



Rosicrucian Heritage

March 2020, Vol 27 No 1



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The Rosicrucian Order

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If you enjoy this magazine, you have an open mind, and this message was meant for you! To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order, visit our website www.amorc.org.ng or contact us for a free copy of our introductory booklet "The Mastery of Life."

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Cover spread

Take good care of it, our
one and only precious home.





by *Kenneth U Idiadi*

*Grand Administrator for English speaking West Africa
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Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC*



The Serenity of a Rosicrucian Mystic

*“Serenity is not freedom from the
storm, but peace amid the storm.”*

THIS PROFOUND statement was attributed to an anonymous author. Let us picture a situation in which people are quietly going about their business in an office complex or shopping centre. Then imagine that suddenly the peace and quiet is shattered by a series of loud explosions coming from many directions. Undoubtedly, people would be thrown into a state of panic and confusion and the pandemonium that followed would see some running in fright in various directions while others would be frozen, rooted to the spot where they are, unable to think or act.

Still others bearing arms and perhaps with some security training would immediately pull out their weapons to defend themselves. Very few persons, if any, would have sufficient presence of mind to calmly make an intelligent analysis of the situation and gain a clear understanding of the cause of the disruption. It is those in this last category that would be in the best position to

take the most appropriate action for their welfare and that of others. In a crisis situation, a calm head could literally make the difference between life and death.

Living in a Dangerous World

Early humans lived in a world filled with danger to life. They had to be constantly vigilant to defend themselves from attacks by wild animals many of which had greater strength and speed than they possessed. And in many cases, the greater danger came not from animals but from other humans competing for valued resources. Scarcity of resources promotes xenophobia and a fear of strangers; and the contest for limited resources easily descends into deadly conflicts.

For example, food and water are basic necessities of life, and when they're in short supply, competition for them becomes a matter of life and death. Attempts at





controlling scarce natural resources has been, and remains, the root cause of most communal conflicts. In addition to the danger from other humans, our early ancestors were also exposed to the dangers of the environment such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornados, torrential rains, droughts, etc. Living under these conditions, these early pioneers of human life had to be aggressively alert most of the time, and this kept them almost perpetually alert to opportunities of survival at whatever cost.

Mental and Physiological Changes

When we're physically threatened or attacked, certain physical and mental changes are automatically triggered within us. These changes, the so-called "fight or flight" response, prepare us to either stand and ward off the aggressor, or to leave from the scene as quickly as possible. The rates of blood flow in different parts of the body are temporarily altered. A greater supply rate is delivered to the outer limbs and the mid brain while being reduced to other parts of the body like the digestive system and the frontal lobe of the brain. In this way the most important parts of the body for the task at hand are energised. The brain also secretes the stress hormone cortisol to temporarily deaden physical pain.

In this state, the body is primed for quick, intuitive action. The higher mental faculties are held in abeyance since philosophy and any higher thought processes are not required at the time, whereas urgent action is. The sense of self-preservation is heightened and whatever needs to be done to preserve life is carried out without any hesitation.

Any sense of finesse, morality or decency is completely abandoned in such a state. If a fight ensues as a result of the threat, the body and mind will be in the right condition to exert maximum force on the opponent. If an escape is attempted, this will be done with a greater speed than the body would normally be capable of achieving. There is a third survival response that could occur when neither flight nor fight responses are appropriate and that is the "freeze response." This would be very helpful when hiding from a predator in a place where the slightest movement could give away the hiding position.

Once the attack is over and safety regained, the body naturally returns to normalcy and the higher intellectual faculties become functional. This is fortunate because the state of mind associated with the survival response is not conducive for normal social interaction. Furthermore, the nature of disruption in the normal functioning of the body during the fight or flight response is such that it would become unhealthy for us if maintained for a prolonged period of time.

Survival Mode Activation

In modern times, the level of threat to the physical security which was in existence in ancient times has been significantly reduced. It's no longer necessary to remain in a constant state of alert. We can generally move around without having to look over our shoulder at every moment. However, as our ancestors of deep pre-history spent many years in this heightened state of alertness to danger, it's relatively easy for one to be triggered back





Outbursts of anger are commonplace in every society and perhaps it's fair to say that everyone has been infuriated at one time or another. When angry, we're conditioned to attack instinctively or go on the offense.

into the survival mode even in the absence of any real physical danger.

For example, it would not be unusual for a person to get very upset after being severely criticised. Outbursts of anger are commonplace in every society and perhaps it's fair to say that everyone has been infuriated at one time or another. Even though it is not an attack on the physical body, criticism can induce mental and physical reactions within us that resemble what happens when we are under physical threat. When angry, we're conditioned to attack instinctively or go on the offense. This is more or less equivalent to the fight response of the survival mode with the same changes to our mental and physiological makeup.

The flight and freeze survival responses also have their equivalents in our common daily reactions to life which occur without any physical threat. When we become anxious, changes occur in us that are very similar to the flight response. We can't think clearly, our heart beats faster, and we feel a turning in the pit of our stomach as blood flows away from the intestines. And when we're depressed, we experience changes quite like those in the freeze response. We seem to become greatly slowed down both mentally and physically. Our body feels sluggish and heavier than normal.

While it may be true that the changes in us may not be as aggressive as when in physical danger, they tend to approach these conditions to some degree. And for every degree of approach towards the extreme conditions that characterise the survival response, there are mental and physical repercussions. One doesn't need to be a psychologist to observe the fact that anger, anxiety and depression seriously reduce the quality of our social lives, and also impair our physical health in the long term.

Social Effects

The physiological changes associated with these reactions, even when mild, are strong enough for us to easily feel the

detrimental effects. Our social interaction skills involve the use of the higher cognitive functions centred in the frontal lobes of our brain. Our ability to reason, solve problems, plan or think analytically, largely depend on the firing of neurons in these frontal lobes. When the flow of blood is reduced to the forebrain during mild survival responses, the neural activity becomes limited in that region. And the effect of this is that we become socially awkward because we can't think clearly.

Our sense of self-preservation associated with survival also unconsciously rises, making us more self-centred than usual. We wouldn't even realise, or for that matter care, when we step on other peoples toes. Other reactions that take place within the body such as the reduction of blood flow to the digestive organs and an increase in the stress hormone secretions would also cause us to become more irritable as well as impair our health.

To understand how we involuntarily put ourselves into such states of biological harm, and to better appreciate the principles involved, we need to look closely at the triggers and processes involved in these reactions. Let's take the example of a person who is wrongly accused of stealing. Many people will react with indignation to such an accusation, for it is a social smear on the personality to be called a thief. Though the personality is actually a mental construct, its importance to most people easily ranks with the physical body. This makes many people unconsciously respond to attacks on their personality in a manner similar to a physical attack. We could find ourselves becoming very angry which often accompanies an impulse to carry out a verbal or even physical reprisal.



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This is the fight response. In this state, our sense of reasoning is weakened as a result of the physiological changes in our body. Consequently, we may end up saying or doing things out of character and later regret this after the episode of anger subsides.

It may not be very far-fetched to suggest that the majority of anti-social traits found among human beings are based on our unconscious physical reactions to imagined threats. In a research into human psychology, Dr. Jaan Suurkõla, an Estonia-born Swedish physician and scientist, discovered that most people fall into a pattern of behaviour that he named "survival oriented behaviour." The typical characteristics of this kind of behaviour were as follows: the tendency to be aggressive on impulse without considering the feelings of others; a self-centeredness that sought recognition and dominance at every clear opportunity; poor judgment and weak morals; and a sense of insecurity that bred intolerance. Ironically, most who fall into this category find it difficult to accept they have these characteristics. This may seem like a poor testimony to human nature but there is a redeeming aspect. And this is the fact that in the absence of any sense of threat, people naturally become very amicable and serene.

There is a state of deep inner security that makes us serene and imperturbable. It is the state of Peace Profound that every Rosicrucian aspires to attain. Members of the Rosicrucian Order use this term "Peace Profound" as a traditional greeting to express their wish for all to attain this serene state of accomplishment. The way to achieve this goal involves freeing our consciousness by turning it inwards away from our mental limitations of individuality,

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so it may expand naturally to cosmic consciousness. There are a few simple techniques that can facilitate our progress along this path of development.

Humility in the use of "I"

The tendency to focus most of our attention on matters that promote our sense of self-importance can become a habit. One effect of this is an inclination to frequently talk about ourselves without even realizing that people around may find it boring. By paying close attention to what we say, we may be able to reverse this trend and possibly become less self-centred. In her book *"The Joy in Living: A Guide to Daily Living"* Mother Theresa gave the following advice: *"There are a few ways one can practise humility, and one is to speak as little as possible of one's self."*

A key word that will help us monitor when we're talking about ourselves is our incessant use of the word "I." When we're about to say something that begins with the word "I", we should pause and quickly reflect on the necessity of talking about ourselves and refrain from doing so if we find it unnecessary. We should as much as possible choose to avoid using ourselves as examples in the things we wish to say to others. There will of course be many occasions in which the use of "I" is unavoidable or even necessary. However, every time we reflect on our use of "I", we stir up the deeper aspects of self. There's a split of the self into the observer self and the observed self; the observer in us being the deeper aspects of self. And the more we carry out this exercise, the more we become detached from our self-limiting ideas, and the less we feel threatened by anything that may appear contrary to them.

Freedom From Possesiveness

The ideas that surround the use of the word "I" are similar to those associated with the use of the word "mine." Whatever we call "mine" becomes an extension of the self, be it a person or a thing. The attachment to a material thing could be strong enough to make people prefer injury to their physical body rather than damage



*There are a few ways one can practise humility,
and one is to speak as little as possible of one's self."*
-- Mother Theresa --

Image: Wikipedia, Manfred Ferrari





None of our material possessions will remain with us forever. At the end of our incarnation, our possessions are inherited by others. It is therefore more appropriate to think of ourselves as caretakers instead of owners.

to their highly valued material possessions. This tendency is often revealed in the remarks that people make. In an example of this, it was no surprise that a news-report on the internet of a policeman that assaulted a student and broke his latest model iphone attracted remarks that expressed more concern over the damage to the phone than the physical injury suffered by the student.

The more we become attached to material things, the more vulnerable we become. We can avoid this by changing our relationship with the persons or things we take for granted as being ours. One way we can do this is to always bear in mind the fact that everything that has a beginning must also have an end. None of our material possessions will remain with us forever. At the end of our incarnation, our possessions are inherited by others. It is therefore more appropriate to think of ourselves as caretakers instead of owners.

This idea makes even more sense when we realise that the origin of everything humans claim to possess, was freely made available by nature without any charge. This includes the four fundamental elements of Earth, Water, Air and Fire with all their combinations and even our intellect which was also freely bestowed upon us by natural law. We may have transformed these elements into various sophisticated gadgets and devices, but no one has paid the original debt to nature. And to that extent, it is fairly accurate to say that we don't really own anything. We're merely custodians of the things we make use of and leave behind at the end of our incarnation. When we adopt this attitude we become free of any form of material bondage and life becomes less threatening to us.

Understanding Our Spirituality

Having knowledge and understanding of the spiritual dimension of our being also enables us to remain serene in the face of tests and trials. Our behaviour at any given time depends in particular on the specific circumstances we're faced with, and in the nature of our character in general. Circumstances can change from moment to moment, resulting in different behaviour. In the course of a day, an individual typically passes through different circumstances that could make one a parent, a student, a friend, a supervisor, etc. Each situation demands an appropriate role and the associated behaviour that goes with it.

However, the character of the person remains the same throughout the day. Our character depends on the accumulation of experiences we've had in life and the nature of our underlying soul personality.

Our childhood character may be so different from our character as adults that it may be impossible to recognise any similarity between them. On the other hand, the personality of our soul, which evolves over several incarnations, is easily recognised as being more or less the same from childhood to adulthood.

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This soul personality is a limited expression of the one universal human-related Soul which all humans share in common. This human Soul, a soul of the collective of the human species, is the perfection which the soul personality strives to reflect in the course of its evolution. It is an ideal state to which it aspires. Our behaviour in every circumstance can serve to potentially bring about a marginal increase in the ability of our soul personality to reflect the perfection of the soul. The consciousness of this fact is very uplifting and should inspire us towards more balanced responses to the challenges of life.

Creating Harmonious Surroundings

By holding positive thoughts of peace, harmony, love, kindness and health, we can also effectively reduce the tendency to feel threatened. The benefits of this radiate



from us and impact on the consciousness of those around us. We should always be conscious of the fact that people operate at their best when they don't feel threatened. One demonstration of this can be found in the learning disability that occurs in a child that feels threatened. The physiological changes that occur in children that feel unsafe, work directly against the use of their intellectual powers.

A parent or teacher who resorts to bullying in order to force a child to learn in a prescribed manner, sooner or later has to give up this crude approach for lack of success. For optimal learning, the environment in which a child is taught should be made as friendly as possible. It is the application of this principle that informs the use of bright colours and pictures in the classrooms of young children, especially in the early kindergarten stage. However, this basic principle applies to all of us throughout our lives from childhood to old age. There are many examples of this principle in the adult world. The creative productivity of workers becomes adversely affected when they feel threatened by their employers. Homes which are meant to be places of peace and security are sometimes turned into places of mental and even physical abuse where family members feel threatened by aggressive parents. Members of such households tend to become socially dysfunctional as a result of the feelings of insecurity they develop.

To get the best out of people it's important to ensure they don't feel threatened when we interact with them. This may seem to be in contradiction with what is experienced in real life where people are generally made to work by the threat of sanction. However, such threats are only effective in getting the minimum expected from a worker, and even then, with limited success. A system where incentives are offered for results without any form of intimidation, has proven to be the best way of deriving the maximum creative output from people.



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Human Cultural Development

Having moments of serenity where the mind functions unfettered from security threats and free to receive Cosmic inspiration, has been responsible for the overall growth and development of humankind. Ancient people must have used periods of respite from the dangers of the environment to commune with their inner self. And from these periods of communion arose technology, cultural practices, the arts, sciences, spirituality and religion. Clearly, communities that were able to create a more secure environment were by that token able to thrive beyond the less secure communities in many areas of human endeavour.

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However the gains of a nation resulting from the contributions of its citizens in physical security can be lost if they become embroiled in mental tensions which produce the same limitations as those caused by physical insecurity. In other words, it would be like moving out of a physical jungle only to go into a mental jungle. So, let's not forget the popular saying: *"eternal vigilance is price we pay for liberty."* We must strive to be mindful of slipping into modes of behaviour that are reminiscent of the age of great physical insecurity that existed throughout most of human evolution. Anytime we find ourselves enraged, frozen, or frightened, or to a lesser extent, irritated, depressed or anxious, we should mentally recite the well-known *Serenity Prayer*: *"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference."*

We may also apply the given techniques to minimise our vulnerability to imagined threats which only ever dwell in the mind. Finally we must try to make people around us feel calm and at ease whenever possible, so we may benefit from the best of human nature. If we remain steadfast in this practice, we may eventually be admitted into that one percent minority group of serene humans on our planet, a group where you can find all true Rosicrucian mystics.





The Fluid World of Mind

by *William Haak*

WITHIN THE mind, all things are created before they can become manifested in the material world. The greatest accomplishment that can be attained by anyone is to become master of the creative domain within. “Man know thyself” is still meaningful today, for without fully knowing ourselves and our relationship to the environment, how can we be in a favourable position to understand the needs of our intricate body, and to keep it in first-class condition to perform efficiently and render service to the rest of mankind?

