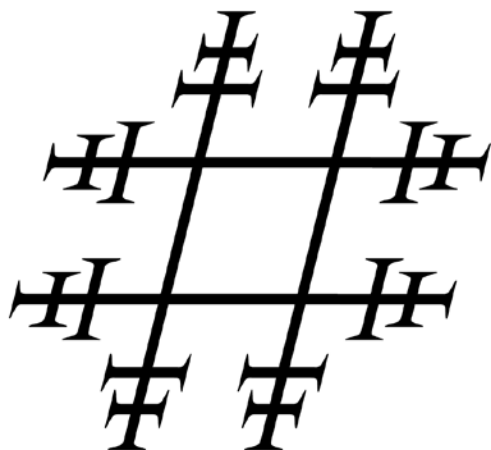




Rosicrucian Reflections

Christian Bernard

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*To Hélène,
my soul's strength.
With my gratitude for
her unconditional support
for the last forty years.*



Christian Bernard

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PREFACE

TWENTY YEARS AGO in 1990, on April 12 to be precise, the members and all the Grand Masters of the World Council of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross (AMORC) asked me to accept the Presidency of the International Office, and the office of Imperator. As the circumstances leading to my having to take on this service were sudden and unforeseen, I was obliged for the first three years of this new task to continue in my office as Grand Master of the French-speaking Jurisdiction of AMORC, which I had held since 1977.

Two decades have passed, which have been full of necessary and meaningful changes for the Rosicrucian Order. One of my goals has been to strengthen the international aspect of the Order, and I believe that I have put the full force of my endeavors into bringing this about. In a few lines I cannot go over all the events of these last twenty years. They were varied, diverse, and even the difficulties were definitely constructive. Now, I can take another look at what is past, continue to live and to build the present, and imagine and hope for the future, but the latter is not up to me to decide.

The time will soon be here when I shall have to wisely agree, not to leave AMORC, which I will cherish until my last breath, but simply to pass on the flame. But before that happens, I wanted, both for our archives and also because I have often been asked to do so, to gather together some of what I have written. This book therefore represents some of my thoughts and ideas as a Rosicrucian. Some of the texts are short, others longer, and

their style varies according to the circumstances and means of their publication. They may have been read during Rosicrucian Conventions and never published before now, or have appeared in the *Rosicrucian Digest* magazine, or in one of the letters addressed annually to each member of AMORC throughout the world. I have adapted them so that they can be read by a wider public. I have naturally had to be selective, as some texts would not be suitable, it being my duty to preserve Rosicrucianism's "esoteric" aspect, as well as our rituals and certain other things. This work was therefore not the right place for some of what I have written. The first chapter is an interview I had with a journalist several years ago, and it will provide an introduction to AMORC for those of you who know little or nothing of it.

I have never aspired to be a prolific writer, and have never thought that my ideas would change the world, nor even that my personal reflections would interest that many people. Had I devoted the greater part of my time to writing books, I would perhaps have been able to publish some of them as part of the Rosicrucian Library. My first duty, however, has been to dedicate both my pen and my time to the activities of AMORC, including correspondence with its membership, maintaining contact with the Grand Lodges and Grand Masters, the general restructuring of the Order and its teachings, the supervising of new Administrations, the many Conventions and other traveling required as part of my office, and so on.

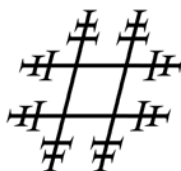
Anniversaries are often the chance to take stock, look within, and make resolutions for the future. It is therefore my hope that I continue to have sufficient energy to carry out my role for a few years more, while waiting to be superseded.

