

— ROSICRUCIAN —
BEACON



March 2022, Vol 31, No. 2



Find your Deeper Self

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

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 fully attainable. And it assists you to reach those goals with care and attention to the smallest details.

This deeper part of you is a veritable slumbering genius, eager to help you express your hidden talents with greater refinement and sophistication than you have ever considered possible. And 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 'Master Within', for it has in abundance, qualities of refinement, high purpose and spiritual maturity we would expect only of the most accomplished of people.

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

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



membership@amorc.org.uk

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



@RosicrucianOrderEMEA



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ISSN 0966-033X

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

Greenwood Gate, Blackhill,
Crowborough TN6 1XE
UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: +44-1892-653197
Email: info@amorc.org.uk
Web: www.amorc.org.uk

EDITOR

Bill Anderson

Design and Layout

Cloud White

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Cover spread

“Of dewdrops, worms and wondrous things...”, the European Robin is the most endearing and quintessential symbol of the arrival of spring.





by **Claudio Mazzucco**
Imperator of AMORC

Rosicrucian Spiritual Tradition in a Modern World

Whatever conversation of a philosophical nature we engage in, it is good practice, before starting the conversation, to reflect on the sense and meaning of the words that are about to be used. Taking the word *'spirituality'* for example, it is important to have a clear vision of its meaning within the context of Rosicrucian philosophy. To achieve this, we are going to use *'art'* as a means of gaining a clearer understanding, as the language of art touches many levels, awakening glimpses of truth in those who contemplate on it. I will begin with a few extracts from the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The soul is the perceiver and revealer of truth. We know the truth when we see it; let sceptic and scoffer say what they choose.

By the same fire, vital, consecrating, celestial, which burns until it shall dissolve all things into the waves

and surges of an ocean of light, we see and know each other, and what spirit each is of.

We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul.

When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love

Before the revelations of the soul, Time, Space and Nature shrink away.

--- Emerson's *'Essay IX, The Over-Soul'* ---

Emerson's words awaken in us the idea that whatever we speak of is a vision, not in the sense of something requiring only the eyes to see, but a vision of an





Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)



Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

inner image which reveals itself to those who know how to search for it. Only those images that follow each thought and human expression make possible a first-hand description of the spiritual experience. They must of necessity always be symbolic, evocative and indirect, always suggesting Truth without ever pronouncing it. This is what Spirituality means to Rosicrucians.

Debussy was a member of a branch of the Rosicrucian tradition founded by Joséphin Péladan towards the end of the 19th Century. I am not going to delve into this as I believe it is more useful to highlight certain aspects of Rosicrucian spirituality so you can conclude for yourself the meaning of Debussy's affiliation to such an initiatic school.

A UNESCO Initiative

In 1996 UNESCO, a branch of the United Nations dedicated to education and the development of human abilities, published a paper on a study carried out by eminent scientists and educators of various nationalities. The study looked at how the development of an individual should be in the 21st Century. Known as the *Delors Report*, this study highlighted four essential points which could be called four fundamental pillars for the education of future generations:

- Learning to do.
- Learning to know.
- Learning to live together.
- Learning to be.

From a first analysis of these four points we can conclude that the first two are areas of focus for education, while the third and fourth are elements

that each individual develops mainly within the family environment. In fact, this is how things used to be until the beginning of the 20th Century, when the transformation of contemporary society led the family to abdicate, for a variety of reasons, its fundamental role of preparation of the individual for life, through the affective and social relationships which are typical of a family nucleus. But the reasons for this change are best dealt with by sociologists and anthropologists. What is of importance to us are, however, the last two points: *learning to live together* and *learning to be*.

From a careful analysis, it is clear that these two points are essential for humans to be able to express their true potentials and to live harmoniously with others and their environment. The relevance of these two aspects becomes more evident if we look at recent events in the world, particularly with regard to the environment and indeed the very survival of cultural diversity. It is therefore understandable why *learning to live together* and *learning to be* are such important pillars for human evolution. Without them, we are destined to be plagued indefinitely into the future by constant conflict with others, both internal and external conflict. And we will be incapable of adapting ourselves to the constantly changing conditions of life, not knowing how to maintain a healthy equilibrium with our environment and fellow human beings.

17th Century Transformation

Let us now jump back in time to the early years of the 17th Century, in particular in the Rhineland-Palatinate region of central Germany. The 17th Century as a whole was a dramatic time in European history: it began with the burning of Giordano Bruno,

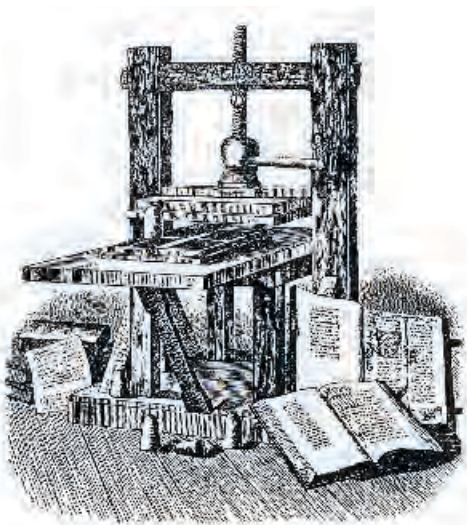




Giordano Bruno.

martyr of free thought and a symbol for all who sought their own Truth through personal knowledge and experiences of the Sacred.

Bruno's thoughts spread across Europe, particularly to Britain and Germany, influencing many prominent thinkers. Europe in the 17th Century underwent several periods of great transformation of thought and consciousness, influenced by Copernican theories: from the profound transformation of scientific thought in the works of Galileo Galilei, Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton and several others, to the discoveries that radically modified the theologically-led notion held until then of Man's pre-eminence at the centre of the Universe.



Gutenberg printing press.

With navigation and the discovery of the New World barely 120 years before 1600, the rapid dissemination of philosophical and scientific thought was now possible, thanks to the initial development of the printing press in Gutenberg in the 15th Century, followed by advances in mass-printing techniques. Such were the essential factors leading up to the rapid transformation that took place during the 17th Century.

But with major changes came major crises as well. Northern Europe was under the influence of the Protestant Reformation which introduced the need for followers outside the clergy to become aware of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments without the intermediation of a priesthood. Indeed, Luther had claimed that every Christian should be his or her own priest. And so it happened that over a mere few decades, literacy in northern Europe and Britain had become superior to that of southern Europe. In this context the Palatinate in Germany under Protestant influence, enjoyed a particular form of freedom, for the pre-eminent ruler of the region, *Elector Friedrich V* of the *Holy Roman Empire*, was considered modern by many of the learned of the time. Unlike many other powerful leaders, he had an open mind and was receptive to new ideas.

Within a brief period then, the Palatinate became a centre where many cultural and esoteric forms converged, such as the Kabalistic, alchemical



Friedrich V Elector Palatine, and briefly the King of Bohemia.





Above: Engraving by Balthasar Moncornet of Friedrich and Elizabeth as King and Queen of Bohemia, 1620

Right: Elizabeth Stuart.



and hermetic currents, as well as mathematicians and scholars of medicine, mechanics and astronomy. He gathered together these areas of learning into a single centre of development for education and knowledge in the broadest sense of the term.

It was during this period when the idea began to develop among the learned of Europe that the world was about to witness the realisation of a Utopia on earth. This was reinforced by the fact that Friedrich V would be marrying *Elizabeth Stuart*, daughter of *King James I* of Britain, who, with his military might, could have guaranteed the security of the reign of Friedrich. But this did not happen. Regarding the marriage between Friedrich and Elizabeth, the Shakespearean company took to the stage in Germany with various productions in honour of the royal couple. Shakespeare and his company, as will be discussed later, very likely played an important role in the genesis of Rosicrucianism.

The Rosicrucian Manifestos

Within this climate of intellectual, artistic and spiritual rejuvenation, full of new hope, ideas and projects, the first Rosicrucian Manifesto entitled the *Fama Fraternitatis* ('*Fame of the Fraternity*') was published in 1614. It was followed in 1615 by the publication of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* ('*Confession of the Fraternity*'), and in 1616 by the *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*. In 1624 Paris awakened to a display of posters plastered on the walls of the main churches of the city, reading as follows:

We, the Members of the Principal College of the Rosy-Cross, have taken up residence, visible and invisible, in this city, by the grace of the Most High, towards Whom are turned the hearts of the Just.

We demonstrate and teach to speak, without books or signs, to speak the different languages of the countries in which we dwell, to save mankind, our fellow-men, from error and from death.

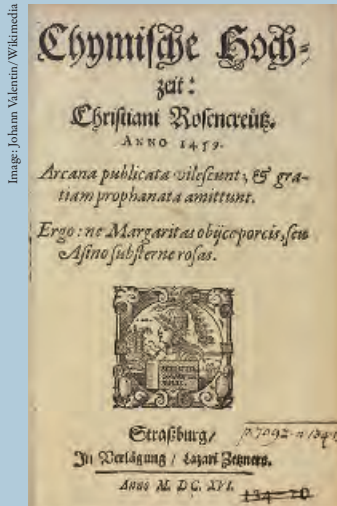
If someone wishes to see us merely out of curiosity, he will never make contact with us. But if his desire truly brings him to register with our Fraternity, we, who base our judgement on thoughts, will show him the truth of our promises. For this, we do not make known the place of our stay in this city, since the thoughts united to the real desire of the seeker will lead us to him and him to us.

Scholars attribute the first two manifestos to a circle of eminent thinkers at the university of Tübingen, known as the '*Tübingen Circle*', while the *Chymical Wedding* is attributed to Johann Valentin Andreae. The *Fama* tells the story of the legendary founder of the *Brotherhood of the Rosy-Cross, Christian Rosenkreutz* (CRC). It explains how CRC reached a high level of spiritual and philosophical preparation through a long journey that took him as far as the Middle East and possibly southern Arabia, and then by way of North Africa, Spain and France, a return to Germany where he created a monastic Order, the *Brethren of the Rosy Cross*, consisting of only a few individuals.

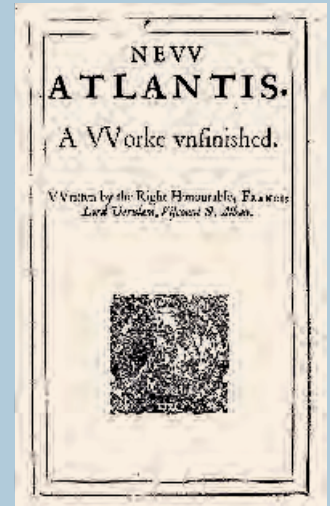




Fama Fraternitatis.



Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz.



The New Atlantis.

In essence, the *Fama* not only made people aware of the existence of the Order, it also hoped to bring together wise men to expand the boundaries of knowledge for the benefit of humanity as a whole. The story is almost certainly an allegory and its message was meant to be understood symbolically, not literally. The very image of CRC is a symbolical one and should be understood in esoteric, rather than exoteric terms.

The *Confessio* complements and completes the *Fama*. On the one hand it emphasises the 'regeneration of Man' and society, and on the other hand it highlights one central point, that the Rosicrucian brethren possesses a 'philosophical science' that enables such regeneration to occur. The *Confessio* was aimed primarily at seekers who were keen to participate in the work of the Order and for the benefit of humanity.

The *Chymical Wedding* is an allegorical description of an initiatic process with many alchemical references on the transformation of Man. It is about a marriage between a prince and a princess, and as a guest, CRC narrates the events that take place in the castle during the seven days of celebration. There is no need to delve too deeply into the three manifestos here, as it is a topic well catered for by academic research, most of it freely and easily available.

Rather, we will look at the fact that these manifestos gave rise to more than four hundred publications, some of which were highly critical of the brotherhood, while others were commending and humbly requesting admission of their authors. Their impact on the world of culture and thought, was very significant. One has only to think of Isaac Newton, the father of modern physics. When he died, he left in his library 30 books on chemistry and physics, but 130 books on alchemy and hermetic philosophy, among them being were the *Fama* and the *Confessio*.

René Descartes may have travelled to the *Dutch Republic*, partly to escape persecution by the Inquisition in France and to enjoy the greater personal freedoms available in the republic. But another reason was to attempt to find the Rosicrucians. Spinoza too was associated with the movement, though with the advent of the *Thirty Years War* (1618-1648), everything was swept away, leaving nothing but death and destruction from which Europe recovered only slowly and with much suffering. The Rosicrucian movement was, however, active in the Dutch Republic and Britain and, in 1693, some Rosicrucians, led by Grand Master *Johannes Kelpius*, sailed to the New World with the intention of building a Utopia as suggested in Francis Bacon's 1627 book '*The New Atlantis*.'



