during the day depending on your circadian rhythms or even your mood. It seems to be highest in the morning and can even differ from one arm to another. Emotions like anxiety and stress can also affect the readings

High blood pressure can affect anyone at any age with the cause often unknown. You unfortunately cannot modify your age, genetics or family history, so it is important to ensure you appropriately manage your lifestyle.

In the worst-case scenarios and if high blood pressure symptoms are left untreated, serious conditions affecting both the heart and lungs can occur. High blood pressure is the largest single-known risk factor for cardiovascular disease and related health problems and can lead to:

- Heart failure.
- Coronary artery failure.
- Stroke.
- Kidney disease.
- Vascular dementia.

What Causes High Blood Pressure?

Most people with high blood pressure are diagnosed with primary hypertension – a class of high blood pressure that doesn't have a known secondary cause. People who have an underlying medical condition are diagnosed with secondary hypertension. The causes of high blood pressure can be hard to pinpoint but there are lifestyle factors that can increase your risk, particularly the following:

- Drinking too much alcohol - regularly exceeding alcohol intake recommendations.

- Eating too much salt - salt intake makes your body hold onto water, this extra water then increases your blood pressure.
- Being overweight or obese - puts more strain on your heart as well as causing fatty deposits to line your arteries increasing blood pressure.
- Not doing enough exercise - doing exercise increases your blood pressure for a short period but over time will give you a lower resting blood pressure.
- Not eating a nutritious diet of fruits and vegetables - consuming saturated fats and cholesterol increase blood pressure, swapping these for fruit, vegetables and low-fat dairy products can help avoid high blood pressure.
- Smoking - narrows and hardens your arteries making blood clots more likely to occur.

The causes of high blood pressure can be wide and varied. If you're worried that any of the above factors are causing direct damage to your body, you should visit your doctor. Similarly, if you're concerned about low blood pressure symptoms, make sure you seek medical guidance.



Ways to Help Lower Blood Pressure

Fortunately there are several modern drugs that are highly effective at reducing blood pressure; and there are of course the most obvious..., lifestyle changes that can ease the pressure on your heart and body as well.¹

- **Exercise:** Do some if you don't already! Many more jobs are being done from home (home working) that will encourage you to sit in front of a screen all day. You need to make the effort to get up and exercise – and I don't mean to the fridge and back! Exercise will increase the blood flow in your arteries and make you feel better. Any kind of aerobic exercise will do you good. If jogging or running doesn't appeal, go out for walks and do your breathing exercises at the same time.
- **Salt:** Eating too much salt is bad for you. Remember the Rosicrucian injunction to be moderate in everything. Salt raises the blood pressure by making your body retain water. Avoid as many pre-prepared foods as you can, as they often contain concealed salt. It's better to eat fresh food whenever possible. The potassium in fresh fruit and vegetables helps your body excrete sodium in your urine.
- **Drink:** Caffeine and alcoholic drinks can increase blood pressure temporarily but as I've said before – moderate yourself! Heavy drinking can raise your
- **Go Green:** Vegetarians and vegans tend to have lower blood pressure than meat eaters. Now, that may be due to the saturated fats in meat and dairy products which are linked to high blood pressure. In general, we are advised to cut down on our intake of meat and dairy and eat plenty of wholegrains, fruit and vegetables. Oily fish contains blood-pressure-reducing omega-3 oils too.
- **Relaxation:** Here, I am probably preaching to the converted but when we feel stressed, we produce more adrenaline, which increases our heart rate and blood pressure. Relaxation and meditation can reduce stress in many people, so keep doing it. Take time out from your busy life to meditate and de-stress. A good sleep is also a factor in reducing stress and if you fall asleep while meditating so much the better – you obviously needed sleep more than you needed to meditate and you will be more relaxed.





Final Thoughts

Whether in the medical or any other field, we should stay as close to nature as possible. As soon as we stray from it, we are breaking ties with natural laws and running counter to our own well-being. Through ignorance, pride or greed, people have spent too long trying to dominate nature, when they should instead have been seeking ways of cooperating with it.²

High blood pressure is a symptom of our modern way of life. Processed foods and a sedentary lifestyle can all add up to an unhealthy blood pressure reading. But

this can often be resolved by judicious diet and exercise. As a final thought I would like to leave you with a quote from that wonderful mid-18th Century book *Unto Thee I Grant the Economy of Life* - Book 12, Chapter 2: *"Sickness of the body affects even the spirit. One cannot be in health without the other."*

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by Ron Davis

When Death is Imminent



The single most important event of my life came as I lay at the point of death. Because of the decision I made during that brief period, the moment of dying became for me a rebirth, like a hinge between two lives. My new life is incomparably better than the old, and although I am physically still the same person, it is as if I have entered an entirely new dimension of living.

Of course, I'm not immune to the normal trials and tribulations of life and when a thundershower catches me in the open, I still get as wet as anyone else. I make mistakes as before, but not as often or as seriously as before. When I stub my toe, it hurts as before, but I don't curse some unknown fate for having caused it. And I have certainly not grown either heroic or saintly. It is just that life has for me acquired a whole new flavour and value,

and my formerly insurmountable problems are no longer important.

The winter of 1997 was particularly cold and unpleasant. Everyone complained bitterly, and getting to and from work on the gridlocked rail network was a misery. Apart from the unpleasantness of constant cold, the cost of heating the house was beyond my meagre earnings, and I had to dig deeply into my savings. Just before Easter 1998 I contracted pneumonia. I couldn't understand how, in the prime of life, I could go down with a disease that we normally associate with old age. But there I was, desperately ill in hospital, only partly aware of the seriousness of my predicament. Doctors and nurses with concerned expressions came and went, and all sorts of pipes and tubes were attached to me, but I steadily weakened and got worse.



Finally one evening, a close friend of mine was told that everything possible had been done but my chances of surviving the night were slim. I don't recall him coming in to say a last goodbye, but he told me that after he got home, he sat up all that night waiting for the phone call that would tell him I had died. Some time in the wee hours before dawn I awoke, all alone in my hospital room. It was pitch dark outside, and the only sound I could hear was the faint back and forth sound of some machine doing its job of keeping me alive. I was weak and in considerable pain, but I did not stop to analyse the feeling. For the first time

**Every part of me knew I was
at the point of something too
awesome to comprehend.**

in a week, my mind was perfectly clear and rational. I was aware of myself and my surroundings and all my senses were operating normally. I knew that several days had passed, that it was night, and where I was and why. And I knew I had been bordering on a coma but that was no longer the case. When I say I 'awoke', it was like waking up into a reality that somehow surpassed my normal day-to-day awareness. Everything was so clear, rational and calm, and the options for continued life, or the end of my life, was crystal clear to me.

I had a small electronic buzzer attached to my left hand and although I wanted to call a nurse, I could not muster the strength to depress the button. I tried again and again, but my hand simply would not move, I could

not do it. In fact it was as if I had no longer any control over my body, any part of it. That is when I knew without any shadow of doubt that I was dying..., not tomorrow, not 'soon', not even in an hour or so, I was dying right then. There was no time for a few quick words to someone even if anyone had been present to listen, or to do or undo anything in life. It was utter finality, not later, it was now. This was the moment of truth.