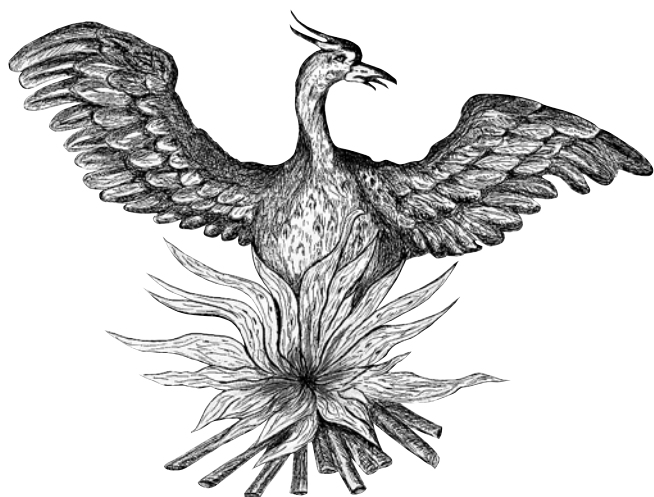
Readers and friends, having this book in your hands means that for one reason or another you are interested in

Rosicrucianism. In all events, I would encourage you to better acquaint yourself with this philosophical and humanist movement, and perhaps—if you have not already done so—to enter its portal, without restriction being placed on your own freedom to think. Having made this choice myself forty-four years ago, I have no regrets whatsoever, and remain convinced that the Rose-Croix ideal which is conveyed through AMORC is a remarkable blueprint for life, and a path of knowledge and wisdom beyond value.

Christian Bernard
Imperator

Omonville
April 12, 2010





Interview with the Imperator 1

A.M.: *Christian Bernard, you are the current Imperator, meaning the worldwide head of AMORC, which is considered an heir of the authentic Rose Cross Tradition. Your Order places its origins in the Mystery Schools of Ancient Egypt. What exactly does this mean?*

C.B.: First of all, I must make it clear that the history of AMORC is made up of two aspects: the traditional aspect, passed on by word of mouth and which cannot be proven, and the historical aspect, which can be validated using archived documents. Concerning its traditional aspect, AMORC does indeed place its origins in the Mystery Schools of Ancient Egypt. Today most historians and Egyptologists acknowledge the existence of these Schools in which, as their name indicates, the mysteries of the universe, nature, and humanity were studied. According to what we know, some of the pharaohs were involved in them, and were even sometimes at the head of them. This was the case notably with Amenhotep IV, known more widely by the name of Akhnaton, who was the first to make monotheism a state religion.

Whatever the case may be, it cannot be denied that Egypt is the cradle, not only of the “physical” sciences (medicine, astronomy, geometry, and so on), but also of the “sacred” sciences, including esotericism. Indeed, many works from past centuries make it the starting point of a Primordial Tradition, that is, of an absolute Knowledge that God had revealed to certain chosen

ones, and which had been passed on via a lineage of Initiates: Hermes Trismegistus, Moses, Zoroaster, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Jesus, ...

A.M.: *As you have just referred to Pythagoras, it is held that he studied in the Egyptian Mystery Schools, is that correct?*

C.B.: That is right. He studied there for nearly twenty years, before returning to his own country and then founding the famous school at Crotona. But he was not the only one, as Solon, Thales, Democritus, Plato, Plutarch, Iamblicus, and many other Greek thinkers were initiated into the Egyptian Mysteries, and these few examples show that Egypt was the repository of an unusual wisdom. This wisdom, or gnosis, then spread by way of Greece, Ancient Rome, and then the Arab world in the Middle Ages. It was primarily in the Renaissance, after the fall of Constantinople, that it was introduced into Europe.

A.M.: *So while it may be traditional, the Egyptian origin of Rosicrucianism is not a myth?*

C.B.: No. While saying that, Egypt is not Rosicrucianism's only traditional source. In *Silencium post clamores*, Michael Maier, the famous seventeenth century Rosicrucian, refers to the influence that the Brahmanic, Eleusinian, Pythagorean, Persian, and Arab mysteries had on the Rosicrucian Tradition. I sincerely believe, in fact, that Rosicrucianism brings together the greatest streams of thought that humanity has known, in both the East and the West. The content of AMORC's teachings is the living proof of this.