Image: Ephrata Cloister/Bestbubrian/Wikimedia



Image: Ephrata Cloister/Doug Kerr/Wikimedia



Far left: *Grounds of Ephrata Cloister*
Left: *Printing Press of Ephrata Cloister*

Utopia

We are accustomed to thinking of a Utopia as being synonymous with a fantasy-land or unrealistic ideas about some idyllic state. The word *'utopia'* derives from the Greek word *'outopos'*, meaning *'no place'*, *'nowhere'* or a *'place that does not exist.'* In *The Republic*, Plato indicates in a subtle way that *"...Utopia is a form of Ideal Society. Perhaps it is impossible to achieve it on Earth, and yet a wise man must place all his hopes in it."*

An eminent Sufi thinker once said that for as long as humans seek Jerusalem as a place on a map, there will never be peace in the Holy Land. These words highlight the inherent nature of a Utopia, *'a place that does not exist.'* We have been taught that reality is made only of things that can be seen and touched. As the saying goes, we are modern people *'with feet on the ground.'* However, at the beginning of the 20th Century, science itself started dismantling this rigid

and arid concept of reality, replacing it with a concept more elastic and pliable due to the presence of the human consciousness. And so it is that Rosicrucians have always maintained that *'thoughts are things.'* Harmonious thoughts strengthen us and bring us well-being; discordant thoughts can lead to our death.

Rosicrucians have always maintained that 'thoughts are things.'

Thought and human consciousness are part of a dimension that is capable of acting upon what we interpret as *'reality.'* And if we think about this honestly a while, how many things from our present experience of reality are none other than the *'pre-reality'* thoughts that resided in the minds of enlightened individuals of the past? Utopia is for us therefore an *'internal condition.'* It is a dream, an aspiration written in the hearts of men, women and children, being the meeting point of the many different phases of reality that exist. Rosicrucians established themselves in the state of Pennsylvania in the late 17th Century, forming a community called *Ephrata*, named after the biblical town of Ephrath in the pre-Roman province of Judea. In Ephrata the Rosicrucian community quickly developed printing facilities where important documents, some even about the European colonisation of the Americas, were being printed.

Many soldiers wounded during the American Civil War 170 years later, were cared for by members of this community; and those who were dying were



This drawing is believed to be of Johannes Kelpius (1667 - 1708) - done in 1705 - three years before his death at the age of 41. Kelpius was the founder of the first community of Rosicrucians to land in the New World. They settled at Germantown in Pennsylvania.





Battle of Hampton Roads, American Civil War, 1862.



Siege of Stralsund (1628), Thirty Years War.

comforted by readings of inspiring words from books and pamphlets printed by the first Rosicrucians in North America. As already stated, in Europe at the conclusion of the Thirty Years War, the Rosicrucian movement gravitated to the relatively greater freedoms of Britain and the Dutch Republic. The Dutch Republic (which became the *Kingdom of the Netherlands* in 1815) was renowned for its great spirit of religious and philosophical tolerance, while Britain was renowned as the country of Francis Bacon

Holland was renowned for its great spirit of religious and philosophical tolerance...

and Shakespeare. It is believed that Bacon had served as Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order at some time during the reign of James I, and may have been its custodian during a quiet phase of its existence after the outbreak of hostilities in the Thirty Years War.

Shakespeare's plays were made up of a few actors who, if not Rosicrucians themselves, were sympathetic to their ideas. And it has even been suggested that some of the Shakespearean plays were either authored by or influenced by Francis Bacon. Towards the end of the

Thirty Years War the *'Invisible College'* was formed in England and subsequently became the Royal Society which was founded on principles well-known to have originated in the *Fama Fraternitatis*, calling together all wise men for the expansion of knowledge. *Isaac Newton* was its president for several years and the Rosicrucian *Elias Ashmole* was another. It is today one of the most reputable and authoritative scientific societies in the world.

But the Rosicrucians, where did they end up? For a few years they remained in a state of secrecy, or *'sub-rosa'*, remaining *'below the rose.'* Nevertheless, the Order continued its activities in Europe until the end of the 19th Century when it resumed its activities together with the Martinist Order and various Masonic rituals disseminated mainly in France, Germany and Italy.

The Salons Rose-Croix

In 1892 Parisians were invited to public events hosted by what was called the *'Salon Rose-Croix.'* What did this and other salons consist of and what relationship do they have with current Rosicrucians? At the end of 19th Century, the West was astonished in the face of new possibilities offered by industrial science. Science triumphed and people felt that with the advent of the 20th Century, modernity would bring them happiness.





Carlos Schwabe's poster from 1892 for the first of Joséphin Péladan's art and music "Salons de la Rose + Croix."



Joséphin Péladan.

Some enlightened minds however..., philosophers, mystics and artists..., were concerned with the prospects offered by this progress. This concern was particularly felt through the *Symbolists*, a movement that gathered together artists of all disciplines.

Joséphin Péladan, organiser of the *Salons* and allied to the Rosicrucian movement, sided with the Symbolists and queried the problem in the following terms: *'The speed of the material world accelerates the interior life. But man, endowed with wings, does he not perhaps have the same heart and the same pain?'* Péladan placed himself at the meeting point between the symbolist and esoteric movements. As an *Artist* he positioned himself in the *Symbolist* movement; as an *Esotericist* he presented himself as an initiate of the *Rosy-Cross*.

His aim was to restore reverence of the Absolute in all its splendour, with Tradition as its base and Beauty an instrument. He saw the Latin civilisation as being in a state of decadence. For him, only the enchantment of art could again save the West from an imminent disaster. He sees art as a tool capable of reversing the trend. The essential activity of the *Order of the Rosy+Cross of the Temple and of the Grail* that he founded, was therefore concerned with the organisation of exhibitions and evenings dedicated to the fine-arts.

The poster made up in shades of blue, evokes the dream. It proposes a hierarchical trinity of



humanity, symbolised by three women. The first woman is chained in muddy waters, looking at a stairway that rises towards the light, decorated with white lilies and roses. She represents humanity longing for a better life, but is chained to the material world. The second woman has just liberated herself from her chains and mounts the first step of the stairway. This represents an initiate on her or his journey towards enlightenment. The third woman, translucent and radiant with light, receives in her hands a heart descending from the sky. This represents the mastery gained by anyone linked to the Divine. Péladan's theory about art is derived from the Rosicrucian formula: *"There is no other Truth but God, there is no other Beauty but God."*

Art is a search for God through beauty. In his work *'How to Become an Artist'*, his theory

Art is a search for God through beauty.

on aesthetics was developed. For him, the mission of art represented the divine order. Art, together with religion, needs to magnify the divine element, enabling others to participate. Its beauty results from the balance between sight and vision. The perfect work is that which brings together all that is perfect, though it is not enough to satisfy the intellect alone.

Péladan assigns Man the status of *'artistic animal'*, believing that there exists in humans an invisible attraction to beauty. This search for beauty is motivated by the nostalgic feelings of the lost harmony that he instinctively seeks in all things. In his book *'Idealistic and Mystic Art'*, he invites the artist to make a reflection. For him, the true artist is one who possesses the ability to listen, through contemplation, to the non-material qualities of objects that enable him to capture the celestial influx of *'the Word'* as the Divine Creator:

Artist..., you know that art descends from heaven, just as life pours from the sun. That there is no masterpiece, that is not the reflection of an eternal idea.

You know, painter or poet that which is defined as abstract. There is a little part of God even in a work of art.

Learn that if you create a perfect form a soul will come to inhabit it. And what a soul, a spark from the Central Fire.

The *Salon* was inaugurated at a special ceremony with music specially composed by *Erik Satie*, a well-known Rosicrucian of his time. This was the environment in which Debussy lived and I am sure you will draw your own conclusions from the association.

Fortunately, we live today in a time of freedom, made possible by men and women of the past who nurtured a utopian dream. I point to the writings of one of these great people, *Jan Amos Comenius*, patron of UNESCO and a supporter of





Eric Satie (1866 - 1925), well-known French composer and pianist of the late 19th and early 20th Century, is widely believed to have been a member of the 'Fraternity of the Rose-Croix of France'. Portrait by Santiago Rusiñol.

the Rosicrucian movement in Europe, whose work re-connects us with the opening words of this article. Modern education is still influenced by Comenius' original guiding principles, and these certainly help people to *'learn to do'* and *'learn to know.'* Sadly, few are today interested in *'learning to live together'* and *'learning to be.'* Cultural and human poverty, often so widespread, clearly demonstrates this.

Furthermore, we live in an era of our human history where the transcendent has been almost entirely removed from our lives. Although this may reassure some scientists who base even their most private moments purely on things that can be seen and measured, on the other hand, it distances them from their true nature, producing the sad results we are witnessing today: a totally unbalanced rapport with the environment; a relationship between individuals which, even when all goes well, is more of a truce than a state of peace..., an incapacity to conceive and dream of a better future.

We believe that *'learning to live together'* and *'learning to be'* are exactly the things that a traditional initiatic Order should be doing. To provide modern people with the appropriate environment and tools

they need in order to develop this ability, people are empowered to become better, more mature human beings, capable of evolving and of grasping more profoundly the true meaning of life, namely to prepare oneself to become the architect of one's own destiny.

Rosicrucianism holds fast to the value of education, in an etymological sense of the word; and it supports the quest for Beauty as a privileged route for reintegration with the Divine. Rosicrucians maintain that this quest is essential, especially in an age such as the present, where the illusion of happiness obtained exclusively through scientific and technological progress without limits, is fast failing.

We, Rosicrucians of the 21st Century, are more than ever convinced that education can truly save humanity from its own entrapments. In an etymological sense of the word, education, as mentioned earlier, ensures that people discover within themselves true knowledge, recognising in their fellow humans, as they recognise in themselves and the universe, Divine nature in action, expressing all the potentiality of the soul that manifests in all people.

We are children of the absolute and carry within us evidence of this inheritance.

We are children of the absolute and carry within us evidence of this inheritance. *"We have rejected that which the beast within us wanted, and we want to find the Man wherever he may have been lost."* With these words, the French politician and writer André Malraux, was emphasising that the moment has arrived when new answers are needed, and these can only come from a renewed vision of Reality. Rosicrucians believe that an initiatic order in particular, as with art in general, has the purpose of helping people to reach this new vision. Perhaps this is Utopia...? Certainly it is in her that we place all our hopes. Can we do otherwise?





by **Harry Allsworth**

Interconnectedness

Have you ever had one of those days where nothing seems to be going right, where deadlines mysteriously converge, traffic lights are always red and lift doors close as you approach them? I'm sure you have and you'll understand how I felt as I found myself sitting alone in my cubicle late one summer afternoon in the large open-plan office where I earn my living. Long after everyone had gone home I sat there feeling decidedly sorry for myself and more than a bit angry that I hadn't completed the things I should easily have accomplished that day.

In my negative self-reflection I felt that every effort I made to move things forward was being frustrated by delays and unnecessary obstructions. My mind rushed from one memory of disappointment to another in what seemed an endless cycle of unforeseen problems, unhelpful people and coincidences that seemed to have made a mockery of my plans. "*Why me!*" was the sorry-for-myself cry.

Most people have such moments from time to time, sometimes during the day, but also late at night when the mind can't settle and keeps us awake with self-tormenting reflections about every trivial thing in God's creation. And when we're deep in such gloom it's easy to become caught in a whirlpool of negativity that can overwhelm our normal critical abilities and make us unable to break the cycle of negative thoughts, self-criticism and self-doubt.

If you recognise some of this, take heart, you're not alone, for many well-known people have, through the ages, been known to have been plagued at times with self-doubt and negative thoughts: William Blake, Buzz Aldrin, Hans Christian Andersen, Winston Churchill, Charles Darwin, Abraham Lincoln, Michelangelo, Isaac Newton, and many more. However, they all achieved great things in spite of, or maybe even because of, such negative moments, and that should give us hope when we face similar circumstances. If others fall face in the



mud and manage to pull themselves up and continue as though nothing untoward has happened, then we can too. But how do we accomplish this? How should we react when we find ourselves falling into that negative state of mind that brings on all the *'demons of the mind?'* Is there an emergency procedure we can follow when we're at our lowest ebb? Happily there is!