We have been created with a sensitive, impressionable

and fluid mind, as flexible and as changeable as the clouds in the sky. The mind is a computer par excellence, capable of recording sight, sound, taste, smell, pain, joy and so on. It has the capability of reproducing all of these and more. It can create new images, forms and ideas in this fantastic fluid realm. It is the abode of the personal soul entity, sustained by the universal spirit force that permeates the entire universe. The mind is our own personal world over which we can have complete control, if we have the will to do so, by keeping out the incessant petty bombardment from outside. We must come to the realisation that self-



help resides in our own mind.

We live our entire life in our mind. All our perceptions and acts are recorded there. All plans for action are formulated in this creative fluid world, and are likewise given form and assigned dimension. Here in this invisible realm we rule supreme, and most importantly, we can be an assistant creator to the Master Creator of all nature and mankind. Nature cannot directly create from inanimate elements such as rocks, minerals, gems, and so forth, the many useful things for our comfort, use and pleasure. Our receptive mind and responsive two hands are all that are necessary for bringing ideas constructed of inanimate elements into existence.

The bulk of our misery on the earth plane is due to the fact that we do not know the true nature of our bodies or mind, nor their needs. We depend mostly upon outsiders to repair our body, someone who is more or less interested in us as an economic commodity.

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recorded there.**

Fundamentally, the basic needs of the body and mind are comparatively simple. They involve outdoor exercise, fresh air, water, undevitalised and unadulterated food, and effective elimination of waste matter; in other words, internal cleanliness. Also we need an optimistic state of mind, filled with interest and curiosity to observe the magical world in which we exist. Likewise, we need toleration for our fellow human beings, who have their own lives to live, as long as they do no harm to others. We interact with one another, and should observe the law of “action and reaction”, or “cause and effect”, and act so that our actions will always result in harmonious reactions.

It is the undue striving for material possessions and the attempt to control the lives of others that are the root of most of our discontent in this material world. This results in mind misery when something seems unobtainable. Let me quote the words of one great mind, Charles Steinmetz, who said: *“Some day people will learn that material things do not bring happiness and are of little use in making men and women creative and powerful.”*

Man has gone far astray in ravishing the Earth, the gem of our solar system, almost to the point where the end product can only bring ruin to human life. Perhaps we should keep in mind the words of the explorer Admiral Byrd, who said: *“Since returning to civilisation, I live more simply now, but with greater peace.”*

The majority of us live and die without ever realising the precious privilege we have in being allowed to experience this exceedingly magical condition called *consciousness*. It exposes us to the magical world in which we live. By some adverse incident in history, our minds have been directed to a distant world called *heaven*, a non-material place of which we cannot produce concrete or positive proof. We miss the point of living if we focus our minds principally on an abode in some far-off place, away from the earth plane where our feet are planted.

Our greatest need in preparing for a full life in this conscious world is that we be taught, early in life, our relationship to the environment which sustains us and on which we are dependent during the span of our life on this Earth. We have been indoctrinated with the need to fit ourselves into some material vocation for a programme of lifework. While a work-plan is very necessary, it should not be the sole purpose. It seems apparent that most of us will never understand the body we live in, a body made of the dust of the earth and to which it returns when the invisible tenant, soul, leaves this living house of spirit, which is a small portion of the Universal Spirit.

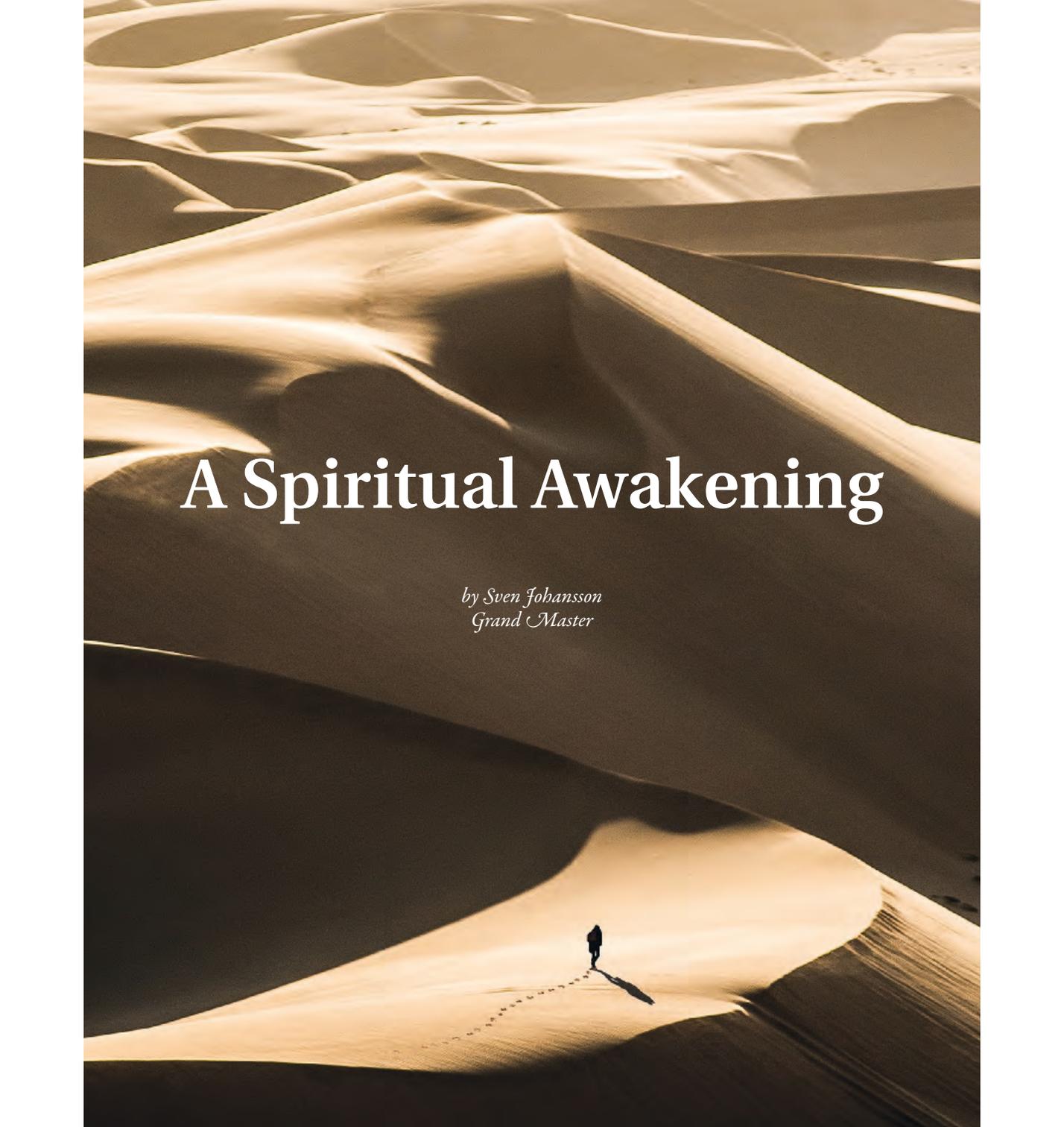
Nature has placed us in a setting that is a veritable paradise; all provisions have been made in great variety for our sustenance and entertainment. Foods spring as if by magic from the ground. The panorama of nature in our material environment is awe-inspiring with its endless variety. We need to be alert and observant to enjoy the limitless change in nature’s domain.

In our mind resides the seat of our joy or misery. We have the choice as to which condition we shall exist in. We are the sole custodian of this realm; therefore, let no other dominate this sacred abode of our mind. The furnishings of the mind are determined and decided upon by ourselves.

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If we are dissatisfied with the material we have stored in our mind, we can change it. The mind is a continuous recording centre of the events occurring in our environment. Most perceptions merely pass through the consciousness and are not permanently recorded. Lasting impressions are stored in the subconscious and it is these recordings that exert the most potent control over our thoughts and actions. Our mind can encompass the entire universe and still wonder what lies beyond.





A Spiritual Awakening

*by Sven Johansson
Grand Master*

YOU HAVE no doubt heard of the inscription that reputedly once stood over the portal to the temple of the oracle at Delphi: *“Know Thyself.”* And you have also probably heard the oft quoted words of the 18th Century poet Alexander Pope: *“Know then thyself, and presume not God to scan; for the proper study of mankind..., is man.”* As students of mysticism, we know that living the life of a mystic involves a personal, clear and very direct awareness of the Divine Reality,

something that we accomplish entirely through the good graces of our deeper self. To put it in non-religious terms, the mystic seeks an intimate, personal, clear and direct experience of the highest, most refined form of reality that he or she can conceive.

I use the term “non-religious” as there are more and more people in the world today who in all respects we would regard as true mystics, great humanitarians, deeply compassionate people infused with what we know to be





There are more and more people in the world today who in all respects we would regard as true mystics, great humanitarians, deeply compassionate people infused with what we know to be spiritual power..., and yet who cannot in all conscience subscribe to any particular form of religious belief.

spiritual power..., and yet who cannot in all conscience subscribe to any particular form of religious belief. They worship nothing, they go to no churches, temples or mosques, and generally shy away from anything to do with religious matters. Yet for some of them, as it is for only some religious people, love and compassion motivates them deeply. And that overwhelming feeling of compassion and caring for other people, indeed for all forms of life, is surely the golden thread that links all forms of true spiritual experience! Theories, creeds and dogmas clearly do not count as much as direct experience of the Sacred itself.

For most mystics however, it is not easy to speak of a mystical quest in dry, purely scientific terms. Maybe because of the religious upbringing many of us have had, it is difficult to speak of mysticism in anything but “religious” terms. And it is not hard to see why, for we have centuries, indeed thousands of years of religious beliefs ingrained in our psyche, and no doubt to a certain extent even ingrained in our physical DNA. And that is something that will not go away easily. What is important though is that we are all aware of the concept of a supreme, single source from which everything in the universe has arisen. That includes all laws of nature, everything that mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology can ever throw at us, all creative arts, and yes, even our many different concepts of God.

The capital “G” in God

Like all words, “God” with a capital “G”, is for all of us a definition, even though most of us don’t really see it as such. After all, most people will speak of God as though it were a term everyone agrees upon, so what’s the problem? The problem is that there is seldom agreement as to what this God really is. At some level of our being, usually far below the level of objective awareness, we all have one definition or other of this God. Roughly though, our definitions approximate to certain qualities we agree upon..., things like universal justice, compassion, goodness, love, impartial arbitration, patience, understanding, tolerance, wisdom, etc., all laudable qualities in any society, and things that average persons almost biologically are urged to seek. But the very broad, almost infinite nature of our definitions of God, cause this God concept to be beyond our ability to fully understand. Indeed it is hard to even partially understand that immense presence so many simply refer to as “Father.”

We experience God as something profound, something we yearn for with great longing, even though we can perceive only a very tiny “portion” of this God.

Our special intellectual concepts of a Supreme Deity is of course personal. But these concepts are far from static; they change over time, usually only in very subtle ways, but occasionally much more dramatically. What I believe all Rosicrucians can agree upon though is that our concepts of what this supreme Deity *actually* is, cannot be more than very limited, personal realities of something so awesome and great that it far surpasses any understanding we could ever possess. Yet, we can be deeply satisfied with our incomplete forms of intellectual, emotional, psychic and spiritual approximations of what the *fundamental actuality* of God is, for the personal realities we experience of that awesome actuality is still deep and beautiful to us, regardless of how limited they are. We experience God as something profound, something we yearn for with great longing, even though we can perceive only a very tiny “portion” of this God.

Of course God is much more than a mere word..., much more than just intellect and emotions. It is a deeply personal and intimate experience which is lived on all levels of our being..., one that ultimately cannot be fully shared with anyone, even though it can of course be

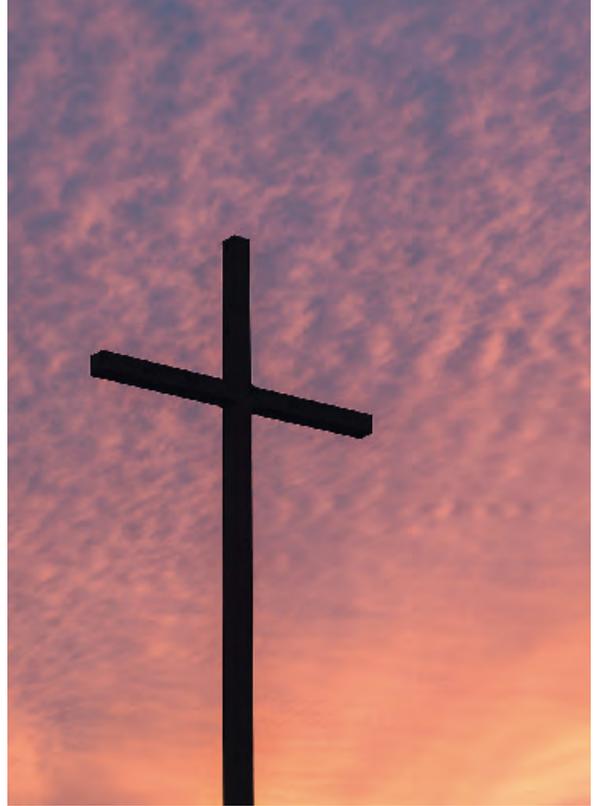


spoken of. The experience of God is far too personal, far too deeply recessed within our being to be able to even describe in more than the roughest of outlines. So as not to offend the sensibilities of those who are strictly non-religious however, we can of course avoid using “God” and speak instead in terms of the “highest good”, the “law of all that is”, the “source of all reality”, the “totality of all natural law”, etc. Of course such definitions are rather dry, purely intellectual constructs, and miss the greater part of the actual experience. But for the sake of simplicity, as mystics we have no difficulty speaking freely of God even in religious terms. As a personal experience, the sublime presence of our Creator is almost impossible to describe and certainly very hard to share.

To “know thyself” is in its deepest sense, to “know God”, or at least that portion of Divinity that already exists within us. And the journey leading us to that ultimate experience of “knowing God”, is called the “Mystical Path.” Through our Rosicrucian studies we know that what adepts in past centuries called the Summum Bonum or Supreme Good is none other than humanity’s highest conception of God. Every major religion speaks of God as being omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, everywhere present..., the All, the Absolute, higher than the highest of all conceptions that human beings can attain. God is everywhere present, infusing every substance, whether animate or not. God also encapsulates the past, present and future all in one. And if God is the greatest we can conceive, then God must also be infinite in every respect, for nothing can exist outside of God! Indeed, there can be no such thing as an “outside”, for by very definition, God would be there too.

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To our limited understanding, God has been, is and always will be infinite in every respect, in all dimensions and specifically, infinite in time and space. To being there cannot be a state of non-being. God is both substance and the faculty of awareness to perceive that substance. In absolute terms, God does not evolve, for God is already complete, perfect and without change. In finite terms, everything that has been, everything that exists now and everything that will come into existence, already exists within the permissive being of God. And God is in fact at the same time both something and nothing, both all



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things and no things..., though even the differentiation between something and nothing is transcended by God. Even a complete Void, if such a thing could exist, is part of God..., and yet still only a very small part.

