

ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST

Volume 101 Number 2 2023



Montreal
World Convention

ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST

Vol. 101 - No. 2

2023

Official Magazine
of the Worldwide
Rosicrucian Order ®

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ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST (ISSN
#0035-8339) is published two times per
year by the Grand Lodge of the English
Language Jurisdiction of the AMORC
at 1342 Naglee Avenue, San Jose CA
95126.

The front and back covers are
images of the Montreal skyline.

The AMORC World
Convention took place in
Montreal from August 16 –
20, 2023. More than 1,300
members from 50 countries
around the world participated.

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OPENING REMARKS

Imperator Claudio Mazzucco, FRC



The World Convention of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross has numerous things to offer: Reflections, mystical moments, experiences. Before exploring these, I ask you to pause for a few moments and think: what really brought you here? What stimulus, what impulsion made you want to participate in this activity? What image did you have in mind when you decided that you wanted to be present here and now?

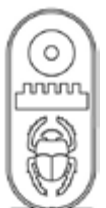
Allow me a personal memory: I remember, when I was a young member, going to the Order's convention in Brazil. We used to prepare everything long beforehand. The Master of the Chapter I belonged to had t-shirts made with the name of our Affiliated Body, which we wore during the convention. The night before was the eve of a big festivity, of a celebration. And the next day everything became enchanted, spellbound. Meeting several hundred members coming from all regions, even from foreign countries, made it even more magical. The city of Curitiba was overcome by the members of our fraternity. One could meet them everywhere; they were recognizable by a t-shirt, a bag, or simply by the symbol of the Order pinned on their shirt. It was a

peaceful, joyful conquest. That was the spirit of fraternity which animated all of our activities.

Right now as I welcome you, I want to recall that same spirit, I want it to manifest itself here and now, I want you to feel the bliss of our togetherness with which we'll celebrate the values of fraternity, of fraternal friendship. Of that spirit that produces joy which, as Baruch Spinoza said, is a condition of greater power of the mind.

If there is a reason why we meet here, as well as in the Affiliated Bodies and in all the activities of the Order, it is precisely to celebrate fraternity and to produce joyfulness. We are, all of us, responsible for this. It is up to us to edify those moments that we long to see realized, since they will not descend from above like a blessing. It is up to us, all together, to edify them so that our traditional greeting at the end of each activity be full of meaning and emotion. The very greeting we have been repeating for centuries and with which I will now leave you to our activities: "Peace Profound, frater, Peace Profound, soror."

Happy World Convention to you all!



MUSIC THAT MOVES US

Julie Scott, SRC

*Grand Master of the English Grand Lodge for the Americas
and Secretary of the Supreme Grand Lodge*

Today we are going to experience music that moves us.

As you have no doubt experienced, music can move us on many levels. It can move us physically, for example, when we can't help but tap our toes or sway to the beat.

Researchers have found that people perceive and make sense of what they hear by mentally simulating the body motion thought to be involved in the making of sound. So, when we tap our toes to music, it's actually our brains trying to make sense of the sound.

A good example of this occurs when listening to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik."

It's almost impossible not to move to that music, isn't it? That movement is our brains trying to process the sound.

Experts have found that, when runners listen to music, they often match their stride to a particular beat, which can help them regulate their pace. If they listen to music with a faster beat, they will run faster. This is called auditory motor synchronization. The same applies to

marches that inspire and motivate soldiers to keep moving, even when they may be exhausted or disheartened.

Music can also help to create rhythmic heartbeats that then affect our brain waves, creating a feeling of tranquility that we experience throughout our entire being.

Almost one hundred years ago, H. Spencer Lewis noted: "Unconsciously a great many persons have become attracted to certain songs that they find themselves humming or singing many times a day. Usually they think it is because they like the tune, or like the melody, or perhaps like the words. The fact of the matter is, they have unconsciously noticed that the music is soothing or beneficial to the nervous system, perhaps to the entire system, and that is why they continuously sing or hum such songs."

The technology of modern devices such as a Garmin or Apple watch can measure the physiological effects of music, such as heart rate variability, which is a measure of the beat-to-beat changes in heart rate. This is what H. Spencer





From the collection of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum. At left are a bell and a flute, and at right are castanets, all of which are thousands of years old.

Lewis was referring to, decades before the technology to measure this was invented.

While using a Garmin device, I have listened to a lot of music noting which pieces create the most heart coherence for me. There is one particular piece that immediately soothes my nervous system, according to my Garmin device and according to how I feel. You may find a similar effect, although each of us has our own heart coherence music. It is Vivaldi's "Four Seasons, Spring, Largo."

Please breathe slowly and rhythmically while listening to this music.

There is evidence to suggest that music also moved some ancient people in extraordinary ways. Some songs connected ancient people with the spirit world.

For the Australian aboriginal people, Dreaming or Dreamtime represents the relationship between people, plants, animals, and the physical features of the land; the knowledge of how these relationships came to be, what they mean, and how they need to be maintained in daily life and in ceremony. It is a magical realm that connects us with the source.

Today these aboriginal people still use music and movement or dance to enter or attune with this realm.

In ancient Egypt, images were drawn on temple walls showing musicians and

dancers. In your museum, the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, we have castanets and flutes and other musical instruments used by the ancient Egyptians more than 5,000 years ago.

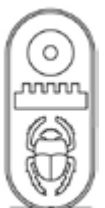
The ancient Egyptian goddess of music, love, beauty, dancing, and joy was Hathor, the cow goddess. She was one of the most popular and powerful deities and a protectress of women.

The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum displays several *sistrums* – a musical instrument that imitated the sound of Hathor rustling through the reeds. The word *sistrum* is Greek; the Egyptians called this instrument *shh, shh, shh, shhhh*, which was the sound that it made.

Today, during their most mystical ceremonies, some South American shamans use an instrument made of palm fronds that makes this same rustling sound – *shh, shh, shh, shhhh* – moving their initiates deeper into the mysteries.

Pythagoras used music for healing, as did the Therapeuti and the Essenes. At the Pythagorean School in Crotona, they played invigorating music each morning and soothing music each evening.

Some pieces of music move our emotions too – some move us to sadness and others to happiness. We all have our favorites. Two songs that many members



are familiar with are “La Vie en Rose,” performed by Soror Edith Piaf, and “What a Wonderful World,” performed by Louis Armstrong.

Devotional music can also move us and is used in almost every religion. The following are some examples of devotional songs from three different traditions.

First is the Christian hymn “Amazing Grace.” The lyrics to this song were written in 1772 by former British slave trader John Newton, who claimed that his life was spared by the mercy of the Divine, during a storm at sea. He later became an abolitionist and preacher. It’s a message that forgiveness and redemption are possible regardless of the sins we have committed and that the soul can be delivered from despair through the mercy of the Divine.

I particularly like the version of the song recorded in 1947 by Mahalia Jackson, one of America’s greatest gospel singers and someone whose grandparents had formerly been enslaved people.

Here are the lyrics: “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I’m found, was blind, but now I see.”



Mahalia Jackson.

Another piece of inspirational devotional music is a Sufi song entitled “Chaap Tilak,” with lyrics from a poem by an Indo-Persian Sufi mystic, singer, musician, poet, and scholar named Amir Khusro, who lived in the thirteenth century. A notable performance of this song comes from Abida Parveen and Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

Abida Parveen is Pakistan’s most accomplished singer of devotional music. She is an expert on Sufi music worldwide. Sufism is Islam’s esoteric tradition.

The theme of this song is the transformative power of a mere glance from the Divine, a central theme in Sufi mystic literature.

Some of the lyrics include: “I give my life to you, Oh my cloth-dyer, You’ve dyed me like yourself, by just a glance.”

Now we will consider a recently released song from Snatum Kaur, whose sacred chants are part of an ancient practice known as Kirtan. This chant includes the phrases “I am” and “Sat Nam.”

In the ancient language of the Sikhs, *Sat* means truth and *Nam* means name. Together, *Sat Nam* has a deeper meaning: “I am truth,” or “Truth is my essence.”

Our final piece of music to consider is a song that moves many of us in profound ways – the “Rosicrucian Chant,” written by our dear frater H. Spencer Lewis.

Here are the lyrics:

O, love, that knoweth of no fear,
A love, that sheds a joyous tear,
O, Love, that makes me whole and free,
Such love shall keep and hallow me.

So Mote It Be!

Note: If you would like to see a playlist on Apple Music of all of the songs mentioned in this article, click [here](#).

SPIRITUAL FRIENDS

José Botello, FRC

Grand Master of the Spanish Grand Lodge for the Americas

One of my favorite hobbies is reading books or magazines, as well as, when visiting bookstores and libraries, searching among different titles and authors. In one of these searches, I once read something by an author who wrote, “Sometimes we ask the Divine for a miracle and It sends us a friend.” This topic of friends is really nothing new – Greek philosophers were already discussing it more than 2,400 years ago. Aristotle himself declared, “Without friends no one would want to live.” He also added that friendship helps younger ones not to make mistakes while alleviating the vulnerability of older ones.

If we go back a little further in human history, to our roots, to Pharaoh Akhnaton, we discover that in those times there was no specific term for a friend: the term “brother” was used instead. The depictions of Akhnaton with his family would be a good example of this. The pharaoh embraces one of his daughters and “gives her the breath, shares with her his air.” He is hereby declaring that she is very important to him; nowadays, one way to demonstrate this relationship is through friendship, which for some ancient cultures was identified with brotherhood. In brotherhood there is reunion, touching, shaking hands. We see very ancient images where those who share brotherhood sit at the same table to partake food and stories. This is something we have seen in many ancient cultures.



Akhnaton and one of his daughters.

Friendship, later called fraternity from a philosophical point of view, is a universal and transversal value, implying for all people the need to consider themselves as brothers and sisters. In this way, the value of fraternity leads us to be supportive, respectful, and empathetic with each other. We may notice that, already in the eighteenth century, fraternity was linked to the ideals promoted by the 1789 French Revolution, that is, the quest for liberty, equality, and fraternity.

A notable quote is from Raymond Andrea, former Grand Master of the Grand Lodge in England, in his book *The Technique of the Master*, in which he says: “In fact, the more we advance in our occult work,

the more it appears necessary and natural to evaluate the persons we meet according to this inner point of view, the better we develop a completely new scale of values and thus move away from the judgment of being objective. Then we seek the certain intuition of the divine guide, whose voice is

so clear and insistent that we recognize and trust it. This is how we learn to detect our true companions on the Path.”

There are different companions on the path. There are those with whom we shared a common history for many years, as well as those who accompany us in the search for well-being. We also have friends who are present in moments of fun and joy and those companions in the pursuit of excellence and professional or economic well-being. Additionally, no less



important are those who accompany us on the spiritual path, whom I prefer to call “spiritual friends”; I am referring here to my fratres and sorores.

The year 1972 was one very important year in my life. On the first of February of that year I entered the portals of the Order. I still have in my Sanctum a certificate received from San Jose, California, that testifies this. At the end of the previous year, at the age of eighteen, I had obtained my bachelor’s degree in business and moved to my country’s capital city to continue my higher studies in accounting, and then, something interesting occurred to me.

For the first time I had moved away from my childhood friends, my school friends; I was leaving behind my whole life of adventures and memories, although it was only an eighteen-year-long story, but I already missed it. Today I still have some of these friends whom I call my “joint history” friends, my life friends.

At the same time when I left behind many of those joint history friends, thanks to my Rosicrucian affiliation, I met, that same year, a group of friends whom I call my “spiritual friends.”

I quickly learned that the spiritual path requires spiritual friends. We always need allies, although no one can directly change another, but they can do a lot to support them. For instance, when you lose interest in participating in group activities, you can still join in just for the sake of feeling supported or not to disappoint them. Belonging to a community of like-minded people is a great help in difficult times.

This new group of friends I met was totally different from those I had met in the past. It was a group of seekers of excellence and wisdom through knowledge – this filled me with satisfaction. It is a somewhat difficult group to belong to, because it requires equal attention to the way you



*The interior of the Grand Temple
in San Jose, California.*

behave with others, and the way others behave with you. It was with this group that I discovered the true concept of humility. Of all the negative emotions we may see in another person, I think the one that bothers people the most is arrogance, which is the opposite of humility. We tend to get more upset with an arrogant person than with a violent person. For this reason, in our society, humility is defined as a noble and spiritual state, a state of equanimity that recognizes equality in all relationships. In humility, everyone is given the same value and the same importance, so we all hold the same importance and the same value when we relate to each other.

Human behavior in relation to humility clearly shows the level of consciousness of the individual – and mine was not very high to say the least, thus I feel indebted to my fratres and sorores on the Path. This relationship of friendship is somewhat demanding, due to the difficulty we have in feeling equality when we value ourselves and others. This group of friends required an investment of time and space in order to achieve its continuity, something that was not easy for me at nineteen, with a new profession, a new city to discover, and a university career degree to achieve. However, during the seven years that I spent with this first spiritual group, I never stopped caring for it and nourishing

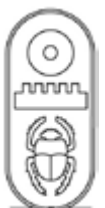
it. It was through this group of fratres and sorores of the Lodge that I came to be acquainted with a second group of spiritual friends in my life.

We are now in 1979, which marks another important event on my path. That year I ceased to be an investigator of financial banking crimes, a job to which I had dedicated the previous seven years. I also left my colleagues with whom I had already established an emotional connection. Just a few months earlier, in December 1978, I got married – since then forty-five years have elapsed in my union: thank you, Lala! I had a new job, as deputy financial director for the national telephone company. Every time I went into my office and saw under my name the title “Deputy Controller,” I felt an emptiness in my heart: a void, that of my historical friends, the ones I mentioned earlier as being the first group of friends. I also felt the absence of my colleagues that I was used to seeing, and realized that these relationships took a few years to build. It was a good position, but very solitary, and besides that the political situation of my country was deteriorating, thus a change of environment was inevitable. It was in that year, just four days after my first wedding anniversary, that my wife and I decided to leave everything behind and emigrate to another country, in search of new opportunities.

Thus, before the end of 1979, Lala resigned from her position as financial administrator of a prestigious airline company, and I resigned as deputy financial director of my country’s national telephone company. Without much pondering, we emigrated to a strange country, with a strange language and a strange culture for us. I remember those first Christmas family dinners, how both Lala and I were in tears with every bite, eating something that we didn’t know what it was, missing the food of our small town, the typical food of the end-of-the-year festivities to which we were so accustomed. I missed the friends of life.

Here in this new environment, however, I met my third group of friends. Family friends that I preferred to call emotional friends. Next to my father, mother, and siblings, the first one that comes to my memory is my father-in-law; it was love at first sight. My father-in-law and I have been great friends. He taught me to understand American football, one of his passions. We spent entire Sundays in reclining armchairs watching games.

He also taught me Italian cuisine; he was an excellent cook. My father-in-law graduated from the military academy in Italy with honors, as a lieutenant colonel in the armed forces. My future mother-in-law was not only my elementary school teacher, but lived at home with us almost



until the day of her transition. I remember her always worrying about my diet when I was a child and making sure I always wore clean clothes. In addition to my siblings and other relatives, a new group of friends was born for me, the “family friends.” The interesting thing about this group was that their main objective was to have a good time, and the truth is that, at the time, they were a very fun group; so today, I miss them very much. I must speak in past tense because most of them have already gone through transition. There are still a few of them and when we get together we have a wonderful time, always spending unforgettable moments.

In addition to the other groups of friends, there is also the group of “fun friends.” This is a very interesting group because this group gathers exclusive members of all the previous groups. The difference is that their main objective is to have a good time, to have healthy fun. It is easily said, but in practice it is not so easy to find friends who can have a good time within the framework of respect for the ethical and moral values of the rest of the group. This is a very important group for my mental health. This is the group of travel, exotic restaurants, movies, theater, weekend barbecues, etc. It is a very fun and tolerant group at the same time. There is never a problem deciding where we go, what we eat or drink. We have been part of this group for more than forty

uninterrupted years of shared celebrations and joys.

However, the topic that is central to this presentation is that of “spiritual friends.” As I mentioned earlier, 1979 was a very important year for me and this includes my spiritual friends. Upon moving to this new city at the end of 1979, I visited a local affiliated body in search of spiritual friends. I knew beforehand that in this group of friends, nationality, language, sex, gender, race, religion, politics would not be important; there is a common goal, a quest, that turns it into a fraternity.