Pull Yourself Together

When we're down and at our whiniest about our circumstances, some well-intentioned people will gruffly say *'pull yourself together!'* as though a few kind words wouldn't have been better under the circumstances. Such advice so often ignores the basic mechanisms of our brains that have evolved over millions of years to recognise patterns in the world around us. So, when, through our own careless thinking, our minds have been given the task of finding every negative thing in sight, it does an extraordinarily good job of it. It can even create negative outcomes that don't even exist yet! So how can we free ourselves from this state of mind? Especially, how do we stop having negative thoughts when we know perfectly well they will merely spawn more of the same?

I find the most critical step in escaping such a mental state is one of self-recognition.

I find the most critical step in escaping such a mental state is one of self-recognition, namely recognising and becoming aware that my mind is actually actively seeking negativity around me, when it could just as easily be actively seeking positive situations instead. Then, rather than encouraging the mind to continue its self-defeating task of finding more and more negativity, I try to enter a state of neutrality, so-to-speak put the mind in neutral and allow life to coast along a while *'without me.'* As I do this, I naturally gravitate to a state of less and less obsessive thinking, less and less harsh judgement being delivered by my chattering brain about the rights and wrongs of whatever bothers me so much. Eventually I try to enter a state of no-thought, where my mind enters the closest I can to a state of true nothingness. I try, metaphorically, to *'step off the world'* a while as I blank

my mind and give up everything to a *'higher power.'* That's the start of my emergency procedure; that's how I begin when I wish to stop the destructive cycle.

It's like a resetting of the mind, you know..., pressing and holding one of those buttons on your electronic watch until it's ready to have the time reset. The inner silence that accompanies a blanking of the mind is precisely what we need in order to re-sensitise ourselves to the presence of our deeper self; and through that awakening, start looking in a different, more positive direction. Of course, thinking of nothing is, on the surface, quite a difficult task as it entails not thinking at all; and how do you do that? Well, even if you can't fully accomplish it, the mere act of trying, will, at least partially, assist in resetting your mind and making it *available* to think about better things.

Illumination

Nevertheless, returning to my cubicle in the office, sitting there dejectedly that clear summer's evening, I started trying to think of nothing just as the fading sunlight started to reflect from a window in a tall office building behind me and illuminated parts of the large open-plan room in a seemingly random manner. It was a surreal experience, as though time were slowing down just for me. It truly felt as though something were happening just for my benefit, and I was astounded at the sudden clarity and beauty of everything.

As I looked more closely at the light and dark patches in the large room, the areas being exposed by the light were anything but random for me; there was purpose and beauty everywhere. The photographs of families on the desks of my work colleagues were brightly illuminated showing the smiles and love within each frame. I began to follow the light beams as they slowly moved around the room and noticed how each item touched by the sun's rays seemed to be linked in some way with the previous item, and leading on to the next one as if they were related to each other, one giving birth to the next, each one connected to its predecessor and its successor in a long line of cause and effect.

Following the light in this silent manner, I could see how people in the office shared many things. More than just trivial tasks, they shared aspirations, and above all, they shared the many small islands of love they had



experienced. I forgot time, forgot where I was, as I began to feel linked by deeper shared values that made all of us more like a big loving family than a random group of people sharing a miserable and stressful work environment.

As I wondered what would be illuminated next I suddenly felt a warmth on my back and knew that I was now the focus of the light. At that moment I realised that instead of being held back, I was simply a part of a much larger pattern where, even if I didn't appreciate it at the time, I was an essential cog in a big and wondrous machine, a much greater whole than I had ever dared believe possible. And the best thing about this was that I felt a deep purpose behind that *'whole'*, even though I couldn't understand what it was. All seemed so clear at the time, though I can't today explain what it was other than the profound sense of connectedness that so utterly consumed me.

That annoying red traffic light that delayed me from getting to work on time that morning, the old man driving erratically at a snail's pace which made my two-minute delay to my desk turn into 10 minutes..., all that and much more had a purpose, and I saw that the

I felt a deep purpose behind that 'whole', even though I couldn't understand what it was.

purpose was good and in fact was precisely as it should be; no faster, no slower, no need to change anything one way or the other, all was working to perfection just the way it was meant to happen. The only thing that was missing that hectic morning was my trust in allowing a greater plan to unfold. Truly there is a greater purpose behind everything, even when we can't see it, but maybe *especially* when we can't see it.

So the next time you're confronted by a *'bad day'*, take time to relax a while, step off the world and blank your mind with a feeling of gratitude and wonder for just a few minutes. There's a whole universe out there working for you, making things happen just the way they were meant to. Our thoughts and experiences are all interconnected and we can, and should, design our lives to seek the positive and creative, and shun and discard the negative and destructive..., always!





Life and the Journey into Self

by Lynn Hodgkinson

There comes a time in the lives of many people when they feel the right moment has come to *'change gear'*, to stop for a moment and think about a new direction. This point in a person's life often prompts us to begin gently on the slopes of meditation or other contemplative methods and, eventually, it may lead us to the portals of a mystical or spiritual tradition.

The essence of any esoteric tradition worth its salt may be summarised as follows: *any sincere quest for the understanding of Self, journeys from the outside and travels inward.* The clamour of the physical world demands that we seek answers *'out there'*, that we assign blame for our misfortunes to something or someone other than ourselves and, that we can only be complete if we attract approval from those around us or, on the other end of a social media conversation. If we truly desire to scale the limitless heights of our inner landscape, the vast *'universe within'*, and discover our oneness with the Whole, we must get the full measure of the person who is operating in the world and



responding to its events. Who are you? We can't hope to understand or navigate the 'outer' until we have thoroughly grasped the 'inner' and begun to know ourselves.

When you look into a mirror, what do you see? You are looking at the embodiment of all the natural and universal laws which govern your entire existence. As you come to know yourself, you become acquainted with more than your individual entity, for you are a Cosmos.

Character

It has been said that any journey begins with the first step; so begin with your character, the outward impression you make on others. Character is constantly becoming, thanks to the influences acting upon us on our path through life. It also seems to be the outer aspect of something deeper within us. It gives shape and expression to the personal ideal or standard which animates us. Yet this ideal or standard is always changing, even imperceptibly, as each day passes.

"Character is the conscious code of thought and practice..., emotion and action..., which the school of personality has established for one and which the outward traits emulate as an ideal." -- (sourced from an old lesson in the Rosicrucian archives.)

Personal evolution is about learning to analyse and assess which traits are right, and which need to be modified or abandoned, and that requires a closer look at the Personality which sets the inner standard and is the force which lies behind the outer expression of our character.

Personality

Personality may be revealed or veiled. It is the subtle quality of the inner person that may only reveal itself at certain times. People sometimes surprise us. The question is: does personality change too? Or, as we evolve, is our 'inner school' simply choosing to select a different kind of standard with which to express itself?

Meditating on our personal journey through life, and our responses to it, can throw up some revealing new knowledge about ourselves. As our reactions to events and people around us evolve, we can perhaps sense that something is changing within us. In this way, the outer world is important for our evolution, though it is not the summum bonum of our existence.

Life is the tool and catalyst for inner growth. Every person we meet, every emotion we feel, every decision we make is simply the outer manifestation of an inner process. Learning to recognise patterns and cycles in our journey through life can help us to navigate the distracting storms or the darkness of the valleys. The theosophical writer, Mabel Collins, wrote:

"...the entire true meaning of earthly life consists only in the mutual contact between personalities and in the efforts of growth. Those things which are called events and circumstances and which are regarded as the real contents of life – are in reality only the conditions which make these contacts and this growth possible." -- from 'The Story of the Year: A Record of Feasts and Ceremonies' published by George Redway 1895

Mysticism and Science

The deeper, immaterial levels of ourselves are elusive to the objective world and to our objective thinking. Science leads us to the brink of realisation but stops just when we try to lift the veil in our wonderment and awe. Therefore, a new method of research and discovery is required. This is the moment when a person's mystical journey of exploration and discovery begins. It is here that the path begins to divide between mysticism and those areas of science which resist recognising anything which lies beyond the visible plane.

The deeper, immaterial levels of ourselves are elusive to the objective world and to our objective thinking.

Here in the 21st Century, times are changing. The pioneering spirits of science are now increasingly recognising the existence of often unseen yet indisputable causes behind most of the effects we encounter in the world. However, as long as we continue to limit our exploration to the physical plane, our journey of discovery is impeded. We cannot rely purely on our objective senses to discover the immaterial. We must turn to our unseen but ever-present helper: *Consciousness*.





Consciousness and the Unity of All Things

Both the material and the immaterial worlds have one thing in common: they both inherently possess the quality of natural and universal laws. This can also be described as *'the unity of all things.'* The same laws apply in the physical world as in the non-physical dynamics of the way in which we think, speak and act. Universal laws exist and act within everything, within each of us. If we once more look into the mirror, we are conscious of the entirety of the laws that express themselves through us each and every day. We can witness the all-pervading permanence of all that is, was and will be, no matter how many times its outer form changes.

The universe, through its actions, expresses order

The universe, through its actions, expresses order and intelligence.

and intelligence, and we can learn how to tap into this higher aspect of ourselves. We can make contact with it and give expression to its wisdom. The Rosicrucian meditation techniques and exercises provide us with the map and the compass. Our discoveries in our inner space can then be reflected in our dealings with life and the world around us. In this way, we are not driven by the world, nor tossed about by its tumult: the dynamics of our life emanate from within and are governed by the deeper, wiser, higher self. Moment by moment we are extending our inner keyboard. That is the magic and glory of our human existence.

Man is a microcosm, or a little world, because he is an extract from all the stars and planets of the whole firmament, from the earth and the elements; and so he is their quintessence. -- Paracelsus.



Goethe the Mystic

In 2019, the world celebrated the 270th birth anniversary of a soul-personality who has won acclaim as one of the immortal masters of the written word: *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*.



by **Walter J Albersheim**

The test of time ranks Goethe with great literary luminaries such as Homer, Sophocles and Shakespeare. In countless essays and speeches he has been praised as a lyric poet, a dramatist, novelist, scientist and statesman..., but few have discerned in him for what he really was..., a master mystic! The obvious philosophical and social significance of Goethe's renowned dramatic poem Faust has been widely discussed, but its mystical content has remained almost entirely unrecognised.

One might well ask how Goethe could have been such a giant, a master in so many fields, if it were not for some special faculty of mystical illumination? Great is only he whose work, transcending mere beauty, ennobles us by a reflection of the Light which he received. It behoves us therefore, as students of mysticism, to recognise the mastership of a man who was endowed from birth with spiritual receptivity, knew the Rosicrucian Order and broadcast its truths, even though veiled in poetical form.





Faust and Mephisto by Anton Kaulbach.



1876 Faust, large German edition.



His outward affiliation with mystical organisations may be investigated by biographers and historians but his progress on the spiritual path needs no such studies, for it shines forth from his life's work. A great part of that work is familiar to all well-read people who speak German. Much of it has been translated into English although not even the best translation renders the melodious beauty of a perfect poem which, by-passing our analytical mind, speaks directly to the soul. Whether we read the originals or the translations, we must, however, learn what to look for in order to find his mystical self-confessions. And like all writings of this nature, they elude the casual reader who is not already a seeker.

this vision in full detail some eight years later.

Another sign of linkage to a super-personal intelligence were his sudden flashes of artistic intuition. He tells about poems written at night in a semiconscious daze and finding them complete and perfect in the morning, though scribbled diagonally across a scrap of paper. He even began a poem about the *'Wandering Jew'* by stating that a midnight inspiration compelled him to *'jump out of bed like a madman.'*

With wealth, talent, temperament and good looks favouring him, it was only natural that he enjoyed to the full the pleasures of student life and

Inborn tendencies leading the young poet toward the path are mentioned in Goethe's autobiographical work *'Fiction and Truth from my Life.'* The son of well-to-do, upper-class bourgeois parents, he was a tall, vivacious, good-looking lad, with a precocious gift for languages and for rhyming. He expressed much zest for life and possessed insatiable curiosity. Several extrasensory experiences are recorded, the most striking one occurring in his student days while he was riding away dejectedly after a final parting from his sweetheart, Friederike. Suddenly he saw himself *'not with the eyes of the body, but of the spirit'* returning on horseback, clad in a strange, grey, gold-embroidered suit. Fate, or accident, verified



Goethe in the Roman Campagna.



became involved in many flirtations and amorous attachments. But soon he felt the need to cleanse himself from this social whirl through long solitary nocturnal walks. In *'Wanderer's Night Song'* he exclaims that he is bewildered and tired of joys and sorrows alike, and prays for *'sweet Peace.'* In *'Even Song'* he feels an intimation of profound peace in the sunset on solitary mountaintops. Such physical wanderings eventually leads him to *'The Path.'*

Glimpses of Divinity

Nature worship brings him moments of exaltation when the clouds seem to enfold him so that like Ganymede, the cup-bearer of the gods, he feels himself carried up as on eagle wings to the bosom of a Heavenly Father. But such raptures do not last and give way to deep despondency and, eventually, to the *'Dark Night of Despair'* which comes to every mystic, and becomes recognised.