We are “parts” of God

During a Rosicrucian Lodge convocation, the Chaplain say at one point in the ritual: “*To Being there has never been a beginning.*” By extension then, since we are “parts” of this Being, this great indefinable “something”, at least some aspects of us must therefore always have existed as spiritual components of our greater Self in one form or another..., slowly evolving from one incarnation to the next over time periods we cannot even begin to comprehend. Each of us has a *soul personality* which is linked via our *personal soul* to the Universal Soul of God. Manifesting in daily life some of the attributes of our soul personality, we have minds with which to think and reason, wills with which to make our daily choices..., and we have access to the one great force and intelligence pervading all that exists. Children of God we verily are, literally slumbering versions of God incarnate, potentially with far greater power than we ever fully realise.

So what stands between us and sought-after qualities like health, happiness, success, self-mastery and essential



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goodness? If we really are but slumbering versions of God, why aren't we happier, more successful, more masterful? Ever since the mythical origins of humanity, it has been the outer self or ego that has been our downfall, and it is only through mastery of that outer self that we can regain our status as divine beings. Through free will and reason, we either adhere to or flout what we believe to be divine law, which is but an interpretation of the so-called "will of God." Walking in the "ways of God" means adhering to our understanding of that law. Only our vaunted ego separates us from a realisation of our true place in the Divine Unity, a realisation of "God within."

If we find ourselves unhappy or have failed to achieve what we have desired in our lives, we can only blame ourselves.

Not until we choose to know and actively seek out a greater understanding of Cosmic or Divine Law, do we even begin to glimpse the best path we should be following in our present life. Seeking a greater understanding of Cosmic law is a deliberate act; we consciously choose to govern our lives according to the highest concepts of goodness and sanctity we know. And as that goodness begins to envelope us and motivates our every thought, our uniquely customised path to freedom begins to come into view. In the words of the Master Jesus: *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened."* But remember there is also a corollary to this: *"Ask not and it will not be given to you; seek not and you will not find; fail to knock and the door will not be opened."*

Our destiny is of our own making; we create our future, consciously or unconsciously, through our every thought, word and action. Happy the day when we fully realise this profound truth; for that is the day when we will, for the first time, shoulder the burden of our karma and future entirely by ourselves. And from that moment on, we will begin moving ahead under our own steam, on our own special path of inner development with neither sorrow nor regret, humbly and with sure-footed confidence.

Life is indeed like a stage where our roles are determined by what we think, say and do. Whether happy or sad, whether at peace or troubled, whether competently or incompetently..., *it is we who write the script!* We attract people, places and situations into our lives as a product of what we allow ourselves to do. They act like magnets, bringing about what we have started; and whatever we wish to stop, it is within our power to do so too. If we find ourselves unhappy or have failed to achieve what we have desired in our lives, we can only blame ourselves. Harsh as this may sound, at a deep, fundamental level, it is however true.

Only we have the power to change our lives through an understanding and application of the forces and laws of which we are a part. And there is no greater force available to us than the power of creative thought. Governing our thoughts wisely whilst harmonising them with universal Cosmic laws, inevitably leads us to the greatest form of fulfilment and happiness we can know in our mortal state, namely what Rosicrucians know as the state of the Rose-Croix. Mind is ever both the builder and the way. Remember therefore *"...whatever you sow, so will you reap."*

Of course we can't solve life's problems by merely wishing for it..., doing nothing..., daring nothing...,





*Remember the saying "like begets like."
Acts of kindness beget further acts of kindness.*

planning nothing..., for there also exists the corollary: "*Whatever you fail to sow, so will you fail to reap.*" Self mastery, namely mastery over your thoughts, passions and actions, is not a state of being that you will only find at some time in the distant future; for in the here-and-now, you have already attained a degree of self mastery..., and the attainment of even greater mastery over your outer self is more akin to a process or a continuing journey than a destination, a destination that very few of us is likely to reach for many lifetimes yet to come. What should concern us far more than our destination however, should be the *direction* in which we are travelling, for it ultimately determines whether we will in the end succeed or fail. If that direction wrong, we will truly be lost!

Our Reality

Our lives are not what others believe them to be but how we experience them, namely, *what they appear to be to us*: that is our reality, the only reality that counts. The world is what *we* perceive it to be, for reality is fundamentally an inner experience that no one can fully share with us. As this reality is within us, it follows therefore that we can within reason change it. If we could change both our perception and understanding of the universe around us, we would instantly change the world itself! Those are strong, extreme words perhaps, but also a dire warning..., for it means that the world we know, is the world we have created! And if we are to take our personal paths seriously, this above all else must be uppermost in our minds. We create our reality, we create our future..., and destiny is what we make happen, not something that is imposed upon us.

So, how should we proceed? Simple enough of course..., begin with the outer self. Take a good look at yourself (your home sanctum mirror is a good place to

begin), and reflect upon the kind of person you are; examine your thoughts and emotions and take a good look at your attitudes towards, and motives behind, everything you think and do. Start portraying to the world, through controlled thoughts, well placed words and carefully executed actions, the kind of person you inwardly would like to become. Although you may at first have to be like an actor on a stage, portraying the personality of another person, you will not need to act in such a manner for long. Soon enough, through the

creative power of thought, you will become the person you long to be!

Remember the saying "*like begets like.*" Acts of kindness beget further acts of kindness. Acts of anger beget further acts of anger. And if we want compassion and love, we must be compassionate and loving towards not only others, but towards ourselves too. and if we wish to avoid strife and conflict, then our thoughts must completely eliminate them from our lives first. They must not even be a possibility. This is a law, not merely a moral platitude.

Intent is by far the most important thing we have, and manipulating it into good, constructive, helpful thoughts, words and deeds, is the way of a true mystic.

In the process of growth, you will also learn that it is wrong to judge a person by the mistakes he or she makes. Rather, if we really must judge a person, then judge the motive that is within that person's heart; for the Cosmic does not weigh or measure the actual size, nature or quality of a gift or act, but the intent, purpose and spirit behind it. We are reminded of the incident in the Temple in Jerusalem when the master Jesus witnessed a poor widow secretly donating a small amount of money to the poor whilst others, financially far better off than her, were openly and ostentatiously donating great sums of money. The motive behind her act was all that counted, and her widow's mite was worth more than the mines of King Solomon. Intent is by far the most important thing we have, and manipulating it into good, constructive, helpful thoughts, words and deeds, is the way of a true mystic. Magic, alchemy and transformation in a mystical sense is truly possible for anyone willing to manipulate his or her *thoughts* and crucially as well, to manipulate the very *motives* behind those thoughts, so they become



pure and pristine as a sparkling mountain stream. Let us therefore be proper mystics and learn to guide our intent to the highest spheres of action we know.

The Law of the Triangle

Because we live in a causative world, for every effect we see, there must have been a cause..., or rather, in accordance with the Rosicrucian law of the triangle, there was a pair of causes. Similarly, for every pair of causes, for every one of our actions, there will be an effect somewhere, some time. To understand the effects manifesting in our lives, and to solve life's problems, we must first become aware of the forces that are working within the deeper self. It is only when we turn our point of inquiry inward and attempt to realise our true self as a profound mystery of immense potential for good, that we come to the threshold of perceiving God. To know oneself is to know one's heritage and power. And knowing how to use that power can be a force for great good.

As sons and daughters of God, we are not only thinking, reasoning, rational beings, we are also emotional, psychic super-beings made in the image of the Most High.

Of course knowing one's self is not enough. One must also learn how to use that self in a practical way that benefits not only our personal needs, but those of many others too. To reach a state of peace and harmony within the self, we must fully understand that the inner self is an integral part of Being, namely a part of the Divine. As sons and daughters of God, we are not only thinking, reasoning, rational beings, we are also emotional, psychic super-beings made in the image of the Most High. What we allow ourselves to think about and the manner in which we use our reasoning powers, causes urges and desires to percolate to the surface of consciousness in us. These desires in turn call forth emotions which *move us to actions* which in turn compel us to make a choice between the *needs* and *desires* of the moment.

This choice, the exercising of the will, is toward that desire that our thinking and reasoning has determined to be good and

beautiful, and is usually the strongest desire of the moment. If our thinking and reasoning is positive and in accordance with the "Will of God", we will create happiness and harmony in and around us. If however, our thoughts are negative, we will bring disharmony, pain and suffering wherever we go. Inevitably our desires always go beyond our needs, and it is up to us to weight up the consequences of following a desire when the need of the moment would perfectly suffice.

The gifts of life and consciousness constitute the greatest blessing we have. Vast and varied as it may be, on a super-macroscopic scale the universe as a whole operates at all times in harmony with all its components..., a harmony that the human mind can perceive if it will but lift itself out of its slumber. We can never actually break Cosmic Law, but we can certainly persistently try to do so, thereby bringing painful adjustment and no small amount of suffering into our lives. When we are out of harmony with our deeper self, we are out of harmony with our real nature, the one that is directly linked to God. And we experience the effects of that disharmony as suffering and unhappiness. It is safe to say that all unhappiness is due fundamentally to human ignorance of the divine nature of the inner self and the creative power of thought that lies dormant within us. This is not to deny the physical causes of unhappiness, but at the back of it all lies the fundamental mismatch between our day-to-day outer thoughts and the thought processes and desires of the soul itself. Where these have diverged, disharmony and unhappiness is sure to manifest.



It is safe to say that all unhappiness is due fundamentally to human ignorance of the divine nature of the inner self and the creative power of thought that lies dormant within us.





Mystical lore states that the soul incarnates itself into a human body in this world.

When we attempt to solve problems by constantly denying our own causative responsibilities, namely when we regularly look outside ourselves for causes of our afflictions rather than looking within our beings for possible contributing factors, we are certainly fooling ourselves and compounding our own problems and unhappiness. We know no greater master than our very own Inner Master, the personality that the soul has clothed itself with whilst incarnated in our human body. Mystical lore states that the soul incarnates itself into a human body in this world precisely so that it can witness the laws of the wider universe in action..., thereby learning and growing from the experience and itself becoming more and more inclusive in its nature.

The psychic body, invisible to most, but visible to a few, is a clear manifestation of the divine power that animates us.

For every living thing, there will always be an unseparated segment of the universal Soul residing in that creature in the form of a unique, individual soul..., and that of course especially includes humans. The psychic body, invisible to most, but visible to a few, is a clear manifestation of the divine power that animates us and makes us the living, thinking, self-aware creatures we are.

Surprisingly, it is in the nature of all living things with objective consciousness to tend toward imbalance and disharmony; for chaos is the rule, system and order the exception. It is through mind that the forces which have

moved us into a state of imbalance, are given direction and allow us to once again achieve a state of harmony. The inherent nature of change, from imbalance to harmony and back again, continues in a cyclic fashion as we move from one experience to another. We are sensitive to the imbalance that occurs within, and it is this sensitivity which creates urges and desires, impelling the body and mind to action. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are deep within ourselves devoted to seeking this ever-elusive state of harmony. And everything we do, whether consciously or unconsciously, is for the purpose of removing disharmony from our lives.

Applying Meaning

We each live in our own self-created world of the mind, and everything we perceive actually takes place in this mind. That is where impressions are interpreted and where meaning is applied to them. Clearly then, due to that application of meaning, our world of reality is not only dependent upon what we have perceived from outside of us, but also on our understanding and analysis of those perceptions. In other words, it depends most crucially on the manner in which we give meaning to the things we perceive. Our world is largely the product of our own creative thoughts, and through the power of those thoughts we eventually find what we expected to find, whether or not it is what we wanted to find. Harsh as it may sound, we are each responsible for the world we perceive. We each choose the feelings we experience and decide upon the goals we would like to achieve.

By allowing our minds to harbour the thoughts we have, and by allowing ourselves to do the things



we do, we have in effect “asked” for everything that happens to us, through the creative power of our thoughts. And ultimately we receive precisely what we have asked for, even if our asking was done flippantly and foolishly, rather than with careful thought and planning. Only when we become aware of the presence of the Divine in all things, is there an awakening. The key to our happiness can come only after we have come to understand our true relationship with the God of our understanding and all humanity. We either deliberately face ourselves toward the light or we face away from it. There is little point in trying to find some in-between state, for Light alone is the way of love..., and darkness is the way of doubt and fear.

Our concept of evil most certainly must exist within the permissive will of God, if we include in God everything that can exist. But evil is not expressive of the will of the God we can conceive, even at the limited stage of mental development we have reached. What is evil to us is impersonal to God and we are in effect the ones that give moral value to the concept of evil, just as much as we give moral value to the concept of good. In biblical terms, we are sons and daughters of God and have been given free will to choose between our concepts of good and evil. Evil is a reality in so far as we try and circumvent those aspects of Cosmic law that bring us happiness, goodness and the feeling of sanctity.

We can never actually succeed in breaking Cosmic law, but we certainly can hurt ourselves while trying to do so. We may even manage to fool ourselves that we got away with breaking Cosmic law, but what may for a while appear to be a life lived outside the bounds of Cosmic law, is ultimately shown to be no such thing....

and just compensation is already beginning to operate. The reality of evil lies in our abuse of Cosmic law through our prideful and misguided choices. We can do what we want to, and be what we want to, and there are no limitations on the mind except those that we acknowledge. Remember however, that the body is a vehicle used by the soul. It serves as both a place to reach our concept of the greatest good, and as an instrument through which we may attune with the highest and most Divine principles of existence.

The purpose of life then is to gain knowledge from experience in material reality, something that will allow us to gain greater and greater degrees of comprehension of what is infinite and eternal, and to express the true nature of the inner self, the God Within. With the incremental gaining of understanding of the sanctity already within us, there eventually comes a moment of *full spiritual awakening*, a sudden and profound manifestation of the spiritual entity already resident in us. From that moment onwards, a true mystical path opens up, inviting us to begin the most important part of our journey to the state of the Rose-Croix. There then follows in due course the attainment of a physical, mental and spiritual balance which places our outer being in a state of complete subservience to the will of the soul which in turn is the closest we can ever, in mortal garb, get to God.

When that point has been reached, the cycles of incarnation on earth will be near completion..., the will of the outer self will conform with the Will of God..., and the mystical path through the world of matter will have been traversed in full. To this end, I wish you ultimate success and a truly beautiful journey.



Compassion in Action

by Louise Lane



WE HAVE been taught not to be judgemental of others, and for good reason; for we can never fully know the circumstances that may have led a person to his or her present situation. The ability to understand is inherent in every human being, and makes it possible for us to realise that another person's experience is parallel to our own, yet not the same. Compassion is a feeling of deep sympathy for another who is stricken by suffering or misfortune, and is usually accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the person's pain or to remove its cause. In the fullest sense of the word, compassion is using our mental and psychic abilities to bring us to a realisation that what exists in the world is a complex mixture of human experiences.

Compassion comes in different forms. The first and most common one is when we are moved to alleviate the suffering of others within our social and cultural circle. This form of compassion is very much tied to our recognition of ourselves in other members of our society. At this level, we are motivated especially to help children, the weak, the infirm and the aged. It helps us to understand our own suffering and makes us feel good, that we have "done our good deed for the day". Here compassion is still very much conditional. There are others, who by our standards of behaviour clearly deserve neither our help nor our understanding.