A.M.: *Some historians of esotericism, I am thinking especially of Serge Hutin, also refer to the influence that alchemy had on Rosicrucianism. Were the Rose-Croix alchemists?*

C.B.: Alchemy goes back to Ancient Egypt, but it was the Greek and Arab alchemists who introduced it into Europe, where it was particularly active in the Middle Ages. In this period, contrary to what is thought, those who practiced it were not isolated seekers. Most belonged to secret societies, particularly to the one which would make itself known in the seventeenth century by the name of the Order of the Rose Cross. As a result, alchemy did indeed have an influence on what was to become Rosicrucianism. In the same vein it is notable that, from the seventeenth century on, some alchemists symbolized the final stage of the Great Work by a fully-opened red rose.

A.M.: *Speaking strictly historically, does the origin of Rosicrucianism really go back to the seventeenth century?*

C.B.: Yes. It may be considered that it was through the appearance of the three famous Manifestoes—the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614), the *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615), and the *Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1616)—that the Rose-Croix made their existence known to the public. As confirmed by Antoine Faivre, historian of esotericism, it was in the seventeenth century that the western Tradition, heir to the Primordial Tradition, had its historical revival when it took form in Rosicrucianism.

A.M.: *Is it right to think that the word “Rose Cross” with its corresponding symbol, appeared at this time?*

C.B.: In fact it is possible, indeed probable, that the term “Rose Cross” and the symbol had been used during previous centuries. In his work *Liber resurrectione et corporum glorificatione*, Paracelsus in 1533 mentions the symbolism of the Rose and of the Cross. It would also appear that, as early as the thirteenth century, Arnaud de Villeneuve is referring to it in *Rosarium Philosophorum*. This might be the oldest historical reference to the Rose Cross.

A.M.: *Some historians claim that the Rosicrucian Manifestoes were in circulation as manuscripts before the dates you gave. What do you think of this?*

C.B.: It is quite possible. According to the letter by Adam Haselmayer, published in the “Fama,” the first Manifesto was in circulation as a manuscript in the Tyrol in 1610. Whatever the case may be, the “official” publication of the three Manifestoes had a considerable impact. Did you know that following their publication, hundreds of books were published about the Rose Cross? W.E. Peuckert has counted some four hundred titles, just for the years 1614 to 1620.

A.M.: *The Fama Fraternitatis represents Christian Rosenkreutz as the founder of the Order of the Rose Cross. What is your view on this?*

C.B.: When you read the “Fama,” it is clear that you are dealing with a symbolic text. In like manner, Rosicrucians of today see Christian Rosenkreutz as an allegorical character: therefore the matter of the founder of the Order of the Rose Cross cannot come into it. The Order had in fact already been in existence for a very long time,

as I have pointed out previously, but not as yet under this name, at least officially.

A.M.: *Is it known precisely who the author or authors of the three Rosicrucian Manifestoes of the seventeenth century were?*

C.B.: Harvey Spencer Lewis, Imperator of AMORC from 1915 to 1939, thought that the Manifestoes had been written by Francis Bacon, author of *New Atlantis*. Most current historians, however, are in agreement that they are the work of a group of Rose-Croix, the Tübingen Circle. This circle comprised twenty or so remarkable personalities, among them Johann Valentin Andreae, Tobias Hess, Christophe Besold, and Johann Arndt, all enthusiasts of alchemy, Kabbalah, and Christian mysticism. The Manifestoes would therefore be a collegiate work. This is the opinion of, among others, Roland Edighoffer, specialist on the history of the Rose-Croix.

A.M.: *Could you give us the names of well-known people who have left their mark on the history of Rosicrucianism?*

C.B.: They are quite numerous. The ones that come to me quickly are Robert Fludd, Francis Bacon, Elias Ashmole, Michael Maier, whom I have referred to already, Comenius, Cagliostro, and Descartes; and, more recently, Erik Satie, Claude Debussy, Nicholas Roerich, and François Jollivet Castellot. Today, AMORC still has well-known Rosicrucians within its membership, but it is not up to me to disclose who they are.

A.M.: *The current cycle of AMORC dates back to 1909, the time when Harvey Spencer Lewis's work revived the Order of the*

Rose Cross in the United States. Where did he receive his initiation, and from whom?

C.B.: H. Spencer Lewis became interested in esotericism at an early age. When he was nineteen years old he took part in research on paranormal faculties. He then turned towards philosophy and the so-called “occult” sciences. In 1907 he met a woman who spoke to him about the Rose Cross: this was May Banks Stacey, and he was particularly interested. There then began for him a long search, which led him in 1909 to France, to Toulouse, where he was initiated into the Order.