In the *'Harper's Song'* he cries out against the divine powers which allow people to sin but then metes out punishment for a guilt they are too weak to

avoid. Again, as Prometheus, he rebels against the gods who demand worship from men whom they doom to misfortune and death. He refuses to bow to fate and resolves manfully to shape his own destiny. Later he realises that the seeming injustices of one lifetime may be resolved in a new life.

In his *'Song of the Spirits over the Waters'* he likens earthly life to water that rains down from heaven, flows along on earth for a while and then evaporates back to heaven, undiminished though invisible and impalpable, to start a new cycle of existence. Having regained confidence in life and mankind, he calls upon man to be *'noble, helpful and kind'*, and to exemplify in himself the qualities which he formerly ascribed to imagined divinities. At about this period of life, at the age of 35, an age so significant to mystics, he seems to have found contact with Rosicrucians.

In a fragmentary epic entitled *'The Mysteries'*, he tells of a pilgrim impelled toward his travels from on high. Lost at night in a mountain wilderness, he finds shelter in a monastery. The cloister door is adorned



Top Left: Goethe, sketch, Sternbrücke in Weimar.

Top Right: Goethe, sketch, Faust and Erdgeist.

Bottom Left: Goethe, sketch, 1810, Monolith, Central Bohemian Uplands.

Bottom Right: Goethe's notebook from studying Judaeo-German, 1760.

Opposite page: Goethe in 1828, by Joseph Karl Stieler.



with a cross and roses. The legendary tale breaks off abruptly. Why was it not completed? Did the poet himself remain at the outer gate of the Order, without knowledge of its inner nature, or did he find that true mysteries can only be intimated to the multitude by fragmentary hints?

The second reason seems the more likely one, because in the introduction to *The Mysteries* Goethe warns us that the path might seem to lose itself in the bushes, intentionally, and that none could puzzle out its meaning merely by mental effort. Clearly, he implied that each of us must find his or her own experience to progress. While association with Rosicrucian mystics undoubtedly helped Goethe in his life's quest, it offered no shortcut to salvation for him any more than it does today for other students of the mysteries. He kept on searching and studying the wisdom of all cultures and times, especially those of the East. He wrote ballads about Hindu legends, and an entire book of verse, named '*West-Eastern Divan*', in the style of the Persian mystic-poet Hafiz.

Freedom from Doubts

At long last, 30 years after writing '*The Mysteries*', Goethe could proclaim that he had attained the '*Golden Dawn of Illumination*.' This confession is hidden away among the orientalisating Divan series. Like *The Mysteries*, it is prefaced by a warning and addressed to the Wise only, not to the jeering crowd. The flame of a candle shining through a night of earthly love, beckons him on to Greater Light and Greater Love. He praises the living soul that like a moth is drawn to, and finally consumed by, this flaming Greater Light so that it loses its mortal identity. The poem closes on the triumphant note:

Until you have attained this..., to become
[evolve] by dying..., you are but a dull guest on
a dark Earth.

The injunction '*Die and Become!*' is often quoted but rarely understood. I myself, although loving Goethe since boyhood, had to read the verses many



times before their meaning dawned on me. Fortunately, the poem is written not only for those who, like the poet, have experienced '*Flaming Death*' (they no longer need its challenge) but to all of us who long for this experience, knowingly or unknowingly.

After this poem was completed, one senses that Goethe is free from doubts and worries. He scoffs at fear about the transitory nature of earthly life, exclaiming: '*We are here to eternalise ourselves.*' Yet he does not retire into an ivory tower but stresses instead one's duty to put one's shoulder to the wheel on behalf of the common good.

Let Man bestir himself while it is Day [for] the
Night will come when he may work no more.

His manifold activities included those of Minister of State, Theatre Director, Court Poet, scientist and dramatist. He was the '*Olympian*' whose presence was sought by visitors from all over the world.

Unavoidably, the poetic works of a man so sure of himself lack the passionate appeal of those written when he was a struggling and erring youth: we cannot feel kinship with One too high above us. Goethe no longer wrote romantic poetry, becoming instead the protector of such young romanticists as Lord Byron and Victor Hugo. However, some of his last verses were pure gems of wisdom, condensed into proverb form. And so, toward the end of his long life he could declare:

Throughout the infinitely many-fold and ever-
changing cosmic cycles, Joy of Life streams
forth from all created things, from the mite as
from the giant Sun. And all this struggle for
existence is Rest Eternal in the Lord.

Verily, one who has attained such serenity is a Master mystic. The poetry of his old age may no longer appeal to the uninitiated, but his life itself is a work of art, a tale of seeking and finding, of the good fight unto victory. May it spur us on to equal effort and equal reward!





by **James Wilson**

Our Beautiful World

“Everything has beauty,
but not everyone sees it.”

Confucius

I would like to share with you an exercise I'm fond of doing. Unfortunately I don't do this exercise often, as it requires one to sit comfortably outdoors for a period of time, and in our frustrating British climate it is a rare occasion when it's both dry and warm enough to do so! However, please indulge me and imagine that I am sitting on top of Malling Down, my favourite spot here on the South Downs of Sussex. This exercise is best done from a good vantage point. I make myself comfortable and begin to breathe fully in and out, holding the breath for a short period and then slowly releasing it and willing myself to relax more and more with each exhalation.

I do this for a few minutes and then begin the exercise. It's a very simple exercise because it involves only looking, or should I say '*seeing*.' I begin by looking out to the horizon and then bring my gaze steadily back and take in the landscape from the furthest point I can see, back to the hill I'm sitting on. I look carefully at the way both nature and humans have shaped this landscape over time. I look at the contrast of form and colour between the natural environment and the towns and villages. I see the river and reservoir, the roads and pylons. I take in the woods and far hills of the North Downs as well as the farmyards and ploughed fields. I try to be completely non-judgemental when I see something that doesn't



appeal to my sense of aesthetics..., what may be termed a *'blot on the landscape.'* Instead I try to think about the human achievement behind it.

Having spent some time looking at the wider environment, I then begin focusing my attention on my more immediate environment. I begin to look at the individual trees and shrubs around me, the flowers on the hillside and man-made structures such as fences, gates and water troughs. I watch the cattle and the sheep and, if I have my binoculars with me, I take a closer look at the birds and butterflies that are resting or feeding nearby. I try and take in as much detail as possible, all the time looking at tones and shades of colour, the light and shadows, texture, form and even the 'shapes' of the spaces in between the various solid objects. The idea is to see what I would not ordinarily see if I were just walking along this hilltop, glancing casually from side to side.

For the final part of the exercise I begin to look at the micro-environment that is most immediate to me. In other words, I begin to take a very close look at the world that is within just two feet from where I'm sitting. Being very careful not to cause too much disturbance, I start to gently explore the long grass around me. I notice the different varieties of grasses with their long and graceful stems and perfectly formed seed heads. I note the way the grass moves in the gentle breeze before I part it, take a closer look and wonder at the tiny size and diversity of the creatures that live in



this particular habitat. By simply prying the grass apart, I have discovered a whole new micro-universe. If I am fortunate, I have remembered to bring my magnifying glass so I can explore in even more detail this tiny universe and the life forms that inhabit it.

Feeling Beauty

A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul. -- *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* --



What is the point of this exercise? Well, absorbing oneself in nature is immensely relaxing and uplifting, but endlessly fascinating too. Also, how many of us can say that we truly see the things around us? How often do we take the time to take in so much detail? To do so not only opens the eyes but also opens the heart to the beauty that is all around us. When I practise an exercise such as this, my mind is absorbed with thoughts of the wonder of creation and my heart is filled with higher emotions. I find myself contemplating the universal forces inherent in all things and I can feel, not just see, a beauty that is not ordinarily experienced. There is no doubt in my mind and heart at such times as these that an attunement is taking place, an attunement with some power that is within us and all around us. It is a power that is ineffably beautiful, peaceful, graceful and sometimes overwhelming.

I feel intuitively that during such moments I experience just a very small proportion of the beauty and peace that could be obtainable by us. However, it is enough to lift me and temporarily release me from the usual mundaneness of life. It is also enough to enhance an ever-increasing awareness of the divinity behind all life and particularly within my own being. It is a mere hint, a subtle suggestion, but it is there nonetheless. To contemplate such things and to try and attune with the higher aspect of ourselves and the beauty and peace inherent within the universe is one of the goals of the Rosicrucian, and we try to do this through practical methods of meditation. Exercises such as the one described can certainly be a form of meditation and can produce surprising results.



I am reminded of an incident from a book I read many years ago, supposedly based on a true story. It involved a little girl growing up in 1930s London who had been abandoned by her parents and taken in by a young man and his mother. Her name was Anna and she had a very intimate and communicative relationship with 'Mr. God.' One day she was walking down the street and was suddenly completely captivated by a patch of rust on some railings. She became very excited by this and stopped each passer-by to show them what she had found. The response was always the same: a pat on the head and a look of pity for this sweet but strange girl.

The reason that Anna failed to get any of the passers-by excited about what she saw was because all they could see was a bland bit of brown rust on some old railings that badly needed a lick of paint. What Anna saw in the rust, however, was a world of sparkling colour, beautiful texture and glistening light. This incident illustrates the difference between merely *looking* as opposed to *seeing* what are to many the hidden beauties of the world.

Creating Beauty

I never saw an ugly thing in my life: for let the form of an object be what it may – light, shade and perspective will always make it beautiful.
 -- John Constable (1776 – 1837) --

Most of the time, the majority of us only casually look at the world around us. Occasionally we may



see something that takes our breath away, such as a beautiful sunset, and we then may feel something of what I have described. However, how often do we actually see such a sunset in this country? Why wait for such moments when, with a little effort, we can actively look for and really begin to see and feel the beauty that is all around us all the time? And of course, beauty is not only to be found in nature.

While we humans are most certainly very capable of creating ugliness in this world, we also have a remarkable capacity to create beauty, and thankfully we don't always have to wait for that dry, warm day to seek it out. Beauty can be found everywhere if we look. It may be found in an art gallery, a museum, an aquarium or any number of places that exhibit natural or human-created works of art. It may simply be found in a vase on a windowsill or in the glossy photographs within the pages of a book. And let us not forget that beauty is not just to be observed with our visual sense. We have four other physical senses with which we can discover the beauties of this world.

Beauty is not only physical, of course. Beauty can also be found in our thoughts, emotions and actions. We could get truly philosophical about it and assert



that beauty is a state of consciousness only and that it exists only in the mind. For the purposes of this article it matters only that beauty is something we experience and surely something we all seek. It is hard to imagine anyone actively seeking to bring ugliness into their life. However, rather than just seek it, can we not also make a point of adding to the beauty of this world? As individuals we can all do this. For instance, do we not contribute to a beautiful world when we plant seeds or young plants and nurture them into maturity?

We can make our homes and our gardens, and even where we work, places of beauty. We can help to keep our natural environment beautiful by avoiding despoiling it in any way. We can add to the beauty of the world by buying only items that are of real quality rather than cheaply and poorly made mass-produced goods, as this creates a demand for craftsmanship. Likewise, supporting businesses that are ethical in their approach and practices helps to create a better and more beautiful world for all.

We can also help add beauty to this world by supporting those outstanding organisations that help protect the environment, help those in crisis or work for peace in this world. Most importantly, we can contribute to the beauty of this world by ensuring that our own thoughts are only for peace and beauty and our conduct admirable in all respects. Look for and enjoy the beauty in this world. Actively seek it and look more closely at the world around you. Seek it everywhere you look, Listen for it, feel for it and, most importantly of all, take time to seek it also within your own being.