The second level of compassion is still very much conditional, but encompasses the suffering of those outside



our own social and cultural circle. It includes others of different races and cultures, but excludes the criminal, and those who have become, from our point of view, morally outcast. Such limitations on the expression of compassion, though easily rationalised, reflect unconscious feelings of fear. If we were really honest with ourselves we would soon realise that we often withhold our compassion and feelings of sympathy for such persons, for no other reason than that we fear them in one way or another.

On a third level, is what can be referred to as pure compassion. This, as we shall see, is the most difficult form of compassion to achieve for it demands complete, unconditional love for another human being. It is entirely uncontaminated by any unconscious feelings of fear and pierces the veil of all appearances. It sees beyond those walls of protection that we have spent our lives constructing in the vain hope of protecting ourselves from daily life. This form of compassion recognises that the most difficult, the most violent and most depraved persons, are at one and the same time the most sensitive and least adept at self-protection.

Pure compassion allows us to see that fear is the only energy that can so confound the subconscious mind as to distort the personality, and drive us to perform violent and depraved criminal acts. Pure compassion therefore, goes beyond tolerance, charity and forgiveness, for this at last is true compassion in action.

But how open are our hearts to compassion? What is our capacity to expand unconditional love? For love to be real, it has to be put into action. Love is not something to be thought about, it is to be felt. Compassion in action can be explained in that one word, action, and action means service. There is of course a difference between service and just helping. Helping has its roots in inequality. Those being helped could perhaps feel in an inferior position, and this infers a sense of debt. There is also a sense of judgement, us versus them. It is the work of the ego and something that makes us feel good. Service, on the other hand, offers love to all parties. It includes empathy, which is the ability to feel another's pain. Service means doing something for the highest good, and is the work of the soul. With service there are no strings attached, no greed, no social kudos, and no guilt.

Compassion begins with us. It is the art of self-renewal and therefore the actualisation of loving your neighbour as yourself. As an example, in South Africa there was a Vuka award advert on TV for cancer. In the advert, there was a 10-year-old boy who had been diagnosed with cancer. In the process of having chemotherapy treatment, he lost most of his hair. However, instead of leaving it that way, he decided to shave off the rest. Now, when this little chap was ready to return to school, he walked

apprehensively into his classroom, only to find that all the other boys and his teacher greeted him with huge smiles, banners of welcome and bald heads. That was a case of compassion in action!

If we learn to develop spiritual feelings of solidarity towards mankind, this type of altruism is totally free of ego, and is the highest form of compassion. When we show compassion, we must be generous, without judgement, without argument or any desire to impose our wishes on another. In other words, absolutely unconditional. We need to practise random acts of service without any thought of reward. Examples of this are: anonymous donations to charity or someone in need, assisting with disasters like fires and floods, and doing chores for folk who are unable to look after themselves. There are many ways in which our service is needed. We just need to look around; it won't be far away.

Human beings have a remarkable ability to respond to the needs of others in times of crisis, but it is unfortunate that most of the time it takes a catastrophe to bring out the best in us. Compassion is something that has to be practised on a regular basis, and it must begin with us. If we are unable to contribute consciously to the well-being and spiritual development of those who share this world with us, then we will be much the poorer for it. If we are unkind to ourselves, we will be unkind to others, and if we are negligent with ourselves, we will be the same with others. Only by feeling compassion for ourselves, can we feel compassion for others. If we cannot love ourselves, we cannot love others, and we cannot stand to see others loved. If we cannot treat ourselves kindly, we will resent it when we see others being treated kindly. When we are able to love and care for ourselves in an unconditional and loving way, then we can do the same for others who may desperately need love and kindness. It IS through compassion, service and unconditional love that we learn.

The late Dr Loren Eiseley, American philosopher and palaeontologist, was convinced that the future of the scientific age in which we live depends upon man's ability to continue to show compassion. He stated, that as long as man can weep, as long as man can express emotions and is considerate not only of the well-being of himself, but the well-being of all men, then civilisation is safe. Humanity will continue to evolve and will continue to struggle for perfection, but only for as long as man is able to express compassion. We must remember, that as we study, as we attempt to progress in the work that we are meant to do in this life, and to progress in our own desire to develop ourselves physically, mentally and psychically, compassion is one of the most important keys in our own personal evolution.



The Seeds of Self-Fulfillment

by Mary Ann Fowler



THE KIND of body you have, the kind of home you live in, the type of work you do, the kind of people you meet, are all conditioned by and correspond to the images in your mind. As there can be no plant without a seed, so the circumstances in your life spring from the hidden seeds of your thought. Every one of your actions is always preceded by thought.

Action then, could be thought of as the flowering of thought; joy and suffering are its fruits. So when choosing the fruits of your life..., a healthy body, a satisfactory job,

friends and opportunities..., you must first plant the seed of thought and supply yourself with the proper image in your mind before the thing will be manifested in your life. Without the mental image within, you cannot have the material expression without...; “as within, so without.”

There are probably things you would like to change or eliminate in your life, and let’s face it, we all have them! Perhaps there’s some part of your body you would love to change or some habits. If you rid your mind of the mental image, that is, stop thinking about the unwanted





An egg has within it a tiny seed capable of becoming a chicken. But before you can see the chicken, the mother hen must have enough interest during the gestation period to nourish the egg. If the hen loses interest, the chick will be still-born. The manifestation then is a rotten egg. It's the same with your thought ideas. Lose interest and fail to act, and your idea becomes the equivalent of a rotten egg.

condition, you will have taken the first step towards removing it from your life. The secret of successful living is to build up or visualise the mental image you want, whilst at the same time getting rid of the mental image you don't want. How do you do this? By choosing the thoughts you allow your mind to dwell upon.

Thoughts are Things

To Rosicrucians, thoughts are things. According to the Law of Polarity, anything that's created anywhere in the Universe is produced by two other things. For years it was believed that the atom was the smallest particle of matter; but when scientists split the atom, and later with the discovery of sub-atomic particles, the Law of Polarity was apparent. It always takes two things, the positive and the negative..., the odd and the even, or the up and the down, to produce a third condition. Since thoughts are things, they too must be composed of two other things.

The two components of thought are clearness (the negative, passive element) and interest (the positive, active element). If you want to try out the Law of Polarity and create what you want in your material world, you should start with your thought process. First, you need a clear mental picture of what you want; second, you need enough interest to cause the creative forces of the Universe to respond to your desires.

The Thought Seed A Creative Idea

Thoughts by nature externalise. You've heard the old saying "like attracts like...", well you tend to attract to

yourself and to become attracted to people, circumstances and situations that are similar to the images you hold in your thoughts. If you think about happiness, you'll attract happiness into your life. But it's impossible to be successful and happy while you think about and hold an image in your mind of failure and sadness. Remember, the type of thought you concentrate on and hold in your mind will reproduce itself in your outer world: for as within, so without.

It's impossible to be successful and happy while you think about and hold an image in your mind of failure and sadness.

Most people want to become happy, healthy and prosperous. But do you hold that image in your mind? or do you just read an inspirational article or two and then wonder why you're not more successful in attaining your goal? One of the reasons you may not see the manifestation of your desires is because you haven't acted according to the Law of Polarity. If you don't think quietly, constantly and persistently about the kind of things you want, and you don't act on the guidance from within..., if you let doubt destroy the second pole, i.e., your interest..., that doubt causes the image to become distorted before time has permitted the creation to express itself in physical form. The thought seed, or the creative idea, must be nourished and kept alive through its gestation period just as with any other life form.



An egg for instance, has within it a tiny seed capable of becoming a chicken. But before you can see the material manifestation, namely the chicken, the mother hen must have enough interest during the three-week gestation period to nourish the egg by keeping it warm with her body, turning it in various positions with the expectation of seeing a chick. If the hen loses interest and fails to sit on the egg, the chick will be still-born. The manifestation then is a rotten egg. It's the same with your thought ideas. Lose interest and fail to act, and your idea becomes the equivalent of a rotten egg.

Concentration

If you want to be successful, concentrate your thoughts on things such as love, wisdom, joy and beauty, and use affirmations to maintain your interest while nourishing your thought-ideas throughout the gestation period. Your mind must be open and receptive, and intuitively you'll be directed toward your highest good by the Cosmic Energy within. Just as the hen acts intuitively in changing an egg into a chicken, you can act intuitively to change your idea into its material manifestation.

If you want to be successful, concentrate your thoughts on things such as love, wisdom, joy and beauty,

The Rosicrucian teachings emphasise concentration, because concentration is the key to a happy life. Through concentration, you build an image within that will then be manifested in your life. Many people fail to concentrate successfully because they think that concentration requires the classic use of will power in the form of closing your eyes real hard, grinding your teeth and generally tensing the body all over. This may work on occasion, but it's a lot easier to concentrate the effortless way..., and it's a lot easier.

Think about a camera! In a camera there is of course no question of pressure. The secret lies in focus and depth of field. If you want to photograph an object, you focus your camera lens quietly and steadily on the object and calmly select your depth of focus. You don't press violently against the lens of the camera and you don't move the camera from one item to another, moment by moment. If you did, you would end up with a blur. The same is true with the picture you are developing in your mind when you don't keep your thoughts concentrated for any length of time. In attempting to concentrate, some people think health for a few minutes and then wander off to thoughts

of ill health or fear. They think prosperity a while, and then without knowing even, start worrying about their debts and how they're going to pay their bills. They think about bodily perfection and then think about old age, aches and pains. Is it any wonder they are so apt to demonstrate a hazy, blurred image?

I am not advocating taking one thought and trying to hold it by will power. That's not quite the approach to take. Rather, allow a train of thoughts to have free play in your mind; one leading naturally to the next; a bit like entering a so-called "brown study." The thoughts must be positive, constructive, harmonious and about your desire. By thinking quietly and without effort you'll attain the mental image of all-round success. When you have an image of success in your mind, success will follow in your outer experiences in the form of a healthier physical body, happier relationships, more productive work and fuller spiritual development: for as within, so without.

Power of Affirmations

How are you using the great power of affirmations? Do you tell your friends about your problems, and then explain that you're using affirmations to rid yourself of the problem? If so, you're strongly affirming the existence of the problem which is the very thing you're trying to get rid of. If you tell your friends you're going to work on your rheumatism, your lack of finances or your undesirable relationships, you're making these things very real in your subconscious mind.



If you want to photograph an object, you focus your camera lens quietly and steadily on the object and calmly select your depth of focus.





The Rosicrucian teachings emphasise concentration, because concentration is the key to a happy life. Through concentration, you build an image within that will then be manifested in your life.

What should you do? Change your mind about the problem and forget it for a period of time, say for a month, and you'll be astonished at the results. To keep looking for any improvement in the condition is remembering the problem, putting energy into the problem..., and that's really affirming the existence of the problem, isn't it? The secret is to forget the problem and have your thoughts changed into the new condition. Believe what you're thinking, and act as though the new condition were already in existence in the outer world. If you do this, the new condition will soon appear outwardly, because the outer is only the projection, the visualisation manifested, of the inner.

Your true thoughts and beliefs are projected in your daily experiences, and correspond with the circumstances in your life. True activity always comes from within and is manifested outward. False activity tries to work from without inward. As with the seed and the egg I spoke about earlier, growth comes from within. The seed and the egg contain everything necessary to create life in a visible form. The tiny mustard seed, so small you can't see it once you place it in the soil, will burst forth from within and produce a plant two feet tall. If you do a project because you've been inspired from within and you act on that inspiration, that's a true action and you are working from within outward. Your work is alive and will be productive. If you're working from outside inward, your work will not be productive; in fact, it will fail.

The Infinite Mind

If you are to be successful in your job, you must love your work and be inspired from within to take positive action. The same is true in your mystical development. If you insincerely meditate, perhaps in order to impress

others, your efforts will be in vain. But if you turn your consciousness within, to attune with and accept the guidance from the Infinite Mind, your spiritual growth will be apparent and will be reflected in the circumstances of your life. Your thoughts rapidly crystallise into habits, and habits solidify into circumstances. The real you then, is reflected in the circumstances of your life, and those circumstances are the results of your thoughts.

Thoughts of fear, doubt and indecision crystallise into weak and irresolute habits, which solidify into failure. Impure thoughts of every kind..., thoughts of envy, jealousy, revenge, injustice or unfair criticism, crystallise into confusing habits which solidify into adverse circumstances. On the other hand, beautiful thoughts crystallise into habits of grace and kindness, which solidify into genial, cheerful and pleasant circumstances. Pure thoughts of love, health and happiness crystallise into habits of temperance and self-control which solidify into circumstances of success and peace. Just as lovely, pleasing and enjoyable thoughts produce a sweet and sunny disposition, so do sour, disagreeable and offensive thoughts result in a sour and unattractive face. If you persist in a particular train of thought, whether good or bad, it cannot fail to produce its results in your character and in your world.

So look at yourself and your life. Are you pleased with what you see? If you want to improve your life, you must improve yourself. Begin by changing your thoughts, for much of the misfortune you encounter in life is as a result of your own inharmonious thoughts having led you to the circumstances that brought the misfortune about. The peace and harmony in your life is a result of your own mental harmony within. You are meant to be a happy, healthy and prosperous person; and happiness, health and prosperity are the result of a harmonious adjustment of the inner with the outer: for as within, so without.





Procrastination

by Shirley Styles

EVERYONE THESE days suffers from the feeling of being pressed for time. We are busy people, we have active lives and we just don't seem to catch up with things the way it was "in the old days." In fact it's useless at times to sit down with only our thoughts for company, as those thoughts inevitably turn to the guilty feeling (nay certainty!) that there are many more important, more urgent things we should be doing.

Do you know that much of this is due to past procrastination? It's obvious when you think of it. If we didn't needlessly put things off, those "urgent things" would now be done. So, procrastination is the first thing we need to eliminate, and that demands planning and the stamina and will to put our plans into action. Procrastination is a much more serious problem than we realise. It is like a silent cancer. It requires no effort, does its work silently and unnoticed, but ends up delivering a painful blow. In fact it does more than almost any other habit to deprive us of satisfaction, success and happiness. We do ourselves a great dis-service every time we toss an issue into the mental tray marked "pending", when we are perfectly capable of dealing with the issue then and there.

More than two centuries ago Edward Young, disappointed with law, politics and in his 35-year

rectorship of a small church, wrote the often-quoted line "Procrastination is the thief of time...", and how true that is. In fact, procrastination is much more than a thief of time, it is the mother of all thieves of our self-respect. It nags at us, spoils our fun and deprives us of the fullest realisation of our ambitions and hopes. Even our leisure is eaten into by procrastination. Were it not for procrastination, logically at least, we should easily have enough time for all those things we can't do now.

For so many who complain the most that they have no time for leisure, life is a real drag, a constant, steady grind..., a proverbial pain in the... you know what! Most such people however have not learnt to organise their time and energy. They have also not learnt to set their sights just little a bit lower than they are used to..., so they can at least get through their allotted daily tasks. They are the sort who find themselves nervously unfit to deal with immediate things, to stand the pressure of urgent jobs, and when faced with such challenges, retreat for what they think will be but a while, but which turns into full-blown procrastination.