A.M.: *Where did his initiation take place?*

C.B.: It was in the Hall of the Illustrious in the Capitole that H. Spencer Lewis met the person who put him in contact with those in charge of the Order in France. Our research indicates this intermediary to have been one Clovis Lasalle. The initiation itself took place in a “château” near Toulouse. In our archives we have some very interesting documents about H. Spencer Lewis’s stay in this area. Among these documents is the letter he sent to his wife the day after his initiation.

A.M.: *So the Rose Cross was present in Toulouse at this time?*

C.B.: Yes. As early as 1860, in fact, the Viscount of Lapasse wrote of the “Rose Cross, a secret society with a few adepts still extant.” In 1890, Simon Brugal, speaking of the Viscount of Lapasse, tells us that the latter was a pupil of Prince Balbiani of Palermo, who was a disciple of Cagliostro. According to Brugal, Lapasse had been initiated in Bavaria by followers of Baron von Eckartshausen.

To come back to H. Spencer Lewis, he was not just initiated in Toulouse, but was also given a mandate to reactivate the Order of the Rose Cross on the American continent and to put the Rosicrucian teachings into writing. Up to that point they were transmitted solely by word of mouth. He was given the necessary documents, charts, and records. In spite of the difficulties he encountered, he carried out this mission successfully and dedicated himself unceasingly to it up to his death in 1939.

A.M.: *But why did the Rose-Croix in Europe entrust to an American the mission of reactivating the Order of the Rose Cross? Could this revival not have been carried out in Europe?*

C.B.: We would have to think that the Rose-Croix in Europe had foreseen the First World War, and knew the upheavals which would result from it. They therefore demonstrated considerable wisdom in entrusting the Order's records to H. Spencer Lewis, thereby avoiding their destruction or loss in the turmoil. The facts proved that, unlike Europe, the American continent was indeed spared from the conflict.

A.M.: *How did the Order re-establish itself in France at the beginning of the twentieth century?*

C.B. : From 1909 onwards, H. Spencer Lewis worked on the development of the Order in the United States and started to put the Rosicrucian teachings into writing, using the documents entrusted to him by the Rose-Croix of France, as I just mentioned. When peace returned, everything was in place for the reactivation of the Order in Europe.

H. Spencer Lewis thus came to France in 1926, and entrusted some French Rosicrucians, some of whom were also Freemasons, with the task of creating Rosicrucian Lodges, which was done between 1927 and 1928 in Paris and in Nice. The first Grand Master for the new cycle of the Order in France, Hans Grüter, was in fact chosen from among the Rosicrucians of the Lodge in Nice.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Second World War caused the temporary suspension of the Order and the Vichy government banned the activities of the traditional Orders. What is more, in common with other minorities, the Rosicrucians of the time became the victims of Nazism. Some even paid with their lives for their commitment to the Rose Cross ideal. It was not until January 1, 1949, that AMORC became active again in France, and developed under the leadership of Jeanne Guesdon, who was to be appointed Grand Master and hold this office until her death in 1955.

A.M.: *There were, then, links between the Rose Cross and Freemasonry at the beginning of the century. Is this still the case today?*

C.B.: There are indisputable traditional and historic links between these two organizations. What is more, when H. Spencer Lewis came to France in 1927, he was invited to a Masonic event reserved for the 18th degree (the “Knight of the Rose Cross” degree). As attested by a document we have in our archives, he was received with the honor due to his rank by Camille Savoie, Grand Commander of the Grand College of Rites of the Grand Orient de France who, having welcomed him

in the name of all the brothers present, asked him to be seated in the East of the Temple.

Today, the Order of the Rose Cross and Freemasonry pursue their respective activities completely independently, which does not prevent there being Rosicrucians who are Freemasons and Freemasons who are Rosicrucians. In the same way, there are Rosicrucians who are Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and so on. AMORC is open to all social groups and all religious persuasions, its primary purpose being philosophy.