How did I know? I can't answer that other than to say I simply knew with a certainty greater than anything I had been certain of before. Every part of me knew I was at the point of something too awesome to comprehend, but above all something that was absolutely final and entirely non-negotiable. When you reach this moment, you too will know. I did not doubt..., I knew!

I can remember thinking "*but I will never see the sun again*", and had for the briefest of moments a sudden rush of panic which immediately dissipated in the face of the enormity of what was happening. This was the turning point. Up to that point, I had never been a particularly religious person. I had been brought up by loving and devoted parents who had tried their best to instil a sense of religious worship in me, but having felt the full force of priestly brutality and outright cruelty from some of the 'brothers' at the catholic college I attended as a schoolboy, I had from my mid-teens onwards had little regard for the bearers of the message of peace that came with the religion of my parents.

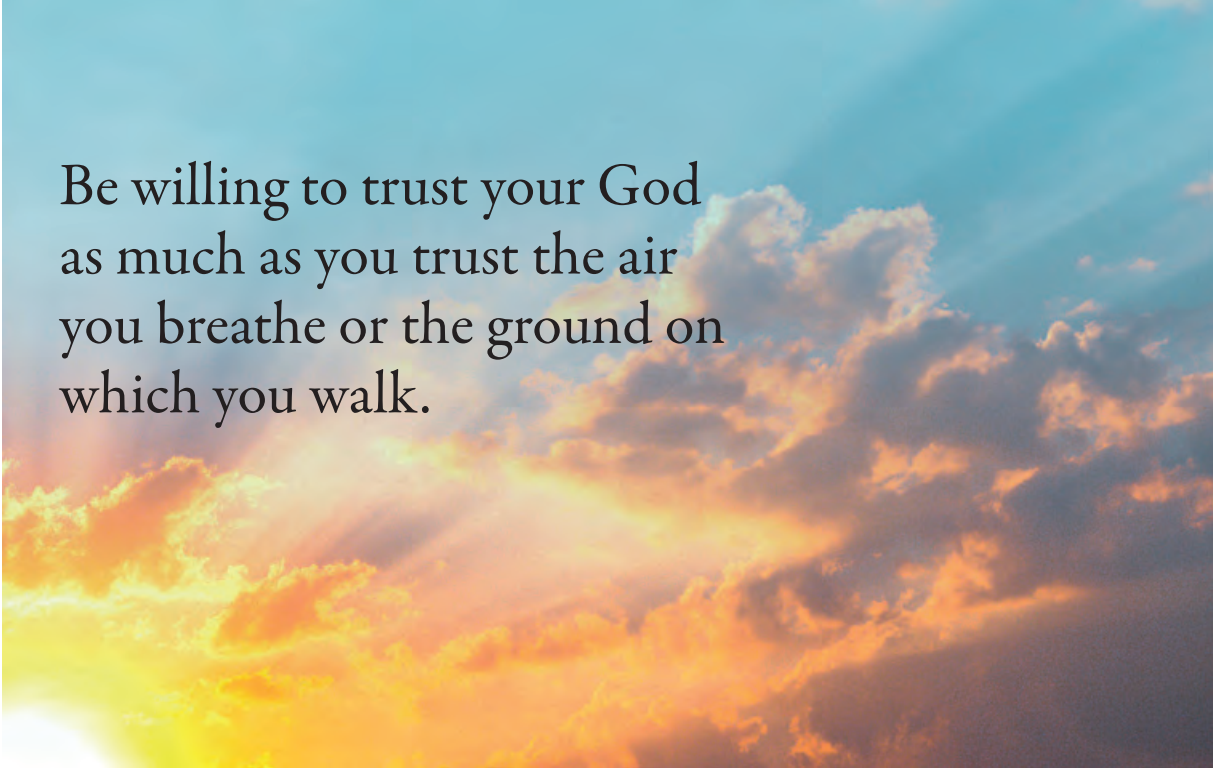
Complete Trust

The experiences of school had jolted me, but they had never entirely eliminated my belief in a Universal Mind or God of some sort that could be both impersonal and deeply intimate and personal at the same time. So, at the



**I had no hesitation
in giving myself up
willingly and fully to
my God.**





Be willing to trust your God
as much as you trust the air
you breathe or the ground on
which you walk.

threshold of my final moments of life, I had no hesitation in giving myself up willingly and fully to my God. I put myself utterly and completely in His hands, without question or qualification. I asked only for the power to accept whatever His will for me might be.

It is very difficult to put this in words, for although it sounds very 'religious', it was far from that; it was an overwhelming feeling of trust in a force or power beyond my understanding, but which I could only describe as my understanding of God. I did not ask to be allowed to live, merely that I would accept His will whatever it was; and instantly I was overwhelmed with a love that nothing on earth can be compared to. It was the most gentle, refined, caring and compassionate feeling I have ever experienced, and as a faint echo I can still remember today.

I did not die of course and the pneumonia quickly went away following this experience. I returned to the normal activities of my day-to-day working life, and I remained as human as anyone else. I don't even lay claim to the title of a 'good' man, and if to err is human, then I am eminently still a very ordinary person. Nevertheless, that night was assuredly a turning point. Nothing has been quite the same since. The moment that I gave myself up fully to my God, I learned once and for all what has become for me the secret of a happy and victorious life. It is a twofold secret:

First, be willing to accept life and any crisis of life on its own terms. Try to face the reality, whatever it may be, without the deadly errors of either false pride or that arrogance of spirit called self-pity. Second, be willing to trust your God as much as you trust the air you breathe

or the ground on which you walk. Know that as long as you get yourself out of the way, your God will have already solved the problems you are concerned about.

Life is still to be led. I have not yet been fed to the ravens or tended by angels, and my new life is not fatalistic; I still make all the decisions. The difference though is that there is no longer either doubt or fear. I do not have to 'earn' or 'deserve' the love and mercy of my God; it is always there, waiting for me to help myself. I only have to be willing to allow the greater Self of my inner God to subsume and take over the far smaller self of my everyday life, for all things to work exactly as they should. With this knowledge it's impossible to feel lonely or afraid ever again, for I have the most wonderful companion and protector at my side all the time. Call it willingness or acceptance, it does not matter, but the reality of my life has changed completely.

There is nothing new or even special with what I've said, for so many in the past have had similar, and some had far deeper experiences than this. And all of them found the same truth in their own ways throughout humankind's long march through pre-history and history. The nearness of God, however you understand that word, can be found in myriad ways. In my case it was influenced by my religious upbringing, for others it will have no religious trappings at all, yet be one and the same attunement and experience.

The very fact that so many have experienced something very similar to what I experienced that night on my death bed, attests, I believe, to its truth. In any time of trial, just be willing to abandon all to the highest form of good you know. I call that ultimate good, the God of my Heart.



Creed for Happiness

I shall begin each morning unafraid, and shall seek the wonderful gift that the day will bring. I shall be guided by intelligence rather than belief, and shall see truth and ignore no fact. I shall control my thoughts and guide them into the highest realm, holding my cherished ambitions and sacred ideals uppermost in my mind.



Throughout the day I shall enjoy all the beauty of my surroundings. I shall glory in my associations and aspire to the exaltation that comes with love of God and of Humanity.