It was then that something happened, that changed my life forever. As I think back today, what would become of us without external teachers? In 1979, when I arrived at an affiliated body for the first time, I saw a group of members who were collecting signatures to expel the then-Master in office. One of them approached me asking for my support. I declined, so my first visit in that affiliated body was not harmonious; in fact, I was rejected by the group.

That night I withdrew in my Sanctum, and after extensive reflection, I decided not to participate in any group activity of the Order for a period of twenty years. I did so and twenty years later I went to that affiliated body again, which was no longer located in the same place. To my surprise, they were again collecting signatures to revoke the then-Master in office. But this time something wonderful happened: I was not at all bothered by the intentions of this small group; I felt that something had changed and it was not exactly a change in the attitude of the spiritual friends group. It was I who had reached a different state of consciousness, if I compared myself to how I was twenty years before.

Hundreds of years of study and research have repeatedly shown that the people who do best in life and achieve the





greatest happiness are those who rely on relationships with their family, life friends, and their community, most especially with spiritual friends, some of whom we call fratres and sorores and others brothers and sisters.

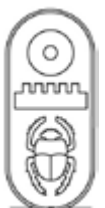
We all seek happiness, we all want to be happy and for many, this becomes a philosophy of life, which implies among other things to improve the way of thinking, to know how to distinguish those things that benefit us or not. This also includes knowing what other people require from us in order to be happy, to feel good. Knowing how to provide others with their needs is a sign of wisdom and spiritual growth.

The norms of social behavior are different from the norms of behavior in the world of markets, whether labor or economic. In the labor market, when we provide a service, we expect to be paid an equivalent amount, since this is the law. Social norms do not work this way, since they do not carry a compensation for goods or services. In the spiritual realm especially, compensation may come in the form of a thank you, a friendship, or

perhaps an apprenticeship, or simply the expectation of receiving another favor in return in the future. All of these rewards are more powerful than money.

The problem arises when we confuse market norms with social norms: this happens because social norms are more powerful than market norms. For example, compensating someone with money reduces their motivation, since the relationship is no longer voluntary, it becomes commercial. Worst of all, when this happens it is almost impossible to go back, because, after the cessation of the service relationship, we do not expect to be paid for attending a birthday party or be refunded for a Christmas gift. For this reason, we must not be self-taught on the Rosicrucian path, for spiritual conduct has its own conditions. We must be instructed to the truth through well organized teachings, through a trained Master, through Initiation, and not least, through spiritual friends.

Fratres and sorores, thank you very much for being my spiritual friends.



INTUITION

Hugo Casas, FRC

Grand Master of the Spanish Grand Lodge for Europe, Africa, and Australasia



*Aristotle with a Bust of Homer, by Rembrandt (1653).
Aristotle analyzed the golden mean in Nicomachean Ethics.*

Many people have likely heard of the golden mean. It is that virtue which makes us stand or progress at an equal distance from the two extremes, that is to say, which keeps us away from excesses and places us in the middle ground.

As I was thinking about this, I realized that I could fall into the error of the extreme by finding deep definitions of intuition, such as that of the famous philosopher Dane Rudhyar, which reads: “Intuition is the holistic perception, the awareness of being: the ability to be aware of the identity of the whole.”

Based on this concern, I then thought that this piece should be more informal, fraternal, and I looked for a more friendly definition, something that is simple to understand but at the same time has some depth. The following definition came to mind: “Intuition is that thing that you know, that you don’t know how you know it, but that you know that you know.”

After repeating this several times, I realized that, with this definition, I lacked some information, which is why it was not a good way to start, and why I had to apply the middle way, the one that the Rosicrucian teachings offer.

From the very beginning, our teachings explain that all human beings are endowed with an objective consciousness, which is based on our five physical senses and on the set of subjective functions or faculties i.e., mental processes such as imagination, memory, reasoning, etc. We are also endowed with a subconscious mind which acts under the control of the Cosmic Consciousness present in our whole being. This does not mean that we are animated by four different types of consciousness: objective consciousness, subjective consciousness, subconscious consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness. In reality, in the human being, there is only one consciousness at work, Cosmic Consciousness, which, as we observe in the case of the human being, is multiple in

its manifestations and corresponds to the Cosmic, that is, to the set of natural and universal laws through which the Divine Intelligence manifests Itself in the whole of Creation.

Therefore, if all human beings shelter the universal flow of Cosmic Consciousness, which is perfect in the image of its source, this means that we are permanently linked to this Intelligence and possess It in the depths of our being, so that It is also in the depths of our being that the knowledge of the past, present, and future is to be found. In other words, given the presence of Cosmic Consciousness in our being, we all potentially possess the key to all the mysteries of the universe.

But then why don't we have access to this source of knowledge at all times or whenever we need it? Because our objective consciousness, that of our five physical senses and subjective functions or faculties, is limited to the perception and interpretation of the material, visible, and tangible world. Therefore, in order to gain access to this knowledge, we have to use other faculties that transcend the limited powers of our mind, faculties that Sri Aurobindo called "supramental," intuition being one of the main ones, since it enables us to transcend the limits of our mental faculties.

It is curious, even paradoxical, that we are used to sharpening our senses when we want to see or hear something, and yet, for intuition to manifest and be effective in us, we must silence objective reasoning and listen to the greatest of masters, our Inner Master.

We can consider intuition as the faculty of perceiving immediately, without any kind of intermediary, and of understanding without the intervention of reasoning, a situation, a behavior, a principle, a law, or any knowledge; however, as it is not a mental faculty, it does not depend on our brain either, although it needs the brain to manifest itself in our objective consciousness. From the Rosicrucian point of view, intuition is a spiritual faculty, to be more precise: its roots are in our most divine dimension, that is, in the soul, and for this reason, when it occurs in us, it has that marked realism that we have all experienced at some time, although, being so influenced by rationalism, we find it very difficult to give credence to that which deviates from logic or shows some sort of empirical basis, which is why we find it difficult to approach intuition or intuitive thinking.

But let us continue to be walking question marks: if intuition is a spiritual faculty, how does it manifest in us?





The answer lies in the Sixth Law of the Rosicrucian Ontology, which states that, “A person is a double being in their nature, but triple in their manifestation.” That means a person is composed of a dense physical body and a soul of a spiritual nature. When the soul is incarnated in the physical body of a human being at birth, it generates an intermediate body called the “psychic body” which allows the soul to be in contact with the physical body and to manifest itself on the terrestrial plane. Intuition is one of the means by which our inner self can manifest in the physical body, for it is the repository of the Knowledge that we must acquire from life to life and without which it is impossible for us to become aware of the perfection of our own nature, the ultimate goal of our evolution.

Intuition can manifest itself in different ways in us: through thought, through feeling or emotion, through the reception of an inner voice. In all cases, in this way, it is possible to obtain answers to the specific questions we ask ourselves, as long as these questions are legitimate and acceptable from the cosmic point of view.

The following question often arises: how can we develop intuition in ourselves? First of all, we must have the inner certainty that it is a latent and existing faculty within us, and that it can therefore be developed,

stimulated, maintained, and exercised in all facets of life, if we allow it to manifest itself without obstructing it with mental processes. Doubt and skepticism will not benefit our intuitive thinking, and it will therefore be necessary to give it similar importance as the importance given to our intellect or to our objective perceptions. This may be why some people are more intuitive than others.

Another important point in developing our intuition is that it cannot be developed in all the fields of our lives. In other words, we will only be able to perceive what we are able to understand, and so we will have little or no chance of receiving insights into matters that are not close to our temperament or background.

The development of intuitive thinking takes place in us to the extent that we remain in harmony with the Cosmic, for it is in the Cosmic that intuition has its source. It must pass through us as if we were a channel, and in this sense meditation, especially in its passive phase, plays an essential role, for it is a time when we are in harmony with the Cosmic, which will facilitate the reception of intuition.

Since I mentioned earlier that within us lies the knowledge of the past, present, and future, it is important to distinguish between intuition and premonition, because, even if it is very subtle, it

does exist. We could say that intuition corresponds to an event that has already taken place, even if we have no objective knowledge of it, while premonition, which means “prior warning,” is closer to an inner perception of an event that has not yet taken place, although it should be understood that premonitions do not necessarily have to happen, especially if they directly concern the free will of the people involved. It is therefore preferable to consider premonitions as probabilities or warnings.

As we have just seen, there are a number of factors to be observed in order to release this and other dormant faculties which we all treasure and which we must seek to awaken through our mystical experiences and our work in our sanctums, but this does not mean that the development of the faculty of intuition requires exclusive conditions which are difficult for the majority of people to meet. Even science now indicates that it seems enough for the human being, especially up to the end of the infantile stage, to have a healthy development, in contact with the greatest possible

diversity of stimuli provided by the natural and human environment, on which the intuition feeds, for this development to take place. Educational theorists, parents, and educators should take this seriously.

And since I have referred to science, it is also remarkable to notice that this field, through the statements of many scientists, agrees that no scientific discovery or creative production has ever been the sole result of objective mental activity. Perhaps this is why Einstein said that intuition is the only thing that really counts, or why Thomas Alva Edison tried to induce short dreams when working on his inventions. When he felt blocked and unable to continue his research, Edison would simply try to sleep, and he claimed that this practice always gave him additional insight into the questions that blocked him, thanks to the intuitive symbols he received during these short sleep phases.

In fact, contrary to popular belief, the scientific method combines both intuition and empirical observation to reach new horizons and new knowledge. New ideas are born of intuition, without which the information acquired through random





observation would be an accumulation of meaningless circumstances. Intuition and reason place these same observations in a meaningful relationship and in an ordered system that allows the new ideas formulated as hypotheses by intuition to be verified and validated.

Sir Francis Bacon, in the seventeenth century, and Immanuel Kant, in the eighteenth century, recognized the role of intuition in research activities and defined it as the thought process that aims to arrive, without diversions, to the object or phenomenon under study. The Mexican scientist Arturo Rosenblueth stated that, in the scientific method, intuition is manifested as the problem or phenomenon to be studied, and that the formulation of the working hypothesis, the selection of the experimental method, and the final construction of the theory are also essentially intuitive. He added that in research, experience is important, but the decisive factor is intuition.

Einstein is also said to have shared the following idea: The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.

Carl Gustav Jung, MD defined intuition as an unconscious process resulting from the emergence to consciousness of an unconscious content, a sudden idea, or a presentiment. It is similar to a process of perception, but unlike conscious sense activity and introspection, this perception is unconscious. Jung also differentiated between instinct and intuition, which are not identical, since instinct, from a biological point of view, is an innate behavior present in many species, which appears as an already determined adaptive response without the need for learning and, therefore, oriented towards evolutionary success, whereas intuition seems to be exclusive to human beings and is the result of learning and experience.

If I refer to the fact that intuition seems to be a human characteristic, it is because it is difficult to deny the extraordinary abilities of some animals such as dogs and cats, of which we all know extraordinary stories in which, for example, after being separated from the place where they lived with their masters, they managed to find their former home after journeys of several hundred miles.

Finally, we must also consider as excellent the survival techniques and ways of life of our primitive ancestors, who had no other guide than the learning that their time offered and, in the end, it is their intuition that has allowed us to be here today.

Therefore, we must learn to trust our intuition. There is no doubt about its reliability; the problem is to know how to interpret it correctly and to develop the capacity to become aware of the intuitive faculties we possess. We also have to take into account the fact that we are trying to use a faculty that we have not developed with age, as is the case with the abilities related to the senses. We are also confronted with the fact that we

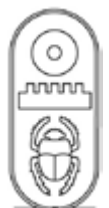
have not been brought up in the world of intuitive development, quite the contrary, because as children we were told not to pay attention to these impressions, that all these matters were a product of our imagination and that we were dreaming. So we have to ask ourselves what it means to reactivate a potential faculty that we have not cultivated and used for many years, and about which our consciousness has been implanted with the idea that there is no point in using it.

The result of all this is that we often come to the erroneous conclusion that our personal intuition is not correct and does not work, even though we are more or less aware that intuition, despite not belonging to us, has its roots in the Cosmic, in the Universal Spirit which is in all the atoms of our being, and which, therefore, not only does not make mistakes, but is capable of perceiving the solutions to our problems and bringing them to our objective consciousness, even though we are not able to interpret them.

Intuition looks for patterns to give quick answers and these patterns emerge through proper training. Let us be aware



The Shekinah in the Grand Temple in San Jose, California.





that we have spent our whole lives communicating with other people and trying to decode what the media tells us, and that this communicative intuition provides us with many clues to which we look away because we continue to believe in the primacy of the rational path and that it alone is worth listening to.

I now propose a mystical experiment related to our theme: we have understood the importance of being able to listen, on our mystical path, to our Inner Self, our Inner Master, in order to get in touch with our most divine dimension, with our soul. That is why I would like to draw your attention now to the following poem entitled “Yo no soy yo” (I am not I), written by the Spanish Nobel Prize winner Juan Ramón Jiménez:

I am not I.

I am this one
walking beside me whom I do not
see,
whom at times I manage to visit,
and whom at other times I forget;
who remains calm and silent while
I talk,
and forgives, gently, when I hate,

who walks where I am not,
who will remain standing when I
die.

Now, intone the vowel sound AUM three times. This vowel sound produces a harmonization between the physical, psychic, and spiritual aspects of our being, which is effective when we wish to harmonize with our Inner Self. Each of the three letters of this vowel sound represents a point in our sacred triangle as it manifests on the visible and invisible planes.

The vowel sound AUM is normally intoned on D below middle C. Since this note is very low, we will intone it on D above middle C.

As mentioned earlier, the human being is double in nature and triple in manifestation. So I now recommend that you concentrate for a few moments on the triangle, formed by the three lit candles. The first one represents our physical body; the second one our spiritual body i.e., our soul; and the third one our psychic body.

Now, while holding the image of this trinity of lights, close your eyes and take a series of deep positive breaths, that is,



inhale deeply through the nose, holding the air in your lungs for a few seconds, but without discomfort, and then exhale through the nose.

Become aware of your breathing and focus your attention on the movement it produces.

Since the purpose of this mystical exercise is to commune with your Inner Master, mentally affirm this desire with the following request: “I wish to commune with my Inner Master.” Repeat this request as often as necessary, until you feel it in your mind and heart.

In this state, surrender to Cosmic Communion.

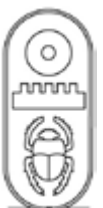
When you are ready, slowly return to the objective plane, take a deep breath and become aware of your surroundings; take another deep breath and move your feet and hands; take a third deep breath and, when you are ready, open your eyes.

In humility and supplication, bow your head slightly forward, and recite mentally the following closing:

God of my Heart, God of my Realization, I thank You for the privilege of approaching You, and for all the gifts I have in my life. In all humility, I beg You to inspire me on the path of goodness and to raise me in the understanding of Your laws, so that I may be a living expression of Your perfection. My deepest desire is for people to know happiness and Deep Peace, so I ask You to help all humanity and guide them on the path of evolution. So Mote It Be!

With this experience completed, I wish that through the tools that the Grand Architect of the Universe has made available to us, and through our efforts as Rosicrucian students, our soul, the rose, will blossom, and that its live petals will be our guide on the mystical path that leads us to Peace Profound.

So Mote It Be!



THE FRATERNAL ARK

Lucy Crawford-Sandison, SRC

Grand Master of the English Grand Lodge for Australia, Asia, and New Zealand



We unite at this convention as fellow travelers on our Rosicrucian journey, as a mystical fraternity having deep spiritual bonds and united in the light, life, and love of the way of the Rose Cross. We have all devoted ourselves to reading, practicing, and cherishing the teachings and traditions of our beloved Order. This closeness, of sharing in those essential Rosicrucian ways, opens us to an unquenchable spirit of fraternity that is our heritage.

The teachings and traditions that unite us are a much treasured “ark of wisdom.” This ark has been sailing upon the waters of the primordial tradition for centuries and has opened in the hearts of seekers when they are ready. I use the word “ark” to poetically represent a moving container of wisdom. It can be symbolized by a boat or a ship or as a little treasure chest. The future-making possibilities of our Order’s “ark of wisdom” live as a hope and a promise in our hearts.

Every Rosicrucian journey is a part of the living narrative of our ancient fraternity. Each expression of our Order’s teachings

in life, through perhaps parenting, talents, livelihood, and spiritual work, will ensure that this promise will live on. It will always find its future – making light, living in your love for our Order.

This is the incredible spirit and strength of our “fraternal ark.”