P.R.: *People interested in esotericism in general and Rosicrucianism in particular, know of the existence of AMORC but are largely in the dark about its structure and functioning. Can you tell us about this in greater detail?*

C.B.: In 1909, about a hundred years ago, AMORC started its current cycle of activity. Today it covers the whole world and consists of a number of language Jurisdictions. There are thus German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, Nordic, Portuguese, and Russian Jurisdictions, and so on. Each jurisdiction is known by the traditional name "Grand Lodge," and is directed by a Grand Master, the latter being elected to office for renewable terms of five years.

P.R.: *What does the role of Grand Master consist of?*

C.B.: During his or her term of office, the role of each Grand Master is to reply to letters from the Order's membership, have members in for discussions should they wish to do so, oversee the work that is carried on in the Lodges, chair Rosicrucian conferences at national or regional levels, run internal seminars on the Rosicrucian

teachings, give public lectures, write philosophical articles or perhaps books, and so on.

PR.: *And what is your role as Imperator?*

C.B.: First of all it should be made clear that the term “Imperator” as used in AMORC does not mean “Emperor,” as could be thought. At a traditional level, it comes from the Latin *imperare sibi*, meaning “master of self.” From what we know, by the end of the seventeenth century this symbolic title was being used to designate the highest officer of the Order of the Rose Cross.

Before being elected to the office of Imperator by the Supreme Council of AMORC, I was Grand Master of the French-language Jurisdiction. My current role consists in overseeing the functioning of all the Grand Lodges and of ensuring that the traditional and administrative rules of the Order are correctly applied worldwide. I am also available to all the Grand Masters to help them in their task of serving the members.

AMORC being founded on a hierarchy of office and not of persons, it has happened in the past that an Imperator or a Grand Master has been relieved of their post, for not performing the duties incumbent on them or not fulfilling the work expected of them by the members. It should be understood that the Order’s leaders are not in their positions for their personal “glory.”

PR.: *You mentioned the Supreme Council: what does that consist of?*

C.B.: The Supreme Council of AMORC is formed of all the Grand Masters and the Imperator, creating a group of

people of different nationalities. It meets at least once a year, for the purpose of evaluating the Rosicrucian activities being held within each Jurisdiction. During these meetings, decisions regarding the general functioning of the Order are also jointly made.

P.R.: *Some people consider AMORC a secret society. What would you say to them?*

C.B.: That they are wrong. It is true that the Order of the Rose Cross in the past carried out its activities in the greatest secrecy, in order to protect its members from religious and political persecution. But from the beginning of the twentieth century, AMORC has been operating more as an unobtrusive organization, in the sense that it does not seek to attract the attention of the general public, but does not hide its existence either. Moreover, it holds regular lectures to explain what it is, and what it is not, to people interested in philosophy and spirituality.

P.R.: *What is the typical profile of a Rosicrucian?*

C.B.: There isn't one. Since AMORC is not a religion, it counts among its members Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, and so on, and also people of no particular religion. Since it is non-political, it brings together Rosicrucians who are representative of all the traditional political shades. Since it does not discriminate racially, it unites men and women of all nationalities. The Order is thus a worldwide order, whose very composition conveys the humanist character of its ideals. Anyone interested in philosophy and spirituality can therefore become a member.

PR.: *While AMORC may be open to all religions, do its teachings not have a somewhat Christian connotation?*

C.B.: No, the Rosicrucian teachings do not give a special place to Jesus or to the New Testament, nor to the Christian creed in general. This said, in one of the Order's degrees the esoteric aspects of the great religions are studied, including Christianity. This allows each member to appreciate how these religions have all drawn from a common source, that is, the Primordial Tradition. Moreover, it is explained in this same degree that they can all be respected as vehicles of spirituality. If, in fact, you had to compare AMORC with one of the great religions currently in existence, it would likely be Buddhism, if only because it is more a philosophy than a religion.