Aspects of Silence

by **Sven Johansson**
Grand Master of AMORC

The word *'silence'* has probably more subtleties and meanings than most of us are aware of. Of course we all know a few of the nuances of meaning of this and other related words, but usually we think of just one of them: *'no sound.'* Silence comes from the Latin root *silere* meaning to be silent, quiet, noiseless, not speaking, being verbally inactive, vocally at rest, ceasing to speak, sing, etc. And from *silere* we get, via Old French, our familiar English word *silence*, though sadly devoid of most of the subtlety of meaning it originally possessed.

The concept of silence, and of course the word *silere*, far predates the language of the Romans, and can be traced to a word in ancient Phoenician where it meant not only quietness, but also things like stillness, tranquility, serenity, peace, being content, reconciled and more, indeed much more than merely refraining from making sounds. From that ancient Northwest Semitic word it is believed a similar sounding word found its way into Aramaic, Hebrew and eventually Arabic, and is today



known as *Shalom* in Hebrew and *Salaam* in Arabic, meaning 'peace' or more specifically, the blessing: 'peace be upon you.'

Over the millennia, the original word has altered in pronunciation from language to language, and small nuances of meaning have been added and taken away from it. By the time the word entered the English language, its meaning had already long ago changed from its original intended form to what we commonly attribute to it today, namely, the absence of sound. In the following article, I will discuss three types of silence and end off with a fourth type, seldom used, but more than the other three can be perceived as silence in its ancient, original meaning of quietness, stillness, tranquillity, serenity, peace and even the very threshold of the Abyss of Eternity.

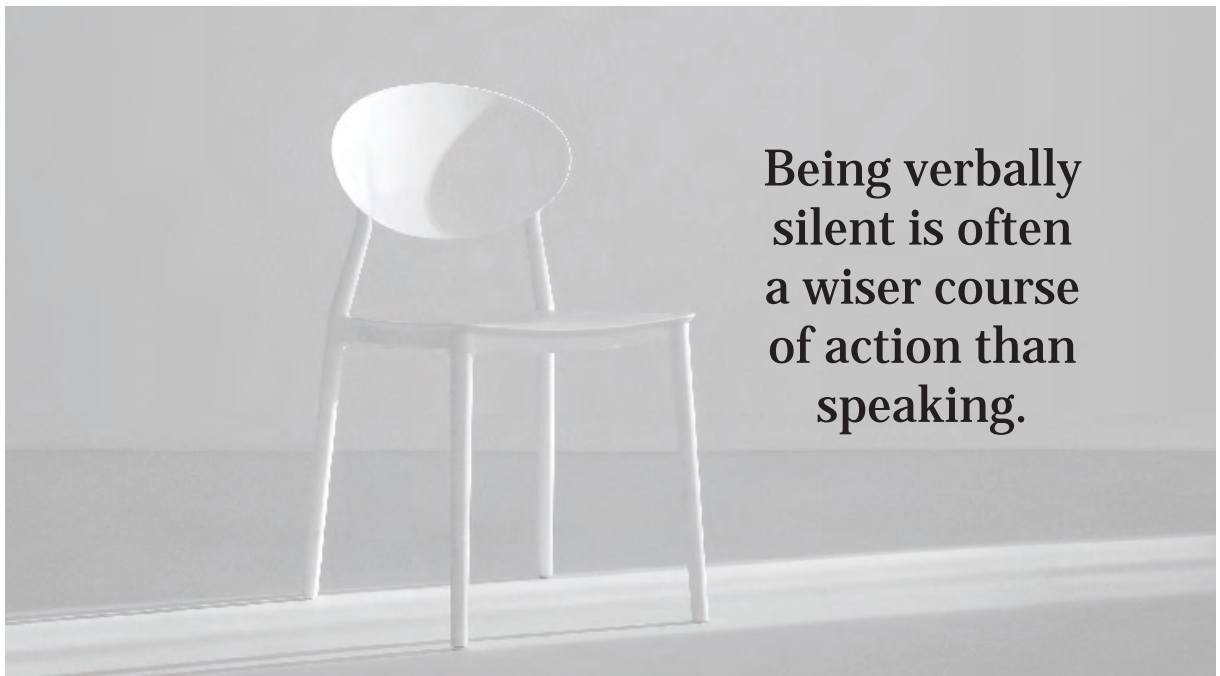
SILENCE OF THE TONGUE

I'll begin with verbal silence. Quite apart from trying to avoid loud, aggressive people and environments, some people wisely try to control their own input into those environments; and that includes restricting the amount of talking they do. That's not to say we need to be meek and mild in all circumstances, but it does mean it is good to remember that being verbally silent is often a wiser course of action than speaking. Of course we needn't avoid

speaking altogether, merely exercise careful control over our words and speak only when the circumstances require it. Being able to speak well when necessary and to be silent when it is better to say nothing, that is the ideal way of conserving and even building up our precious reserves of Vital Life Force. But it is of course not the easiest of things to do, especially when issues we feel passionately about are at stake.

Knowing when not to speak is important and, if you think back a bit over your life, I'm sure you'll agree that speaking in anger and saying things you didn't really mean, was one of the first issues you recognised as a stumbling block to your inner development. We all need to be inwardly restrained from speaking at times when nothing good can come from what we're so eager to say. It's a delicate and refined form of verbal control, knowing when to speak, how to say it best and for greatest benefit and, of course, knowing when to be silent.

For some, especially the gregarious, friendly types, it is often hard to remain silent when silence would accomplish more than talking. No matter how good our verbal intentions are, there are still times when silence would accomplish more than talking. On the flip-side of the coin though, how do we learn to say what needs to be said when just a few supportive words could be of



Knowing when not to speak is important.



immense, even life-altering benefit for someone? That is the delicate balance needed: knowing when to speak and how to say it for the greater good and knowing when to remain silent.

Deliberate, well-thought-out control of our words and how we say them, combined with attunement with the wisdom and experience of our deeper self, are of course the only way forward. It is a true art and comes ultimately only from deep attunement with our soul. Proficiency does not come easily and it demands we deliberately be

The delicate balance needed is knowing when to speak and how to say it for the greater good.

aware at all times what we're doing and what we really wish the outcome to be so we can exercise the required control the instant it is needed. Usually, there is no advance warning and our control has to be like a subconscious reflex action, fully automatic and under the direction of our deeper, more mature, more accomplished, *'inner self.'*

A good place to begin is to resolve deliberately,

though only after careful consideration, to do our best to be as alert as possible always. It is a deliberate, sensitive and refined form of manipulation of awareness, far superior to any of the extremely harmful drugs some people take nowadays to get a boost to their cognitive alertness. It goes much further than this and ultimately remains under our full control. Being conscious of what we're doing or saying at the present moment, what led us to the present moment and, crucially, knowing what we're about to say, is paramount.

When fighter pilots train to become aerial masters of combat, an expression of overriding importance drummed into them is *'situational awareness.'* As mystics, we are training to enhance our situational awareness in the arena of our inner lives, and it behoves us therefore to train ourselves assiduously to be constantly alert to our own motivations, our own thoughts. And that of course spills over into control of our words, knowing when to be silent, when to speak and what to say when we need to speak.

Saying Nothing vs Speaking Up

We can probably all recall instances when we babbled on when it would have been better to say nothing; and other times when it would have been far better to speak up..., but we remained silent! Most of us respect a person who always seems to say the right thing at just the right time and, furthermore, says it with



precision and few words. The ability to speak one's mind intelligently when there is a need to and to remain silent when talking would be counter productive, is a trait most worthy of development.

As with all valuable things in life, it is, however, a very difficult thing to accomplish but one that most assuredly eventually has to be mastered. Most of the time, what we say or fail to say, is affected more by how our egos have reacted to a situation than by pure reason or intuition. And frequently, we leave things unsaid simply because we're too afraid to hurt or offend someone, even though we know it would be better for certain things to be said and for the person to be temporarily shocked at our frankness than to remain silent and for no possible good to come from our

Frequently we leave things unsaid simply because we're too afraid to hurt or offend someone.

interaction with that person. The truth hurts at times, but in some cases that is not a good enough reason to remain silent, especially when a few well-placed comments could have an enormous positive bearing on the lives of many.


A fundamental rule relating to the question whether or not to speak, is to be intelligently informed about what we're about to say. Making our statements on matters with precision and clarity, and avoiding mere waffle and idle chit-chat, is fundamental to our decision whether to remain silent or to speak. Remember how harmful loose and unformed talk can be because of the unquestioning nature in which so many individuals accept information. If inaccurate statements are made, or worse still, if deliberate lies are said, who among the many listeners would bother to investigate further? The sad fact is that very few would, and that is why we all, though especially the media, have such great responsibility to report accurately and without embellishment what we believe to be the truth. Sadly, the internet is awash with both deliberate and innocent though sloppy falsehoods, and many lives each year are harmed by this.

Summing up: it all comes down to a point of judgement in the use of our speech, thinking before expressing our opinions in words, and of always being *situationally aware* of what we've just said and what we feel right about saying next. Above all though, and the one thing which will always cause us to say the right thing at the right time, is to say what we have to say with *kindness*, always! It is an aspect of universal love, and is sure to bring out in us the most beautiful verbal expressions we are capable of.

SILENCE OF THE MIND

The second form of silence is more personal, for it involves silence or rather, stillness, of the mind, denoting a refined control of our mental faculties. Controlling our thoughts is not the same as suppressing them, but it does mean channelling them into the most important things we need to think about. Silence of the mind involves exercising a basic control over the idle wanderings of our thoughts. We've often heard the expression '*thoughts are things*.' It means that thoughts have certain potentialities and that '*wrong thinking*' and





Silence of the mind involves exercising a basic control over the idle wanderings of our thoughts.

'*right thinking*' have definite effects upon our lives and immediate environment which in turn lead to physical consequences. That is not only a Rosicrucian principle, it is accepted by all serious systems of thought.

If thoughts really are '*things*', then they are important primarily because they have value, just as rare metals and stones have value. Would it not be wise therefore to use our thoughts carefully and not waste them? After all, the number of thoughts we will have during our lifetime is limited, and idle thinking or daydreaming *without purpose* is an offence to the self and a failure to exercise silence of the mind. Daydreaming is fine, provided there is a clear purpose to it. But if we allow ourselves to do nothing but idly daydream without purpose and purely as a result of a lack of discipline, we are wasting the life force that animates us. And we are wasting our limited, precious time and efforts with thoughts that should, at the very least, be constructive, creative and possible of being brought to successful fruition of something good and beneficial for as many people as possible.

It may be enjoyable to idly daydream about how great it would be to be wealthy, or to accomplish important things in life; or worse still, how we could have altered history if we had lived in a different era with the knowledge we have today. However, merely daydreaming and doing nothing of a practical nature to implement our thoughts, is not exercising good judgement. What is needed is a deliberate directing of our thoughts, throwing out idle speculation and daydreams about what could never happen in the real world

and replacing them with thoughts specifically intended to bring about a better state of being.

Clearly, it would be far better for us in quiet moments to try and direct our thoughts towards such qualities and ideas as will bring us happiness and contentment, than to idly speculate upon how great life would be if we were suddenly to inherit a fortune. Having a lot of money suddenly thrust upon us would be no guarantee of gaining happiness or inner peace. But preparing ourselves for an elevated mode of existence through the disciplined and channelled form of thinking practised by mystics..., this brings us not only happiness but a supreme sense of fulfilment as well.

Let us therefore *control our speech* and accomplish it by, first and foremost, *controlling our thoughts*. Silence in both cases is often the preferred route, though such silence has meaning only if there is purpose and intent behind it.

SILENCE OF THE WILL

And then there is silence or stillness of the will. Society generally considers self-control and the development of will-power to be important personality traits and certainly there is great merit in this. For only when intelligent people constructively exercise their will-power can society have well-planned and clearly defined directions to follow. One of the better by-products of silence of the will is the ability to direct oneself towards the development of a worthwhile moral character..., moral that is, in the context of our societal and spiritual norms.