Perhaps sometimes people feel that they walk a lonely road in a situation or in a society that little understands the depths and breadths or the eternal dimensions of what they have been learning. Maybe they have faced the dark vicissitudes of life’s challenges, and its chaos, but have overcome these difficulties with serenity through our Order’s “ark of wisdom.”

May it be that they always find the same spiritual courage from within that “ark of wisdom” that has helped so many of our Rosicrucian brothers and sisters to find their way in the past, to journey onwards into the new light of each day.

The following is a story about the spiritual beauty and strength of our “fraternal ark.” This is a story of spiritual

courage, of the victory of adventure over adversity, discovery over desolation.

It is the story of Rosicrucians, who in the seventeenth century chose to set sail from Europe for new lands in America. It appears that they carried a promise living in them to safeguard the Rosicrucian wisdom and create a new opportunity for its future-making. In the summer of 1693 these likely brethren of the Rose Cross sailed forth from Rotterdam in the Netherlands to new lands unknown to them.

They sailed first to London, then, leaving in the chill of winter, onwards to Philadelphia in a ship named the *Sarah Maria*, traversing around 3,900 nautical miles of ocean and arriving close to the summer solstice of June 1694. Surely this journey was a momentous event in the greater cosmic sense, and a momentous event in the history and mysteries of our Order.

We know that the voyage of the *Sarah Maria* was filled with trials, but these brethren were steadfast in their purpose and inner promptings, believing wholeheartedly in Divine providence. The name of the ship, the *Sarah Maria*, was considered by them to be a benevolent sign for overcoming danger with faith,

hope, and love. A war was raging on the seas between European nations. Despite warnings from their families, they continued. The *Sarah Maria* encountered some mysterious serendipity, which helped her overcome a near shipwrecking and survive attacks from hostile warships.

The Atlantic crossing was known, in those times, to take around six weeks. Despite initial delays, the ocean crossing was unusually long. Where did they go? What was this journey for? And what was in the ark of the *Sarah Maria*? How did the trip come together?

This piece is going to take you on an imaginative journey, as well as provide you with some historical facts about this voyage. But first it is important to open a window into a small book that likely provided a wellspring of inspiration to those Rosicrucians on the *Sarah Maria*.

This small unheralded book published posthumously in 1627 is named *New Atlantis*, and it was tucked into the back of a much bigger book called *Sylva Sylvarum*, or the *Forest of Materials*. On the cover of the *New Atlantis*, are the words “A Worke Unfinished, written by the Right Honourable Francis, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban.” The author is Sir





Francis Bacon. The story is about travelers who get lost on a ship in remote oceans and discover an unknown island inhabited by a mysterious fraternity.

While a connection between the voyage of the *Sarah Maria* and the *New Atlantis* is my own, it is certain that the *New Atlantis* was an important part of the heritage of the Rosicrucian fraternity in the seventeenth century and, as an esoteric narrative, it would have been studied in Rosicrucian circles. The real journey of the *Sarah Maria* followed in the wake of the metaphorical journey of the *New Atlantis*. Spiritually, both are connected and form part of the ark of the fraternal heritage of our Order. Sir Francis Bacon was an eminent English Rosicrucian-mystic-philosopher-statesperson. He led movements for the advancement of both natural philosophy and the scientific method, but many of his writings have highly poetic breadths and metaphorical depths, and extensively allude to the Rosicrucian fraternity. Right through this period there was a lot of Rosicrucian activity centered around Tübingen University, in Germany, a place particularly associated with the seventeenth-century Rosicrucian manifestos.

So, when I was researching the voyage of the *Sarah Maria*, I could imagine that there were children of those well-educated

Rosicrucians who had likely read *New Atlantis* with their Rosicrucian parents. Picture for a moment a child encircled in the light of a candle flame, being read this story, and those words; so precise, so passionate, and spoken with such a silken warmth that the story may have expanded like an airborne lantern in those children's souls. This story could have fanned sparks in their imagination, and strengthened their desire for discovery, especially if, as they grew up, the allegory's meaning was more and more revealed to them. It could have led to one of the greatest journeys of their life if those children became travelers on the voyage of the *Sarah Maria*.

Let me open a doorway for you into the mysterious spiritual beauty of *New Atlantis* by sharing some parts of this story. This will provide the foundations for us to imaginatively journey further together.

The narrative begins:

So that finding ourselves in the midst of the greatest wilderness of the waters of the world, without victuals, we gave ourselves up for lost men and prepared for death. We lifted up our voices to God [the Divine], who showeth wonders in the deep, that is in the beginning, he discovered the face of the deep, and brought forth dry

land, so now discover land to us, that we might not perish.

After this, the lost travelers discover an island, named Bensalem, meaning “the inheritor of peace.” Inhabited by a mysterious fraternity who had advanced skills of knowledge in all areas of the highest and most refined arts, science, and philosophy, it is a utopian place pervaded by the cultivation of serenity.

It is easy to imagine students in Rosicrucian circles at Tübingen University debating over the allegorical meaning of this lostness, seeing it as representing the lost and sorry state of humanity. Perhaps they felt it to be an allegory for the aching lostness of any person who has forgotten their divine nature. Finding a peaceful island with refined and learned inhabitants could be a metaphor for the discovery of a special form of wisdom. Bacon was surely alluding to the fraternity of the Rose Cross. Upon arriving in the waters surrounding Bensalem, a boat meets the travelers, who are read a warning on a scroll about not landing on the shore. Although perplexed by this warning, the travelers experience an unusual humanity shown towards them.

They are asked certain questions and, having answered sincerely, are

admitted into the “House of Strangers.” This beautiful residence on the island of Bensalem is full of crafted provisions and learned attendants, scientific researchers and those healing the sick. In such a beautifully composed atmosphere they wish to refine themselves. Being warned and questioned before being admitted on to the island likely alludes to the requirements of becoming a student of the fraternity.

As the allegory unfolds, the travelers are told about an ancient king of Bensalem, named Salomon. He was the lawgiver of that land and wholly dedicated to making the people happy. His house was known as “the eye of the kingdom of the fraternity.” This king could therefore represent the very highest office of leadership in the fraternity. As a mark of Salomon’s supreme office, every twelve years he allowed two ships of three brethren to sail beyond the waters of his crown to give knowledge to other countries.

Do you know what was the only thing that King Salomon allowed them to trade? The exact words written are: “But thus, you see, we maintain a trade, not for gold, silver, or jewels... nor for any other commodity of matter, but only for God’s





[the Divine's] first creature which was light.”

It is a beautiful picture, that this fraternity was only allowed to trade in Divine Light! Imagine for a moment a “fraternal ark,” that is our worldwide community of Rosicrucians being exchangers of Divine Light.

There is another part of this story that seems significant to our Order's fraternal ark: One evening a brother of Salomon's house was sailing on a boat just off the island. He saw a great pillar of light arising from the sea. On top of it, a large cross of light emerged. The cross dissolved, leaving a small ark of cedar wood and a palm branch at its fore. The little chest-ark contained a book and a letter. It is important to mention that the main protagonists in *New Atlantis* are a priest, king, and philosopher. These three symbolic figures perhaps represent the soul qualities of devotion, dignity, and the love of wisdom, that the brothers or sisters of the Rose Cross aspired to achieve, and which those Rosicrucians on the *Sarah Maria* may have exemplified. But what could the little floating box chest-ark mean? Bacon stated that parable was a form of ark containing knowledge about the most precious portions of the

sciences, philosophy, the beauty of life, and the human soul. This little ark might represent the most core treasures of the Rosicrucian wisdom.

To understand the essence of the symbol of an ark it is helpful to reflect upon what an ark does in many ancient stories. It is a moving container that transfers something of significant importance. Something of great spiritual value is being purposefully moved, to be entrusted into new constructive, benevolent conditions. An ark might be symbolized by a ship traversing a vast ocean, like Noah's Ark, or as a box chest that appears at a special moment, or as a sacred tabernacle being moved to a promised land, like the Ark of the Covenant, or even as a relocated coffin containing a body, like the casket containing Osiris that floated down the Nile to Byblos. The moving vessel contains higher knowledge; the aim is to take it on a new course into the future, where it may be of greatest benefit. The voyage of the *Sarah Maria* likely safeguarded the Rosicrucian wisdom and created a new opportunity for its future-making. This perhaps explains what this journey was for. But why did they leave in 1694?

The terrible Thirty Years' War between two sides of the Christian faith had left

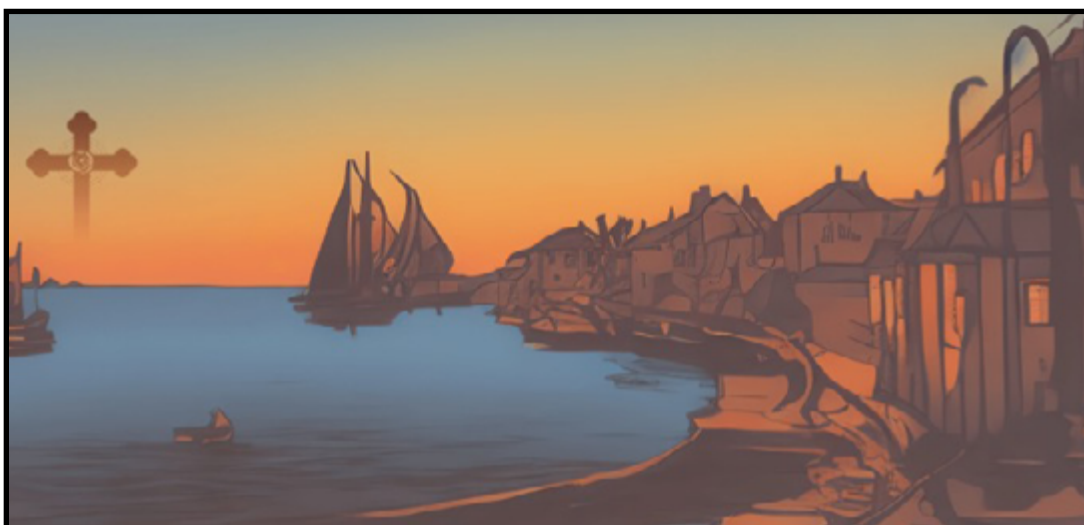
despair and futility in the air of Europe. Then came strange weather, caused by climatic change and vile diseases. The Rosicrucian manifestos, now around seventy-five years old, encouraged creating places where peace could reign, and humanity could advance and honor the divine works.

The leader of the brethren, Johann Jacob Zimmerman, was someone who devoted himself to measurements of the stars, and the horoscopes of humanity. He calculated divine influences upon the approaching end of the century, and held millennialist views of an imminent golden age, requiring the fraternity to find new beneficent conditions. Sadly, Zimmerman passed through his transition in Rotterdam, just two days before the voyage. Johannes Kelpius was only twenty-seven when he took over Zimmerman's leadership. He was a visionary yet introspective young man, and also a student from Tübingen. The diary of Kelpius contains an account of the voyage. In it he expresses the atmosphere of continuous fraternal discourse and devotional prayers onboard. Historically speaking, the travelers are noted as being pietists, but these leaders firmly point towards the travelers likely being a Rosicrucian fraternity.

Also, a large number of Rosicrucian documents and manuscripts were onboard. During the sixty-eight years between Bacon's *New Atlantis* and the ship leaving, it seems that there was much intense communication between brethren in Britain and mainland Europe, including those Behemists, hermeticists, pietists, alchemists, and kabbalists who might have turned with eyes of interest towards the ideals of the Rose Cross.

Before they crossed the Atlantic Ocean, their sights were set on London, where important meetings were likely held. Members of the Philadelphian Society in London were purported to have financed the ship's journey. The travelers likely met the elusive mystic Jane Lead, known for her visions of the divine Sophia. Although in society she was an ordinary homemaker, she was actually an adept in all manner of esoteric practices and the leader of the Behemist group, which became the Philadelphians in the same auspicious year of the voyage.

Lead's alchemical scripts were clothed in intense expressions of Christian revelation, but her central vision was of an "alchemical ark" – a great, glittering golden ark, with six wings and ruby-red eyes, which could fly as well as sail. She





was deeply passionate in conveying that we must find this divine ark in ourselves.

After the *Sarah Maria* left London she was forced to anchor in the seas after becoming almost shipwrecked on sandbanks. There followed lengthy times waiting for the safety of a convoy of ships that did not appear. It seems, however, that only a single sister ship, *Providence*, accompanied them to safer waters, assisting with defense from an attack by warships. After this, the route becomes obscure. Perhaps they sailed via the islands of the Azores. It was not uncommon. The lost civilization of Atlantis that Bacon had alluded to, and which Plato had written about, mythically centered around the Azores, as island remnants of those lands, including Pico Island with the magnificent Mount Pico. Atlantis, of course, could allude to spiritual islands rather than physical places, but either way, if the route went via the Azores, it surely would have been evocative of the mysteries.

Now imagine attuning with the voyage of the *Sarah Maria* as if you are on this ship. Please close your eyes briefly and begin some neutral breathing.

As night begins to fall, the last promontory of land is enshrouded in a misty eventide light. It is as if a farewell

hand is reaching out to us on the *Sarah Maria*, blessing her. With the rest of your brothers and sisters of the Rose Cross you gaze out over a vast, vast ocean. You are not fearful, for a great guiding majesty seems everywhere present, enveloping the *Sarah Maria* as if giving her pure sails of Divine Light.

Under the exquisite cosmic architecture, the laws of the universe seem to reflect so very gently and sweetly in the waters of the ocean, as well as in the stars, glittering above with a radiant hope. We hear a faint echo of Francis Bacon's words: "the Divine Majesty took delight to hide His [Its] works, to the end, to have them found out."

We gather on the decks around our brazier, where our promise seems to be abiding in each other's eyes. Our cherished manuscripts are stored deep in the hull of the ship, below the water line, rising and falling as every wave passes. After many hours of discussion, a mystical silence descends among us, and we enter into mystical communication, filled with an atmosphere of eternity and the bonds of fraternal peace. As the midnight hour approaches, we retire to the calm darkness of our cabins, each feeling alone as travelers in the cosmic immensity.

On a foreign shoreline we gather on the beach and burn all the remaining excessive and sentimental objects of our former life. These are dangerous times. This act is to push back our fears through lightening the burden of our sentimentality. Our hope is to strengthen our fraternal unity and our closeness with the omnific mind, whose most holy name is love. *Providence* accompanies our *Sarab Maria* for many weeks, like a benevolent soul, a guide and protector.

Arriving at a small village of colored houses, we welcome aboard three travelers in turbans of red and green. They bring books of mathematics from the libraries far away to the east, in the lands of Arabia. They give us sweet birds in ornate cages, and attar, a perfume from the roses of Damascus. A pleasant aroma arises, and we meditate in the shadows of our sails.

Is it just a dream that we arrive in the azure remote waters of the Azores, where we ascend the *Montanha do Pico* for gaining far vision and other reverent acts? Leaving *Pico* at dusk, our course is now fully set westwards. Each day is closed with the golden eventide silence of meditation and prayer, as we move ever closer towards the city of brotherly love, *Philadelphia*.

We are not spared further trials and troubles, for in the middle of the great

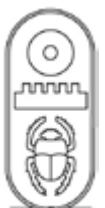
expanse of ocean, the wind no longer fills our sails. We drift listlessly for two whole weeks. A mysterious sloop passes us by, its silent grace piquing our curiosity. Yet, after many weeks becalmed, a bickering breaks out between some of our brethren. There is a bitter air hanging over the *Sarab Maria*.

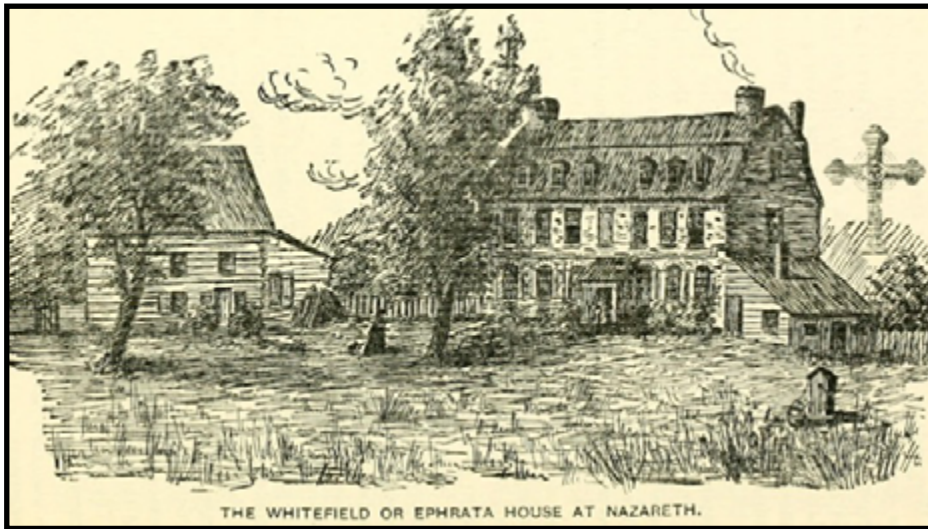
The winds began to rise once more, but a fire breaks out on the deck, mirroring the unfettered anger and clouded humility in the hearts of some. But nature ensures that goodwill is restored, lest we perish. Our ship is saved from destruction because all hands work together to put out the fire. But we are tested of our fraternal resolve once more when a mighty storm rises on the seas.