Business people who are today at the heights of success are invariably people who were judicious enough to exert themselves at the proper time twenty or thirty



years ago. They did not put off any of the things that were necessary to their advancement, and having their eye on tomorrow's opportunities they got today's business out of the way today! Not only is procrastination a deadly blight on our lives, it is a nuisance to all our companions too. Everyone the procrastinator has to deal with in the family, factory or office is thrown from time to time into a state of agitation that "nothing gets done" by this person. Everyone else has to work harder to take up the slack that is left by such a person. It is all very well to admit that procrastination is a bad thing, but if we are to do anything effective toward its cure we must know something about its cause.

Indolence may be the weak link in the chain of any person's character, especially if they are business leaders and have people under them who rely on their dynamism to push the company forward to success. Indolence at the top often manifests as indolence in the ranks of the employees too. Everyone is putting off something that could be done now rather than later. Reluctant to tackle jobs that are more challenging than normal, they seem baffled by small difficulties, or are engrossed in spinning out some activity unnecessarily. The famous Parkinson's Law ("work expands to fill whatever time is allotted to it") is very much in evidence in such corporate cultures, and company failure is inevitable. Procrastination may of course in some cases be due to ill health, but usually it is due to much deeper rooted psychological and attitudinal problems and every real mystic knows have to be resolved before they can move on with their inner development.

"Procrastination is the thief of time..."

A child who cannot find his clothes in the morning may be unknowingly rebelling against school, and postponing having to go there. A man who explodes in the midst of a business conference may be motivated by an inner irritation that follows a sense of putting off something that should have been given immediate attention. If you are a chronic procrastinator it may be that your parents did more for you than they should have. Perhaps they "picked up" after you, and quietly in their loving ways, did the things you left undone. You learned that by putting off duties nothing serious happened: someone else did the work.

But today you find that your habit leads to unending ills. You are effectively putting off proper, normal living to some fictional future date. You are making yourself unhappy because in deferring your life to the future, you



Procrastinators find themselves nervously unfit to deal with immediate things or stand the pressure of urgent jobs.

are missing the present and its golden opportunities for rich living. You are putting off until tomorrow not only duties and jobs but happiness and achievement. The truth is that we are most inclined to postpone doing things that seem at the time to be unpleasant, distasteful or difficult. When we have something like that to do, we fiddle around with little things, trying to keep busy so that we have an excuse that will ease the conscience. Dreading and postponing a task may be more tiring than doing it, and apprehension over delayed unpleasantness may so preoccupy us that other things cannot be done effectively.

The well-organised life leaves time for everything..., for planning, doing and following through. Time does not boss this sort of life like a taskmaster with a whip. Time is not used up in regretting, or in trying to live life retroactively, or in explaining why something needed has not been done. Human beings, like things in nature, suffer from inertia. It takes more effort to start than to keep going, and it is easier to stop than to continue. Even worse, we find it possible to delude ourselves: we frame plans and make decisions and then allow ourselves to think of them as being completed.

Decisions are of little account unless followed by actions. And no recipe for getting something done is as good as the words: "Do it now!" Doing nothing is "negative action", and there are consequences: discouragement, irritation, disappointment, and even ill health and mental upset. By constructive thought and action, energetically applied to the elimination of procrastination from our lives, we may make this year much longer than the past year in terms of things done, happiness realised and vividness of life enjoyed. Try following one of the rules found in that wonderful Tibetan book *Unto Thee I Grant*:

"Whatever you resolve to do, do it now. Defer not till the evening what the morning can accomplish."



Postures for Spiritual Growth

by *Alvin Sedoya*



TRAVELLING on the pathway to illumination is a journey: there are no shortcuts, no easier ways of reaching your goal, no 'quick fixes.' For the path you take is in its broadest terms defined by what you presently are, which in turn depends on what you've been in the past. In other words, your personal karma plays a big part in how your life is formed and what challenges you'll face along the way.

That there are no fast lanes to illumination may

sound a bit boring and unexciting, but deluding oneself about the true nature of the challenges we must face and overcome on our journey is a waste of time, a bit like seeking the blueprints for the mythical perpetual motion machine. Austere as the journey to illumination may seem for some, the truth is that it is far from boring or austere, even though it is certain in most cases *not* to be easy. Every person seeking genuine spiritual development will have a life filled with challenges, some severe, some





Although the journey will have its flat, desolate, boring plains to traverse, as well as a few dark valleys, in the big picture the path points upwards, on and on to the next elevation, the next peak beyond which ever higher peaks beckon one on.

relatively easy to overcome, but all of them will have to be dealt with sooner or later.

Procrastination, other than briefly as one takes a rest and gets one's bearings, is invariably not a good thing once one has decided upon a final goal. What one can be assured of when that goal has been defined and decided upon is at the very least an interesting, rewarding and thoroughly fulfilling life, where achieving one goal points to the next, and so on and so forth. Although the journey will have its flat, desolate, boring plains to traverse, as well as a few dark valleys, in the big picture the path points upwards, on and on to the next elevation, the next peak beyond which ever higher peaks beckon one on.

Intuition, that highest of all human faculties is what finally tells us which way to go, which of the many doors to open and pass through.

Times of seemingly rapid progress are for the most part mere illusions, for they are preceded by long periods of 'gestation' as one prepares oneself and does the groundwork necessary for those rare quantum leaps in consciousness and understanding. For every such leap, there will be countless hours of boring and frustrating apparent stagnation, where nothing seems to be happening and things just aren't coming into place. But adhering to a coherent system of inner development

throughout such periods is essential. One has to have before one an ultimate and transcendent goal, and most importantly, a method of reaching it. Once the method has been found to be effective, applying it through thick and thin is all that's needed. The Rosicrucian Order has over the past century provided such methods for hundreds of thousands of people the world over.

Karma is no fool. It is there to assist us to evolve, and rarely if ever presents us with difficulties we can't overcome by applying the tools and techniques we've already acquired. True progress can only be made step-by-step, hour-by-hour and day-by-day through discipline and hard effort. Our steps on the path consist of our personal thoughts, our feelings towards others, and the actions we take in dealing with others and ourselves. There is a strong element of the here-and-now in this approach and we are so-to-speak on the ground in the thick of it all among the hot, sweaty masses of confusing, noisy and conflicting paths that beckon us on. But only one path will be best suited to our needs. Intuition, that highest of all human faculties is what finally tells us which way to go, which of the many doors to open and pass through.

A More Direct Route

As we metaphorically travel on our path of spiritual unfoldment we learn through painful experience the futility of trying to find shortcuts by attempting to avoid what our accumulated past actions and the karma associated with them dictates are fundamentally important experiences for us to have. There is never



a need to fret about this, but a great need to accept the lessons that lie before us. And we need more than anything else to just get on with the task of learning from the experiences that will accompany them. And learning grudgingly is of course not the right way of going about things. Gratitude and joy at being given the chance to wipe the slate clean from the stains of past thoughts, words and actions should be the spirit in which we accept our daily challenges. Focusing our energies on the task ahead, rather than questioning “why me?”, is paramount.

Our attitudes are fundamental and directly govern how we, as students of the mystical life, approach and master the tasks needed for our development.

If there exists such a thing as a quickest route to heaven, then accepting your path is it. You'll find that accepting it good naturedly (indeed with gratitude!) and dealing with the challenges it presents amounts to the least painful, most rewarding and by far the quickest and most direct route to illumination. Contrary to what many people think, the approach that brings success is crucially based on the broad substructure of one's *attitudes*. Attitudes have cognitive, affective and behavioural components. They determine how we think, feel or act, and it is these attitudes that allow us to have the realisations needed in order to realise in detail how to apply our toolkit of effective methods of inner development in the most economical and effective manner possible. Our attitudes are fundamental and directly govern how we, as students of the mystical life, approach and master the tasks needed for our development.

So I have come to believe that certain key attitudes are essential for any path of spiritual development to be successful. There are potentially many such attitudes of course but only a few that are effective in furthering our spiritual development. I will consider just five attitudes but refer to them more accurately as mystical or inner *postures* instead. For attitudes are in effect deliberately held mental and emotional postures adopted with difficulty at first but held with a lighter and lighter touch as we begin mastering the true art of living.

Causation

The first posture is what I call *causation*. It is crucially important to come to understand that there are always

two causes to every manifestation. Things don't manifest along a one-dimensional string of causes, with one cause leading to the next. No, all phenomena are the result of *two* active causes, never just one.

We can call one of them the 'positive' polarity and the other the 'negative' polarity or quality. The words 'positive' and 'negative' have in this regard no relation to their normal association with electric fields. They are merely two qualities in which a *few* aspects of those qualities (not all of them) are polar opposites like the north and south poles of a magnet or the positive and negative terminals of an electrical circuit. Only two causes can produce a manifestation and that manifestation occurs at the point of their union. Polar opposite 'sub-qualities' of these two 'things' are what causes the 'things' themselves to be attracted to and eventually bind with each other in a stable union. This principle is known as the *Rosicrucian Law of the Triangle* and is part of the fundamental teachings required by anyone aspiring to learn the deeper, esoteric mysteries of life.

We can consider the '*things*' as including absolutely anything at all, whether physical objects or agglomerations of mental thoughts and emotions. What is crucial though is to treat them as 'things' even though they may not be tangible. They are 'things' in so far as they can be mentally constructed and understood, and it is important therefore to realise that whatever the nature of a 'thing', it is ultimately the result of the union of two other 'things'. Without a clear understanding of the duality of all causation, we tend to concentrate on only the most obvious cause, thereby missing half the picture and thereby failing to see the full range of causes behind a 'thing', i.e. a material object, a thought, an emotion, an event, etc., indeed anything whatever you can think of. Because we tend to concentrate only on one cause, we tend to attach too much importance on that single cause and lose the wider perspective needed if we are to fully understand what is happening and why.

When we understand the need for two causes we have a better understanding of our self. Usually, we'll be analysing something which has happened and we will therefore be alert to recognise the two parts that were played in the event's cause. In other words, we will see how we personally share responsibility with someone or something else.

Change

The second posture, closely related to the first, is *change*. It is one of the strongest of certainties we have. We may speculate about our physical existence, maybe even





People who work their entire lives towards their retirement may discover that their lives become empty and boring when there's no longer a worthwhile reason to get up in the morning, especially if they have no hobbies or interests.

speculate that we are mere holographic projections from some super-mind, that we may move from one universe to another between incarnations, and all sorts of other things we can't prove, yet! But one thing is absolutely clear, we experience change all the time, and ironically it's the only constant part of our lives.

We change not only our mental concepts of ourselves and the world around us, we also change the deepest feeling we have for things, our emotions, our love for or dislike of certain circumstances and people. Few things are so stifling to our individual or collective human creativity, or as deadly to personal or social development, as a misplaced zeal for a final solution, finding a *'once-and-for-all'* final situation where we can put our feet up and relax. We've seen some truly tragic national 'final solutions' in the past with millions dead as a result, so let's never think of anything as ever being the be-all and end-all of any issue. There is never a true ending. There are stages, chapter endings, section endings but no end to our book of life, no *'final solutions.'* What was *'final'* a decade ago may seem anything but final today.

People who work their entire lives towards their retirement may discover that their lives become empty and boring when there's no longer a worthwhile reason to get up in the morning, especially if they have no hobbies or interests. In the March 2015 *Rosicrucian Heritage* magazine, the article "Go to the Light" (page 33) mentions the long deceased Michael Shoreditch who can't let go of the office environment he lived in for a large part of his life. He ends up in a psychic state of limbo rather than embracing change and moving on to the Light he's destined to experience before his next incarnation. Well, on a purely mundane level we too should avoid ending up in a situation where we feel there's little else to do than just carry on with what we've

always done. Even if we feel we've finally 'made it', we have a healthy bank balance and can put our feet up to enjoy the fruits of our labours, we must be careful not to think this is the end of change, that things will from now on continue on the straight and level indefinitely. The fruits of our past efforts eventually go out of season, the money dries up and we are eventually forced to face change again. Change is the law!

As the two polarities of any manifestation continually combine and recombine to produce new manifestations, we are experiencing change constantly. And change causes us to explore new avenues, try new things, seek new understandings of things, and seek new situations in the ever-changing world around us. The fast pace of life experienced by most people is the realisation of the impermanence and instability of our material and social lives. Sensitive seekers already know this and fully realise that not only does the outer

The fast pace of life experienced by most people is the realisation of the impermanence and instability of our material and social lives.

world constantly change, they change too.

Our aims, our goals, our aspirations and desires all change over time. Sometimes change is forced upon us and at other times (less frequently) we initiate the change ourselves. In a sense, we wake up as new beings each morning, slightly different from the evening before, and the world is for us just slightly different from yesterday. Consequently, those who are serious about personal development examine their private philosophy each day in the light of new experiences because they know that yesterday's philosophy is inadequate for today's living. When we are trying to create perfection at the same time as coping with change, we must remember that our very concept of perfection is changing, expanding, evolving.

Of all people, mystics though generally all people sincerely seeking genuine spiritual advancement don't expect to live in a world where things stay as they are. They are sufficiently self-assured to live comfortably in an ever-changing world, happy to meet change as it arrives, adapt to the changed circumstances and see those new circumstances as karmic gifts meant to spur them on to new experiences that will assist them in meeting their daily challenges, and in the greater scheme of things will





Private home sanctums can help Rosicrucians attune with the God of their heart.

deepen their spiritual maturity.

The more experienced we are on our given path, the more we welcome change as a vehicle for growth. In fact, understanding change makes us more accepting of it with the result that we try to share in the process, guiding change for the benefit of ourselves and others. We won't find any adept longing for the past or fighting change in defence of the present state of affairs. We'll be fully immersed in the present, while carefully and knowingly working for the future and engineering the changes that we believe are necessary to bring that future into the present. We become transformed into willing, understanding and excited agents of change.

Self-Reliance

The third posture is *self-reliance*, something which flows directly from our concept of self. Of course I'm not referring to egocentricity or selfishness, or that we abandon our public duties and serve our personal needs to the complete exclusion of the needs of others within our karmic proximity. No, we have social obligations, we have karmic obligations, we have civic duties to perform, we have our family, village, community and nation to stand up for, and we must not abandon our duties.

Self-reliance is more akin to courage, fortitude, inner resolve and a deep sense of responsibility. True

mystics know that no answer can come from anywhere or anyone except from within oneself. We don't really accept advice from anyone for example until we inwardly agree with it; in other words before we have internalised and made that advice our own. We rely best on what comes from within us, even if we borrow the seed thoughts from others to begin with.

We carefully listen to others, enjoy exploring new ideas with others and gain much from group study where we share ideas and experiences with others. But in the end, we don't really accept anything until we've taken ownership of it and see that it resonates with our inner self. To that extent, we are relying on ourselves. We are self-reliant in that our decisions are made by us alone and not imposed upon us. To the extent we make the experiences of others our own, valuable lessons may be learned; but all the answers we seek ultimately lie within us already, and these answers can only be found there.

As a Rosicrucian, I have a private 'home sanctum'. This is a small room where I retire regularly, usually each evening before I retire to bed, and do a number of important mystical exercises, quite apart from thinking the day over, noting the mistakes I made and the things I did right. Most important of all for me is to attune myself with God, or as Rosicrucians call it the *God of my Heart*; in other words the highest form of holiness I can reach. It is my sanctum sanctorum, my life's anchor, and I would feel most lost without at least something resembling the sanctity I'm privileged to experience in it from time to time. Each time I sit in front of the big mirror I have on my altar, I look squarely between the two burning candles into the face of the person whose inner self has all the answers. My Inner Self, like your Inner Self too, is an extension of the Divine Self, and it knows the answer, the correct answer, to every question you or I could ever ask. This is where I get my best advice.