I shall forgive freely before forgiveness is asked. I shall harbour ill thoughts toward no one. I shall fulfil every trust. I shall remain poised and serene in every trial, and face each emergency without fear.



I shall be friendly and courteous toward all. To me each day will be one of kindly deeds and unselfish love. I shall obey those in authority and give loyalty to all to whom loyalty is due. I shall be clean in body, action and thought. I shall revere my God and have the utmost respect for the religious convictions of my fellows.

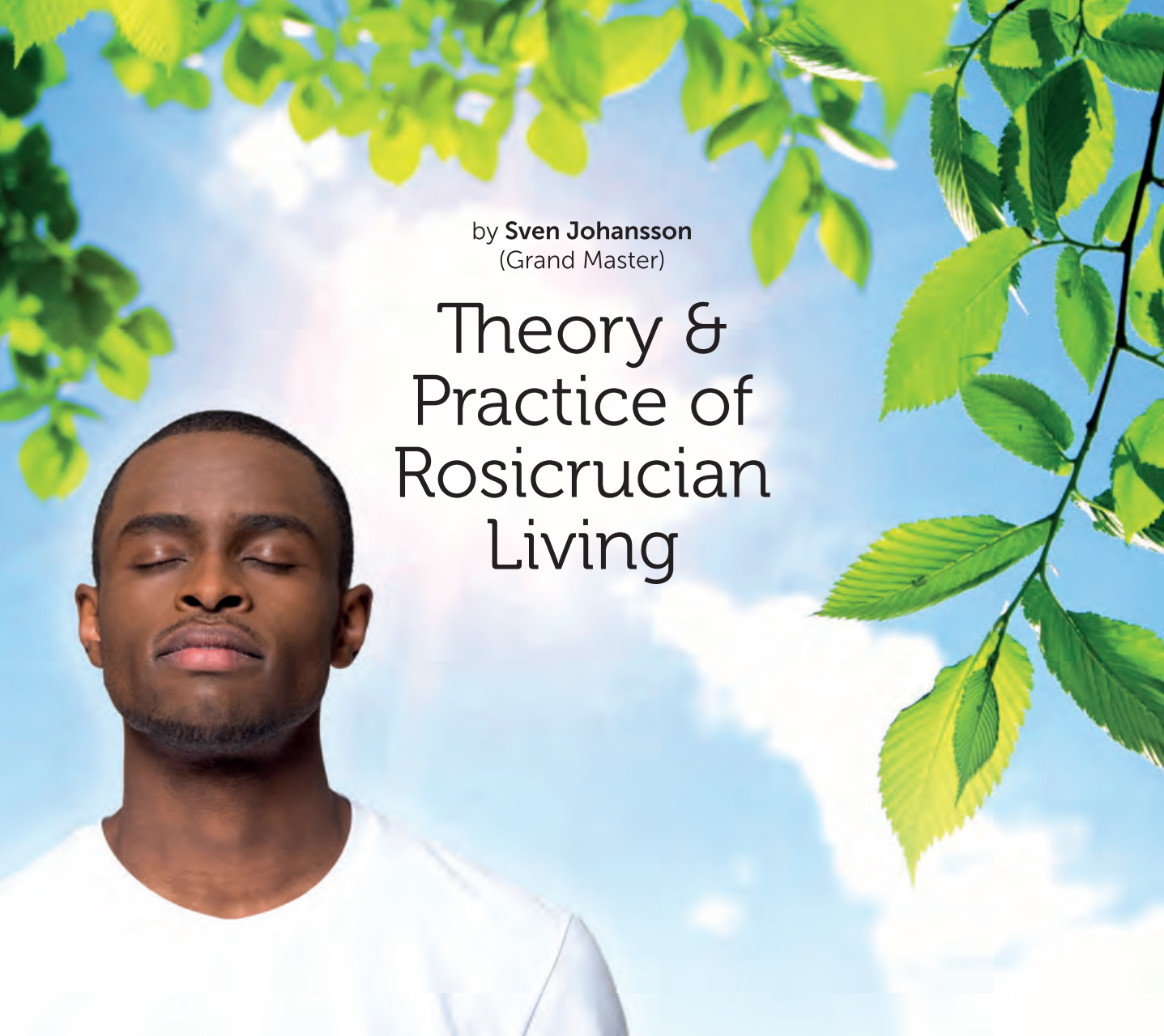


To obtain the most from life I shall give the best that I can give. At all times will I enthrone service and eliminate the motive of gain. I shall perform each task cheerfully. I shall build and not destroy.



And so will I come to the end of each day with the satisfaction brought by service, serenity, kindness and love. I shall go to my rest with the peace that comes from an untroubled mind and the memory of tasks well done.





by **Sven Johansson**
(Grand Master)

Theory & Practice of Rosicrucian Living

We all have our personal ways of viewing life, its laws and how we interact with them. But we don't always agree on what we perceive to be reality. Indeed, how could it be different? The great diversity of life on our planet clearly implies there must exist a great diversity of personal realities. And with humans, virtually identical life situations sometimes lead to sharply different conclusions. In fact, apart from the obvious physiological similarities we humans share with each other, there are thoughts, attitudes and reactions to events that we never share with others, and which thankfully make us unique individuals. Fortunately, the greater part of that uniqueness of thought and living is good and beneficial, both for ourselves and for our wider community.

Over many years of correspondence with Rosicrucians, I have come to realise that there exists a veritable multitude of ways or methods of living that bring people peace and happiness. In many cases, merely the act of making a firm well-considered decision and then sticking with it through thick and thin, is all that's needed to nudge a person a bit closer to his or her ideal of happiness and fulfilment. But while these different ways of living usually emerge from deep within the cultural diversity of our planet, what I have also noticed is that there are, despite many outward differences, a few specific things that are virtually guaranteed to bring into the lives of people some of the most sought-after qualities humans can possess; things like peace, harmony, health, happiness, tranquillity, kindness, compassion and suchlike.



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In this article I will outline some of the theoretical and practical aspects of the Rosicrucian teachings that I have found particularly helpful in my life. I must stress from the outset that I am not presenting any new, radical theory, and certainly nothing new as far as Rosicrucians are concerned. I am merely outlining what I have personally found helpful over the years through emphasis on certain well-known Rosicrucian principles of living, and you are free to accept or reject any part of it.

Rosicrucians pride themselves in being ‘walking question marks’ and when better ways of viewing and understanding the mystery of their existence appear on their inner horizons, they avidly seek to unravel those new and potentially greater visions; in fact, they eagerly incorporate the new insights they’ve gained into their deepest thoughts and beliefs. To one extent or another, whether consciously or subconsciously, we all seek to better understand ourselves and those principles we should be using in guiding our daily living. One could even go so far as to say that this curiosity, this constant desire for ‘improvement’ and understanding, is an innate biological mandate over which we have little control, and perhaps thankfully so!

Yet, although we may have developed ways of doing things that work for us more or less by rote or habit, would it not be so much more satisfying if we could always do these things with a clear and fully satisfying conscious understanding of the rationale or theory upon which our thoughts and actions are based? Of course it would, and I will now outline this theory and practice as applied to my personal life.

THEORY

Before mentioning some of the practical things I try and do deliberately as a personal strategy of

evolvment, let me briefly outline the theory upon which I base my thoughts and actions. I will mention six basic principles of existence.