We ask the God of our Hearts, with all our united fraternal love, for calm to abide in the waters of the seas and as well as in ourselves. The seas calm and a vital breath fills our sails and fills each of us. From then onwards, our promise seems to guide the remainder of our voyage, like a star of peace. Our promise is safe.

The light of the rising sun envelopes our vessel, surrounding it with a rainbow of new hope. The new lands are not far away now; our promise will be fruitful.

Although our maps and instruments of navigation were tattered or lost in the storm, a cosmic picture, unique to each of





us, grows in our midst, and we re-find our course without further trial.

At last, we arrive in Philadelphia, where we meditate and give prayers of thanks on the banks of the river for the safe delivery of our promise. The seeds of our meditations and prayers are cultivated as we build our little community, which later becomes named “Ephrata,” meaning “fruitful.”

Let us now end this imagination and return to historical records. The brotherhood became known as “The Woman of the Wilderness” since its activities were likened to the biblical woman in the “Book of Revelation,” who had gone to into the wilderness to meditate. Kelpius created his own special sanctuary in a cave above a creek in the Wissahickon wilderness.

When past Emperor Harvey Spencer Lewis spoke of being entrusted to develop a new cycle of our Order, in the early part of the twentieth century, he did not speak of it as the “creation” of our Order in America, but of an “awakening.” He saw his work as the second cycle of Rosicrucianism in America, as he greatly valued the fruitful works of the seventeenth-century Rosicrucians there. He deeply valued the well-researched account, written in 1895,

by Julius Frederick Sache, a descendent of those on the voyage.

You might also know that Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, was believed to be Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order in the seventeenth century, during the time of King James 1. He cast many fruitful Rosicrucian thoughts, words, and deeds far and wide.

The importance of the direction that Rosicrucian wisdom took by virtue of the voyage of the *Sarah Maria* will likely never be fully known. But it was definitely significant to the future-making of our Order.

The ark of Rosicrucian wisdom was opened in those new lands and became fruitful.

Our worldwide “fraternal ark” continues to sail on into the mists of time, as if a resilient vessel of light, surmounted by a Rose Cross. As if it is continuously attuned to the ethereal wind of the Égrégoré of our Order. We, as its travelers, exchange our light, life, and love with the world.

May it be that a promise lives within you.

ON THE UNIVERSAL CONNECTEDNESS OF MULTIPLICITY IN UNITY

*Alexander Crocoll, FRC
Grand Master of the German Grand Lodge*

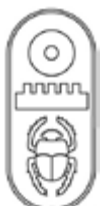
Anyone who does not deny God, the Divine, the Deity – or whatever we want to call the origin and essence of our being – cannot avoid affirming the unity of life, the love that unites all opposites, and its ideal and its expression on the human level: true brotherhood. We should therefore be guided by the timeless eternity of the origin of what we call “fraternity,” even though our understanding of this sublime ideal may be lost in the mists of history when viewed from the outside.

The words, designations, and external ideas of this concept, which is based on the other side of our existence, may change and be subject to the most diverse influences, but the cause and essence always remain the same. This already clearly indicates that the concept of fraternity goes far beyond what we, as human beings, are able to grasp in a purely rational and emotional way.

Consequently, fraternity cannot be exclusively a matter of inviting other people to behave positively, along the lines of: “Behave well, consider others as your

brothers and sisters; not only do them no harm, but promote the well-being of all.” These are pious wishes that have been given unceasingly, day after day, for millennia. And yet we human beings of today, at least in our outward individuality in terms of the qualities of our hearts, are no better than the human beings who lived before us. So, the question arises why the one truth of universal connectedness, which is basically the reflection of a universal principle on the outer plane of humanity, hardly seems to take shape in the world of the particular and the individual.

No matter how many reasons there may be, we should first affirm that on the human level the claim to fraternity is brought about by a cause which is in principle of universal order. This cause bears the name of Love i.e., that higher form of Cosmic Love which makes intelligible, conceals, and yet at the same time reveals the unity of life. Life is an indivisible unity and so the high ideal of fraternity in the human realm appears to



us as the fruit of an awareness of universal truth. Where it is absent, there can be no effective expression of love and therefore no fraternity; and so let us try to approach the essence of fraternity somewhat.

I already mentioned that the words, designations, and outward ideas of the concept of fraternity are grounded on the other side of our existence and that the essence or being of fraternity corresponds to a universal principle. However, if a principle has universal validity, it must come from the one source of all being.

If one occupies oneself mentally with the origin of being, the starting point for the existence of all that is i.e., of all multiplicity, appears to be something simple and undifferentiated. This simplest thing is the One and appears as the origin and reason for existence of all things i.e., as the highest thing that can exist. This ineffable One remains principally hidden from rational comprehension, and yet reason compels us to accept the One. In religious terminology, it would in fact have the role of the supreme deity. And yet the question of the prior – still so far removed from time and space – arises that even the term “primordial beginning” does not seem appropriate, for how can something beyond time and space have a beginning?

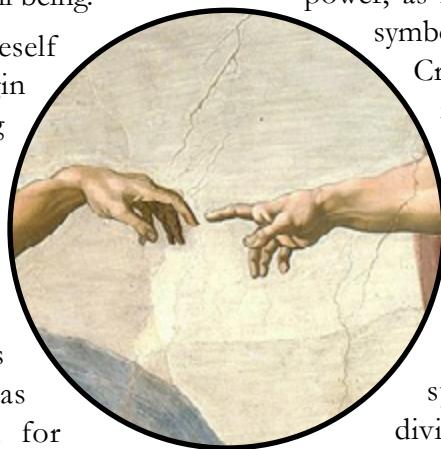
Even if not thought of in a linear temporal sequence i.e., rather in terms of principle, the reason for all existence in this world already begins before what is later called creation – with an impulse from another level. Mathematically this would perhaps correspond to zero i.e., a completely different level than that of the following numbers, beginning with one. Kabbalists would say “from beyond the three veils.”

But wherever we locate the timeless origin, whether as Zero or One, it begins far beyond the many acts of creation that took place during the seven days of creation, and it is at first far above the appearance of the first triad of three superordinate transcendental forces, and it takes its place as a guide for the following spheres.

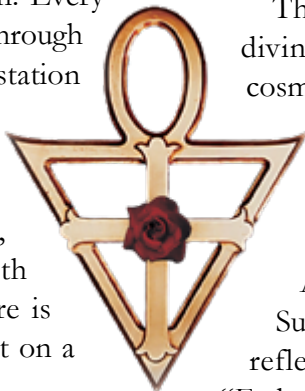
The One (1) is the igniting primordial force out of which all that follows comes into being. In it is hidden that all-birthing power, as it is also described in its symbolism with the First Day of Creation in Genesis. It is the number of unity in which everything still rests, which will spread out in stages, but which already has a certain dynamic inherent in it – LIGHT.

The Two (2) symbolizes duality, that division that is inherent in everything that descends as a primordial force from a higher level to a lower one. This world of ours, in which humanity finds itself or rather believes it finds itself, is a world to which this Two (2) is assigned, a world that arises out of duality and is shaped by it. Everything can only exist through its corresponding counterpart and everything in the universe is of this twofold nature, both the material and the immaterial, the visible and the invisible. This is the basis of all earthly existence – LIFE.

Most spiritual traditions teach that creation is dual. The creation myths of many cultures point out that everything has its counterpart, because without this counterpart nothing would exist. Creation is thus quasi-duality, and the beginning of all creation is that a counterpart develops out of an unfathomable eternal unity. This is the starting point for perception to take place at all. Perception is a process of confrontation



and the only thing that can be perceived is that which appears as a counterpart. Thus, the emergence of creation out of unity, out of the “primordial ground,” the “unground” of all being, is necessary for all cognition; and the world of creation serves as a mirror, both for the Divinity and for humankind. The Three (3) symbolizes the ancient and imperishable law of the triangle. This law is considered as the law of accomplished manifestation. Every realization can only take place through this law. A completed manifestation happens through the connection of two opposite poles: a positive, giving of oneself (1) and a negative, receiving force (2). When both poles or forces combine, there is a completed manifestation, but on a different plane – LOVE.



Thus we also recognize that everything that is perfect is something threefold, and consists of a trinity of points, so also the human being with body, spirit, and soul. The Christian creation myth, which corresponds to the first Rosicrucian principle of the Incarnation of humanity, in which the Divine as Spirit breathes the breath of life into the body of the human being and the human being thus becomes a living soul, illustrates how the trinity in the human being emerges from the duality. Through this creation myth we can grasp the trinity of the human being, which reveals itself as body, spirit, and soul. Thus this myth illustrates the cosmic law of three and the conscious experience of the triple composition of one’s own being, and the harmonious interaction of all three parts of one’s being has always been the goal of any spiritual path. However, the supposedly linear development out of unity via the duality of creation to the Three (3) is merely a symbolic bridge that is not to be understood as a spatio-temporal sequence, but can facilitate a first approach to

understanding and comprehension. Where healthy life takes place in harmony, there we feel this trinity. Not only in the sense that two have united, but also that a third has emerged, as fruit from the contradiction. The contradiction remains, just as in the birth of a child, man and woman remain as parents. This is the mystery of the Trinity, the unity in the Three (3) – both in the upper and in the lower concrete world.

The Supreme Trinity of the three divine principles appears on the cosmic level in different terminology, in Catholic terminology as “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” in Rosicrucian terminology as “Light, Life, and Love,” in Alchemical language as “Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt,” or, as a concrete reflection in the lower world, as “Father, Mother, and Child.” This Supreme Trinity is a unity. Unity means that two meet and a third comes forth as the fruit of this encounter. Only the trinity forms the unity; without trinity there would be no unity. The One “seen from below” or “from outside” is rigid, solitary, lifeless, in a sense alone. “Seen from above,” the One as Unity already contains the Three, the Principle of Encounter, the Fruit.

The three Divine Principles are the emanations from that great Unity from which everything flows forth, whether in the visible or the invisible realm. Three lights springing from one source or three sources as the basis of the one reality.

We can feel this trinity as a hidden root in the upper world, and so we are not rootless even in this lower world – we are in a sense at home in the eternal.

And so it is a matter of finding access to a source that flows out of ourselves. The direct, immediate relationship with ourselves, with our deepest being, is in the foreground. You don’t hear a voice telling you what to do – that can also be the case,



but it's more about a mood. One knows something or rather suspects it in the sense of a barely comprehensible certainty. We do not attain this kind of certainty with our reason or because we are so clever – its source lies elsewhere, in the hidden, in the non-conscious. Thus, one's own life tells itself from this other hidden side – and where this no longer works, the human being appears to be relationshipless in every respect – relationshipless to themselves and to the world.

With the attainment of the third state, a unity comes about; something is completed and this shows itself in a strange doubling of the three. Something very strange happens here, in the truest sense of the word, and we recognize a peculiar connection between the Three (3) and the Four (4). The Three (3) always seems to be expressed in the Four (4). One could also speak of a principle according to which the Three (3) appears in a kind of doubling as the Four (4).

This universal happening, which could be called the 1-4 principle, is so familiar to all of us that we often hardly notice it anymore. For example, the third in the series of signs of the zodiac is a double, the twins, that is, two. Or in alchemy: the three principles of Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt reveal themselves in the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth. From the two primary alchemical elements of fire and water emerges a duplication of the three, the two composite elements of air and earth. In relation to the four kabbalistic worlds, it is noticeable that in the lower Fourth World the qualities and essences of the other three worlds are expressed and become effective. Here again we recognize a trinity that

steps outward through a fourthness, into the world of the appearance of time and space. The three fundamental philosophical principles finally give birth, as a unity of the lower world, to that activity which symbolizes Earth – with its four mystical elements also manifesting in the earthly. This principle extends into the concrete; in the union of man and woman, the child is born, again something double, for it can be a son or a daughter.



The Four (4) symbolizes firm order, stability, and constancy. Everything can only endure through the Four. We can also see in this the meaning of the four mystical elements, which are considered as the basic components of creation on all its three levels.

So far we have counted up to four, which may remind us of the teachings of Pythagoras and the sacred tetractys. We also know from the Hebrew tradition that this outer world only reaches up to four, on all levels therefore up to four hundred, the numerical value of the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Beyond this lies the 500, the 5 on another level. Here again the basic 1-4 principle is shown.

As can be seen from some examples, this principle appears in various forms that do not always make it easy to recognize it. Sometimes this principle is figuratively woven into a narrative or is only mentioned in passing, so that it is easy to miss. In many places it is also woven into certain numerical relationships of letters, words, or whole verses, so perhaps even less obvious than in pictorial representations. So, we are really dealing with the so-called mystical language, the understanding of which is what gives us access to this

principle in the first place. Let us now look at a few examples, combined with the hope of further approaching the essence of this 1-4 principle.

The first example is certainly one that does not immediately catch the eye. It is the very first sentence of the Bible, which says: In the beginning God [the Divine] created the heavens and the earth. If you look at this first sentence in Hebrew, you will see that it consists of 7 words and 28 letters. The very first sentence of the Bible refers to the ratio 1:4 as a fundamental principle.

Another example, also at the very beginning of the Bible, this time from the second chapter of Genesis: the story of the so-called Fall of Humankind – it is about the story of paradise with the two trees. There is the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We know that in Hebrew the letters have numerical values. If we add these together, we get a ratio of 1:4 for the two trees.

So, a ratio or a relationship is described that is essential for our existence in this life. This 1 and the 4 facing each other, this ratio 1:4 determines our life. It is more than just interesting information. It has something to do with how we approach our meaning of life and whether we actually understand in this life where our origin lies and what makes us human beings. But let's take a look at a few more examples in the hope that this may make the 1-4 principle and its meaning more apparent.

Genesis 2:10 says: "A river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided into four streams." Here too we recognize the 1-4 principle. Something emanates from the 1, which then becomes something that has a different quality.

Or in 1 Samuel 17, there is the story of David fighting Goliath. There it is mentioned in passing that David took five smooth stones from the stream and put

them in his bag. Then he took the sling in his hand and went to meet the Philistine. Then in the course of the entanglement it is then said:

David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, and hurled it with his sling. It struck the P'lishti [Philistine] in his forehead and buried itself in his forehead, so that he fell face down on the ground.

Thus David defeated the P'lishti [Philistine] with a sling and a stone, striking the P'lishti [Philistine] and killing him.

We recognize again the 1-4 principle. Of the 5 stones he took one; so four remain. The 1 finds the victory, i.e. through the 1 the victory is obtained. Goliath thus stands for the four (4) without connection to the origin, to the one (1). Without the connection to the origin, we are arrested in this outer world and become giants, impressing others, imposing and acting out outer power. The Bible thus describes – if one detaches oneself from the external



narrative – the essence, the principle behind it, how everything is constructed, the architecture of the world, so to speak.

Or in Mark 6:3 it says: “Isn’t he the carpenter, the son of Miryam [Mary] and brother of Yaakov [Jacob] and Yosef [Joseph] and Yehuda [Judas] and Shimon [Simon]?” Again we have the four (4), the four brothers, and as opposite Yeshua, the One (1).

Or there is also the example of Yeshua on the cross; again the one opposite the four. On the four of the cross is fixed the One who comes from the other side.

After the crucifixion we read in John 19:23 and 24a:

When the soldiers crucified Yeshua, they took his clothes and divided them in four parts, one part for each soldier. And they took his tunic too. Now his tunic shirt was seamless, woven in one piece from the top straight down. So they said to each other, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be.”

So four pieces of clothing are divided and one whole, undivided as a counterpart.

This principle of 1-4 actually extends into the physical, as can be seen from the next two examples.