The Inner Self, also known to Rosicrucians as the Master Within, is not the body itself, it is not the brain, it is not any possessions I have, nor any accumulation of knowledge I may possess, nor any personal achievements I've made. It is separate, apart from the outer me, it is a unique, independent, never to be repeated extension of the god-consciousness existing in all creatures; and it has a wisdom beyond our wildest dreams. This the Self to which we look for all reality.

Self-reliance then is reliance on this Inner Self, and being confident and proficient in contacting it whenever needed. Our self-reliance is part of a courageous philosophy, and although it is something everyone should possess, it is unfortunately something which only a few do. Far too many people look to an ordinary, fallible person to lean upon, like a guru, a pop idol, or





My Inner Self, like your Inner Self too, is an extension of the Divine Self, and it knows the answer, the correct answer, to every question you or I could ever ask. This is where I get my best advice.

some icon of intellectual fame, when all the time the only really competent guru is already 'inside' them. We must look to our Self for all true solutions and not try and impose our personal beliefs on others. Our Inner Self is for us only, and to help others therefore, we must lead by example and create that example through reliance on our Self.

Impersonality

The fourth posture is *impersonality*. It is very important but often one of the most difficult of attitudes to maintain. The term '*impersonal*' means for some people being cold, aloof or uncaring. But that is not what's meant. For me, and I'm sure for others too, it means something quite different and is the source of both perspective and power.

When acting in a personal way, people are prone to playing God. Even when sincerely trying to help others, they take it upon themselves to control the people they're trying to help by selecting the objects and the means of help according to their limited value judgments. In other words, *they* select who should receive help from them and *they* decide what help is best suited for those they wish to help. There's a tendency to decide what someone *should* do, or suggest how they might live *better*. In the individual's great self esteem, it becomes too easy to want to evolve the understanding of others, meaning of course, to make it *more like their own*. Sounds a bit presumptuous? Of course it does.

It is far better to be impersonal. To illustrate this I'll use an analogy, one often used in the training of a mystic. How unfortunate some of us would be if candles acquired some special intelligence and will of their own and started radiating their light only to those they considered deserving of it. Of course that's not likely to happen; a candle doesn't ask who we are or how we live,

nor even why we're using its light. The candle simply radiates impersonally with no sermons, no advice, no judgment. It gives its light to everyone, sinner or saint, and we may take of its light as we will, and use it as we may. It gives because that is its nature.

Acting in a personal way means limiting ourselves to helping those we know, those we approve of and those we judge deserving of our assistance. We're also limited by our emotions. Now certainly there are times when personal efforts are good and proper and even required and we should all respond to an appeal for assistance. All of us should in some way treat the ill, comfort the distressed and protect those in need of protection. But the bulk of our work should be devoted to *impersonal* service, an offering of our all to the Cosmic to be used wherever required and in whatever way needed, without demanding the personal control we find so hard to let go of.

Impersonal service means serving all, known and unknown, human, animal, fish or fowl, all who are in need and who could benefit from our helping hands. Best of all, while serving impersonally, we're not held back by worries about success, nor given over to pride by what help we've given, nor worried about the possible new karmic bonds we may have inadvertently created. So, true students on the path simply give, for it is in their nature to give freely, kindly, with concern, with love, and to all who can receive: "*like the radiation of a light in a darkened room.*"

High Aspirations

The fifth and last posture is a dogged or determined holding of *high aspirations* as long as possible, as often as possible. Doing so requires great effort though, and sometimes enormous challenges need to be overcome. The determination with which we uphold our highest principles of living determines how successful we are in



our spiritual evolution. It is in fact the most important of the five inner postures, for without it we are lost pretty soon and find ourselves back in the humdrum ordinariness of a life without a transcendent goal. Keeping one's consciousness elevated and working at the highest level of awareness we are capable of is what is needed to uphold determined aspiration.

Far too many seekers complain about how long it is reputed to take to become an adept. Well, that's just too bad isn't it? One can't become a world-class concert pianist without years of effort; one can't become a brilliant scientist simply by attending a few night classes in physics. Some people compare themselves with great masters of the past as though they were already on the same level intellectually and spiritually with these 'super beings' and just need a little extra push to gain entry to the exclusive *'club of masters.'* What a grand delusion! Mastering life is not only a lifelong venture even when one manages to doggedly and persistently uphold one's highest aspirations; it is a venture that will continue for many lifetimes, even for the most diligent of aspirants, even when one's determination is fierce as a burning

Keeping one's consciousness elevated and working at the highest level of awareness we are capable of is what is needed to uphold determined aspiration.

furnace and one's aspirations are truly high.

There'll be many moments when one's aspirations are tested and questioned, and one's determination to carry things through begins to falter. When that happens, many people feel they've failed and stop even trying to use the innate powers and gifts they already possess. Feeling unable or not powerful enough to operate on a greatly elevated vibrational plane with ease and finesse, they do nothing, they don't even try to remedy the situation. What poor excuses for seekers of spiritual illumination. None of us can at all times be completely attuned and harmonious. We're human after all, we have our limitations, and we'll fail many times over before attaining mastership.

It is better therefore to completely forget about comparisons with past masters, or with anyone else higher than us for that matter, and decide instead to operate upon the highest plane of consciousness open to us *at this time*

and just get on with it. In this way we'll always be at the upper limits of the personal range of our spiritual quest, and at this level we'll receive many glimpses and even detailed visions at times of what lies even higher than we can aspire to at present. Aspiring consistently to something noble and spiritually rewarding, and doing so consistently and with determination is the mark of a true mystic, no matter what beliefs or philosophy of life s/he holds.

As we probably won't reach that highest plane today, let's try instead to reach the highest plane we reasonably believe achievable. There's an old saying: "*Prove that you can be trusted with a match and you'll be permitted to hold the candle.*" Its meaning is simple and obvious; do your best now and higher development is sure to follow.

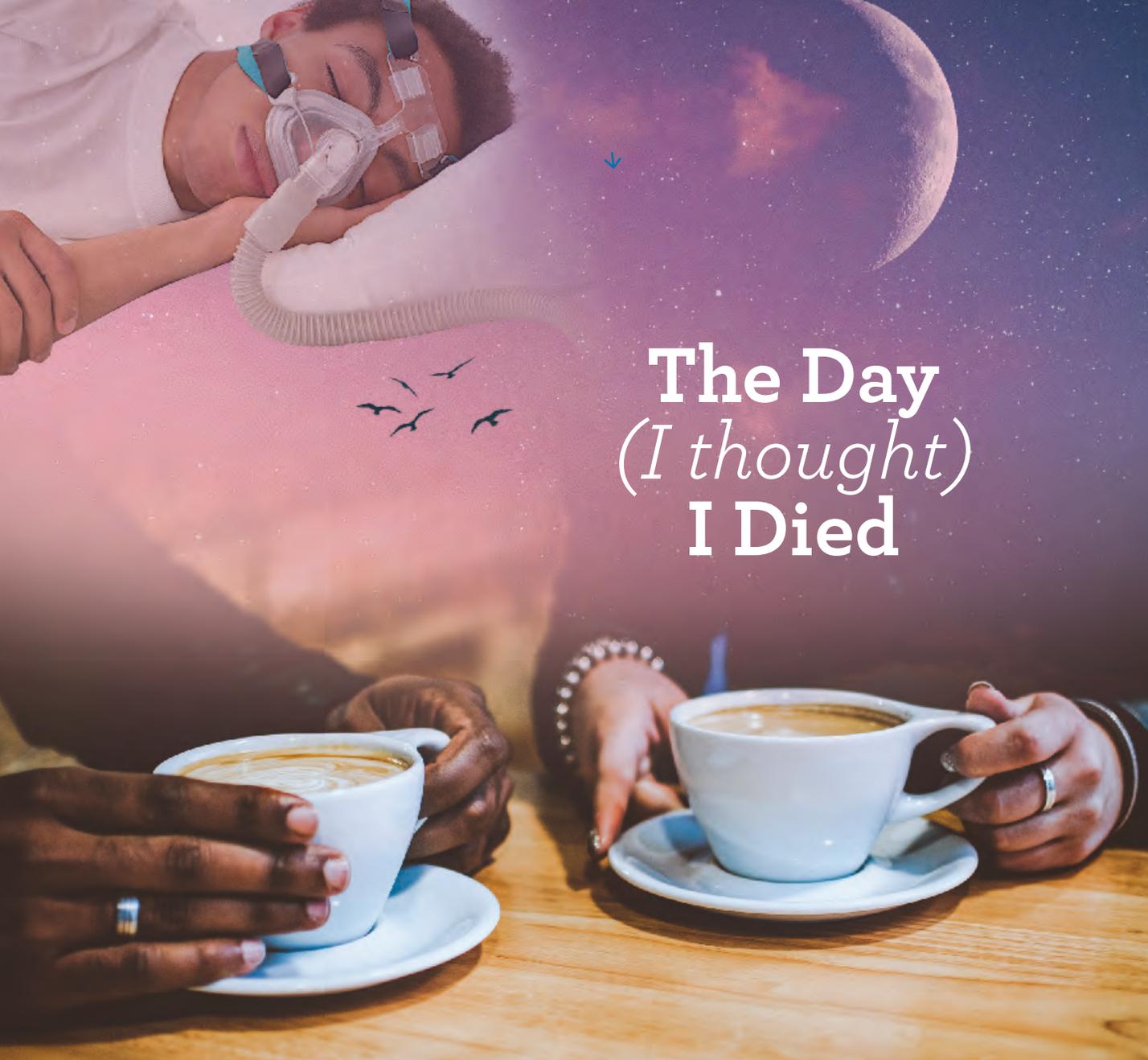
The five attitudes or inner postures discussed in this article are of course tightly interwoven with each other and mutually reinforcing. Attitudes, those deliberately held inner postures of thought, word and action, have no direct power in themselves but their implications are tremendous. They exert their power through their effects on our thoughts, feelings, words and actions. In summary, if people were suitably grounded philosophically by the society in which they lived, there would be no need to even speak of these postures. Our postures of living are there to properly orient ourselves so we can get on with the work that lies within our personal abilities to accomplish.

Rightly understood, these inner postures permit personal power and true wisdom to be acquired more quickly than without them. Create a few new postures for yourself, make them your own personal way of living, and you can be sure they will become crucial tools in your journey on the path to Illumination.



*"Prove that you can be trusted with a match and you'll be permitted to hold the candle."
Meaning; do your best now and higher development is sure to follow.*





The Day (I thought) I Died

by Barry Hill

IN THE EARLY summer of 2007, I was not feeling well for weeks on end. It started off as a cough and soon the usual flu symptoms arrived. I was in my mid forties and health-wise there were no issues I knew of, and I hadn't had flu in years. In fact I was in peak condition, so it was an annoyance not to be able to do my usual weekend cycling. I felt like a rag doll, hardly strong enough to make it up the stairs.

Thankfully the flu passed within a few days and I was well on my way to a full recovery when I accepted with pleasure an invitation to meet up with my sister and her children at a local coffee shop. I love the innocence and spontaneity of children and had a special bond of affection for her twins of three years of age, one a boy, the other a

girl, both very different personalities but bright, active, full of life and above all caring and affectionate towards each other.

The queue to place the order for the coffee and buns was long and my sister patiently took her place in it as her children met up with other children their age in the shop. The two with the family next to me were complete strangers to them at first, but with shy, friendly faces and actions to begin with, within minutes they were all best friends for life. It was a wonderful scene. Why couldn't adults be like this? All those wars, arguments and misery among adults when little children could meet up so easily and become friends almost immediately, how easy it would be to banish



conflicts for good if we could just become as little children again.

The shop was full of people, lots of talking and laughter. The ambience was relaxed and pleasant, good music was playing and I was overcome with a sudden feeling of gratitude to be able to experience life at its best again and especially now that I was feeling so much better. As I sat there in a comfortable sofa absorbing the scene, I put my head back briefly and closed my eyes. That must have been when I lost consciousness and everything suddenly ceased. I don't remember what happened, nor do I remember the way in which I lost consciousness, but I do remember suddenly being aware of silence.

I was looking down on everyone in the shop from what I estimate must have been close to the ceiling.

I was calm and under no discomfort except the disorientating view of concurrently seeing everyone in the shop as though from a great height above them, as though I were a thousand feet up in the clear blue sky and could see all that was going on in the shop, yet at the same time at ground level looking at people continuing their normal conversations. In an instant things changed again, and this time all was clear. I was no longer in two places at once. I was looking down on everyone in the shop from what I estimate must have been close to the ceiling. I saw everyone as though I were before them, everyone and everything simultaneously, including myself slumped to one side on the sofa. The silence remained as I watched with great clarity everyone continuing as normal.

I have no idea how long this lasted as I had no sensation of time and had no concept that I was somehow 'gone' or that anything was different. It was only long afterwards that I was told I had been clinically dead from cardiac arrest for at least six minutes. At one point I saw myself in great detail slumped to one side on the couch, with my head at an impossible angle and people standing around looking down at me. And then everything went blank until I awoke three days later in the intensive care unit of a hospital only a block away.

Initially I had no memory of anything that had happened and was repeatedly restrained from trying to get up. When I was told I had suffered a heart attack and been clinically dead for over six minutes, I knew there was a good chance I had suffered permanent brain damage. But none of that mattered; I was just grateful I was still alive and could see and speak and even move a bit. Life is at its most desirable when it has nearly ended, and for me, it was so so good still to be here.

Under strong sedation, I fell asleep again, and in the early hours of the next morning I awoke again with the same

clarity as before. The memory of what had happened in the coffee shop returned in full, graphic detail. I remembered it all as far as the point where everything had ceased. I knew however that this time, this silent early hour, was altogether different and it was destined to be my last goodbye. From a point somewhere high in the room I saw two nurses rush into the room, lights going on and very quickly after them a doctor arrived and I was rapidly wheeled out of the room. That is when everything ceased again.

I had suffered another heart attack, this one more serious than the last and it was only due to the hard efforts of the doctor and nurses that I regained my life and am able to write these lines today. The memory of everything was clear when I finally awoke twelve hours later, after having undergone a bypass operation. And the memory is clear even today.

Did I die? Twice? I don't know, but the doctors were adamant I did and that I was fortunate to have survived both heart attacks. I certainly experienced something I've never experienced before or after, the sensation of being out of my body and seeing things perhaps as billions of now dead people must have seen their parting from life in the past. The feeling I had in that intermediate state was one of complete calm, no fuss, no bother, no hurry, just an acceptance that things would unfold as they were meant to and there was a place somewhere, some time, where dear people from my past patiently waited for my eventual arrival.

However we understand that expression '*was meant to...*', for me, every second of these events was truly '*meant*' to happen to me, for it has left me a changed and I believe much better person because of them. Every day since then has been a precious gift, and the change for the better in my mind and heart that the experience brought about has been an immense blessing and release. Seeing myself slumped on the couch in the coffee shop, and again seeing myself and hospital staff when I was technically already clinically dead, and the supreme calmness and silence that accompanied both visions, has convinced me that there is a life beyond death.