The Law of Singularity or the Monad

The first principle is what I call the *Law of Singularity* or simply the *Monad*. In most philosophies and religions of the world, it is postulated that there exists an ultimate actuality beyond which nothing else can exist. And that within this singularity or monad lies, if not the whole of creation, then at least the whole of creation that we could ever perceive.

The singularity is infinite in every way. It is ‘the One’, and outside it, nothing else can exist. It is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega of everything that exists, has existed and ever can exist. No thought or concept can ever span it in its entirety; and certainly nothing can go beyond it. From the time of Homer in ancient Greece, the word *Nous* has evolved and morphed and changed subtly in meaning, from ‘*personal intellect*’, to ‘*human intellect*’, to ‘*human experience*’ to ‘*human potential*’, to ‘*human égrégore*’ to ‘*world égrégore*’ or even ‘*universal égrégore*.’

The great Islamic theologian Avicenna referred to it in one of its Classical Greek forms as the ‘*Active Intellect*’, analogous to the more modern philosophical expression the ‘*Mind of God*.’ However we understand this widely-used and interpreted concept, we are sure to have to acknowledge before long that only approximate agreement is likely ever to emerge over it for as long as inflexible religious interpretations exist. But it is a good starting point and a word still used extensively in Rosicrucian writings, so I will refer to the Monad in its more familiar form as simply *Nous*.





Whatever we can conceive must have an equal though opposite mirror image of itself somewhere in the universe.

The Law of Duality

The second principle is what I call the *Law of Duality*. Whatever we can conceive must have an equal though opposite mirror image of itself somewhere in the universe, either now, in the past or in the future. In the case of our existence, we are a duality, being composed of two infinite though seemingly opposed qualities of Nous, namely *Spirit* from which all matter and energy originate, infused with *Vital Life Force*, the 'carrier' of the individual soul that exists within every human being.

We are matter animated by a soul. We sometimes loosely speak of both as though they were energies. But while this may assist us in intellectually dealing with them as concepts, they are perhaps better described merely as *principles* which transcend all understanding we could ever acquire in human form.

The Law of the Triangle

The third principle is the well-known Rosicrucian *Law of the Triangle*. Every single thing that can clearly be identified, either physically or conceptually, is the result of the union of two other apparently separate and clearly identifiable things or properties. Every manifestation is the result of two simultaneous causes, in the case of humans being what Rosicrucians call *Spirit*, namely the law, principle and energy behind all physical manifestations..., and the *Vital Life Force*, law, principle and energy of which 'carries' with it the unique soul we possess.

These two principles give rise to a third one, called *Consciousness*. And this consciousness manifests in its highest form as the *soul personality* with its tremendous refinement filtering through like shaded moonlight to

the outer personality, which in turn is the character by which we are known.

The Law of Compensation

The fourth principle is the equally well-known *Law of Compensation*. Everything we think, say or do has consequences which intimately involve us every step of the way. Simply put, if we do good, we can expect to receive good in return; and if we do bad, then we can expect to receive the same in return. That is the law, very crudely and bluntly stated; the old 'eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth' principle, though on a far more sophisticated level.

On the material plane, the law manifests as Isaac Newton's famous third law of motion: "*For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.*" On the mental, psychic and spiritual planes, it manifests as the famous injunction attributed to the master Jesus: "*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*" In other words, whatever you do, be fully prepared to have that same thing happen to you; otherwise don't do it.

In the realm of inner development, we refer to the law of compensation as the Law of Karma, the word '*karma*' originating with the Sanskrit root *krm* which roughly translates as '*action*.' For every act or thought we have, there are consequences, and those *consequences* we call '*karma in action*' or simply *compensation*. The consequences are like ripples on a pond; they last through time, sometimes only briefly, sometimes much longer. The law says nothing about punishment, nor anything about reward, for it is a totally impartial law, delivering like for like, just rewards for just actions. Our thoughts and actions, so to speak, '*press*' against the awareness or consciousness of other living beings in the universe, and the pressure of those thoughts and actions



have undeniable consequences because the collective consciousness of other living beings '*presses back*' and thereby ensures that karma manifests in our lives.

Understanding just what the consequences of our actions are, and exactly how the collective consciousness of the universe presses back at us when we apply pressure to it, this is the heart of the matter, and what we are seeking to learn. For once we have mastered our understanding of the consequences of our actions, we will have begun the process of merging our outer self with the personality expression of our soul, and we will be well on our way to mastering our lives.

Knowing in advance what our thoughts and actions will yield, are a great incentive to doing the 'right thing.' Unlike a physical law, which acts immediately, the law of karma is a *sentient* law with immense patience and intelligence, a law which metes out the consequences of our actions piecemeal, as and when we are best able to absorb the lessons waiting for us.

The Law of the Reincarnation

The fifth principle is the *Law of Reincarnation*. Whereas all living entities eventually die, are we to believe that their entire awareness disappears, completely and utterly, never ever again to reappear? Surely not, for what possible purpose could be served by consciousness being terminated permanently with every death? Whereas the species as a whole may continue, and through its genes even progress and evolve, this would not be the case for the individual member of that species.

No one can seriously claim to have scientific proof of the existence of reincarnation, and if we were perfectly honest with ourselves, we would freely admit that reincarnation can only be a belief, even though it is a belief based upon deep-seated inner certainties. Many

Rosicrucians will agree from their personal experiences that although reincarnation may in fact only be a belief, it is one which is powerfully vouched for by the deepest recesses of our being; vouched for not only by the sheer logic and justice that the whole concept of reincarnation brings with it, but most importantly by far, vouched for by a few personal memories and experiences which simply cannot be explained in any other way than that they are distant memories from past lives.

Regrettably, even among the millions of people who claim to believe they have lived before and will live again, very few actually believe this; and their actions prove it! Not only does the law of compensation dictate that they have to pay for their actions, the law of reincarnation ensures that whatever is not paid for in this life, will be paid for in another. If such people fully understood and accepted deep down that these are not mere hypotheses, but actual laws of nature as inviolate as the law of gravity, they could not possibly engage in the thoughtless acts of brutality and selfishness that we see taking place in so many places throughout the world today.

If everyone fully understood that karma is a fact of life, and that reincarnation is a fact of their existence from which they cannot escape, they would be a whole lot more careful about how they governed their thoughts and actions today.

The Law of Light

The sixth and final principle is what I call the *Law of Light*. We allude to our spirituality as a flame of Divinity burning within the deepest recesses of our consciousness; something which constantly eggs us on to seek the Light of spiritual awareness. The Law of Light dictates that all sentient beings, no matter what their form, have no option but to seek out the highest form of spiritual awareness

"Do to others as
you would have
them do to you."



they are capable of perceiving.

As an innate urge, this law ensures that all living creatures, and especially those with some form of self-awareness, will seek in their particular and peculiar ways, to dwell in the Light of spiritual awareness to the greatest extent of their understanding. Dwelling in Light is the ultimate goal of humanity, and to the extent that all people have within them a spark of Divinity, they are all to one extent or another, already dwelling in the Light of spiritual awareness.