The oxygen we breathe in corresponds to about 20 percent of the air. So again 1 part compared to the 4 i.e., the remaining 80 percent, which is essentially nitrogen, but also gases like carbon dioxide, etc. The One, that which keeps us alive, is hidden in the Four. If we had everything only from one side, we could not live; and if we had everything only from the other side, we could not live either. We need both in a

certain proportion. So, the One does not come in isolation.

Even our hand is an expression of the 1-4 principle. The thumb stands as 1 opposite the four fingers; in the case of the human hand we also speak of the opposable thumb. Without the thumb we could only mimic, because we would lack the connection to the One, the connection to the origin of all being.



What a level we could reach if we took care of the connection to 1. Only then would a person connect with their true humanity. Then our knowledge on this side would also be brilliant; only then would we actually comprehend and not only understand on the basis of twoness.

This great turning point is also what the mystery of sacrifice is about. The most beautiful and original meaning of the term “sacrifice” is certainly found in ancient Judaism, which is closely related to our own tradition. Here, sacrifice means something like “approaching the Divine.” In tradition, the narrative of Isaac on Mount Moriah is called the “Akedah” i.e., the binding. For the essence of this whole event is this binding of the four into one. Isaac is bound to the sacrifice in the same way as the animal later i.e., the four extremities i.e., hands and feet or the four legs, are bound together into one, into the One.

So it is about a metanoia, about the complete transformation, reversal, or rotation, that is expressed in the *Fama* when the brothers consult their Rota and let a night pass before they open the tomb vault.

It means seeing what the world produces in terms of logic, circumstance, and other appearances, but nevertheless –

despite all this – being oriented towards the higher and connecting with the origin.

So we all have a deep inner longing to do something, to achieve something, or whatever we may call it, that reaches far beyond ourselves and grounds our work in the common Great Work.

However, we can only succeed in this if we dare to live what we understand by fraternity. So we are not merely united in the sense of a brotherhood; the essence of true brotherhood in the sense of fraternity is the common orientation towards the higher i.e., the universal connectedness of multiplicity in unity.

Before concluding, let us go into a contemplative reflection for a few moments. Let three symbols have an effect on us and let what we have said and heard resonate inwardly a little.

Let us trace our sensations a little – and also the question of what all this has to do with ourselves.

What does the mystery of the fraternity mean for us – for us personally?

We try to become aware of this timeless event, this hidden side of our existence, the origin of all being, which makes the universal connectedness of multiplicity in unity possible in the first place – fraternity.

Even though we may hardly succeed in grasping this mystery intellectually, we can nevertheless approach it at any time.

All of us together, this multiplicity of so very different loving people for, as it were, a quadruplicity and yet remain together aligned to our origin.

We all have the privilege of being able to connect with the Celestial Sanctum at any time and thus always stand as mediators between the Above and the Below. So we can trust that the cosmic sun of Tiphareth outshines the abyss and always shines over to us.

Let us now slowly come back again, back to the world of multiplicity, back to the Four and try to remain aware of the connection to the One.



IN THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY

*Michal Eben, FRC
Grand Master of the Czech and Slovakian Grand Lodge*

Fraternity – the very theme of our Rosicrucian World Convention. How do we understand this term?

By its standard definition it has two meanings:

1. A group of people who share a common occupation or interest i.e., a kind of organization, community, or guild.
2. A sense of friendship and mutual support, similar to the way a family behaves.

In Czech, we have two different but linguistically related words for these two meanings. In many languages, however, they share the same term.

The importance of fraternity, in both senses, is demonstrated in many cultures by a similar example: the parable of the rods, which shows the possible weakness of a single entity and the strength of the unity of many.

Let me briefly read the one from Czech history.

The prince of Moravia, Svatopluk, had three sons, and, when he was dying, he divided his country into three parts and left one share to each of his three sons, leaving the eldest son to be a great prince and the other two to be under his command. He exhorted them to not fall out with one another, giving them this example by way of illustration: he brought three sticks and bound them together and gave them to the first son to break, and when he was not strong enough, handed them on to the second, and in like manner to the third, and then he separated the three sticks and gave one each to the three of them. When they had taken them and were bidden to break them, they broke them through at once. By means of this illustration he exhorted them and said: “If you remain undivided in concord and love, you shall be unconquered by your adversaries and invincible; but if strife and rivalry come among you and you divide yourselves into three governments, not subject to the eldest brother, you shall be both destroyed



A wall etching showing the legend of Svatopluk's sticks and his three sons, at Prostějov Castle in the Czech Republic.



by one another and brought to utter ruin by the enemies who are your neighbors.”

Our Order is undoubtedly an organization. And at the same time, we express fraternal feelings toward each other. As you of course know, our Order is not limited to fratres, i.e., men only. This was one of the first things that attracted me to the Order. In addition, our fraternity is traditionally hierarchical, i.e., there must be some kind of structured leadership to guide the community and thus be of service to the community. Hence the title of this piece.

In today’s human brotherhood, we can’t help but observe an increasing lack of brotherly feelings. We can see nations fighting against other nations, races fighting against other races, the poor against the rich, but also the hatred of car drivers against pedestrians, or car drivers against other car drivers, even men against women. One might naively expect that some global threat would unite the human race to fight against this. Even that doesn’t work, as we saw during the pandemic. It’s so easy to fall into pessimism or even into the Dark Night of the Soul with all its devastation and doubts.

But we can help our brothers and sisters to overcome the Dark Night of the Soul by increasing the spirit of brotherhood. It’s our task. It’s our service to the fraternity. Despite this, we have to seek the strength to fight the Dark Night of the Soul in ourselves, which makes

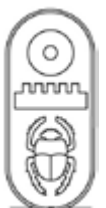
the support of the fraternity significant and, over time, more important. After all, don’t we share and benefit from the same Égrégoire?

And now for something completely different.

Let me switch from this official, but rather cold and theoretical side, to my own very personal reflections. Since I entered this brotherhood, there have been many people who have had a tremendous impact on my life, both personally and also in terms of my function as a Grand Master. The first one to mention is of course the Imperator Emeritus Frater Christian Bernard, who nominated me for this office.

As I did many times before, I’ll do my best to comply with Comenius’s prohibition about writing and publishing work that would be a mere repetition of what has already been written; and command that every new work must tell something new about a topic; or deal with it from a new perspective or within a new context; or make a complicated topic more simple, clear, and accessible to the wider public. Thus I’m not going to pay another tribute to any of the past Imperators – there are already so many!

So instead, I’d like to mention now three other fratres, who unfortunately passed through transition in recent years. They are not forgotten, but from my point of view they are scarcely mentioned, so



I'd like to pay them a little private tribute, but in an informal and unorthodox way, as I usually do. I will not give any personal information about them, such as their birthplaces, biographies, and so on. I will also not give boring dates, nor important, but probably well known, achievements of their lives. I have to admit that because I had so little time to spend with them, some of these facts are even unknown to me. And those facts belong to the realm of historians. That's not my thing, and I would easily forget them. Instead, I'd like to express what they meant to me for my way of life within the Order.

At the same time, I'm not going to rely on my scattered memories. I remember some funny moments that might amuse you, but these are also not important. I mentioned that my recollections are going to be unorthodox ones. Let me explain. To this effect I need to reveal a bit of my history in the Order.

When I applied for my membership, the first thing I did the very same day was offer my service for the improvement of the graphic design of some of the publications. At the time, all materials were distributed as copies of copies of poorly typeset originals. This applied also to the *Mastery of Life* booklet, which had been copied several times on copiers of doubtful quality.

This is the way I managed to progressively integrate my skills more and more into service for the Order. This involved my official education and graduation in electronic sciences, sound studio engineering, and information technology, as well as some language skills. However, there was still one area of skill that I had admired all along, but hadn't been able to find a way to use. It was music.

In these tough and dark days, I found it increasingly difficult to put into words what I felt. I know I'm not alone in having had this block, especially in my position.



Michal Eben, playing piano.

There are so many things I'd like to share with my beloved fraternity, but in regards to my office, rules, and duties, I simply can't. This troubles me a lot.

So I managed to find relief in the arts. Some people might be able to paint a picture, some could compose a poem. That is not my cup of tea, but being a musician is something I've always found to be proper and relaxing for me in a special way, both in musical composition and performance. And being primarily a jazzman, performing especially with improvisation, which I consider the freest way of self-expression

I'd like to suggest that you listen to three little pieces of my music as homage to these three valuable men. I don't dare expect that they would like my music; in fact, I never even had a chance to know their preferences in this area. But I'm sure they would accept them as my deepest demonstration of the admiration and respect that I have for them. I dare to presume they would just be polite enough to call them "interesting."

Don't try to analyze my music too much. Instead, please let it infuse your mind and perhaps I'll manage to transfer a tiny part of my sentiments towards these three people to you as well. These pieces don't talk about the people mentioned above. They talk about my memories of, admiration for, and feelings towards them.

Some of you won't like my music, but these pieces are quite short, and I dare to ask you to accept them as my most sincere and honest expression of my feelings.

These three men I selected are – at least for me – the highest examples of what our Imperator emphasizes and what I've always completely shared: that we, officers of our Order, are merely representatives of the offices vested in us. And that we should carry out our tasks with the utmost humility. And this is the real reason why this piece is called "In the Service of Fraternity." I do not dare call them friends, since we have spent so little time together, but I do feel that we are brothers, and that is more than enough for me.

The first one of them is Frater Claude Papillon, the former director of the Rosicrucian Domain in Lachute, quite close to here. His humor was absolutely remarkable, and so was the effort he gave when undertaking any task, but the main lesson from him was his humility, with which he always fulfilled all his duties. I've never met a person so very dedicated to the service of fraternity. He always said that it's an honor for him to undertake his job – and he meant it!



Claude Papillon.

I suggest listening to the following music titled "Butterfly Over the Lake," in memory of him: https://youtu.be/6QTLHKg2_Y4.

The second one I'd like to mention here is Frater Charles Vega Parucker, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge for Portuguese language jurisdiction. As I promised I'll skip all the personal data and achievements. I'd only like to mention that he was important to me in the sense that he taught me how humor might be used in serious mystical work, without detracting from its seriousness.



Charles Vega Parucker.

I suggest listening to the following music titled "Wig on the Chimney," in memory of him: <https://youtu.be/rAuS1uebxS4>.

The third one is Frater Irving Söderlund, the Supreme Treasurer of AMORC and former Grand Master of the Nordic Grand Lodge. He was one of the first high officers of the Order I ever met. It was he who convinced me, after much hesitation, to accept the office of Grand Master. And it was he who first gave me advice on how to successfully carry out my duties. I will keep him forever in my heart as an image of the true Rosicrucian.





Irving Söderlund.

I suggest listening to the following music titled “Remembrance of the Southern Grove,” in memory of him: <https://youtu.be/Te-SYNsVyw8>.

These three people, of course, do not represent the complete picture of the Order, but for me personally they represent its highest ideals.

I asked you not to analyze my music, nor do I ask you to like it. These pieces are

not tailored to suit everyone. The feelings expressed in musical compositions are often driven by an unknown force. So I don’t know exactly why, but the first one for our Canadian frater has more of a retro disco feeling, the second one, dedicated to our Brazilian frater is not a samba, and the third one for our Swedish frater is mostly written in the Lydian or Lydian-dominant scale, which is typical for some Moravian folk songs and, surprisingly enough, for the Brazilian style baião. Don’t ask me why this is so. It simply happened.

I don’t have the hope that you will remember my music. Instead, remember these men. They were crucial for me along my spiritual path. I believe – or wish – that you all meet your own examples of what it takes to be a real Rosicrucian.

Thank you for joining me in my desire to pay tribute to these incredible brothers. There’s no need to pray for them, I suppose. They already have a fixed place where they currently reside.



The Robert Fludd Rose and Cross mural in the Rosicrucian Cultural Center of New York City.

FREEDOM AND ITS LIMITATIONS

*Akos Ekes, FRC
Grand Master of the Hungarian Grand Lodge*

The topic of freedom is and has always been fascinating for most of humankind since its origins.

In our modern times, we experience that this phenomenon becomes ever more important, sophisticated, and present in our actual daily lives than in any previous time in human history. There are many discussions about the upcoming so-called “Age of Aquarius,” and the growing importance of freedom is clearly a dominant feature of the astrological sign Aquarius.

In modern times, the phrase “freedom” has a clear meaning, the shortest is probably: “freedom is the right to think, speak, and act as one wants.” Other definitions include that freedom is the ability to change, and this is truly a fascinating idea: we rarely connect freedom with the ability to change, so it may be interesting and useful to contemplate and meditate on this topic.

I was actually born on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain that once divided Europe, and grew up in communist Hungary, so the concept of basic freedom is extremely dear to me. We were naturally

free to think as we wanted, but definitely not free to talk or act as we wanted. I can still remember sitting with my parents in a room in our flat that is the furthest from the neighbors while our family was trying to listen, at a low volume, to Western European free radio stations for the real news. I can also recall crossing the border to free Austria with my heart rumbling over how we would be searched, and whether we would finally be allowed to cross the border at all, which we were allowed to do only every three years as tourists.

I am sure each of us has at least a few smaller or bigger personal stories regarding freedom.

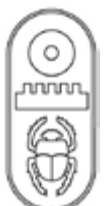
A Glance at the History of Freedom

From the very dawn of human history there were fights and wars between tribes and nations and thus there have always been winners and losers. Losers, much more often, than not, were made servants or slaves or simply considered as a group of people with less rights, thus, less freedom.

In the ancient Mediterranean there were many types of slavery, but even



A demonstration at the national television headquarters in Budapest, Hungary, on March 15, 1989.



free ancient Roman citizens had different degrees of freedom. In ancient Rome, women had less rights than men, and Roman citizen children had predominantly prearranged marriages.

This inequality continued further into Medieval times. It is a sad fact that even today degrees of freedom differ greatly in many countries, in many families, or within different groups of people.

Can you imagine, how a slave in antiquity felt when she or he had no rights?

A person owned by their master could be sold, or be ordered to act as demanded, or be separated from family and friends. Can you imagine that?

Or can you imagine how a young girl in a medieval city felt when she could not marry the man she loved, but had to marry somebody ordered by her father? Can you imagine that?

Unfortunately, these two examples could happen very similarly in our modern times.

Nevertheless, humankind has also achieved a lot in terms of freedom for many people. We, in the twenty-first century, are more free to think, speak, and act and more equal in our rights than in any previous era. This is because the human desire for freedom was so strong that millions of people, alone or in groups, organized activities, stood up against tyranny for their own rights, and defended other people's right to think, speak, and act freely. Many were even willing to sacrifice their lives to achieve freedom for a smaller or bigger group of people.

As a great example, just remember the French Revolution of 1789. The words: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, or liberty, equality, and fraternity, resonate strongly in human history. This was probably a powerful introduction to the Age of Aquarius.



Eleanor Roosevelt holding the English-language version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in November 1949.

In the twentieth century, after the horror of the two World Wars, the freshly established United Nations issued, on December 10, 1948, the famous text of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” which is a milestone document in the history of human rights, laying the foundations of freedom.

In this document, the United Nations details “the common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages. The UDHR is widely recognized as having inspired, and paved the way for the adoption of more than seventy human rights treaties, applied today on a permanent basis at global and regional levels.”

It starts with very clearly stating that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.”

It states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience

and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

It then details human rights to life, security, liberty, freedom of movement, freedom to marry only with the free and full consent of the intended spouses, the right to own property, freedom of thoughts, conscience, and religion, freedom of opinion and expression, and so on.

It is a document drafted in the best spirit of humanity; I encourage you to look it up and read it, which you can do [here](#).

The new or sometimes thousands-of-years-old principles on which this document is built are the basis for why in most of our countries we can say we live in relative freedom. It is also the basis for why we met for this World Convention, and were able to talk freely and unite in the spirit of brotherhood.

Is Human Freedom Limitless?

I propose a question: are there limits to our individual freedom? If we think about it for a moment, we can intuitively say this cannot be the case. Let me jokingly paraphrase a sentence from a 100-year-old issue of *Harvard Law Review*: “Your liberty to swing your fist ends where my nose begins.”

Today, 100 years later, we would probably say that my freedom starts where you do not even start to swing your fist or talk aggressively to me.

But if we are a bit more serious, we realize that even if it could seem better to have more individual freedom, for example, to be able to cross red traffic lights with our car when we are in a hurry in the morning, it simply would not be sustainable even if we manage to escape trouble. It would cause a great imbalance among humans. We have to realize that we are in the same boat, as they say.