Silence of the will is the basis of all control of behaviour and comes before both control of our thoughts and control of our speech. So, while there may be short-term benefits to the wholesale gratification of our desires, the long-term consequences for society as a whole, and indeed ourselves in particular, are harmful. Without a healthy restraint of some of our deeper urges, we run the risk of impinging upon the freedoms of others and indeed of entirely halting our own evolution. Being ruled by an incessant need to gratify every urge we have, no matter how trivial, is an indication of how far we have to go in attaining mastery over our lives.

Physical desires or urges have their proper place in nature and the perpetuation of every species. But for creatures like humans, who generally have well-developed abilities to think, reason and plan for the future, the unthinking physical urges of the body should never become



the dominant purpose of life itself. Silence of the will therefore implies control of the cravings of the physical senses and relegating them to their proper place in the overall scheme of our deeper evolution. Silence of the will is more than merely controlling our thoughts; it means, most importantly, controlling our emotions and the so-called *'natural inclinations.'* These all precede the intellect which in turn precedes speech and action.

Food and drink are essential to the maintenance of life. But while most of us enjoy good food and drink when taken in moderation and at their proper time, devoting our attention and effort solely to the gratification of this one physical appetite has serious long-term consequences; not only because of the obesity it eventually causes but



because of the damage it does to our ability to control our destiny. All urges are directly linked to chemical and hormonal secretions within the body. And while we accept that some of these imbalances are beyond our power to correct, we should do everything possible to employ *silence of the will* to affect our imbalances and to bring them under control. So, by silencing, or at least muting the will in such cases, we are placing our physical desires in their proper perspective. Almost always, those inclinations are mere wants rather than true needs and muting or silencing the will in such cases enables us to fully comprehend and accept that the excessive gratification of our wants and desires is not worthy of our mystical aspirations.

Silence of the will is the basis of all control of behaviour.

An important aspect of silence of the will is the development of *emotional control*. Absolute free reign of the emotions, namely, allowing ourselves to act and react purely as we feel and as our emotions happen to be at the moment, is harmful to our further ability to develop. Every time we allow ourselves to act in this way, we make it just that bit harder to control our lives and considerable effort becomes necessary to undo the inner damage which our unbridled emotional behaviour has caused.

SILENCE OF THE SELF

To sum up..., I have mentioned three forms of silence: *Silence of the Tongue* which depends on *Silence of the Mind* which depends on *Silence of the Will*. All three are important, and many techniques for accomplishing them have been devised over the millennia, many times over, but especially by Rosicrucians. But above and far beyond all these stands *Silence of the Self*, the sort of silence we all strive for when we seek true meditation and attunement with the God of our understanding. Silence of the Self leads to an opening up of the main channel of communication between our outer, mundane self and the infinite sanctity of the Source of all that is. It is by far the hardest to accomplish, yet we can get there eventually if we accept that small steps must at times be taken in order to reach our final destination.

Begin therefore by regularly and deliberately *silencing the tongue* when there is no need to speak..., *silencing the mind* when there is a need to control your thoughts..., and *silencing the will* when there is a need to control your instinctual emotions and urges.

Stepping up from the mundane level of these three areas of control to the level implicit in the final step of *Silence of the Self* is impossible to accomplish in a short time, and probably impossible to accomplish even in a single lifetime. But the simple act of just thinking about *silence* as not merely being the property of *'no sound'* but, more importantly, conveying for us the qualities of *quietness, stillness, tranquillity, serenity* and *peace*, is a good first step to take. And thinking of silence in these terms is a sure way of leading us to the path upon which we will eventually arrive at..., *Silence of the Self*.





Mystical Anguish

by **Martha Folin**

Some experiences are meant to be held close while others, I believe, are meant to be released and shared with others. One evening, while sitting on my porch, I had one of those sharing experiences. As I watched fireflies dodging falling leaves, I contemplated my lovely home, my children snuggled in bed and my faithful canine friend with wagging tail, seated comfortably beside me. Here I was, surrounded by beauty, love and the glorious abundance of Creation. Yet, I felt so sad! Little tears began to trickle softly down my cheek. What is this, I thought? I have nothing to be sad about. There's no crisis in my life, no pain, no lost loved one.

So I decided to meditate on this sadness and, after a moment of silence, the word '*culminate*' came to me. It came so intensely that it was like a searing in my brain, an imprinting on my soul. I could almost hear a voice whispering, "*culminate..., culminate..., culmination is the key.*" I stood up, went into the house and pulled out a dictionary. I would like to share the meaning with you.





Culminate (1) Of a celestial body, to crown, to reach its highest altitude, to be directly overhead. (2a) To rise to or form a summit. (2b) To reach to the highest or a climactic or decisive point, to bring to a head or to the highest point.

As I read and re-read the dictionary definition, I began to understand both the word and the tears. I realised that I had been reviewing the past three days. In my mental meanderings, I had recalled various news broadcasts that told of increased violence throughout the world: wars and bloodshed; outrageous child abuse; rising fear and desperation over unemployment; talk of newer, more sophisticated weapons to kill each other with; starvation, crime, prejudice. I read how a fourteen-year-old boy shot his father and uncle, then hacked their bodies with an axe. I watched a television programme that was supposed to be a satirical comedy but was cruel instead. I had seen a young pup dead in the street, his mother crouched beside him howling with grief as speeding motorist passed. I wish I could say I had heard lots of laughter and seen lots of loving instead, but I hadn't. Instead, I felt inwardly sick, angry and oh so, so sad!

Oneness With Creation

I have been a member of the Rosicrucian Order for most of my adult life, but I have actually been a Rosicrucian in my heart since the day I was born. Rosicrucian friends understand me when I say, in all humility, that I have been

a mystic all my life. For the mystic, there is not just *one life*, there is *all life*. There is not *one creator*, we are *all creators*. When life is lost, a great wrenching is felt deep in one's soul, for it was not just another life, it was a part of one's own life. It makes no difference what form that life was in, it was life.

Pain, sorrow, hunger or fear are not felt by just one person, they are universal.

Pain, sorrow, hunger or fear are not felt by just one person, they are universal. No one hurts alone, hungers alone or dies alone. Somewhere there are mystics who hurt a little, hunger a little, sorrow and die a little with others. Because of their knowledge, they are aware of all things in their world, be they positive or negative. For them, all are one and the same; there is no division, no separation, from all life. That is the view of a mystic.

The great mystic, Jesus, gave us the wisest of words to live by. Many have heard them, but few live them or even truly understand them. True mystics know the immense power behind those simple words, though at times they become frustrated and saddened because it is really so simple. Yet for some, it is so very, very difficult, to *'love one another.'*



If people could just grasp those few, simple words and their true import, our children would not have to grow up with the fear of nuclear annihilation, and all our brilliant minds and talents could be directed towards human welfare, not warfare. There would be no starving people, unless we were all starving. Our humane societies wouldn't have to plead for the end of senseless abuse to innocent animals. Not one child would be battered and bruised by human hands, nor one woman raped. No one would ever need fear another person. No cheating, no lying, no greed, no hate. Just stop and think about it! Can you believe it..., I mean really believe it? Can you begin to imagine what it would be like to live this way? Personally, I stand in speechless awe at the possibilities implied by such humble and simple little words: *'love one another!'*

I stand in speechless awe at the possibilities implied by such humble and simple little words: 'love one another!'

The Battle With Darkness

It is my sincere belief that all true mystics, having reached a spiritual culmination, would agree that the burden is often heavy. For they battle constantly with *'darkness'* and they are not immune to the emotions of anger and resentment towards the human species. The actions of others can cause them to have bouts of great depression and feelings of hopelessness. And it often takes every ounce of vitality offered



them to keep the flame burning. Why some choose not to take a spiritual path or falter along the way is understandable. For in this flawed, physical environment, it can sometimes seem easier to survive if we don't know and don't care.

The mystic's greatest desire is to see the spirit of our higher selves in action all the time, not just some of the time.

Some would ask, *'If it is so painful, is it even worth it? Is it necessary? Moreover, what's my reward..., what do I get out of it?'* Mystics are aware of their *'roles in the play'* and they play them willingly. They know that somewhere, at some moment, they will have awakened a soul, lightened a burden, brought a smile to a sad face, encouraged the faltering or gladdened a heart. Isn't that what it's all about? Doesn't a verse in the Bible use the phrase *'on the arm of a brother?'* Doesn't that really mean to give of oneself? If not one soul consciously chose to walk the path of mystical and spiritual unfoldment, all life would stagnate and be pointless. That makes the act of giving so necessary in my book!

The rewards are numerous, the greatest being the indescribable love and unity with the Cosmic. But seeing a big smile on a little cherub face isn't a bad reward. Or seeing a crippled body healed. Or seeing people *'walking tall'* in the face of adversity. How about seeing kindness in times of sorrow, help when people are in pain? Or seeing the absolute joy that radiates from a healthy, happy animal? These are rewards to the mystic. They are the *'spirit of God'* in action, channelled through our higher selves, to our physical world. The mystic's greatest desire is to see the spirit of our higher selves in action all the time, not just some of the time.

The mystic knows that through some act of kindness, an understanding word, or perhaps a show of spiritual courage..., another Light is born out of the Darkness. Each Light born brings humankind just one step closer to the ultimate culmination of *'loving one another'*, the end of mystical anguish, the beginning of mystical reward.



Islamic Mysticism

by **Bill Anderson**



Sufis performing Sama before Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Auliya. Miniature from the Timurid copy of the Khamsa of Amir Khusrāu. Herat, 1485.

We all belong to a single species today, *homo sapiens*, with perhaps a few percentage additions from other hominin species preceding us, such as the *Neanderthals* and *Denisovans*. We share therefore a long pedigree of evolutionary growth, stretching back at least 800,000 years, both biologically and cognitively, but also less tangibly, *'in the spirit.'* No matter where we come from, what culture we call our own or what belief system we were brought up in or have adopted in our adult years, we all share a broadly similar spiritual filiation when it comes to the disciplined path of *'mysticism.'*



This potential for mystical filiation is ingrained in our very essence. Some believe it exists exclusively because of various common regions in our DNA, and they may be largely right. But for others, while they happily and sincerely acknowledge this fact, up to a point, they also believe that there exists in all people a mysterious faculty of *hidden intelligence* and largely subconscious *life experience* possessing a refinement and sophistication far exceeding any objectively conscious thought processes. And it is this inner intelligence, this *'Inner Self'* which, for them, is the *primary driver* of the physical body we *'inhabit'* for the duration of life on Earth. That is merely another way of saying that all humans, and probably many other life forms too, possess a mysterious quality or driving force called *'the soul'*, a quality which precedes and subsequently succeeds the experience of life on Earth.

In large parts of the world influenced by Western cultural norms and values, the most important influences can be traced to one or more of the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all three of which, in subtle ways, have been influenced by the thoughts and teachings of the golden era of philosophy from ancient Greece. Despite centuries of bitter conflict between these three religions, if we examine the true



*A man holds the hem of his beloved, an expression of a Sufi's agony of longing for the divine union.
From Iran or Central Asia 16th Century.*

spiritual nature of each religion, we find a great deal more that binds them together than separates them. And that applies especially to the expressions of mystical revelation that is found in them all.

Over the centuries, the spiritual beliefs, rituals and practices of the Sufis, a branch of Islam, have inspired poets and artists to create extraordinarily beautiful poetry and art in celebration of the spiritual nature of the deepest part of every human life. Sufis have made extremely important contributions to Islamic art and culture as patrons, artists, builders and poets; and some of the writings from their golden era a thousand years ago, speak of nothing less than the loftiest heights of spiritual attainment.

This article deals with the mystical processes used by one branch of Islam, *Sufism*, and other articles will do the same for Judaism and Christianity. The term *'Sufi'* comes from *'suf'*, the Arabic word for *wool* and refers to an item of clothing once worn by Islamic ascetics. Such clothing is often visible in medieval illustrations of such figures. By wearing such attire, Sufis demonstrated a renunciation of the luxuries of the material world.

From the advent of Islam through to the present, several branches of Sufism and their rituals have coexisted alongside more mainstream, orthodox Islamic practices. Sufism was never a unified movement, but rather a range of beliefs and devotional practices in regions where Islam was the dominant religion. It was widely practised throughout the Islamic world and took a variety of forms ranging from near-total isolation and asceticism to complete integration with the royal court. Sufis served as advisors and spiritual teachers to young princes and were even the founders of certain powerful empires, including the Safavid dynasty in Iran (1501–1722). Illustrations of Sufis, as well as objects used by the followers of Sufism, offer great insights into the beliefs and practices of these mystics.