Truly dwelling in this Light, and being fully aware of its presence in our lives every moment of every day, is our final destination and marks the culmination of our journey; the achievement of perfection on earth and full mastery of life. Our every thought and action is inherently geared to reach this exalted state of being and, fortunately, the Light of spirituality is no stranger to us. With perseverance we know we will one day in this life or another, reach an awareness of the goodness and sanctity of Divinity to such an extent that we will from then on truly be dwelling in Light.

PRACTICE

That then summarises the theory. But how do I use these theoretical principles in my daily life? Or rather, what are the practical consequences of the principles I attempt to apply each day?

First of all, let me reiterate that I find it absolutely essential to have some theory of existence clearly available to me at all times. Without a purpose or reason, there is little point in following any system of thought and action. Even if personal theories aren't accurate in all details..., in fact, even if they're completely wrong, the only thing that ultimately matters is that they are theories which give us satisfaction and happiness, and are logical and just to our inner sensibilities.

It gives me great fulfilment in life to believe that I understand at least some of the inner workings of my being and that from this understanding have emerged several practical guideposts that I can use to ensure that my thoughts and actions lead me along my chosen path. I will mention four practical things that I do quite deliberately and as a personal strategy to keep myself upon my chosen path.

Reverence for the God of my Heart

The first practical thing I do is to revere above all else, the God of my Heart. If you are of a religious bent, in plain simple words this means: *"love your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your understanding."*

If you are of a non-religious bent it could mean: *"love the principle governing your life and everything in the universe, and do so with all your heart, all your mind, and all your understanding."*

In my case, I had a strict religious upbringing and can unashamedly say that I take a religious approach to this and love the God I have come to know with an intensity that surpasses all else. Having this love first and foremost means that the very principle behind my existence is way and above the most important thing there is. Loving the God of our Understanding unreservedly, means that we are constantly maintaining an attraction between our mundane outer self and the most sublime we can ever hope to know.

This is the most important of all principles by which I live, and it gives me the very real sensation that through every happy and unhappy moment, in success and in failure, I have beside me the constant presence of the God of my Heart. Because of this I can truly say that I experience God as a being of immense refinement walking with me wherever I go, constantly at my side and ready to help if I will but allow it to do so.

Gratitude for the Privilege of Life

The second practical thing I do is to adopt a deliberate inner attitude of gratitude for life; and by that, I mean gratitude for everything that befalls me, be it good, bad, pleasant or unpleasant; for every experience I have is meant specifically for me, and has specific lessons to impart. It is a deep honour to have life and to be allowed to experience it on such a beautiful planet. The more we good-naturedly accept our lessons as given factors from which we cannot escape, no matter how painful they may be, the faster and more thoroughly we progress in our inner evolution.

Although I may cringe and complain about the most painful experiences I have, and sometimes in despair may be heard to mumble *"why me?"* I do so only tongue-in-cheek and still feel great pride and happiness when I manage to overcome hardships, or learn to live with hardship with dignity and full acceptance that this lesson was meant for me and I must therefore do all I can to glean the greatest amount of instruction from it.

Reverence for life and for the privilege I have to be able to experience life in material form, here and now, in this solid world, this is a fundamental tenet of my personal philosophy. I understand full well that it is very easy to be this grateful, for I have no great aches and pains yet, and no great physical disabilities or financial hardships to torment me. But it is also my ardent hope and secret prayer that I will, even in suffering, be able to maintain an





It is a deep honour
to have life and to be
allowed to experience
it on such a beautiful
planet.

inner attitude of equanimity, gratitude and reverence for the life I have been given, the only life I know.

Never to Take Offence

The third practical thing I do is to deliberately avoid taking offence for anything, no matter what the circumstances. We have all been offended or felt hurt by what others or even general events in life have done to us. If we would be perfectly honest with ourselves we would soon realise that the root cause of almost every worrying and unhappy thought we ever have, lies precisely in the conscious or unconscious act of feeling hurt or offended for one thing or another.

We have all heard ourselves say many times over things like: *“How dare he say that?”* or *“I deserve better treatment than this.”* or *“Who do you think you are to talk to me like that?”* To be sure, I have said it too, and regretted it every time, even though this regret may not have fully taken hold until well after the adrenaline flow had subsided and my better self had taken control.

We should do our best to analyse the motives for everything we think, say and do, and in this way we will soon see that those motives are not always as pure as the driven snow. Personally I fully realise that without this alertness, this constant self-examination, I could never be fully aware of just when it is that I have taken offence, and it would therefore be impossible to undo the damage that this distorted inner attitude has caused. Once we have taken offence, there is only one *‘right action’* available to us, namely, to back out of the situation as quietly and humbly as we can and fully make amends for whatever damage our offence may have caused, even if that damage was only to our pride.

This is not to say that I accept any and every insult sitting down, nor that I allow myself to be bullied and

pushed around. It is simply that the inner attitude I adopt dictates that no matter how I behave outwardly for the moment, I remain at peace as far as possible, and try my utmost never to hold a grudge against anyone for what they have done. This, at least, is the ideal, and is akin to forgiving always, forgiving without ever being asked to do so, and forgiving for all time. Forgiveness must be instantaneous and leave no residue of bad feeling. It must be done automatically and with good cheer. It must truly come from the heart.

Every act must be at least partially for others

The last practical thing I wish to mention is that to the best of my ability, I let every significant act be at least partially for the benefit of others and not purely for myself. This may seem a bit idealistic, but do we not live in a society where cooperation and interaction with others is essential to our well-being? Yes, I believe we do. No person is an island, and no-one can indefinitely live only for him or her self. Eventually life will overtake that person and deliver the lesson that sharing with others of the abundance of blessings that we daily receive, is a *condition* for continuing to receive those blessings.

Rosicrucians know what is known as the *“law of AMRA”* whereby they pass on at least part of every blessing they receive, unconditionally, with good cheer and without any expectation of reward. This law operates in our lives as surely as the law of gravity. Watch it work, watch it unfold and manifest in your life the minute you begin co-operating with it, and do so consciously with all the goodness of your heart. Give of your blessings and you will be assured of more. Keep them to yourself and they will assuredly one day end.



The Salons Rose-Croix

by Rick Cobban



Early in 1892 a haunting poster appeared in the streets of Paris. It depicted three women, one of them nude and sunk into the mire of daily life, slime dripping from her finger-tips. The two other women ascend a celestial staircase. The one on the lowest step, dressed in dark clothing, occupies the middle ground, offering a lily to a near transparent woman higher up the stairs who, it appears, has left life's pollution far behind.

This light, diffuse woman, representing pure idealism, holds in her right hand a smouldering heart. The steps are strewn with the flowers of Mary: roses and

lilies. Masses of clouds and stars swirl about the mountain peaks at the top of the stairs. The picture is framed by a pattern of crucified roses set on altars. The bottom of the poster announces the opening of the first *"Salon de la Rose-Croix."*

The Salons of the Rose-Croix

This poster by Carlos Schwabe (1877-1926), the German Symbolist painter may be familiar to many, but the story of esoteric and artistic ferment surrounding the Salon Rose-



Croix is far less well known. Between 1892 and 1897 a remarkable individual organised the *Salons de la Rose-Croix*, a series of six celebrated art exhibitions. That individual was Joséphin Péladan. He was imbued with the deep mysticism of the Rosicrucians of Toulouse by his brother Adrien Péladan.