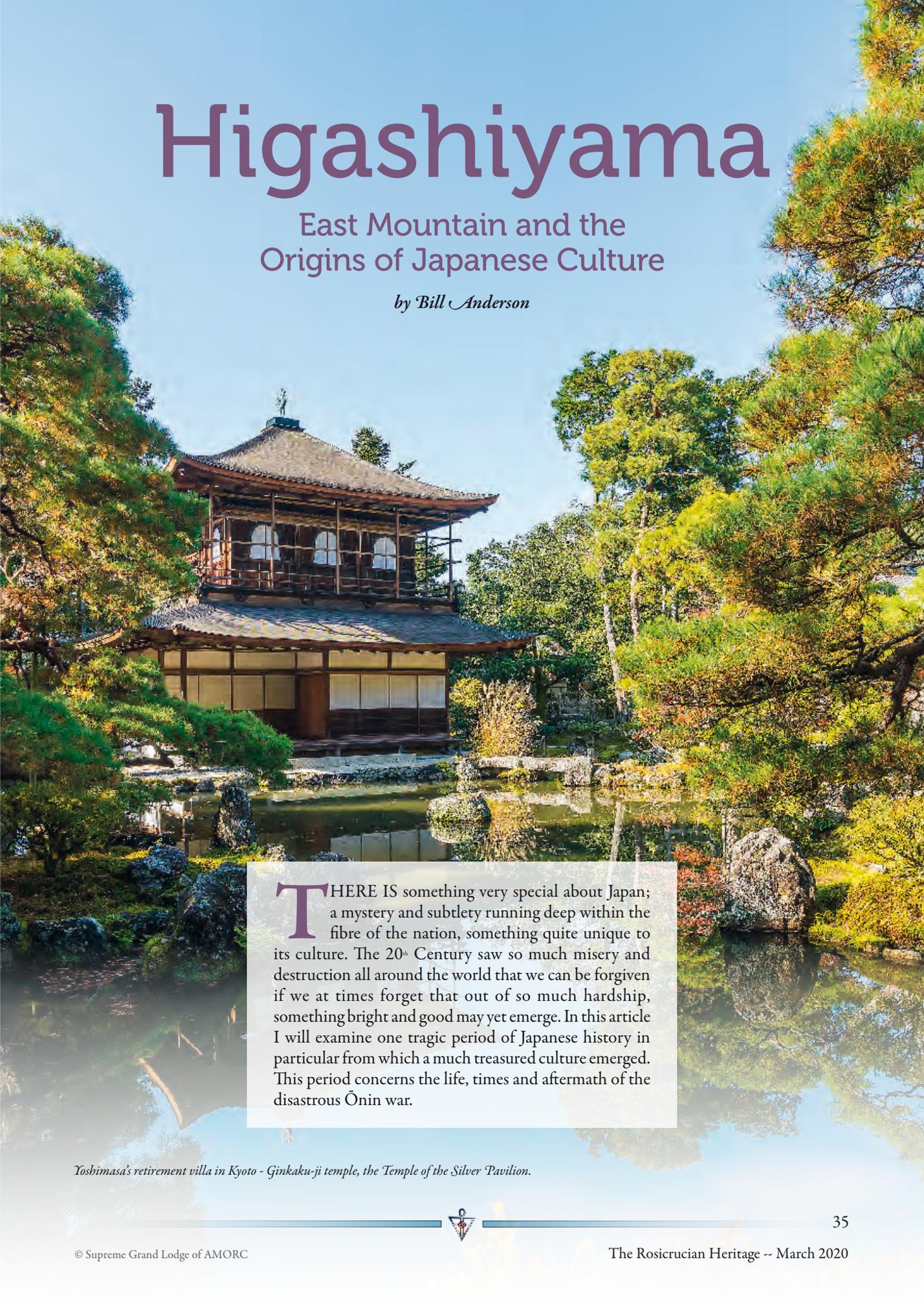
Being rational and a scientist by profession, I know this is only a belief. But it is one powerfully vouchsafed for by two experiences of such supreme clarity and serenity I cannot dismiss them as mere fantasy. They have drawn me closer with each passing year to an acceptance that when I finally leave for good, it will be to a place I was '*meant*' to go..., and it will, I am sure, be of the very essence of all that I love, cherish and know is good. And when my time is finally up, it will leave for the Earth an echo of my gratitude for the experiences life has afforded me, but especially for having been given a preview of what that passing may be like.



Higashiyama

East Mountain and the Origins of Japanese Culture

by Bill Anderson



THERE IS something very special about Japan; a mystery and subtlety running deep within the fibre of the nation, something quite unique to its culture. The 20th Century saw so much misery and destruction all around the world that we can be forgiven if we at times forget that out of so much hardship, something bright and good may yet emerge. In this article I will examine one tragic period of Japanese history in particular from which a much treasured culture emerged. This period concerns the life, times and aftermath of the disastrous Ōnin war.

Yoshimasa's retirement villa in Kyoto - Ginkaku-ji temple, the Temple of the Silver Pavilion.





Ashikaga Yoshimasa

Background

The Ōnin War was a civil war lasting 10 years (1467–1477 CE) during what is known as the Muromachi period. The conflict began as a dispute over who would become Shōgun after the retirement or death of the Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimasa. It soon escalated into a nationwide war involving the Ashikaga shogunate and a number of Daimyo (feudal lords) from regions all over Japan. Before continuing though, let me explain some of the terminology I'll be using.

Modern Japan has an emperor as a symbol of the state and the unity of the people. The imperial family is said to trace its origins back to the Shinto goddess Amaterasu. In the west we are used to thinking of emperors from centuries past as heads of state with supreme autocratic power. During most of Japanese history however, this was not the case. From 1192 to 1867, real power lay in the hands of Shōguns, (*sei-i taishōgun*) military commanders or generals like the Dictators (*Magister Populi*) of ancient Rome. At various times during this period, power passed between different families and for the period covered in this article, power lay with the Ashikaga family.

The Ashikaga, were a family of Daimyo who held the office of Shōgun between 1336 and 1573. Their headquarters and chief power base was the Muromachi district of Kyoto, at that time the capital of Japan, and the period during which they ruled is appropriately known as the Muromachi Period. The Daimyo were the powerful feudal lords of pre-modern Japan who ruled most of the country from their vast, hereditary land holdings. They were subordinate to the Shōgun, and quite separate from the emperor and the court hierarchy who lived in Kyoto. The Daimyo, often referred to simply as Lords, hired Samurai to guard their estates and they paid them in land or food. The officials working in a Shōgun's office or administration are known as the *bakufu*. They are the

ones who carried out the actual duties of administration while the Imperial court retained only nominal authority.

Shōgun Yoshimasa was planning the creation of his retirement villa and gardens as early as 1460. He planned as well that after his death, his retreat would become a Zen temple. During Yoshimasa's rule, and after he retired to his villa in the eastern hills of Kyoto (*Higashiyama* or East Mountain) – hence the title of this article, and which was famous for its beautiful scenery, Japan saw the growth of what has become known as the gorgeous and elegant Higashiyama Culture, famous for the well-known *Chanoyu* (tea ceremony), *Ikebana* (flower arrangement), *Noh* (drama) and *Sumi-e* (Indian ink painting). Higashiyama culture was greatly influenced by Zen Buddhism and saw the rise of Japanese aesthetics like *Wabi-Sabi* and the harmonisation of imperial court and

*Suddenly, just at that moment, it came to me.
I realised what it was that had escaped me till
then: all things are perfectly resolved in the
Unborn. – Bankei Yotaku (1622-1693).*

Samurai cultures. Much of what is commonly seen today as traditional Japanese culture originated or developed during this period.

Yoshimasa's retirement villa in Kyoto became known after his death as the *Ginkaku-ji* temple, the Temple of the Silver Pavilion. It was the centre of the Higashiyama cultural outgrowth in a number of ways. The Silver Pavilion is revered for its simple beauty, the silver having never been added. The rock garden next to it is likewise one of the most famous in Japan, and praised for its Zen and aesthetics. It is an example of the concept that only a trained expert can recognise the subtle beauty within true art and architecture. The beauty of an object should not be emphasised, but gently hidden, revealing itself with subtlety and sophistication only to the initiated. The retired Shōgun invited many artists, poets and court nobles to his villa, encouraging the development of their arts.

Wabi-Sabi

In its barest essence, *Wabi-Sabi* is the Japanese art of finding beauty in imperfection, profundity in nature, and of embracing the natural cycle of growth, decay and death. It is simple, slow, uncluttered, and reveres authenticity above all. Underplayed and modest, *Wabi-Sabi* is the kind of quiet, undeclared beauty that waits patiently to be discovered. It often reveals only a fragmentary glimpse



such as a branch representing an entire tree; *shoji* screens filtering the sun; the moon only partially revealed from an obscuring ribbon of cloud. There's a rich, mellow beauty, striking but not obvious, something one can imagine having around one for a long, long time. It's the peace found in a moss garden, the musty scent of geraniums, the astringent taste of powdered green tea, the time of decades of patience and centuries of tradition and the creation of something beautiful and deeply meaningful.

There's a rich, mellow beauty, striking but not obvious, something one can imagine having around one for a long, long time.

So, *Wabi-Sabi* represents a comprehensive Japanese world view centred on the acceptance of transience and imperfection, and referring often to beauty, not as a final state or end-product, but a process in the making, something that is always "imperfect, impermanent, incomplete." It is a concept derived from Buddhist



Ink Painting

teachings, in particular Zen Buddhism. Characteristics of *Wabi-Sabi* aesthetics include asymmetry, roughness or irregularity, simplicity, economy, austerity, modesty, intimacy and appreciation of the integrity of natural objects and processes.

The words *Wabi* and *Sabi* do not translate easily. *Wabi* today means simplicity, freshness or quietness, and can be applied to both natural and human-made objects with an understated elegance. It can also refer to quirks and anomalies arising from the process of construction, which add uniqueness and elegance to an object. *Sabi* is the beauty or serenity that comes with age, when the life of the object and its impermanence are evidenced in its patina and wear, or in visible repairs to it.

Many Japanese arts over the past thousand years have been influenced by Zen and Mahayana Buddhist philosophy, particularly acceptance of and contemplation on the imperfection, constant flux and impermanence of all things. The following arts exemplify a *Wabi-Sabi* aesthetic:

- Traditional *Shakuhachi* flute music of wandering Zen monks.
- *Ikebana* or flower arrangement.
- Japanese gardens, Zen gardens and *Bonsai*.
- Japanese poetry, particularly *Haiku*.
- Japanese tea ceremony.

Ink Painting

The goal of *Sumi-e* or ink and wash painting is not simply to reproduce the appearance of the subject, but to capture its spirit or essence. It's said that to paint a horse, the artist must understand its temperament better than its muscles and bones. To paint a flower, there's no need to perfectly match its petals and colours, but essential to convey its liveliness and fragrance. It can be regarded as a form of expressionistic art that captures the unseen.

In landscape painting the scenes depicted are typically imaginary or very loose adaptations of actual views. Mountain landscapes are by far the most common, often evoking particular areas traditionally famous for their beauty, from which the artist may have been very distant. Water is often included.

Japanese Tea Ceremony

The Japanese tea ceremony is a cultural activity involving the ceremonial preparation and presentation of powdered green tea. Zen Buddhism was a primary influence in the development of the Japanese tea ceremony. Tea gatherings are classified as either informal or formal tea gatherings.





Japanese Tea Ceremony

An informal tea gathering is a relatively simple course of hospitality that includes confections, thin tea and perhaps a light meal. A formal tea gathering is a much more formal gathering, usually including a full-course meal followed by confections, thick tea and thin tea, and the ceremony can last up to as much as four hours.

The tea ceremony evolved its own aesthetic, in particular that of the *Wabi-Sabi* principle. *Wabi* represents the inner, or spiritual, experiences of human lives. Its original meaning indicated quiet or sober refinement, or subdued taste characterised by humility, restraint, simplicity, naturalism, profundity, imperfection, asymmetry. It emphasises simplicity, the unadorned

Wabi represents the inner or spiritual experiences of human lives.

object, an architectural space rather than the object itself, and celebrates the mellow beauty that only time and care impart to materials.

Sabi, on the other hand, represents the outer or material side of life. Originally, it meant 'worn', 'weathered' or 'decayed.' Particularly among the nobility, understanding the Buddhist concept of emptiness was considered the most effective means to spiritual awakening, while embracing imperfection was honoured

as a healthy reminder to cherish our unpolished selves, here and now, just as we are..., the first step to enlightenment.

Flower Arranging

More than simply putting flowers in a container, *Ikebana* is a disciplined art form in which nature and humanity are brought together. Contrary to the idea of floral arrangement as a collection of part-coloured or multi-coloured arrangement of flowers, *Ikebana* often emphasises other areas of the plant, such as its stems and leaves as opposed to brightly contrasting coloured flowers. It draws emphasis toward shape, line and form, as opposed to the sharp colour contrasts that are so common elsewhere.

Although *Ikebana* is a creative expression, it has certain rules governing its form. The artist's intention behind each arrangement is shown through the creation's colour combinations, natural shapes, graceful lines and the usually *implied* rather than clearly stated meaning of the arrangement. Another aspect present in *Ikebana* is its use of minimalism: an arrangement may consist of only a minimal number of blooms interspersed among stalks and leaves. The container is a key element of the composition, and various styles of pottery may be used.

The spiritual aspect of *Ikebana* is very important.





Ikebana (flower arrangement) examples

Silence is important during *Ikebana*; no radio blaring out the latest popular tracks, just silence and a harmonisation of the creator with his or her creation. It is a time to appreciate things in nature that people often overlook because of their busy schedules. One becomes more patient and tolerant of differences, not only in nature, but also in general. The practice of *Ikebana* allows us to feel closer to nature and provides relaxation for the mind, body and soul.

Zen Garden

Zen Buddhism is designed to help those seeking a path to enlightenment. The 9th Century master Gensha is quoted as saying: *“...the essential message is that the whole universe is not vast, not small, round or square, not balanced or correct, not lively and active, not standing way out. It is neither birth nor death, neither coming nor going; it is both birth and death, both coming and going. Being thus, having in the past gone from here, it now comes from here.”*

The Japanese rock garden or ‘dry landscape’ garden, often called a Zen garden, creates a miniature stylised landscape through carefully composed arrangements of rocks, water features, moss, pruned trees and bushes, and uses gravel or sand that is raked to represent ripples in water. A Zen garden is usually relatively small, surrounded by a wall, and is often meant to be seen while seated at

a single viewpoint outside the garden. The garden was intended to imitate the intimate essence of nature, not its actual appearance, and to serve as an aid to meditation and contemplation upon on true meaning of life.

Zen Buddhism was introduced into Japan at the end of the 12th Century and quickly achieved a wide following, particularly among the Samurai class and war lords who admired its doctrine of self-discipline. The gardens of early Zen temples resembled Chinese gardens of the time, with lakes and islands. But in Kyoto in the 14th and 15th Centuries, a new kind of garden appeared at the important Zen temples. These ‘Zen gardens’ as they came to be known, were designed to stimulate meditation. *“Nature, if you made it expressive by reducing it to its abstract forms, could transmit the most profound thoughts by its simple presence”*, wrote Michel Baridon (1926-2009), a French author of books about historical gardens.