Path of Purification

Sufi orders still exist today, though several groups and individuals have faced persecution in changing political climates. This includes the forced exile of the Senegalese Sufi saint, *Ahmadu Bamba* (1850–1927) by the French colonial authorities in the late 19th Century, as well as the dissolution of all Sufi orders in 1925 in Turkey by *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, the first president of the Turkish Republic (1923–38). In other cases, shrines and





Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (first president of the Turkish Republic) - while Commander of the Army (1918).

tombs of important Sufi leaders remain popular sites for throngs of devoted visitors seeking spiritual guidance and blessings.

Throughout Islamic history, various orders emerged, including the *Naqshbandi*, *Mevlevi*, *Chishti* and *Bektashi*. They followed specific practices and used particular objects in their rituals. While differing Muslim sects and diverse nationalities of the Islamic world may not always share a single religious or cultural ideology, the mystical and romantic aspects of Sufism tend to appeal to a global audience.

Inspired by Sufi ideologies and the poetry of celebrated mystics such as *al-Ghazzali* and *Rumi*, artists from the medieval Islamic period, through to the present day, have produced works of art ranging from ceramic and metal wares to illustrated manuscripts and photographs. The theme of light and enlightenment is emphasised throughout, both literally and in its figurative or spiritual sense.

One rite that is consistent in all paths is an extensive initiation process. New members, known as murids or postulants, would be required to take an oath to demonstrate their commitment to a path of purification, leading to a *'lifting of the veil of ignorance.'* Once accepted into an order, students would receive guidance from an experienced master. The transmission of knowledge from master to student, formed a chain in which sacred

lessons and practices could be traced back through past generations, all the way back to the Prophet Muhammad.

Let us not forget that when the legendary founder of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, Christian Rosenkreutz, sought illumination, he travelled, not to famed Christian centres, but to Islamic lands in search the knowledge he required. The Sufi tradition places a strong emphasis on master-student relationships and an initiate and his elder would embark together on the *'Tariqa'*, a term also denoting path leading to a higher level of consciousness. The path to becoming a Sufi adept was not something that could be achieved alone. Instead, aspirants needed to closely follow the guidance of their master.

The master would guide the student as he passed through various stations, or as modern Rosicrucians call them *'degrees'*, of ascetic and spiritual development in search of union with the divine. Different Sufi orders recognise slight variations on these degrees, but generally there are seven or eight stages that the student must visit before achieving their ultimate goal. The first station



Rumi gathers Sufi mystics.





Dervish draped a blue khirqa, late 16th–early 17th Century.

on the path is repentance, a turning away from sin and a renunciation of the material world and anything that distracts the heart from God.

Other stations include abstinence from the desires of the lower self, commitment to a life of poverty, patience in pursuing the long and difficult path, and gratitude for everything that s/he encounters along the path, however challenging. The Sufi eventually reaches a state of joy through love of the divine, followed by complete surrender to God, before moving on to reach unity with the divine. The final station, an essential goal of Sufism, is the moment in which the aspiring mystic becomes completely immersed in the existence of God.

Certain objects and garments were central to Sufi initiations and rituals, especially in the regions of modern Iran and Turkey. Garments, such as the long-sleeved robe known as a *Khirqa*, indicated that the wearer had reached a certain point in their initiation into the Order, and was by then considered a full-fledged member. Rosicrucians also have insignia for each degree initiation. These robes were bestowed upon a student by their master and fortified them with their master's spiritual blessing.

Dervishes, from the Persian word *'darvish'* meaning,

someone who focusses on love and service, also commonly carried a begging bowl in order that strangers and other Sufis would recognise, embrace, feed and give them alms. When unfilled, the bowls could also be interpreted as a metaphor for the void of the Sufi's ego, which has been emptied through a rejection of worldly desires, and which can only be filled and nourished with divine knowledge. These bowls were an especially important possession of wandering dervishes who lived off the earth and carried only the most minimal and necessary of items.

Turning Inward

Rather than focusing on religious law, theology and philosophy, Sufis understand and experience God by turning inward and experiencing the divine within themselves. *"To break the ink-pots and tear the books"* was metaphorically considered by many mystics to be the first step in becoming a Sufi.

Rosicrucians carefully study everything in their written curriculum; but that is not enough, for they must put their knowledge to good use in order to fully internalise it and make it a key part of their deeper being. For the Sufis, the difficult path of self-exploration to find God could be



A Sufi in Ecstasy in a Landscape. Isfahan, Safavid Persia (c. 1650–1660)



sought in several ways, including the custom of *'khalwa.'* This practice was originally thought to have been undertaken by the Prophet Muhammad, who would retreat to caves in the Hira Mountains near Mecca to eliminate distractions and meditate. Sufis emulated this act and created the custom of khalwa, a period of seclusion that could last up to 40 days. As a reference to this lifestyle, which involves long durations of prayer, meditation and fasting, Sufis often appear in drawings and paintings as emaciated and unkempt, with ragged garments and knotted hair: physical manifestations of their arduous inner path.

Other Sufi rituals, notably the *'Sema'*, a dance-like ceremony in which participants attempt to reach an ecstatic state through music and movement, are communal and celebratory. In the sema, participants play instruments such as the flute, tambourine and drums, while others sing and dance. The sema had the effect of inciting a euphoric condition known as *'finding'*, which enabled practitioners to momentarily forget all earthly, physical ties, thereby allowing them to achieve a heightened state in which they felt encompassed by the divine. While engaging in the sema or khalwa, Sufis often meditatively repeat a dhikr, i.e., a remembrance or devotional act.



Scene from *'The Conference [Language] of the Birds'*, by Attār in a Persian miniature. The hoopoe, center right, instructs the other birds on the Sufi path.

Allegorical Tales

While modern Rosicrucians have their own allegorical tale in the 1616 *'Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz'*, Sufi ideas and beliefs came to be recorded in metaphorical terms by poets such as Rumi (1207–1273), Hāfiz (1315–1390), Attār (ca. 1142–1220), and Nizāmi (ca. 1141–1217). These Sufi master poets used lyrical verse to educate their followers, narrating tales that could be understood as allegories.

Attār's story of the *'Conference [Language] of the Birds'*, for example, describes a journey by a group of 30 birds in search of the Simurgh, a large mythical bird credited with possessing great wisdom (seen as a kind of phoenix or in ancient Egyptian terms, the Bennu bird of Heliopolis) that they hoped to make their king. The voyage of this group of birds in search of their leader is both physically

and spiritually strenuous, and the group travels through a series of difficult episodes that largely resemble the Sufi stations, which in Rosicrucian terms may be described as degrees. When the birds finally reach the Simurgh, they see reflections of themselves, and realise that what they had sought is indeed present within themselves. This poem is an allegory for a Sufi in search of God who eventually finds the divine within him or herself.

No matter what cultural background we may have been born into, we can see that there really is little difference between all seekers of divine revelation. They all have their own paths in life, and all are seeking to find their own way to *'know God.'* Rosicrucians take one path and Sufis another, but they walk in parallel with each other, for they share the same ultimate goal.





A Personal Philosophy

by **Affectator**

Have you ever thought of how you would reply if you were asked to describe your philosophy of life? Although your reply might be that you don't have one, that would not be strictly correct. More likely, it is just that you aren't able to articulate your philosophy in the brief black-and-white sound-bites that so many people expect nowadays. We all have certain moral and ethical principles to which we adhere, even if those principles vary a bit from one person to the next. And if a wide selection of people were given enough time to think about their personal philosophies of life and to respond properly, their responses would undoubtedly be very interesting and thought provoking.

The kinds of answers we receive might run along the following lines: one person might say their idea about this sort of thing was to take all they could get and never mind who gets hurt; another might say that in this life it is every person for him or herself;



others might think that philosophy was their religion; and still others might say they only live for their family. Certainly a varied response..., but some, probably the least in number, might say that they try to uphold certain ideals and believe more people should give some thought to sharing with others and helping wherever possible. In other words, they feel that altruism is a necessary ingredient in a philosophy of life.

Every thinking, serious-minded person has a philosophy to which they endeavour to adhere..., and one's convictions should at the very least include

Not all philosophies are altruistic; many are selfish.

altruism. However, not all philosophies are altruistic; many are selfish. There is always some person or other whose objective is to make a lot of money with no regard for the cost to others, let alone themselves in



health and personal family relations. Then there are those who think only of indulging in physical pleasures and the enjoyment of solely material things. Many seek self-approval and fame.

But there are thankfully many people who do have a concern for the welfare of their fellow men and women and their problems. They are concerned with human dignity, their own, as well as others. To some degree they are enjoying life and want to help others to have a similar enjoyment of it. A personal philosophy can be many things to many people. A good philosophy, as I have said, should include altruism..., at least to a degree; a real interest in the needs of others. Involved in this is that arbiter of our emotions..., the conscience. Not everyone however, manifests a high level of conscience.

A personal philosophy must include a sense of fairness, not only to oneself, but more so to others. One must be truly honest with oneself first and foremost, and maintain self-respect, personal integrity and dignity at all costs. There should be no room or time for pessimism, but rather, there must be provision for dreams of a better day and a sense of joy for each day that passes, and humble confidence in the future. The American writer and philosopher Elbert Hubbard hit it on the nail when he wrote,

A personal philosophy can be many things to many people.

...to love the plain, homely, common, simple things of earth, of these to sing; to make the familiar beautiful and the common-place enchanting; to cause each bush to burn with the actual presence of the living God.

What do we really mean by philosophy? As advanced to us by the Greeks, it means love of truth, that which is reasonable and right. It means to live truth and express truth in word and conduct. It means that in the living of this span of life, our character, our personal life and conduct should not be suspect but instead be imbued with honour, the strength of humility, and of course truth and honesty.



The Eleusinian Mysteries

by **Albert Hofmann**



A votive plaque known as the Ninnion Tablet depicting elements of the Eleusinian Mysteries, discovered in the sanctuary at Eleusis.

Albert Hofmann (1906–2008) was a Swiss chemist best known for having been the first to synthesise and discover the hallucinogenic effects of *lysergic acid diethylamide* (LSD). Never an advocate of the recreational use of drugs, throughout his life he worked to discover where, when and in what manner such substances, known as *Entheogens*, had been used ritualistically in many cultures over the centuries, and in modern times were beginning to be used in psychology. This article offers a perspective on the impact of the so-called ‘*Mysteries*’ on our world and on the legacy bequeathed to us through spiritual means by the Rosicrucian Order.

The *Mystery of Demeter and Persephone* at Eleusis, which was initially only of local significance, became an important part of Athenian

citizenship, eventually developing into a pan-Hellenic institution of universal importance at the time of the Roman Empire. Its pan-Hellenic character was signalled in 760 BCE, at the time of the 5th Olympiad, when the Oracle of Delphi called upon all Greeks to make communal sacrifice in honour of Demeter of Eleusis in order to banish a famine which was then affecting all Greek-speaking parts of the Mediterranean.



Albert Hofmann

What was the message conveyed at Eleusis, a message that so powerfully transformed the cult into the most influential and spiritually significant Mystery of antiquity? This question cannot be answered in detail, for the veil of mystery, maintained by a severe commandment of secrecy, was never lifted through the millennia. It is only

Image: Wikimedia / Philip H. Bailey





Demeter (left) and Persephone (right) celebrating the Eleusinian Mysteries.

by examining the testimony of great initiates that we may gain an idea of the fundamentals and spiritual significance that the teachings of Eleusis had for the individual. There is no question of any new religion having been promulgated in Eleusis. That can be ruled out, for the initiates, when safely back in their homelands after the Mysteries, remained faithful to their autochthonous religions.



Mnemosyne

Instead, revelations about the essence of human existence and about the meaning of life and death, must have been imparted to the initiates. Prayers are known from the Mysteries, offered by initiates to *Mnemosyne*, the goddess of memory, imploring her to awaken and vividly maintain the memory of the holy

initiation, and that the initiation might persist as an experience illuminating all of life and transforming existence. So powerful was the impact of those initiations upon their participants that it is little wonder that they were treated as the highlights of lives, the most important of events that ever took place in each initiate's heart and mind. Perhaps it truly was the power of that mystery transmission of esoteric and spiritual wisdom that ensured that the Mysteries have remained mysteries from antiquity to the present.