Together with Papus and Stanislas de Guaita, Péladan was one of the founders of *L'Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix* (Kabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross). On 17th February 1891, he announced in a letter addressed to Papus published in the journal *L'Initiation* that he would sever his relationship with the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross. This was because of the differences in his understanding of the purpose and direction of Rosicrucian activity. Thus was founded in May 1891 his own Rosicrucian group *L'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et esthétique du Temple et du Graal*.

This Order was divided into three grades: Equerries, Knights and Commanders. Péladan, as Grand Master, was

known as Sâr Mérodack Péladan in his Rosicrucian inner circle. Wearing extravagant violet robes with his beard and hair styled in what he described as the “*Assyrian*” manner, Péladan became a flamboyant figure simultaneously respected, admired and ridiculed in Parisian society. His Order’s activity was based in France but it also spread into Belgium. Esoteric work was carried on simultaneously with its public artistic and literary activities. Péladan believed that art and music could uplift the soul and promote a more charitable and spiritual world. The *Manifesto of the Rose-Croix* and the *Regulation and Monitor of the Salon Rose-Croix* were published in 1891.

The first Salon Rose-Croix exhibition opened on 10th March 1892 in the famous Durand-Ruel Gallery. It was one the most successful exhibitions of the year. Two thousand press invitations were sent out as well as special invitations to private individuals. More than 22,600 visiting cards were left. On the street outside the Salon the police were forced to control the traffic of carriages bringing visitors to the exhibition. The doyens of Parisian high society viewed the Salon. Great artists, writers and poets such as Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Émile Zola and Paul Verlaine, as well as the composer Erik Satie passed through “*the great artistic show of the year*” according to Remy de Gourmont in the *Mercur de France*. The most well-known symbolist artists exhibiting at the six Salons were Carlos Schwabe, Fernand Khnopff, Jean Delville, Armand Point, Félicien Rops and Alexandre Séon among the hundreds of artists who exhibited in the Salon. Naturally the standard of the works exhibited varied, but at its best, the artworks exhibited were rich in symbolic meaning.

The examination of one painting “*I Lock the Door Upon Myself*” (1891) by Fernand Khnopff will demonstrate the many levels of meaning symbolised in the art of the



Joséphin Péladan



Paul Durand-Ruel in his gallery in 1910. The first “Salon of the Rose-Croix” exhibition opened on 10th March 1892 in this famous Gallery.





"I Lock the Door Upon Myself" (1891) by Fernand Khnopff.

Rose-Croix. The audience viewing this painting received the understanding they were capable of perceiving. An androgynous figure is shown in a room. Some saw only the imagery of the popular characterisation of the femme-fatale as being both seductress and chaste. A more insightful interpretation reveals a more mystic vision of the soul personality in contemplation, turning within from the objective world. The androgynous figure symbolises the soul beyond duality and the power the Magus has gained over life and death in meditative isolation. The range of work exhibited may be seen in the painting by Jean Delville, *"Satan's Treasures"* (1895) and Armand Point's *"The Siren"* (1897) which reveals the diversity and ambitions of Salon exhibitors.

The contradictory nature of Péladan's ambition for the art exhibited, and his need to guide the Salon through its manifesto and rules gave rise to problems for both his Order and the Salon Rose-Croix. One of the more contentious issues of Péladan's elitist view of Rosicrucian activity may be found in the statement:

Art, this initiatory rite to which only the predestined should be admitted, is being turned into a commonplace to suit the crowd.

This attitude was demonstrated in Péladan's complex expectations and criticisms of the artists and their work that would be exhibited within his Salon. The inflexible rules of the Salon were enforced and discouraged some artists from continuing their involvement. However, other artists were inspired.

Jean Delville organised Symbolist art exhibitions and Péladan's work in Belgium. Péladan's vision for the art of the Salon is summarised in his maxim:

The work of art is a fugue: nature supplies its motif; the soul of the artist creates the rest.

This statement in many respects could have been the guiding thought for the development of many aspects of 20th Century modernism. In fact, several artists who would later play important roles in the development of modernism exhibited in one or more of the six Salons. Georges Rouault became one of the great independent painters of Fauvism; Émile Bernard a light of the Nabis; Antoine Bourdelle a romantically expressive sculptor and Ferdinand Hodler developed into Expressionism. Jan Toorop became a leading painter of Art Nouveau while Félix Vallotton devised his version of objective realism.

The Symbolists

Symbolism began as a literary movement in the novels *Là-bas* (*Down There* or *The Damned*) and *À rebours* (*Against the Grain* or *Against Nature*) by Joris-Karl Huysmans with their themes of decadence, dandyism and occultism. This should be contrasted with Péladan's symbolist novel *Le Vice suprême*. The hero of this novel is a mystic Magus who uses his abilities in the service of the highest ideals. The poet Jean Moréas formalised the Symbolist movement in a manifesto in the newspaper *Le Figaro* in 1886. Albert Aurier defined it as the painting of ideas to symbolise the intangible and unseen. Symbolism was a reaction against the excesses of Romanticism and the materialism of Realism and Impressionism.

The symbolist painters Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon were invited to join the Salon, but both declined, preferring their reclusive ways. Moreau's symbolist painting inspired by myth and biblical events represented the *fin-de-siècle* mood of late 19th Century France. In his paintings *"Salome"* and *"Voice of Evening"*, jewelled visions entrance the viewer with the evocative power of the symbol while pointing toward a veiled reality. Moreau's teaching and art inspired artists such as Gauguin and Matisse to achieve a new synthesis in their art.

The great muralist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes was not interested in imitating nature. He captured a universal symbolic mood in each work by depicting a particular event. Through static scenes of large-scale carefully muted decorative serene colour schemes he created paintings of monumental power. One giant study for such a mural *"Saint Genevieve Provisioning Paris under Siege"* (1897-98) may be viewed in the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne. We see in the painting *"The Poor Fisherman"* (1881) the contemplative mood evoked by the subtle colour, the awkward diagonal composition and the fisherman's state of supplication.





"Salome Dancing before Herod"
by Gustave Moreau.



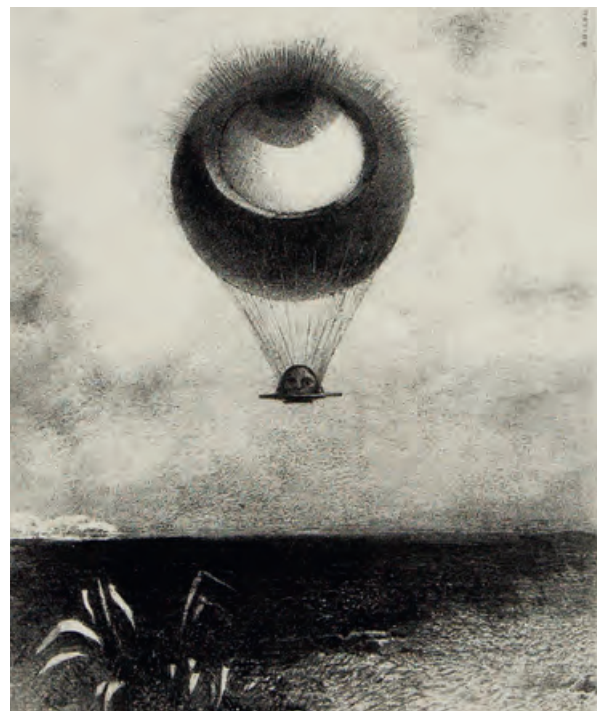
"The Poor Fisherman"
by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes.