Do you remember the hand-drawn picture from one of our monographs where individuals are depicted as lightbulbs and these lightbulbs are connected by the wire? We are essentially one, as each one of us is infused and connected by the same Cosmic Intelligence.

Just as Earth had originally only one continent, Pangea, and all our current continents – Africa, America, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, and Europe – were parts of this single original continent, or just as the various colors are parts of white light, we are essentially one. Therefore, complete freedom does not exist here on Earth.

Although, in my view, the total quantity of freedom that humanity has can grow,



any increase of individual freedom only exists to the detriment of the freedom of other individuals.

Freedom Comes With Responsibility

So, we can summarize so far that individual- and society-level freedom has been growing over the last several centuries. We can also summarize that individual freedom cannot be infinite as it is limited by the freedom of other individuals.

If we study the topic of freedom further, we often meet the phenomenon of responsibility. There are several quotes confirming this common understanding, like that of George Bernard Shaw: “Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility.” Or, Carl Jung, who said: “The price of freedom is responsibility, but it is a bargain, because freedom is priceless.”

The internet is also an abundant source of such adages, and there are recent psychological studies on this subject. We can say that the overall level of freedom we can have is directly proportional with the degree of responsibility we are willing to take. In other words, they go hand in hand. We can say that freedom and responsibility are two complementary faces of the same personal developmental process.

In three very interesting studies by Kennon M. Sheldon and his colleagues at the University of Missouri, it was tested and found that psychological freedom (a.k.a. autonomy) and personal responsibility are complementary rather than conflicting; they also had the further premise that freedom causes responsibility, rather than vice versa.

While we could easily say that these concepts remain on the psychological and philosophical level, they are in fact practiced and proven in real life as well. Freedom and responsibility are, for example, connected to modern business practices, where employers found that if they gave more freedom (more autonomy or empowerment) to their managers and employees, their productivity would rise to higher levels than without this. In the most modern organizational development model, the so-called Teal organizations have reported a substantial increase of efficiency and, parallel to that, an increase of the employees’ self-esteem and wellbeing. It is also a fact that supporting autonomy (i.e., freedom) promotes motivation and it is clear that the resulting trust, self-discipline, and accountability yield creativity. And creativity is very much an Aquarian property. Nurturing these qualities is, therefore,

already a best practice at a growing number of companies.

But your line of thinking can go further and you can say: hold on!

This cannot be the way forward with everyone!

You are right: giving similar amount of freedom to everyone cannot result in the same growth of responsibility in everyone.

Responsibility (i.e., the state of being accountable for something) is not necessarily a desire of everyone. Being responsible and, especially, being responsible for our own thoughts, words, and deeds is a serious concept and still many people would rather relinquish part of their freedom in exchange for not being held responsible.

Why is that so?



Freedom is power. And as with all powers, you have to learn how to master that power. Unlimited power in all cases leads to destruction on this Earth if you do not know the ways of harnessing that power. So it is with freedom: the more you learn about its action-reaction processes, the more you learn to master that power, the further you can go in using that for the welfare of yourself and others.

We are Rosicrucians, and our Order specifically promotes the freedom of thoughts, words, or deeds, but also that it comes with responsibility. Are we not encouraged to try the experiments for ourselves? Are we not encouraged to develop our own view, and not to accept any teaching simply because it is written in the monographs? Are we not working to develop our highest potential? Are we not learning how to harness those qualities of us that do not support our growth? Are we not encouraged to look deeply at the effects of our thoughts and deeds, the action-reaction process? Isn't our motto: "The greatest tolerance within the strictest independence"?

The freedom that our Order promotes comes with a significant amount of responsibility. Responsibility is actually the harness that helps us master the wild power of freedom.

To balance the promotion of freedom, in 2005 the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC issued the "Rosicrucian



Declaration of Human Duties." It states: "In fact, even though democracy is not perfect and includes many weaknesses, democratic societies are currently those that best protect Human Rights such as they are defined in the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights.'" Then it goes on and says that rights and duties have to be balanced, and in fourteen articles it sets out human duties that are needed to be adhered to in order to reach the necessary balance. I encourage you to study this AMORC declaration together with the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

From the previous line of thinking, we could easily arrive at the topic of free will. For a moment, let's just assume that we have a significant degree of free will that we, as humans, can exercise. It was given to us by the Cosmic to be co-creators of this yet unfinished creation. What could then be the greatest use of this freedom given to us?

Let's explore this and conclude with an exercise:

Close your eyes, sit in your usual meditation position, and take a few deep breaths. Close your window to the outside world and lift the veil so that you can become connected with your deepest self.

Imagine you are in front of a huge Rosicrucian Temple that can hold all the Fratres and Sorores of our Order.

The Guardian allows you to enter, and you make the salutation to the east.

You walk to your place, and instantly, all Fratres and Sorores of our Order are sitting at their place along the northern and the southern walls of this Temple. What do you see? What does this vast Temple look like? You are sitting comfortably in your chair, and it is with great pleasure that you look around. Here and there you recognize members from your own Affiliated Body,





Teresa of Ávila.

or Jurisdiction, but you also exchange glimpses with members whom you have just met in this World Convention. Also, you see faces of members whom you do not know. Just enjoy looking around!

As you take a deep breath, you smell our fantastic rose incense, and you hear nice, slow, and calm meditation music.

The ritual has started and you hear the Master of the Temple presenting about freedom and responsibility but the words fade away and you wonder: What would be the best use of our free thoughts, words, and actions? You contemplate this topic, and a few ideas come to your mind, yet still, you have a feeling that these might not necessarily be the best ways of using your freedom, your free will.

At this point you realize that the Chaplain makes an invocation where he invites the presence of the Divine to this Rosicrucian Temple.

You feel that the energies are increasing substantially in this big Temple.

Then the Conductor comes to you in his rose-colored robe and escorts you to the Sanctum of the Temple.

There you close your eyes and immediately you experience a strong feeling as the divine essence permeates your entire being.

As you stand in the middle of the Sanctum, bathing in the white light, your

mind realizes how you could use your free will best: It is to search for, to discover, and then to serve the will of the Cosmic. To realize: “thy will be done.” As you stand there this thought crystallizes and becomes evident; the best way to act for the glory of the Divine and the benefit of humankind is this: to offer and dedicate yourself, with free and honest intention, to the service of the Divine. You now understand the meaning of the following idea from Teresa of Ávila: The Divine has no other hands to act with than yours.

Then you are escorted to the Western point of the Shekinah facing the East. There is an old parchment on the Shekinah. You are told to take the scroll, unroll it, and you can now read what is written there in beautiful golden ink on this old parchment scroll, either with words or a symbol: it is the next action that you need to do if you honestly and wholly offer your help to the Divine to fulfill the words: “thy will be done.”

You are escorted back to your seat and see others taken to the Sanctum and the Shekinah, to read their messages.

The ritual is finished now and you leave the Temple. When you are outside you suddenly realize how much power there is if tens of thousands of us around the world start serving the highest ideal and offer the Divine our hands. It makes you smile with hope and joy.

Now, slowly, move your legs and arms and, on an out-breath, open your eyes.

Look around the room; look to your right and left, in front and behind, and smile at anyone nearby. You have your task to fulfill now and you know that you can go back to this vast Rosicrucian Temple any time, once you have done what you received today, so that you can offer your service in the future as well.

So Mote It Be!

ABOUT "AN-ATMAN," NON-SELF

*Atsushi Honjo, FRC
Grand Master of the Japanese Grand Lodge*

About 3,000 years ago, there lived Indo-European-language-speaking people in the east of the Caspian Sea. They moved to the region of the Indus River, invaded and settled in India, and established the Vedic religion.

The Vedic religion is based on two essential concepts. One is Brahman. Brahman means the supreme reality. At the same time, it means the absolute being, which is the source of the entire universe. So, Brahman is a concept similar to the Divine. The other one is Atman. Atman is a master of individual body and mind. And it is equivalent to a self. The Vedic religion has advocated that people can reach the ultimate enlightenment when they experience and understand Atman is identical to Brahman.

It is said that Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was a fundamental reformer and had a theory of "non-self," which is called *an-atman* in Sanskrit. An-atman denies the existence of self. But obviously, this is an oversimplified perspective because we cannot help thinking a sense of self exists. As French philosopher Descartes concluded with *cogito ergo sum*, I think, therefore I am.

In fact, Buddha did not say that a self does not exist. Moreover, as some studies show, Buddha did not aim to create a new religion, at least in his early stage, but intended to faithfully convey the very essence of the Vedic tradition. One of the essences was a profound truth about the nature of self, which the Vedic masters and

Buddha had grasped. And that is the theme of this piece. As you know, nonviolence and compassion for all sentient beings are essential features of Buddhism. I believe there is a deep relation between these features and the profound truth inherited in ancient Eastern religions.

So, what is a self? Yājñavalkya, a master of Vedic religion in the eighth century BCE, said a self is a consciousness. More precisely, he said a self recognizes physical objects and mental objects. In other words, purely, a self is an observer watching material things and mental expressions.

Can a person recognize a self? Yājñavalkya said it is impossible. Surprisingly, to prove that is easy. Let us try. For the first step, assume you can recognize a self. Then, a question arises. "What recognizes the self?" The answer is "a self does" from the point of definition of self. Based on the assumption, the latter self should also be recognizable. Now again, a question arises. "What recognizes the second self which recognized the first self?" Now, we are in a contradiction called an infinite regress. That means the first assumption is logically wrong. Ultimately a self is unrecognizable.

The French philosopher of the twentieth century Jean-Paul Sartre agreed that a self is unrecognizable. In his book *Being and Nothingness*, he stated this is because of the duality in recognition. To recognize, you need both a recognizing doer and a recognized object at the same time.





Yājñavalkya in the court of King Janaka, in a relief at the Sankara Mutt in Rameshwaram, India.

So, when you say a self is unrecognizable, it means that you cannot recognize a self as an object. Yājñavalkya also pointed out that there are no words to express a self, because words always represent concepts, and concepts are always objects in your mind. He called this fact *Neti Neti* in Sanskrit. It means “not this, not that.”

Do you agree that a self is unrecognizable? If yes, what does the adage “Know thyself” mean? Does it require doing something impossible? I assume most Rosicrucians would not like to think this about this important adage in our tradition. But, in the context of the discussion so far, I’m pretty sure this adage requires us to experience our true selves. It requires us to transcend the subject-object duality of recognition, to free ourselves from the restriction of languages, concepts, and thinking.

In some groups of Zen Buddhism, there are questions called *kōan*. *Kōan* is a Japanese word and is a bizarre question made by a Zen master to provoke a significant question and inner awakening in the mind of their disciples.

The following *kōan* will help you experience the transcendence of duality in recognition.

First, place yourself in the traditional Rosicrucian position for meditation. With your back straight, feet flat on the floor, slightly apart from each other. And put your hands in your lap, palms down.

While in this position, close your eyes, breathe calmly and deeply, and feel completely relaxed.

Now, please breathe in and out as usual. Imagine you are diving into the deep sea. In the beautiful blue water, you go deeper and deeper and finally reach the bottom of the sea. You find a stone and take it in your hand. Then you go up to the water surface and return to the seashore. Now, you will be asked a question. What is the name of the stone?

To find the answer, let me remind you about one of our teachings: time and space do not actually exist, but are created by our objective consciousness.

Slowly, open your eyes halfway. Relax your eyes, and do not stare at anything fixedly. Just see all your surroundings vaguely as they are. Stop thinking and set your mind in silence.

Now let’s gather our courage to go one step further. Let go of attachment to your body and mind, as they are just a concept.

Instead, slip into a state in which there is nothing to see or to be seen.

What is the name of the stone you found at the bottom of the deep sea?

Now come back to your usual state of consciousness.

There are some possible answers to this question, but a classic answer by Buddhist masters is “a self.”

Zen masters often use a metaphor of an index finger pointing to the moon. The moon symbolizes the true self, and the index finger symbolizes the concept of self. They warn us of the mistake of mixing those two up.

All people on planet Earth live with instincts and desires. These are essential to survive. However, suppose you confuse the true self with the concept of self. In that case, your instincts and desires will be distorted, resulting in greed and selfishness within your mind.

In Buddhism, this confusion is called *avidyā*. In Sanskrit, this means a kind of fundamental ignorance. Many Buddhist schools teach that this fundamental

ignorance is the most significant cause of suffering in human existence.

Many Rosicrucians do not believe human beings can know or think of the Creator. Instead of the word “God,” we adopt “God of my Heart, God of my Realization.” This phrase contributes to our understanding of others with different views about the Divine. The Creator and a true self have a similar nature. Both of them are unrecognizable as an object. What we think of as a self is always just a concept. And if we forget it, an idea becomes dominant, namely a self exists like an independent object.

Thinking like this disturbs you from connecting with the Divine and keeps you away from Divine Reality. But, on the other hand, you would realize that you can set your mind free from languages and concepts when you meditate enthusiastically.

To conclude, I would like to confirm this – let us not confuse a true self with the concept of self. Be consistently aware that languages have a flaw of duality. And let us regularly engage in earnest meditation with our inner silence.



FOUR VIRTUES OF A MYSTIC

Sven Johansson, FRC

*Grand Master of the English Grand Lodge for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa
and Vice President of the Supreme Grand Lodge*

We are told that some two millennia ago, there lived in the Roman province of Judea a person who was known simply as “the carpenter’s son” and, for many, he was nothing less than the one and only son of the Hebrew Deity. To some, however, he was known not so much as the only begotten son of the Divine, but as an extraordinary human being with deep spiritual insight, great intellect and compassion, and possessing a power of healing of an unworldly sort.

By his early thirties, this man had undoubtedly attained a high degree of spiritual maturity and wished to spread his insights and wisdom to as wide an audience as possible. Exhorting people to follow his example of living a life of spiritual devotion to an almost impossibly high level, he challenged them to do better and even greater things than he did. And in the two millennia since he lived, he has been regarded by billions as the ultimate template for a true mystic from whom billions of people the world over have derived comfort, inspiration, and even a reason for living.

Although the Christian gospels continue to inspire billions of people to live better lives, the details we can glean from them give us only a very broad outline of what the traits of a true mystic really are. Wide reading and research elsewhere is therefore essential in order to fill in the gaps; for there have existed some highly advanced mystics, men and women, who lived their

entire lives within the often suffocating boundaries of their ecclesiastical disciplines, yet still managed to leave us clues as to how, without leaving their religious faiths, they escaped the shackles of their confinement and silently, in great privacy, incorporated into their lives the sort of universal qualities that form the mark of every accomplished mystic.

Men and women of great spiritual attainment undoubtedly lived before the carpenter’s son, many have lived after him and, even in our own era, it is certain that some great souls are alive today. Truly accomplished mystics do not necessarily have to be affiliated with any particular religion, for they transcend all attempts at labeling while they privately commune in the stillness of the heart, in direct and unimpeded ways, with their highest concepts and experiences

of a Supreme Deity.

Mysticism Misunderstood

Like “meditation,” the word “mysticism” is greatly misunderstood. For some, it evokes ideas of occult practices, incantations, and strange goings on and, to others, it is equated with something unwholesome or even malevolent. What great misunderstanding exists, for mysticism is nothing less than the deepest parts of the human quest for self-knowledge; the acquisition of an understanding through which men, women, and children of good will have glimpses of their most sublime



*A painting of Yeshua
from the fourth century.*



concepts of the primeval source of all human “Good.” Note that I did not use the word “God” but “Good,” for there are some who do not accept the existence of a power, force, or intelligence greater than anything that a sentient human can experience.

The intellectual notion of a higher “Good,” as in good human morals, good human virtues, decent human behavior, fairness in human interactions with all other creatures, justice towards all beings, good political governance, etc., more than suffices for such people as ideals to strive for and in no way reduces the personal goodness that many possess in abundance, simply because they have not yet experienced that “Good” in the form that others have, namely, in the form of their deepest and most reliable guide and friend through life, something they have experienced in deeply intimate terms and to whom they have assigned the word “God.”

A Mystic Defined

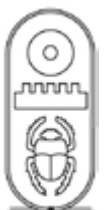
According to Rosicrucian philosophy, a mystic can be defined as one who communes with a deeply personal inner realization of a Supreme Reality, immanent in all things animate or inanimate, and who perceives that Reality directly, deliberately,

and with confidence, in an all-absorbing, whole-being experience often referred to simply as the God of his or her Realization.