PR.: *On similar lines, some people think that AMORC is a Templar organization. Is this so?*

C.B.: No. As I have just been saying, AMORC gives no special place to Christianity, which the Order of the Temple did in the Middle Ages. Also, AMORC does not work to protect the Christian faith, which most of the current Templar movements do. Having said this, there is no doubt that the Rosicrucian teachings incorporate esoteric ideas which were known to the Templar Initiates. In addition, Rosicrucians pursue an ethical ideal reminiscent of that of the Knights of Old, in the sense that they strive to be as virtuous as possible in their conduct, the "Rose Cross Knight" symbolizing this ethical ideal.

PR.: *As AMORC is worldwide, does that mean the teachings it disseminates are the same throughout the world?*

C.B.: Yes. In previous centuries the Rosicrucian teachings were transmitted solely by word of mouth, in places which were kept secret. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, they have been presented as monographs covering twelve degrees, sent out to members at the rate of four per month. Each Rosicrucian studies the same monographs in their own language.

P.R.: *What do the different degrees of the Order deal with?*

C.B.: It is impossible for me to give a fully comprehensive reply to this question. We can say, though, that each member of the Order is initiated from degree to degree into key philosophical and mystical subjects: the origins of the universe, the structure of matter, the concepts of time and space, the laws of life, the aim of evolution, the human soul and its attributes, the phases of consciousness, psychic phenomena, the mysteries of birth and of death, the afterlife and reincarnation, spiritual alchemy, traditional symbolism, and so on.

I should also add that, in parallel with the written teachings that the members receive at home, they can also go to a Lodge of the Order to take part in work which continues the oral aspect of the Rosicrucian Tradition. At these meetings, Rosicrucians converse about philosophical and mystical subjects.

P.R.: *Are there initiations in AMORC?*

C.B.: Indeed there are. This is the very reason AMORC is a truly traditional and initiatic movement. As there are twelve degrees in AMORC, there are twelve initiations. Each consists of a symbolic ritual whose aim is to admit the candidate into the new degree they are about to

study. There is naturally nothing about them that is sectarian or dogmatic. I should also point out that they are not obligatory.

Since the greatest Initiator is each person's Inner Master, that is, the Divine Soul that is within, members of the Order can receive the Rosicrucian initiations at home, by carrying out each ritual themselves, or in a Lodge, along with other candidates and in all their traditional pureness.

P.R.: *Rosicrucianism is sometimes associated with Martinism. How should we see this?*

C.B.: Martinism is a current of thought which goes back to Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the great eighteenth century French philosopher, whose teachings concern Judeo-Christian esotericism. This current of thought gave rise to the Martinist Order, created by Papus and Augustin Chaboseau in 1889. In 1931, this Order restructured itself and gave rise to the Traditional Martinist Order, which is today sponsored by AMORC. Thus some Rosicrucians are also Martinists.

A.M.: *Christian Bernard, we are coming to the end of this discussion. Would you like to say anything in conclusion?*

C.B.: As you can see, AMORC is a genuine esoteric organization whose origins, both historic and traditional, are very old. At the dawn of the third millennium, the teachings it perpetuates remain relevant, and convey a philosophy that humanity is in great need of. This is why the time has perhaps come for the Rose-Croix to make themselves more known. Through this discussion, you have given me the chance to do so, and I thank you most sincerely.

IF THERE IS really one essential thing for mystics in general and Rosicrucians in particular, it is spiritual alchemy. This form of alchemy amounts to one of the foundations of philosophy, and sets out the path we must follow in order to fulfill our inner evolution. Herein, indeed, lies the Great Work that each human being must accomplish in order to discover the Philosopher's Stone that is to be found in the deepest part of themselves, and achieve the perfection of their own nature.

Material alchemy, also called "operative alchemy," has for centuries fascinated scientists and mystics too, but what is essential must remain for us the transmuting, the perfecting, and hence the evolving of our inner being. Whereas operative alchemy transmutes base metals into gold, spiritual alchemy transforms our soul. Before moving on to the latter, I would like to go over what comprises material alchemy.

Generally speaking, its aim was to transmute base metals, usually lead or tin, into gold. This transmutation was not, however, carried out directly upon the metal in question, but on a *materia prima*, that is to say on a primary or raw material, referred to as the "stone material" in some alchemical writings. It is difficult to say exactly what this *materia prima* was, because the descriptions given of it are confused, and they vary from author to author. According to certain sources it consisted of a naturally-occurring ore, composed essentially of sulphur, salt, and mercury combined in precise proportions. It would seem that this ore was rare and could be found only in places known to the alchemists, which they kept a most closely-guarded secret.