All of this brings the viewer into a state of psychological identification with the spirituality of the scene. The metaphysical silence found within the art of Puvis de Chavannes quietly gained him both the respect and influence upon all painters interested in evoking the spiritual in their art. The power of that silence would not be found again until the metaphysical paintings of the Italian pioneer of Surrealism, Giorgio de Chirico.

Composers such as Erik Satie and Claude Debussy were involved in a parallel symbolist enterprise of creating a more spiritual music. Satie composed a fanfare of harps and trumpets, *Les Sonneries de la Rose-Croix*, for the Salon's opening ceremony at the first exhibition in the spring of 1892. However, his best known works are *Trois Gymnopédies* and *Gnossiennes*. Erik Satie's influence continues today in the work of modern minimalist composers such as Philip Glass and Michael Nyman. The prints, paintings and drawings of Odilon Redon find their inspiration in the imagery of dreams and the unconscious. In his work, as in much symbolist art and poetry, the viewer's engagement in the process of interpretation and intuition of meaning of each work is the most important element. In this way the viewer also enters into the mystical and the visionary experience.

Often Redon would add a title which is like a small poem running parallel to the visual impact. The lithographic print *"The Eye floats towards Infinity like some Weird Balloon"* (1882) attests to such a visionary experience. In his painting *"Silence"* (1911) Redon depicts Harpocrates, the god of mystical silence, with the gesture

of the forefinger pressed against the lips that is familiar to Rosicrucian mystics. He reminds us that, ultimately, the greatest mystery cannot be spoken. It is beyond the intellect and all symbolic representation.

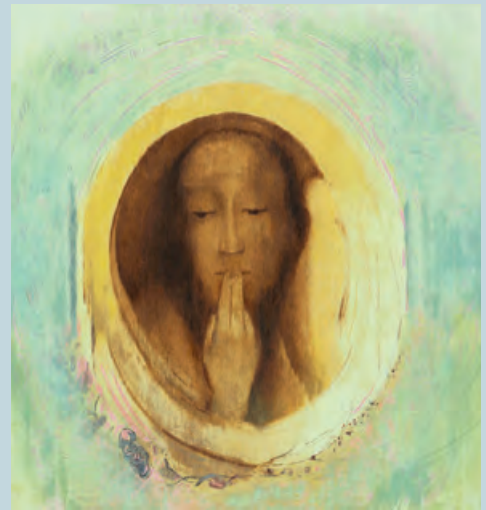


"The Eye floats towards Infinity like some Weird Balloon"
by Odilon Redon (1882).





Poster for the fifth Salon de Rose Croix Point Sarluis.



"Silence" (1911) Odilon Redon.

The Nabis

After 1898 the Nabis (a Hebrew/Arabic word for "*prophet*") became the main proponents of Symbolism while the *Salons Rose-Croix* began to fade into history. Leading artists of the Nabis were Émile Bernard, Maurice Denis, Paul Sérusier, Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, and Paul Ranson. They were a group of artists with diverse styles and beliefs united in their interest in creating a new, modern, spiritualised art.

They regarded the quintessence of the creative act as spiritually uplifting.

They met wearing costumes in their homes and studios to share meals and discuss art, philosophy, religion and mysticism. They regarded the quintessence of the creative act as spiritually uplifting for them and all who viewed their art. The theories and art created by the Nabis using sacred geometry and abstraction of perceived reality truly made them prophets of the explosion of modernism in the 20th Century. However, Robert Pincus-Witten points out that echoes of the Salon could still be heard.

In 1899, after the Nabis exhibition, "*Hommage to Odilon Redon*" proved successful at Durand-Ruel's gallery.

Maurice Denis wrote to Gauguin in Tahiti asking him to join an exhibition of "*Symbolist, Pointillist and Rose-Croix painters*" to be held the following year. Unfortunately, by this time many artists had moved on in their styles and associations with other art dealers in Paris. The exhibition never took place.

The Nabis rallied around Gauguin as the greatest representative of their ideals. In the body of work that reveals the genius of Paul Gauguin it is his largest masterpiece "*D'Où Venons Nous? Que Sommes Nous? Où Allons Nous?*" (1897), which best portrays his mystical understanding of the human condition. Known in English as "*Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*" he drew his inspiration from the unspoiled vision of the indigenous people of Tahiti. In this painting Gauguin wanted the audience to feel "*emotions first and understanding afterwards!*"

It depicts the cycle of incarnation from birth to death. All the spectrum of human activity, aspirations, delights and fears are depicted from the new born baby on the right to the careworn old woman who meditates on the past on the left. A statue symbolising the presence of God stares back at the audience while an androgynous figure perhaps symbolising the soul reaches for the fruit of experience: knowledge and wisdom. It asks the fundamental questions of the origin and purpose of all people, cultures and life itself. Each viewer's life will inform their appreciation of this profound painting and bring meaning to it.

Gauguin evokes associative meaning rather than merely wanting to explain or illustrate.





"D'Où Venons Nous? Que Sommes Nous? Où Allons Nous?" (1897), Paul Gauguin.

I have put all of my energy into it one more time before I die, so painful a passion in such dreadful circumstances, so clear and accurate a vision, that there is no trace of precociousness and life blossoms forth from it.

Gauguin wanted this work to be "*comparable with the gospels*." He achieved the ideal of the Nabis: the complete fusion of content and meaning with aesthetic form. Meditating upon this painting will repay the viewer many times over, for in this work Gauguin was interpreting the great mystery of life.

Legacy of the Salons of the Rose-Croix

Returning to the life of Joséphin Péladan, he continued to do his utmost to convince the public of the value of a mystically oriented symbolic art. He still wore his violet coloured robes and his beard and hair were styled in the "Assyrian" manner. These deliberately eccentric clothing choices which he made into the science of *Kaloprosopie* were caricatured by journalists. However, by the end of the 19th Century many artists, especially the Nabis, enjoyed wearing extravagant clothing to signify their rejection of conventional bourgeois society.

Until his death in 1918, Péladan continued his esoteric and literary activity, which included ninety volumes comprising novels, plays and studies on art or esotericism. Sâr Péladan's life was a work of art. Indeed, later in the 20th Century, Péladan's mysticism of the *Ordre de la Rose-Croix du Temple et du Graal* in Belgium would be one of the

initiatic connections of Émile Dantinne. Using the *nom mysticum* of Sâr Hieronymous, Dantinne played a leading role in bringing together several esoteric groups in the 1930s.

If you look carefully at modern art, with eyes that can see, you may perceive a mystical current that is the aesthetic legacy of Symbolism and the Salon Rose-Croix. In the 21st Century the Rosicrucian tradition of promoting music and art continues through performances and exhibitions in AMORC Cultural Centres such as the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San José and the Rosicrucian Cultural Centre in Paris.



Portrait of Joséphin Péladan by Marcellin Desboutin.





Three Paths to Service

...

by **Nobilis**

The concept of *service* is at the heart of the mystic's life and we might say there are three factors that determine the type and quality of that service in the mundane world.