For many others though, a mystic is not so much a person in tune with a personal Deity, as a person with extraordinary powers, a person of virtuous character perhaps, deep and mysterious and with great psychic abilities. Some Rosicrucian mystics certainly embrace these and many other admirable qualities, but such qualities are not ends in themselves; they are merely consequences of the manner in which the lives of such mystics are governed while keeping in sharp focus their main task, namely, an ever closer union with their personal, highest concepts of that Supreme Reality, and a constant striving for purity of purpose and sanctity in every thought, word, and deed that comes from them.

Greater Challenges for Mystics

Accomplished or aspiring mystics are regularly tested with more challenging situations than people who care little about their inner growth, for mystics actively attempt to live by “higher,” more exacting laws than most other people. And the demands of those higher laws naturally imply the need for greater precision in personal thoughts, words, and



deeds. There is a need for greater control of every aspect of the mystic's life, in order to remain on a given path of inner involvement.

As abilities increase, ever more options are available to choose from. And with more choices comes the need for greater powers of discretion, the ability to accurately choose good from bad, right from wrong. With an ever broadening, more inclusive perspective of the world, an evolved mystic can often foresee the pitfalls of life long before becoming trapped in them. And whatever evasive action is needed, can then be taken before disaster strikes.

Mystics Act Positively and Deliberately

Real mystics are positive and deliberate in choosing only actions that produce results of only the highest moral and spiritual integrity. And they plan their actions carefully in ways that attract them to optimal learning experiences. Like mature students who need no tutors to encourage them to study, true mystics examine their place in life and their reactions to it with purpose and deliberation. And they seldom need any encouragement to do the highest good at every stage of life, for an inner certainty reassures them that they are on the right path.

The technique of development that true mystics practice does, however, carry with it certain safeguards against defeat. They are protected in ways that ordinary people are not, for they are part of an *égrégoire* or group consciousness of psychic protection precisely because of their devotion to transcendent ideals that are common to the ideals of many others of high spiritual and moral values. Under the umbrella protection of those safeguards, they ease themselves

slowly and, with full understanding, into conducting their lives on an altogether "higher plane" than that of all other people. Although such mystics live in the here-and-now in material reality, and are governed by the same physical constraints as all other people, their real focus is on something immaterial and inward. Their single, most important goal is not of this world, but of a transcendent state of being far beyond the hustle and bustle of everyday life; and this they privately pursue above all else.

With the inevitable spiritual maturity that has emerged in those who have happily found and embarked upon genuine paths of spiritual unfoldment, there exist among them certain commonsense "virtues" that they steadfastly live by and which shield them from some of the more obviously wasteful and unnecessary struggles and temptations that so many people must deal with daily.

And it is by putting these virtues into practice that such people fortify and prepare themselves for the challenges that their karmic obligations require them to face and eventually overcome. The virtues they practice are not religious or moral allegories but down-to-earth practical actions that have both long-term and immediate, beneficial consequences for both themselves and the many others whose lives they secretly touch. I will list just four such virtues today, though there are, of course, many more.

First: Love and Compassion

First and foremost of the virtues is a deep and abiding love and compassion for all things in Creation. People intending harm will enter and exit the life of every mystic, just as mystics are sometimes graced as well by the presence of kind people too. But through it all, mystics are devoted to the



welfare of all people equally, just as devoted parents are devoted to the welfare of their children, whether they are well-behaved or not, whether they are bright or slow, and whether they love their parents in return or not.

Mystics can sense the faults and weaknesses of others, and they realize which lessons such people have yet to learn. Armed with that knowledge, their compassion for the struggles of such people comes to the fore and they surround them deliberately and purposefully with the spiritual Light of their being and do all they can to assist them to understand the full extent of their plight and what they need to do in order to improve their conditions. Such people may not know the mystics who are helping them. Indeed they may not care about their welfare, or even be grateful for the assistance they are receiving. But true mystics still silently hope and pray for the day that those they are secretly assisting will find the door that leads to their personal paths to spiritual unfoldment. Those are karmic bonds that can only be released upon accomplishment of this.

True mystics neither gossip nor engage in thoughts, words, or actions that are intended to bring harm to others. Whenever they cause harm through clumsiness or inexperience, they immediately go about setting things right, even if doing so takes the rest of their lives. Their every act is in the interests of harmony, and they conduct themselves accordingly. Their love is freely given, it is outgoing and unasked for, and they serve for the love of service, without thought of recompense. But their greatest and most overpowering love is for the very source of their existence. However they perceive it, this deeply personal Deity is the closest, most helpful and intimate companion they have, the only one who is at their side at all times, though especially during their most difficult moments. With clarity and understanding they concur with the exhortation of the Old Testament authors and the master Yeshua when they said: “Love the lord your God [Divinity] with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.” That is the highest law of a true mystic.

Second: Gratitude and Humility

The second group of virtues are gratitude for all that life brings, both





good and bad, and humility in accepting whatever their fate decrees. True mystics cannot help but feel humbled before the magnificence of Creation; for the more they learn of its intricate perfection and symmetry, the more they become aware of their utter insignificance in the broader scheme of things.

Because of their humility, they are therefore always ready to listen, always ready to learn, both from the meek and the humble, as well as from the arrogant and powerful; for lessons come from all quarters and at all times, and those with humility accept it from wherever it arises. Class distinction and privilege have no place with the law of karma, and true mystics know full well that their most important lessons could equally come from an abyss of poverty and deprivation as they could come from the heights of wealth and waste.

Without humility, many an opportunity of learning is lost. No person is so lowly or so unworthy that something could not be learned from them. Similarly, no person is so arrogant, high, and mighty that a mystic could not learn lessons from them too. A true mystic never takes offense, even under the gravest, most intimidating and unjust of circumstances. For the acts of taking offense or harboring feelings of hurt constitute the most serious and damaging error of all; and against this,

the mystic remains constantly alert. Yet, should they, despite their best attempts at retaining their composure, still succumb, and if the harsh treatment they receive causes them to stumble briefly and lash out in anger, they are quick to regain their composure, rise up, stand erect, and correct their error immediately. And then, with a spring in their stride and gratitude for the experience, they continue on their path, unperturbed and unencumbered by the past.

Their humility manifests as gratitude for all that passes their way. Everything that happens to them, whether pleasant or unpleasant, they accept gratefully as a part of their essential learning experience. They know how short life is and how soon their learning experiences on Earth will be over. And so, with gratitude and humility, they accept all that life brings them, both good and bad, and daily thank the God of their Realization for the experiences and lessons that come their way.

Third: Justice and Karma

The third virtue is a firm conviction that justice always prevails in the end, and karma is an inescapable law of life. True mystics know that they reap only what they themselves have sown. With confidence, they view no actions ever in personal terms, but as manifestations of the great lessons they are meant to learn

through the operation of the inviolable law of compensation, the law of karma.

Even if their limited time on Earth may not be long enough to see the full operation of this law, they have unshakeable confidence that the law is universally just and serves the best interests of all living creatures. True mystics cooperate with the law of karma eagerly and with enthusiasm. And if they know there is a need to answer for something they have done or for something they should have done, they do all they can to compensate for their error and bring on the learning process of karmic compensation as quickly and thoroughly as possible.

At all times and under all circumstances, true mystics are just in their thoughts, words, and deeds. They therefore mete out their responses to life carefully and with thought; for they know that no matter what a person may do in trying to escape the operation of this inviolable law, the full impartiality and severity of its operation will eventually manifest.

They therefore abide by the principles of justice to the best of their understanding and ability and make their judgments only in fair and equitable ways. The Cosmic contains all things, knows all things, experiences all things; and true mystics judiciously weigh the arguments of both sides in any controversy before taking

action in the best interests of all. They know they are not always deciding between right and wrong, but rather between two partial views of a single truth, like two observers looking at the same landscape, the one sunlit under a blue sky, the other lit only by moonlight. Both describe the same landscape but through different conditions of light and understanding. Both speak sincerely from their limited understanding and conditions, and both are therefore right as far as their inner development permits.

Without the compensatory laws and impartial justice of the law of karma, there can be neither order nor peace. Cosmic Law, with its inherent universal justice for all, is therefore openly invited to operate in the life of every true mystic, exacting and onerous as that law may at times be.

Fourth: Discretion

The fourth virtue is that of discretion. True mystics are always discreet and never flaunt their powers or wisdom, even though these may be considerable. Those who flaunt what they know or use their powers ostentatiously to impress others certainly have neither true wisdom nor real power, and are on a fast track to perdition.

There are always those who claim to have unusual powers, who claim to walk with Cosmic Masters, or to be specially



chosen by them for elite tasks. Many claim to be messengers of the Divine, but do not practice even the most basic of virtues they preach. The internet is filled with such fraudsters, some extremely wealthy and plausible sounding, but they must not be heeded. Their ends are for personal glory and financial benefit exclusively, and they are not worthy of being called even aspiring mystics, even though they may have accomplished a great deal in the past and may have accumulated great psychic powers.

True mystics are known by their writings, their words, and above all, their deeds. With silence, sensitivity, and discretion, they pass through life much as a gentle breeze can be felt but not seen. For most of us, they are the gentle souls we know, respect, and can trust with anything. But for accomplished mystics like themselves, they are like rods of Light of intense and scintillating brilliance, acting purposefully with efficiency, and always entirely in secret and in the interests, not only of their own inner evolvment, but especially in the interests of the inner lives of as many other beings as they can.

And so, I have briefly covered the four virtues of a mystic that I wanted to highlight. They are not the only ones, of course, but they are nevertheless important. And now that I have briefly outlined them, you would be right in asking if there are any simple techniques of bringing such virtues into active use in one's own life. Well, there are many well-worn paths to such accomplishments but one that struck me

as the simplest I've ever encountered came about unexpectedly in the following way.

One day, I saw a small message on a noticeboard cluttered with many different messages, none of them of interest to me. But this one message, brief as it was, struck a deep chord in me and I knew immediately it was a gift of great simplicity. It said: "Before you speak, your intentions must pass through portals three, one of each kind in letters bold to see: Is it True? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?" That was all I needed to know to understand that, hidden beneath those words, was a simple truth, a new rule of life for me.



Over the next month, my mind repeatedly returned to those three brief questions and I set about tracing their origin. Some said they originated in antiquity with Socrates, others said they were originally from the Buddha, Confucius, or Lao Tzu. And then others said they were from the

thirteenth-century Persian mystic Rumi, and others ascribed them to a litany of other individuals from Abraham Lincoln to Eleanor Roosevelt, William Shakespeare, Sai Baba, and even Queen Victoria herself. None of them were anywhere near to being plausible until I found an 1872 poem by the author Mary Ann Pietzker entitled, yes, "Is it True? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?" It is a delightful poem and still widely available. But inspired by her words, I would like to end with words in a similar vein which summarize the kernel of truth and deeper understanding that I gained from her lovely poem.

Hear dear friend of things of your heart,
of things you must know afore we part. For portals three before you now stand,
inviting safe passage through strength of your own hand.

Be awake dear child to what you see for portals stood here before you met Me. In heart and mind and most loving soul,
to Light, Life, and Love your dear self will unfold.

And so, dear friend, a caution I give you this day,
that through these words with dearest wish, you will find the life and path that was ever destined to be your way.

As to what you're about to think, say, or do,
pass first through these portals three
True – Necessary – Kind.

And if 'tis TRUE what you're about to think, say, or do,
pass with great verity through this portal first,
and seek truth above all to quench your mystic thirst.

But stay dear child and rest a while if truth walks not with you this day, 'neath the shadow and dark umbra of an unhappy life.

And if 'tis NECESSARY what you're about to think, say, or do,

pass with urgency through this portal too,
and seek only what's needed to find the mystic view.

But stay dear child and rest a while if necessity walks not with you this day 'neath the shadow and dark umbra of an unhappy life.

And if 'tis KIND what you're about to think, say, or do,

pass with kindness through this portal last, and seek but gentle feelings t'wards all creatures who've shared your path, and brought happiness and fulfilment to your life, until arrival of that final breath that was destined from life's start, to be your very last.

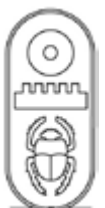
But stay dear child and rest a while if kindness walks not with you this day 'neath the shadow and dark umbra of an unhappy life.

But if through portals three you've easily passed,

'neath Light and blue skies of blessed day on your path;
go sow good seed 'mongst mortals few,

to one day reap great harvests anew, 'mongst mortals drew,
awakened to Light,

with fond gratitude for what is Kind, Necessary, True; and great love for the Life that is you.



PTAH-HOTEP, THE WISDOM OF EGYPT

*Michiel Schillborn van Veen, FRC
Grand Master of the Dutch Language Jurisdiction*

Liberty, equality, and fraternity are the foundation stones of modern France. And these three ethical principles are the basis of what we today consider universal human rights and civilization.

The French philosophers of the eighteenth century saw the inequality of a “noble” or “base” birth as an evil thing. They also condemned slavery and servitude. Revolutionary France was the first country to abolish slavery. Under the belief that all men and women are descended from Adam and Eve, every human being is family. We are all brothers and sisters. These ideas were of course not new. In fact, they are of all times. As far as we can ascertain, hunter-gatherers have always lived as groups of free and equal people. Merit was based on age, wisdom, and personal achievement. There were frequent clashes between groups, and also

ties of love and friendship. Living in bigger groups, settling in villages and cities, led to more clashes. Learning how to coexist peacefully became more and more urgent. The traditional pieces of advice given by the elders to the young became rules. Rules became laws. There lies the basis of civilization and also of politics.

The ancient Egyptians were among the first people to write down the advice of their elders. When we think of Egypt, we see pyramids, we see temples, we see a people deeply interested in life after death. But ancient Egypt was much more than that. It was a vibrant, lively society with a complex structure. It was a society that was in many ways far ahead of its time. Almost every student of the esoteric sciences knows of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. But let us today turn to the Egyptian books for living people.



The weighing of the heart from the Book of the Dead of Ani, ca. 1250 BCE.

Ethics are ultimately the only base upon which we can form a society. Not many people know that the very first books on ethics were actually written in Egypt. They called these books of wisdom *sebayt*, which could be translated as “teachings.” These ancient Egyptian books were texts that were not only studied by scholars. They were used by schoolchildren to practice writing hieroglyphs. In this way, the masters made sure that these ethical tractates were known by everyone who could read and write, which included priests, clerks, officers, and administrative workers – both men and women – and even some farmers could read and write, and they knew these texts by heart. In these books of wisdom it is explained what the ideal relations should be between people. Here it is described how people can live together and be a society. These were among the very first rules of ethics that were written down anywhere in the world. And it is surprising how relevant these books still are. Even we, born many thousands of years later, in a world completely different from ancient Egypt, can learn from these simple rules, that are still relevant.



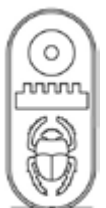
Ptah-Hotep

One of the oldest surviving books is called *Instruction of Ptah-Hotep*. Ptah-Hotep was the mayor of a town or village and he became grand vizier (prime minister) under Pharaoh Isesi in the Fifth Dynasty. Ptah-Hotep lived ca. 2375 BCE. Many Egyptians believed that the book itself was much older and they called it *The First Book*.

Some call the Americas “The New World” and Europe “The Old World.” However, 4,400 years ago there existed only four or five cities in the whole of Europe, mainly in Greece and Bulgaria. In England, Stonehenge was not yet built. The Netherlands were still inhabited by hunter-gatherers. People in my country used stone axes and bone ice-skates and built wooden roads through the moors.

But the Egyptians, they were already making their perfect pyramids, a feat that was only possible in a land with a strong government and a cohesive social structure. It is believed by many that these pyramids were not built by slaves, but by farmers in their free time. On some stones in the Great Pyramid archaeologists have found writing in red ink. One stone says: “We the team from the left bank village arrived with this stone two days before the team of the right bank village! We won this year.”

Now, let us return to that time with an exercise. Please relax. Close your eyes. Imagine yourself to be twelve or thirteen years old. You are in school, not a modern



school, of course. You are sitting under an awning, cross legged. You have a brush, a small well of black ink, and a large piece of a broken pot to write on: papyrus is way too expensive for children's practice. Your teacher, an old friendly priest, starts dictating slowly:

“Be not proud because you are learned; but discourse with the ignorant person, as with the sage. For no limit can be set to skill, neither is there any craftsperson that possesses full advantages. Fair speech is more rare than the emerald that is found by a maiden on the pebbles.

“If you find yourself in an argument with one who is well disposed and wiser than you, let your arms fall, bend your back, be not angry with them if they agree not with you. Refrain from speaking angrily; oppose them not at any time when they speak. If they address you as one ignorant of the matter, your humbleness shall bear away their contentions.