The first garden design associated with this transition to the new style is the *Saihō-ji* or “Temple of the Perfumes of the West,” also popularly known as *Kōke-dera*, or a “Moss Garden.” It began in the western part of Kyoto. The Buddhist monk and Zen master Musō Soseki transformed a Buddhist temple into a Zen monastery and built the gardens. The lower garden of *Saihō-ji* is a pond with several rock compositions representing islands. The upper garden is a dry rock garden which features three rock ‘islands.’ The first, called *Kameshima*, the “Island of the





Ginkaku-ji garden

Turtle”, resembles a turtle swimming in a ‘lake’ of moss. The second, *Zazen-seki*, is a flat ‘meditation rock,’ which is believed to radiate calm and silence. And the third is the *Kare-taki*, a dry ‘waterfall’ composed of a stairway of flat granite rocks. The moss which now surrounds the rocks and represents water, was not part of the original garden plan; it grew several centuries later when the garden was left untended, but is now the most famous feature of the garden.

The gardens of *Ginkaku-ji*, the Silver Pavilion, are also attributed to Musō Kokushi. This temple garden included the traditional pond garden, but it had a new feature for as well, an area of raked white gravel with a perfectly shaped ‘mountain’ of white gravel in the centre, resembling Mount Fuji. The scene was called a “sand of silver and open sea.” This garden feature became known as the “small mountain facing the moon” and similar small Mount Fujis made of sand or earth covered with grass appeared in Japanese gardens for centuries afterwards.

However, the most famous of all Zen gardens in Kyoto is *Ryōan-ji*, built in the late 15th Century where for the first time the Zen garden became a purely abstract

concept. The garden is a rectangle and placed within it are 15 stones of different sizes, carefully composed in five groups; one group of five stones, two groups of three and two groups of two stones. The stones are surrounded by white gravel carefully raked each day by monks. The only vegetation in the garden is some moss around the stones. The garden is meant to be viewed from a seated position on the veranda of the residence of the monastery abbot.

Noh Theatre

Noh theatre originated in the 8th Century when it was introduced to Japan from China. At the time, it referred to various types of performing arts featuring acrobats, song and dance, as well as comic sketches. Its subsequent adaptation to Japanese society led to its assimilation of other traditional art forms.

One theory suggests that Noh theatre originated from outcasts struggling to claim higher social status by catering to those in power, namely the new ruling Samurai class of the time. The transferral of the shogunate from Kamakura to Kyoto at the beginning of the Muromachi



period (late 14th Century) contributed significantly to Noh becoming a courtly art form. Indeed, with strong support and patronage from the Ashikaga Shōgun Yoshimitsu, Noh became the most prominent theatre art form of the time.

The famous Zen gardens of the Muromachi Period showed that Japan had carried the art of gardens to the highest degree of intellectual refinement that it was possible to attain. – Michel Baridon (1926-2009).

Noh theatre, when accompanied by a chorus and percussion ensemble, is a chanted drama; some have even called it “Japanese opera.” However, the singing in Noh involves a limited tonal range, with lengthy, repetitive passages in a narrow dynamic range. Melody is not at the centre of Noh singing. Still, texts are poetic, relying heavily on the Japanese seven-five rhythm common to nearly all forms of Japanese poetry, with an economy of expression, and an abundance of allusion. The music has many ‘blank spaces’ or intervals of silence between the actual sounds. It is these ‘negative sounds’ or silent interludes that are in fact

considered the heart of the music. The Noh percussion ensemble consists of four musicians: three drummers and a flautist.

Epilogue

The era of the Shōgun Yoshimasa was a time of creative change, in fact the creation of the very soul of Japan as we recognise it today. Take a few moments to think of the abovementioned aspects of culture and aesthetics that are now seen as quintessentially Japanese which date to his time; they all began during or after the life of Yoshimasa. Although it was a time of war, stress and great hardship, it was also a time which brought forth one of the greatest contributions to refinement and culture in the history of our planet.

The following poem is ascribed to Yoshimasa himself:

*Today I recall with bitter regret,
the sad world where I lived.
My mind serene, I gaze
at a moon free of shadows.*



The Three Gunas

by Jesús Bonilla



ESOTERIC traditions the world over, including the Kabala, Tarot and Yijing (I-Ching), have their own elementary principles or archetypes which function on every level. The sages of ancient India also sensed this subtle natural order and left us with a corpus of great knowledge about its operation, a knowledge which has brought depth and meaning to many of the very principles which Rosicrucians cherish most. These ancient sages incorporated their knowledge and experience into a yogic philosophy under the name of *“The Three Gunas”*, depending on the context meaning *“string, thread or strand”*, or *“virtue, merit, excellence”*, the subject of this article. According to the Bhagavad-Gītā or *“Song of God”* these are the three basic characteristics or attributes that exist in all things, including your body and mind

Nature, in its constant struggle to achieve balance, manifests three archetypes or Gunas called Sattva, Rayas and Tamas. These three archetypes are held responsible for moving the so-called *“Wheel of Life”* in its continual and gradual evolution. At the end of each great cycle, the Universe returns to a state of non-manifestation, known as *“The Night of Brahma”*, where nature appears without its illusory planes. The Law of Compensation or Karma then disrupts this balance, thus starting a new operational cycle of the Gunas, resulting in the return to manifestation of the material Universe, known as the *“Day of Brahma.”* Tamas represents destruction in humanity; Rayas represents our mundane ties, attachments and habits; and Sattva represents the transcendent path towards liberation. In the whole Universe nothing can escape



the influence of these three powers of nature; only illumination allows us to rise above them.

The Gunas in humanity

The Gunas in humanity manifest in the following three aspects. Sattva is purity and wisdom, movement towards the light. Rayas is activity and continuous change, while Tamas is inertia, laziness, emptiness and darkness. Rayas and Tamas are two opposites points of a triangle searching for the third point, Sattva. Every human being manifests one of these three forces in his or her character, one predominating while the other two act only as secondary elements. Sattva ties us to happiness, Rayas to activity and Tamas to despair. Only Brahma is able to rise above them and Maya, the ancient Vedic word for Illusion.

The Gunas in Mysticism

Sattvic students live in such a state of purity, that contemplation of the "*Path of Discipleship*" ignites them like fire to gunpowder. Rayasic students resemble dried wood, needing the tutelage of an initiatic Order, discipline or tradition to arouse their inner fire. Tamasic students are those who have not yet attained that degree of inner evolution to feel attracted towards the transcendent. Like green wood which when alight produces only smoke, they need time to dry out in order to release the heat that manifests light. These three states co-exist in every man and woman to differing degrees, though one always predominates over the other two.

We may regard Sattvic teachings as those taught by initiatic Orders such as AMORC or the Traditional Martinist Order. The Rayasic teachings are those with deep and devout religious overtones, but void of true depth and mystical unfoldment. The Tamasic teachings are distinguished by superstition, deceit, negative habits, darkness, and all that contributes to the degradation of humanity due to the absence of light.

The Gunas in the Diet

The Sattvic diet consists of fruits, vegetables, beans, cereals, dairy-products, seeds, nuts and unrefined oils. Eating slowly and chewing well is Sattvic. The Rayasic diet consists of stimulants such as coffee, hot spices, eggs, chocolate, soft drinks and salt. Eating fast is Rayasic. The Tamasic diet is the most harmful to the body and mind. It stimulates the lower passions, and consists of rancid and fermented foods, vinegar, alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Tamasic eaters are compulsive eaters and also over-eat.

The Three Gunas and the Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad-Gītā refers to the three Gunas as the three forces of nature: Light, Fire and Darkness. Their power is that which encloses in finite bodies, the inextinguishable freedom of the infinite spirit. Sattva, being purity, is the intelligence which leads humanity towards a pure life via material welfare, and to intellectual knowledge and philosophy in order to obtain happiness on the material plane. Rayas, with its passionate nature, creates anxiety in humanity in order to pursue goals and attachments. It drives us to action, uniting us with the outcome. Tamas, born of ignorance, weakens the soul, submerging it in darkness and confusion. In humanity it induces a feeling of apathy, lack of willpower and lack of initiative.

In Yogic systems, Krishna taught the way to channel and transcend these three powers of nature. Those who detach themselves from the intellect, searching for the Light, detach themselves from ignorance. Those who

The Bhagavad-Gītā refers to the three Gunas as the three forces of nature: Light, Fire and Darkness. Their power is that which encloses in finite bodies, the inextinguishable freedom of the infinite spirit.

remain calm before the constant upheavals of the world, maintaining their stance as the perfect observer, while thinking for themselves, show the activity of the three powers of nature. They submerge their consciousness in the inner peace that lives in their spirit, being unmoved either by pleasure or sorrow, their sense of peace remaining unchanged when faced with either the pleasant or the unpleasant.

They are unaffected by flattery or suffering, and their minds are firm in their purpose, always remaining calm and fixed on their goal. They accept honour and misfortune with equanimity, bestowing upon their foes the same love as they have for their friends. This is those who have transcended the influence of the three Gunas. They are Illumined and life in this world is no longer painful and subject to constant changes, anxieties and tendencies. They have risen above the Gunas and reached full and final Mastery of Life on Earth.





The Afterlife

Would scientifically proving its existence change the world?

by William Hand

ASK MANY people in the street whether they believe in an afterlife and you'll get a variety of responses. Generally though they will fall into three categories:

- Those who believe in an afterlife or survival of consciousness.
- Those who don't know or aren't prepared to say.
- And those who dismiss the whole notion of an afterlife as nonsense.

All of the above is down to belief and, in the case of

religious people, faith. But what if science could prove, beyond all reasonable doubt, that a form of consciousness survives bodily death? Would the world change, and if so how? It's this question that I would like to explore in this short article.

Although it's being challenged, the standard mainstream view of science is that once the body dies, particularly the brain, consciousness closes down for good and that's it. No more awareness, no more individuality, just a state of nothingness that's extremely hard for a



conscious mind to imagine. It's this unimaginable state that causes some people to fear bodily death so much that they refuse even to mention it in normal conversation. The mainstream view also helps to promulgate a materialistic outlook on life in which one has a relatively short time in which to do all one wants to, and one therefore lives life to the full.

There's nothing wrong in living life and achieving of course, but unfortunately that drive causes some people to strive to acquire things at the expense of other people. If you think you have a finite amount of time to do all you want to, is it any surprise that some people will take any action necessary to achieve their goals? Even if it means other people will suffer?

This approach suits powerful individuals down to the ground. If you can keep putting out the message through media outlets that the body is everything and it will all end when you die, then you can take advantage of the urgency with which people will strive to get perceived advantages. I'm not talking about a conspiracy here, just natural behaviours in a materialistic framework. Unfortunately these behaviours can lead to war, conflict, suppression, excessive use of world resources, etc.

Consciousness

Of course there are many in the world today who take an agnostic stance on the survival of consciousness. For them it's a matter for religion and they generally take the view that they will live their life as best they can and then discover whether they survive or not when death comes. However, if death really is the end, they'll never know it! This is certainly a balanced view and in my experience probably the most dominant, despite the position of mainstream science and most of the world's mainstream media. However, the arrival of the Internet in recent years has certainly opened up enquiring minds to numerous possibilities on the subject of death.

Returning to the first group, namely those who believe completely in life after death, for people in this group, death is a transition from one state of existence to another. However, the expected form of the afterlife varies greatly according to religious faith. For many Christians one remains 'asleep' until the 'day of judgement.' For Hindus reincarnation is on offer. The Spiritualist churches speak of the departed as though they were always around us, 'in another room.' The common thread running through these beliefs is that the state of existence after bodily death will be different to that experienced here on Earth.

The Rosicrucian view was succinctly expressed by the first Imperator of the AMORC Dr Harvey Spencer Lewis in his book "*Mansions of the Soul*", where he put forward

in great detail how consciousness and personality survive bodily death in a spiritual realm awaiting reincarnation. This process according to Dr Lewis operates using natural cyclical laws. Therefore, we can see that within this broad group the afterlife is accepted, though its manifestation varies widely, and sadly it's often a source of unnecessary argument and conflict. Because of this it's perhaps understandable that the whole possibility of survival is dismissed as nonsense by many people.

The only way to convince the whole world (or at least 99% of it) that survival of consciousness is true, is to prove it scientifically beyond all reasonable doubt. In science no negative can be proven. It's not possible to prove that there is no afterlife since that would require an infinite number of avenues to be explored. However it only requires a finite number of pieces of good reproducible evidence to prove that it does exist. So the onus is very much on willing scientists to prove survival of consciousness. As I write this piece, there are many scientists around the world seeking to do just that, and exceptional progress is being made, often in the face of harsh treatment from sceptics and lack of funding from established grant systems. This new evidence will be the topic for future articles.

Proof

So I now return to the main theme of this article. If science could prove the afterlife exists beyond reasonable doubt, what then? Firstly by proving it, its form of manifestation would be established and religious faiths would have to adapt to the new findings in much the same way the medieval church adapted to the scientific discoveries in the Renaissance. Secondly the peoples of the world would have to adapt to a different vision of life, a life which does not end with the death of the body but continues to offer opportunities afterwards.

People would learn that killing or harming others has consequences for themselves above and beyond material justice. It's possible that the world would, even for this reason alone, become a more relaxed and happier place with fewer wars and a deeper appreciation of the need to take care of our planet. Who would continue trashing our beautiful planet if they knew they would still be around to witness the consequences for their children decades later? So to summarise: scientifically proving the existence of some form of afterlife would I believe undoubtedly make the world a far better place than it is now. Good food for thought; let's start thinking!

Reference

1. "*Mansions of the Soul*" by H S Lewis is available from *The Rosicrucian Collection* online store at <https://www.amorc.org.uk>.



Light Bearers Association (LBA)
(Rosicrucian Youth Wing)

Annual National Youth Conference



*Grand Administrator Fr Kenneth Idiodi
and other Grand Lodge Officers at the Ceremony.*



*Light Bearer President
LB Joan Okuchaba
welcoming Participants.*



*Induction of new Light Bearers Association (LBA)
members and cutting of the Conference Cake.*



*Grand Administrator Fr Kenneth
Idiodi addressing the Participants.*



VISION

To be a Youth Organisation that builds young people into responsible adults that are equipped to take up critical roles in society.

CORE VALUES

- Spirituality
- Service
- Discipline
- Equity
- Inclusiveness (Non-Discrimination)

AIMS

Our primary aims are to enlighten our members and develop them into adults, who are spiritually aware, morally sound, intellectually empowered and socially well-adjusted.



Traditional and Cultural Carnival display by members of the Light Bearers Association.



Sisters of the Rosy Cross (SIROC)
(Rosicrucian Women Wing)

Annual National Conference



*Sr Gbubemi B Idiodi, National Co-ordinator
welcoming the participants.*

*Grand Administrator, Fr Kenneth
Idiodi, addressing the participants
during the SIROC Conference.*



*Lt. - Rt. GA and spouse, Fr Henry Ojogy, Sr Rose
Bassey, GC Kofi Ekanem, RM John Omori, RM
Sr Eunice Otete at the Opening Ceremony.*



Theme –
Spirituality for
Personal Growth
and Development

October 18th - 20th 2019
Rosicrucian Park, Calabar



*SIROC President
Sr Florence Nwosu*



*Traditional and Cultural
Match Past.*