Connectivity

First, humans have a unique and innate *connectivity* to what Rosicrucians refer to as *the Cosmic* or the *divine scheme of things*. When the idea of service asserts itself, the aspiring mystic seeks avenues of doing good, thereby outwardly demonstrating an altruistic attitude, giving money to charities and physically supporting, through volunteer work, various schemes for the less fortunate in society. This is commendable work and there is merit to that in terms of karmic effect. There is also the fledgling connection with the mental idea of what service is.

Later it becomes increasingly apparent that the service being performed is not something that is meaningful in any higher sense. There is a perception that these outward actions are not just self serving but only affect the fate of human beings temporarily, in this one lifetime, and is relatively meaningless in terms of bringing others toward a better understanding of a divine Reality in which homelessness does not exist. So, a higher purpose is looked for that this desire to serve might be anchored to. It is eventually realised that there needs to be an inner connection to the seeker's concept of Truth, and to be guided by it. We might deem this contact to be a calling from what Rosicrucians know as the *Master Within*. There is then a consequent response to the divine Plan, and service is being performed at a higher level. In this way we might say there is a connection with the *'Heart'*, the higher emotion, so that inner divine inspiration may follow.



Purgation

Secondly, there is a need for a purgation of what we might term our personality nature. The aspiring mystic is taught to be *“equipped for service”*, that is, to purify the emotions, build up the mind with knowledge, obtain virtues, and otherwise become a fit disciple capable of serving humanity. Maintenance of one’s personality nature is by control of the ego and this is achieved through constant attention, certainly in the early stages, and the adoption of a disciplined lifestyle as taught in the Rosicrucian Order.

During this cleansing, attunement with the Cosmic becomes more and more a part of life, and the whole act of service shifts to a higher level. The connection to the Master Within allows the energies of the Heart to be expressed. The mystic becomes guided by the Master Within through the ways of the Heart, and uses the personality instrument as needed to inspire, lift and aid. This can only be achieved through time but is certainly a fine and necessary quality that equips one for service in the mundane world.

Collective Service

The third factor is *collective service*. As the desire to serve develops, there is a growing desire to come together with people of like mind and similar aspirations. This is

reflected in the many religious and mystical organisations that have emerged over the millennia. Each formed its own unique methods of serving humanity, with certain individuals being recognised as truly representative of their organisation through the service they give to humanity. While these individuals are few and far between, they are examples from which the aspiring modern mystic will take lessons. This is the value of group work in its influencing aspect between its members.

Group work means collective service, and in this higher type of service, mystics are not doing things of themselves, based on the capacity of their own personality. They are acting as components of a collective, parts of a group; and the divine Cosmic influence moves each of them individually in such a way that the action of the whole group produces one united service effect. We might make the analogy of the group being like a hand and the fingers representing the individuals of which it is composed. A lone mystic cannot direct the hand, but collectively there is an accomplishment that none on their own could either see or achieve.

When Jesus, a wonderful example of service, said *“Where two or more are gathered in my name...”* he sounded the call to group work, and to united, collaborative action. What is certain is that the type of service that one is inwardly called to do is ultimately determined on how one inwardly stands in relationship to God.



How Will you Start Your Day Tomorrow?

by **Charles de Valois Saint**

Dumont (1961 – 2020)

Grand Councillor Emeritus



Michael is the sort of person some people love to hate. He's always in a good mood and always has something to say. When someone asks him how he is, he repeats the old cliché: *"If I were any better, I would be twins!"* A bit puzzled, I said to him one day:

"How can you be so positive all of the time?" to which he replied with a broad smile: "Each morning when I wake up, I have two choices, to be in a good mood or a bad one. I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I choose to learn from it and not be a victim. Every time someone complains, I choose to point out the positive side of life. It's your choice how you live life. When you remove the superfluous, every situation is a choice. You choose how to react to situations. You choose how people affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or a bad mood."

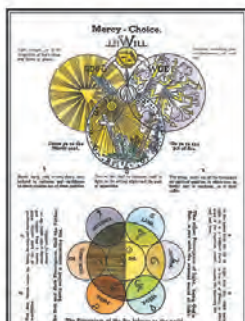
And then one day Michael was involved in a serious accident, falling some sixty feet from a communications tower. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, he was released from hospital with metal rods in his back. I saw him about six months after the accident and

when I asked him how he was, he replied: *"If I were any better, I'd be twins. Want to see my scars?"* I asked him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place. The first thing that went through his mind was the well-being of his daughter. Then, as he lay on the ground, he remembered that he had two choices..., he could choose to live or to die and he chose to live. Michael continued:

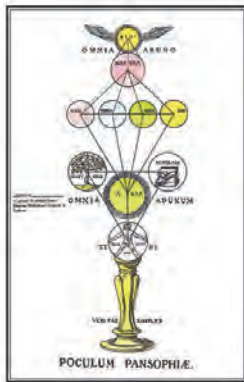
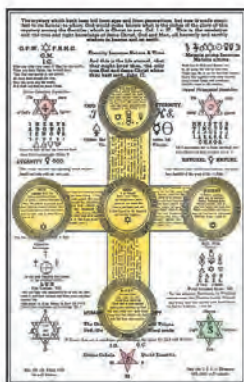
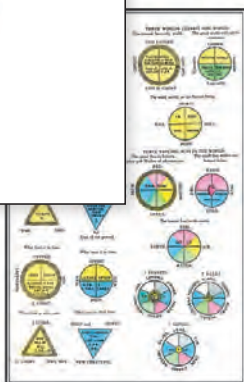
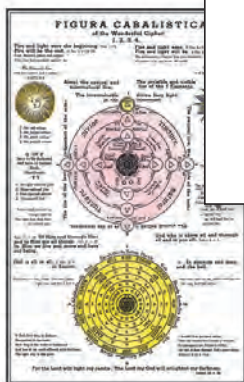
"The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into A&E and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes I read that I was a dead man. I knew I needed to take action. Then a nurse asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes', I replied, and taking a deep breath I said, 'Gravity!' Over the laughter of the staff, I told them solemnly that I was choosing to live and they should please operate on me as if I were alive, not dead."

Michael lived, thanks not only to the skill of the medical staff, but also because of his amazing attitude. Attitude, after all, is everything. So, don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. After all, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.



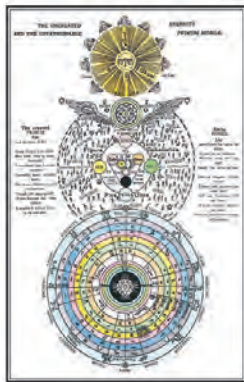


Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians of the 16th and 17th Centuries



This is the first English translation of a rare colour edition of an original German edition of a Rosicrucian pictorial workbook from the latter half of the 18th century. It is a full colour copy signed by Dr H Spencer Lewis on March 22, 1938. Such copies have not been in circulation for over 80 years and are extremely rare. The book was published as a special edition to commemorate the AMORC centennial in 2015.

Available from our online shop at
<https://www.amorc.org.uk/collection>





Life in summer's undergrowth
is a constant hum and whoosh of
flapping wings among myriad
willing participants in the
GREAT DANCE OF LIFE.