“If you find yourself in an argument with one who is equal in knowledge, keep not silence when they say anything that is evil; so shall you be wiser than them.

Great will be the applause on the part of the listeners, and your name shall be good.

“If you find yourself in an argument with a poor person, that is to say: not your equal, be not scornful of them because they are ignorant. Let them alone; then shall they confound themselves. Question them not to tease them, neither pour out your anger upon them that oppose you. It is shameful to confuse a small mind. If you be about to do that, overcome it as a thing unworthy of princes.

“If you are among people, make love the beginning and the end of your heart. One that knows not their course shall say in themselves seeing you: ‘They conduct themselves orderly and become the owner of wealth; I shall copy their conduct.’ Your name shall be good, though you speak not; your body shall be fed; your face shall be seen among your neighbors; you shall be provided with what you lack. As to the person whose heart obeys their belly, they cause disgust in place of love. Their heart is uneasy, their body is gross, they are insolent toward those endowed of the Divine. They that obey their belly has an enemy.



From the collection of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum. The Mesbet Coffin, dated ca. 2000 BCE.



The mystical Spell 17, from the Book of the Dead of Ani.

“Cause not fear among people; for this the Divine punishes likewise. There is a person that says: ‘Power is to be obtained by causing people to fear me,’ and they say: ‘I seize for myself that which I see.’ Thus a person speaks, and they are smitten down. There is another person that gives to those that have not; they cause people no dread. For it happens that what the Divine has commanded, that thing comes to pass. Live therefore in the house of kindness and people shall come and give gifts of themselves.

“Let not a person be envious who has no children; let them be neither downcast nor quarrelsome on account of it. For a father, though great, may be grieved; as to the mother of children, she has less peace than any other. Verily, each person is created to their destiny by the Divine, who is the Chief of a tribe; be trustful in following It.

“If you be of low upbringing, serve a wise person, that all your actions may be good before the Divine. If you be high born and know a person of low account that has been advanced in rank, be not haughty toward them; but honor those who have

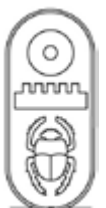
been advanced, according to that which they have become. Behold, riches come not of themselves; it is their rule for those who desire them: if they stir them and collect them themselves, the Divine shall make them prosperous; but It shall make them poor, if they be slothful.

“Follow your heart during your lifetime; do not do more than is commanded. Diminish not the time of following the heart; it is abhorred by the soul that its time of relaxation be taken away. Shorten not the daytime more than is needful to maintain your house. When riches are gained, follow your heart; for riches are of no avail if one is weary.

“Someone who reckons accounts all day passes not one happy moment. One that gladdens their heart all day provides not for their house. The bowman hits the mark, as the steersman reaches land, by diversity of aim. One that obeys their heart shall command.”

And now, please return to the present day.

This was just an introduction. We have heard only a few of the forty-three sayings



of Ptah-Hotep. I made a small selection from the wisdom book. But this will, I hope, have given you an insight in how practical these pieces of advice are. Most of these sayings are still applicable to the days that we live in.

Some people like to talk about “the timeless wisdom of Egypt” and pretend that they are profound thinkers. Some people even say this to imply that they know secret techniques of black magic, and try to cause fear with their powers. But these people actually know nothing of what they speak. The true wisdom of Egypt states: “Cause not fear among people; for this the Divine punishes likewise.” If you cause fear then people will hate you, so that you yourself will have to live in fear. But if you give to those who have less than you, you will be loved.

The books of wisdom of the ancient Egyptians were not about magic or gaining power. They are filled with practical advice about how to live together in harmony, how

to organize your household and your leisure time, how to deal with the relationships between people of different backgrounds, how to deal with the disappointment of not having children, even how to become rich and be happy at the same time. And from these texts we can see that these people from 4,400 years ago were not so very different from us. They had similar problems, the same questions to cope with, the same temptations as we are confronted with today. While our modern temptations can be different, the principle, “One that obeys their belly has an enemy,” applies to all addictions. And so it is with so many of these lessons. The circumstances have changed, but the people are still the same and the underlying rules of conduct still apply.

And one sentence is the most important advice. It is repeated over and over. This is the true timeless wisdom of ancient Egypt: “Obey your heart.”



A coffin fragment in the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum.

A MEDITATION INSPIRED BY THE SACRED TRINITY OF THE ROSIKRUCIAN TRADITION: LIGHT – LIFE – LOVE

*Lise Söderlund, SRC
Grand Master of the Scandinavian Grand Lodge
and Treasurer of the Supreme Grand Lodge*

This is a meditation inspired by the Sacred Trinity of the Rosicrucian Tradition, and it began with a special experience a while ago linked to a symbol we know well: Pharaoh Thutmose III's coronation cartouche. In the experience, the three elements of this cartouche were exchanged with the three mystical elements of our Trinity: the Sun sign was exchanged with Light, the Earth sign with Life, and the Scarab with Love.

This experience became the starting point for this meditation, a journey through time and space that begins with the origin of all that exists.

In the Beginning Was – the One

We may all have our own idea of what the beginning of everything was, the origin of how Creation came into being. But, something that describes the universe we live in is how the process of creation has moved from Oneness to Diversity. Furthermore, as Rosicrucians, we know well the mystical idea that we are here in this Creation, this diversity, to find our way back to the Oneness from which we once emanated – by becoming aware of who, or what, we are at our core.

We can describe life on Earth as an awakening process. What exactly are we waking up to? I know of no tradition that describes this more beautifully than

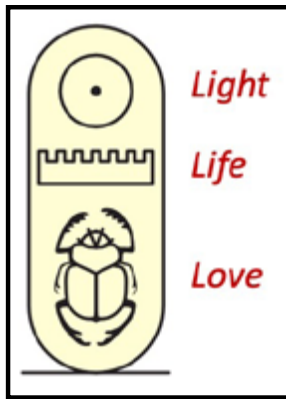
the Rosicrucian philosophy. In all our Temples, the answer is made visible to us in every ritual. What our rituals do is create a solemn and dignified expression of the three attributes through which the Divine reveals itself in the world: Light, Life, and Love. Think, feel in your heart, how these three attributes resonate with you – Light, Life, and Love – the Sacred Trinity of our Rosicrucian Tradition.

In other words, what we humans are slowly waking up to, what is more and more clearly guiding and inspiring us, is a deep inner experience of how the Oneness, or the Divine, has given us three shining stars to guide us in finding our way home, often hidden from our sight and understanding, yet always present and within our reach.

In all that is, we see astonishing, beautiful, intelligent, creative, fabulous expressions of this divine Trinity and, perhaps the most wondrous expression of all, ourselves: human beings.

We are on this Earth for a higher purpose. Not as an occasional product of an aimless physical evolution in a randomly created universe, but as co-creators and co-actors in a Great Plan – a Magnum Opus – in which we are only just rediscovering and understanding our participation.

It is no coincidence that we have been drawn to the Rosicrucian Order.



At this time, in this life, the Rosicrucian Tradition provides the guidance you need to participate even more actively in the completion of the Great Plan – and to contribute to the spiritual evolution of humanity – through your own awakening.

It is not an easy task; it is the most difficult of all and has been described in all mystical traditions throughout the ages by the words “Know thyself.”

To mystically know oneself requires courage, determination, and sacrifices that not everyone is immediately ready for. It requires work that only we can do ourselves, but we know that others share the same challenge with us. Through the Rosicrucian Fraternity, we are not alone.

Can you make sense of what I’m trying to describe? Does it touch upon something in you?

An excellent image to use to describe what lies in these initial words is a historical event that our Emperor reminded us of in his annual letter, about the Rosicrucians who gathered in the port of Rotterdam in 1694. Exposed to religious persecution in a troubled time, they made the courageous decision to leave everything behind and embark on an adventurous and perilous journey to “The New World.” They did so because they dared to believe that something better awaited them across the ocean, and that it was worth standing up for their own beliefs and freedom of thought.

Most of us have probably, at one time or another, faced events in our lives where – just like our brothers and sisters in the port of Rotterdam facing a risky voyage and an uncertain future – we have had to trust our courage, remind ourselves of our deepest values, and make the

decision to leave something old behind, and from a mystical point of view, to open the door to something more hopeful and better. Perhaps we can liken every life to such a voyage, where many important and crucial choices have to be made before the direction of our journey is decided. And in this life, we have made the decision to let the Rosicrucian Tradition provide us with the navigational equipment, maps, rudders, and sails for the ship that will carry us into an ever-brighter future.

Let me briefly summarize: creation has a purpose; life has a goal. We are here to rediscover our divine nature, and in the Rosicrucian Tradition, this Great Work is described as a journey, a journey toward the East. The journey’s main navigational aids are the three brightly shining stars of Light, Life, and Love.

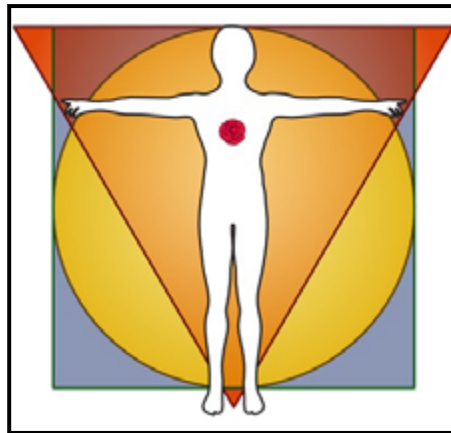
The following is a visualization that describes the process that can prepare you for a new stage in such a journey. In your mind, imagine that you are sitting in a Rosicrucian

Temple and let this sacred room create a meaningful, symbolic framework around the preparations. The visualization is contemplative, but I suggest keeping your eyes open as images will reveal expressions of the progression in our work.

Sit comfortably in our traditional meditation posture and take deep, neutral breaths.

The visualization starts in the southeast of the Temple. You will make a journey that follows the movement of the sun across the sky.

Once, a long, long time ago, you decided, together with the One, to create the world, to enter matter and begin the Great Work, the Magnum Opus. Curious





and expectant, you were born into Creation with its law of cyclic rebirth. What you were not prepared for was that the physical world acted as a veil, hiding your origin from you; so much so that you soon completely forgot both your origin and why you had come here. Life was a dark place, but something within you nevertheless gave hope that there was Light to be sought.

You have made many journeys on the ocean of life before you were born into the life you now live. One day something happens, an experience that may shake you physically, emotionally, and mentally. You “wake up.” An inner voice whispers almost inaudibly within you, reminding you of a deeper reason why you are here on this Earth.

The mystical experience makes you a Seeker, imbued with a desire to understand. Curious, courageous, questioning, you are inspired to constantly seek knowledge, insight, understanding. You turn over every stone, open every book, have the courage to question. The knowledge you acquire lights up your world.

The more you learn, the more you understand how little you really know. You are humbly overwhelmed by your smallness in this mighty, immense Creation, but at

the same time inspired by a compelling inner sense of your own greatness. You are no stranger to this world. You are one with it. You are one with All.

The world becomes a mirror in which you can contemplate yourself. Nature becomes a mirror; every human being becomes a mirror where the reflections lead you to self-insight – the kind of insight that reveals your own true nature and that of the All. Self-insight is fuel for more light.

You begin to understand the deeper purpose of life. Something is calling you from within. You begin to recognize a Plan, a Purpose. Life is a gift given to you for a special reason. You feel how you have to manage this gift for the good of the whole. How? You need guidance, something to further light your way.

You find that the solitary journey you are making would be more meaningful if you could share it with others. With the Rosicrucian Fraternity, you unite your light.

The Rosicrucian Philosophy teaches you about the language of the soul – symbols. These indispensable tools say more than words can ever express. These indispensable tools lift the veil and give



you glimpses of the Primordial Source from which you once emanated.

The symbols tell you about the importance of silence. Outer and inner silence where you allow your body to calm down, your thoughts to take a break, your emotions to become still, like the surface of a mirror. And in this silence you finally clearly hear the inner voice, the voice of your Inner Master.

This voice guides you in another form of teaching, that of Light without shadow, of Life without death, of Love without conditions.

You come to realize that all your different journeys on the ocean of life have done something to you; they have made you a very special vehicle and a conveyor of something far greater than yourself. This is expressed in the symbolic form of a *vesica piscis*, a mandorla – an ancient symbol of a passage, an opening, between the physical and the spiritual worlds. The shape also gives the outline of a ship carrying the most precious cargo you could ever imagine: the Ark, the Shekinah, the divine presence revealed through Light, Life, and Love.

You remember, you realize the meaning of the promise you made at the dawn of time to the One. You know that the promise can be fulfilled by persistently

continuing the work of getting to know yourself and becoming more and more transparent to who you really are and have always been. You see the goal, you take your place in the bow, you are ready.

Now take your visualization a step further. With your eyes still open, imagine how this convention hall is the ship that you have built with your mind. Three Colombes now symbolically manifest the indescribable treasure we carry with us. We set sail. Confident we continue our voyage into an ever-brighter future.

Contemplate your own journey towards the ultimate goal of Creation. Also imagine your role in the journey our fraternity is making in these times to carry the Rosicrucian Tradition into a future where it continues to serve its vital purpose in the Great Plan.

We know what needs to be done: to make the sacred Rosicrucian Trinity even more visible in this world; through the good example, vivify Light, Life, and Love in every human heart; to let this world perfectly reflect what it has always been, is, and will continue to be.

In Light, Life, and Love, So Mote It Be!



CLOSING REMARKS

Imperator Claudio Mazzucco, FRC

Once upon a time, a king called a contest in his kingdom: the one who could say the wisest sentence would be rewarded with wealth and prosperity for the rest of his life.

Many people showed up and pronounced inspirational and wise sentences. But one won, and his words were: "This too shall pass."

Those who understand that time is fleeting suddenly discover the beauty of the present moment which will never return.

I thus wish to seize the beauty of the present moment, a moment of farewells and thanks, and share with you one last experience in which I had the privilege of participating. It is a story I have already told, but since it often resurfaces in my memory, always revealing new understandings, I have decided to share it with you once more.

It was 1986 and I was the Master of a Chapter in Brazil. After the convocation, the outer guardian came to me and said he needed to speak. We went to a corner of the garden and he made the Rosicrucian distress sign. I was surprised because I had

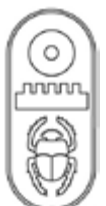
never seen anyone make it; in fact I thought that this sign, which is explained to us in an initiation, was a symbolic gesture that had fallen into disuse.

So I asked him what was the matter. He explained that his daughter had graduated from high school and that there was going to be a celebration but he had no shoes to wear: in fact the only pair of shoes he had were the very worn ones on his feet.

That frater never asked to be exempted from the chapter dues and had never become inactive in the Grand Lodge. To him, the Order was a priority, above a pair of shoes.

By coincidence, a few months earlier I had bought a pair of dark blue shoes to attend a wedding. But since I still today regularly wear sneakers, at the age of 26, I knew I would never have worn those shoes again. However, their dark blue color went well with the master's regalia, and so I used to put them on in convocations.

Now here is the new lesson that event brought to my mind: fratres and sorores, we are all barefoot. We are all looking for a pair of shoes that can protect our feet from the stones of the path, shoes that





will not make us suffer, shoes that will warm our feet in winter. But none of us can obtain those shoes alone. We have to help one another wear the right shoes needed to walk in this life; we cannot do it by ourselves. Some people think that they can solve the problem by perhaps covering the whole planet in soft leather, but we know this is a childish illusion. However, if we all put the right shoes on, the result will be the same as covering the whole planet. But in order to achieve this, to wear the right shoes, we need one another. And so that frater so long ago actually helped me at that moment to put on a new and symbolic pair of shoes.

Now returning to the opening sentence, “this too shall pass”: not everything needs to pass. The lesson, so distant in time, of our frater must now live on within us, right now, in these final farewells. The beauty of the moment that will never be again can in

truth be recalled in our hearts and minds whenever we wish, and we may relive it together with others in an exchange of affection and understanding. This means helping one another to put our walking shoes on. To achieve this, we need one another.

Thank you fratres and sorores, many thanks to those who have organized this convention because we know how much work is involved; let us also thank the God of our Hearts because through Its unfathomable ways It has made it possible for us all to be here. We will soon leave this place with new shoes to continue our journey, knowing that, if our feet are protected, we owe it to the generosity of everyone, of the community.

Wishing you Peace Profound, and I look forward to seeing you in our next activities.