Having obtained the *materia prima*, the alchemists would place it in a container to which they gave the name of “philosophical egg,” partly because of its oval shape, and partly to echo their belief that the whole of Creation arose from a universal “egg,” within which it existed in a latent, or seed, state. From here they put the *materia prima* through several consecutive stages.

In the course of these stages, the *materia prima* took on various colors, until it appeared as a red magma. Upon cooling, this magma gave rise to a somewhat bulky stone of the same color: the Philosopher’s Stone. This is the reason that transmutation aimed at obtaining gold was called “the red work.” The process aimed at making silver, usually out of iron, was designated by the name “the white work,” and also consisted of several stages.

The final stage of the Great Work was to reduce the Philosopher’s Stone to a perfectly homogenous powder. Once this powder was obtained, the alchemist would cast it into the molten base metal, which on contact would gradually transform itself into gold.

This was the basic principle of material alchemy. We also need to be aware that it was practiced according to two methods. The first, designated the “damp method,” gave precedence to the processes of dissolving and distilling. It lasted several weeks or even months, and required the use of retorts and stills. The second was called the “dry method” and favored the processes of heating and combustion, mainly involving the use of ovens and crucibles. This second method was the quicker of the two, but also the more dangerous, involving as it did the risk of explosions. It did sometimes happen that alchemists would get injured in the practice of their art or, even worse, would get killed.

We know that the alchemists worked in special laboratories which were used for nothing else. Most often this was a cellar,

an attic, or other building that was not well lit, as most of the necessary operations could not be carried out in daylight. The adepts also made use of various accessories. As well as the retorts, stills, ovens, and crucibles referred to, they also used scales, different sorts of pincers, pestles, bellows of various sizes, and even musical instruments.

The main furnace, called the athanor, was generally crude in shape and usually made of fireproof earth. For different situations, its fire would be provided by wood, charcoal, or sometimes even oil, allowing better control of its intensity during the most delicate procedures.

If you are wondering why the alchemists used musical instruments during their work, it was because by playing certain notes or combinations of notes, they produced vibrations which had a specific effect on one phase or another of the Great Work. From what we know, they mainly used string instruments such as the violin and guitar. Sometimes they used wind instruments though, such as the trumpet or a small organ. It is also likely that they intoned vowel sounds, although we have no proof of this. This was certainly the case with the Rosicrucian alchemists. The purpose of this was one and the same, to create vibratory conditions favorable for this or that procedure. We can also assume that at times it was to raise themselves to the state of consciousness required for their work.

In the case of the red work and the white work alike, the alchemists did their work by day or night, depending on the operation they had to carry out. While they always worked in a dimly-lit room, they thought that certain stages had to take place when the Sun was in a certain position in the sky, or when the moon was in a certain phase of its cycle.

It is also known that they attached great importance to eclipses, believing that they had a particular influence on

alchemical procedures. They considered this influence to be either negative or positive in different situations, which then governed what they did. There is no doubt at all that alchemy drew on both astronomy and astrology. It is certainly not mere chance that the alchemists held there to be a precise correlation between the metals and the planets of our solar system. They also had a good knowledge of chemistry.

The question we may ask ourselves is whether the alchemists really succeeded in making gold. Judging from the accounts they have left us, there is no doubt whatsoever about this. Many authors too state that this was the means by which Jacques Coeur, Jean Bourré, Nicolas Flamel, and Cagliostro—to name just the most well-known—acquired their wealth. If we accept this as true, it is of note that these individuals were known for their generosity and altruism, which suggests that they were practicing their art in order to help the poorest in society and to pay for projects for the common good, such as hospitals, roads, bridges, and so on. Apart from these testimonies, however, we do not have absolute proof that the adepts of the Great Work really managed to achieve their goal or became wealthy by this means. We must each therefore form our own view on this point.