Participating in the Mysteries was an experience which cannot be understood by examining only their external appearance, for it evoked alterations in the innermost being of each initiate. That is evident from the testimony of the most famous initiates. Thus wrote *Pindar* of the Eleusinian blessing:

Blessed is he who, having seen these rites, undertakes the way beneath the Earth; [for] he [then] knows the end of life, as well as its divinely granted beginning.

Cicero also attested to the splendour which illuminated his life from Eleusis:

Though Athens brought forth numerous divine things, yet she never created anything nobler than those sublime Mysteries through which we became gentler and have advanced from a barbarous and rustic life to a more civilised one, so we not only live more joyfully but also die with a better hope.

The initiates often experienced in vision the congruity of the beginning and the end, of birth and death, the totality and the eternal generative ground of being. It must have been an encounter with the ineffable, the eternal, the infinite..., an encounter with the divine, that could only be described through metaphor. It is striking that the Eleusinian experience is described again and again through antitheses: darkness and light; terror and beatitude. This ambivalence is also evident in other descriptions, such as that of *Aelius Aristides*, who said of Eleusis:

Both the most awe-inspiring and most luminous of all the divine things exist among [with] me. Emperor Marcus Aurelius counted the





The Eleusinian Mysteries Hydria, showing the reunion of Demeter and Persephone at the start of each spring.

Mysteries [of Eleusis] among those endowments which manifest the solicitude of the gods for humankind.

This brings us to a problem of our time. It involves a question, much discussed today, of whether it is ethically and religiously defensible to use consciousness-altering drugs to gain new insights into one's personal inner spiritual life.

If the hypothesis that a consciousness-altering drug was present in the *kykeon* (an ancient Greek drink made mainly of water, barley and naturally occurring substances) is correct, and there are good arguments in its favour, then the Eleusinian Mysteries have a relevance for our time not only in a spiritual/existential sense but also with respect to the question of the controversial use of consciousness-altering compounds to attain mystical insights into the riddle of life.

Separation of Individual and Environment

The great importance and long duration of the Mysteries indicate that they answered a profound spiritual necessity, a yearning of the soul. If we adopt the viewpoint of Nietzsche, the Greek spirit was characterised by a consciousness of reality separated from its origin. Greece was the cradle of an experience of reality in which the ego was briefly separated from the exterior world, the active world of daily life that the ego was most habituated to.

Here, the conscious separation of the individual from the environment developed earlier than in other cultures. This dualistic world view, which the German physician and writer Gottfried Benn has characterised as the European-destiny neurosis, has figured decisively in the course of European spiritual history and is still fully operative in the Western world.

An ego that is capable of confronting the exterior world and of regarding the world objectively as matter, a spirit capable of objectivising the external world, was a precondition for the appearance of Western scientific research. This objective world view is evident even in the earliest documents of scientific thought, the cosmological theories of the Greek pre-Socratic philosophers. The human perspective in opposition to nature, which has made possible a vigorous domination of nature, was given its first clear philosophical formulation by Descartes in the 17th Century. In Europe, therefore, a wholly objective, quantitative scientific investigation of nature has developed which has made it possible to explain the physical and chemical laws of the composition of the material world. Its findings also made possible a hitherto non-existent exploitation of nature and her forces.

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It has led to the industrialisation and technification of nearly all aspects of modern life and has brought a small portion of humankind to a level of comfort and material well-being hitherto scarcely imaginable. But what a price we have paid for this! For it has, in the process, resulted in the catastrophic destruction of our natural environment, worldwide, and we face today a global ecological crisis that has not been seen in many millions of years.

Even more serious than the material consequences is the spiritual damage of this evolution, which has led to an extreme materialistic world view. The individual has lost the connection with the spiritual and divine ground of all being. Unprotected, without shelter, and alone





View of Telesterion, ancient Eleusis, Attica, Greece.

with oneself, the human individual confronts in solitude a soulless, chaotic, materialistic and menacing world dominated by ego-driven, powerful individuals hell-bent on reaching the very top of their game.

The seeds of this dualistic world view, which has manifested itself so catastrophically in our time, were, as previously mentioned, already evident in Greek antiquity. The Greek genius sought the cure, so that the external, material world, under Apollo's protection, could be seen in its sublime beauty. The colourful, joyous, sensual but also painful Apollonian world was complemented by the Dionysian world of experience, in which the subject was dissolved in ecstatic inebriation.

Nietzsche wrote of the Dionysian world view in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872):

It is either through the influence of narcotic potions, of which all primitive peoples and races speak in hymns, or through the powerful approach of spring, penetrating all of nature with joy, that those Dionysian stirrings arise, which in their intensification lead the individual to forget himself completely [...] Not only does the bond between person and person come to be forged once again

by the magic of the Dionysian rite, but alienated, hostile, or subjugated nature again celebrates her reconciliation with her prodigal son, mankind.

The Eleusinian Mysteries were closely connected with the rites and festivities in honour of the god. They led essentially to healing, to the transcendence of the division between humankind and nature; one might say to the abolition of the separation between creator and creation. This was the real, greater proposition of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Their historical, cultural significance, their influence on European spiritual history, can scarcely be overestimated. Here, suffering humanity, split by its rational, objective spirit, found healing in a mystical experience of totality that made it possible for the individual to believe in the immortality of an eternal being.

This belief persisted in early Christianity, albeit with different symbols. It is found as a promise in certain passages of the Gospels, most clearly in the Gospel of John, Ch. 14:16-20, where Jesus addresses his disciples as he takes leave of them:

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another comforter, that He may abide with you





Detail, ancient Eleusis site, Attica, Greece.

forever in the Truth [...] At that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.

But ecclesiastical Christianity, defined by the duality of creation and with a religiosity estranged from Nature, has completely obliterated the Eleusinian-Dionysian heritage of antiquity. In the Christian sphere of belief, only specially blessed people testify to a timeless, comforting reality attained in spontaneous visionary experience; an experience which untold numbers of people could attain in antiquity through the Eleusinian Initiation. The *unio mystica* of the Catholic saints and the visionary ecstasy described in the writings of *Jakob Boehme*, *Meister Eckhart*, *Angelus Silesius*, *Teresa of Avila*, *Juan de la Cruz*, *Thomas Traherne*, *William Blake* and others are obviously closely related to the enlightenment attained by the initiates to the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Transcending the Dualistic World View

Today, the fundamental importance that a mystical experience of totality can have for healing a humanity afflicted by a one-sided, rational, materialistic world-view is emphasised not only by adherents to such Eastern religious currents as Zen Buddhism but also by leading representatives of psychology and psychiatry. Even more significant is that not just in medicine but in ever-wider circles of our society, even ecclesiastical circles, overcoming the dualistic world view is considered a pre-requisite and

fundamental step in the healing and spiritual renewal of Western civilisation and culture.

The official Christian churches, whose dogmas correspond to an expressly dualistic conception of the world, offer no room for such a renewal. Rather, it is private groups and associations who are attempting to satisfy the need and the longing for an all-encompassing experience of the world appropriate to our present level of knowledge and consciousness. Great numbers of all sorts of workshops and courses in yoga, meditation and self-discovery are being offered, all with the goal of an alteration or expansion of consciousness. A new direction, transpersonal psychology, has branched off from academic psychiatry and psychology, which are based on a dualistic conception of reality. In this new discipline, various means are sought to aid the individual to attain a healing experience of totality. More and more, individuals seek security and shelter through meditation, pressing onward into deeper levels of experience of reality.

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It is no accident that drugs are employed by some of these groups and in the private sphere as pharmacological aids in the production of altered states of consciousness. And, of course, this involves the same sort of drugs hypothesised at Eleusis and still used by certain Indian tribes. These are the *psychopharmaka* (a pharmaceutical substance based on the psyche of the individual) of the hallucinogenic class, which have also been described as psychedelics or entheogens, whose most important modern representative is LSD. The Greeks used the term *pharmakotheon*, or '*divine drug*.' This sort of psychotropic compound differs from the opiates, such as morphine and heroin, and from such stimulants as cocaine in that it does not produce addiction and acts specifically on human consciousness.



Psychedelics and Expansion of Consciousness

LSD in particular played an important role in the sixties movement, which addressed war and materialism and whose adherents sought to expand consciousness. As a matter of fact, under specific internal and external conditions, this class of drugs, whether called hallucinogens, psychedelics or entheogens, is capable of producing a totality experience, the *unio mystica*. Before the use of these substances was prohibited worldwide, this effect was applied in academic psychiatry to assist psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic treatment from the pharmacological side.

A prerequisite for meaningful use and a propitious psychic experience of these compounds, which can be described as sacred drugs, is the external environment and the spiritual preparation of those experimenting with them. The Mexican Native Americans believe that if the LSD-like *ololiubqui* (the Christmas vine) is taken by an impure person, namely, one who has not prepared for the ceremony with fasts and prayers, then the drug might provoke insanity or even death. This wise and prudent manner of use, based on millennia of experience, was regrettably not heeded when many

members of our society began to use psychedelics. Accordingly, the results sometimes took the form of psychotic breakdowns and severe accidents. And, in the 1960s, this led to the prohibition of any use of this type of drug, even in formal psychiatry.

In Eleusis, where the preparations and associated ceremonies were optimal (as is still the case among some Indian groups in Central America, where their use is still under the control of shamans), this sort of drug has found a meaningful and propitious application. From this perspective, Eleusis and these Indian groups can indeed serve as a model for our society.

In conclusion, I wish once more to raise the fundamental question: why were such drugs probably used in Eleusis, and why are they still used by certain Native American tribes, even today, in the course of religious ceremonies? And why is such use scarcely conceivable in the Christian liturgy, as though it were not significant? The answer is that the Christian liturgy worships a godly power enthroned in heaven, which is a power outside of the individual. At Eleusis, on the contrary, an alteration in the innermost being of the individual was striven for, a visionary experience of the ground of being which converted the subjects into *Mystai*, *Epotetai*, *Initiates*.



Greater Propylaeian pediment, ancient Eleusis, Attica, Greece.





More and more, individuals seek security and shelter through meditation, pressing onward into deeper levels of experience of reality.

Eleusis as a Model for Today

Alteration within the individual is again underway today. The requisite transformations in the direction of an all-encompassing consciousness, as a precondition for overcoming materialism and for a renewed relationship with Nature, cannot be relegated to society or to the state. The change must and can only take place in each individual person.

Only a few blessed people spontaneously attain the mystical vision which can affect this transformation. As a result, humankind has repeatedly sought paths and evolved methods to evoke deeper perception and experience. First among these are the different techniques of meditation. Meditation can be assisted by such external means as isolation and solitude, a path the hermits and desert saints followed; and by such physical practices as fasting and breath control. An especially important aid in the induction of mystical-ecstatic states of consciousness, discovered

...humankind has repeatedly sought paths and evolved methods to evoke deeper perception and experience.

in the earliest times, is decidedly the use of certain plant drugs. In the preceding discussion, I have made it quite clear that their use must proceed within the scope of religious ceremony.

The fact that extraordinary states of awareness can be induced with various means and in various ways shows us that capacity for mystical experience is innate to every person. It is part of the essence of human spirituality. It is unrelated to the external, social status of the individual. Thus, in Eleusis, both free men and women, as well as slaves, could be initiated.

Eleusis can be a model for today. Eleusis-like centres could unite and strengthen the many spiritual currents of our time, all of which have the same goal: the goal of creating, by transforming consciousness in individual people, the conditions for a better world, a world without war and without environmental damage; a world of happy people.



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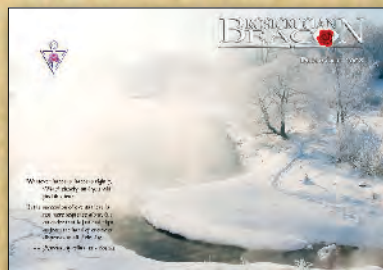
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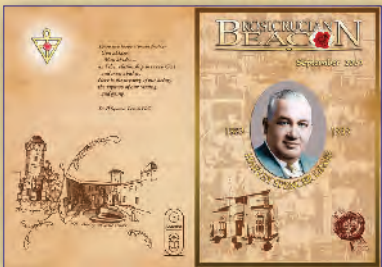
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Of spring's return the Robin sings,
of morning dew, what nature brings.

What gifts of gods this soul reveals
while garden dig I'll slow complete
as friend of all hops round my heels
in dance of joy 'mongst dewdrops,
worms and wondrous things.