To know whether the alchemists of the past succeeded in transmuting base metals into gold is incidental. The most important thing is the fact that they were convinced that human beings have the power, not to take the place of nature, but to emulate it. In accordance with this conviction, they studied the laws of nature with the greatest respect. What is more, most of them were deeply spiritual, and used alchemy as an aid to their mystic quest. This is why their laboratories always included an oratory, meaning a place set aside for prayer, meditation, and for the study of divine laws generally. Usually the oratory consisted

simply of a chair and a table with candles, objects for rituals, and esoteric books.

Material alchemy was just the outward expression of an infinitely higher transmutation, that of the soul itself; the cornerstone of this transmutation is, purely and simply, spiritual alchemy. This mystic process consists in one transmuting one's faults by means of the crucible of life, urged on by the divine fire which burns within us. We are all imperfect, however the ultimate goal of our evolution is to attain that state of perfection which Rosicrucians call the "Rose-Croix state." This state can only come about, though, when we have purified our personality of its negative shortcomings; this entails awakening the virtues of the divine soul which is within us and which is seeking only to express its capacity for wisdom. But such a goal cannot be attained in one single lifetime, therefore we have to reincarnate for as long as we are imperfect.

To the extent that one has not awakened the virtues of one's divine soul, one manifests certain faults such as pride, selfishness, jealousy, intolerance, and so on. In return these same faults are detrimental to the person, for they generate negative karma which is expressed as trials of varying degrees in one's life. We therefore have at least two good reasons for perfecting ourselves: first, it is part of the process of evolution from which we cannot withdraw, whose ultimate goal is to attain perfection, such as we can demonstrate it as human beings; second, it allows us to "think" our behavior into being positive, and create positive karma for ourselves, which is expressed in our lives as joy in various forms, and is conducive to the happiness we are seeking. Surely what we ultimately want, after all, is to have as happy an existence as possible and to gain mastery of life.

There are several stages required to reach the sought-after goal in spiritual alchemy, just as with material alchemy. The first consists in accepting the idea that we are imperfect and have faults to correct. When I say “accept,” this means our own view as much as that of others. This involves both looking at ourselves as we are, in the mirror of our soul, and also paying attention to the image of ourselves that others send back to us. If we do not do this, we end up becoming blind to our real personality and give even more power to our faults, to the point where they generate negative conduct on our part and give rise to corresponding karmic tests.

If reading this chapter is interesting to you, it is probably because you started this spiritual alchemy at the same time as you did your personal mystic quest. There is no question that if your experience of life has endowed you with a modicum of wisdom, it will also have brought you clarity of thought. You are therefore in a position to know and to recognize your weaknesses, and I am positive that you have within you the potential to transmute these. I can assure you for my part that I am well aware of my faults, deficiencies, and mistakes, and I am certainly endeavoring to improve myself. It is not from a position of detachment, therefore, that I am passing on my reflections to you, but rather as a human being to whom this alchemy also applies. If it is always easier to speak about good than to do good, the same can be said for the work and the betterment that we call for in others.

But accepting the concept of having faults is not enough to accomplish this inner transmutation. We must also want to correct them, and this constitutes a key stage in spiritual alchemy. In other words, we must have the resolve to become better, in the human sense. This is only possible if we truly have the

conviction that humankind's goal is to evolve, which presents the whole question of the real meaning we attribute to life.

For my part I am convinced that anyone who strives to perfect themselves receives the support of the God of their heart and can find happiness, even if their faults are relatively numerous. If this is true, it is because karmic law always rewards any effort made in the same direction as the Good. Conversely, any person who has few faults but who lets themselves be controlled by them without ever striving to transmute them, attracts various problems and progressive trials to themselves for as long as they take pleasure in their weaknesses.

Once the decision to perfect oneself is taken, there comes another stage in spiritual alchemy. This consists in materializing our desire to become better by actually transmuting our faults. But to manage to do this, above anything else we must not attempt to fight against them, this unfortunately being our tendency. Fighting them like this in fact contributes to accentuating our faults, because our ego then uses this to give itself power and assert its hold over our conduct. On the contrary, we should disengage from the fault in question, and work on ourselves to acquire the opposite quality. To take an example, if a person is fundamentally overly proud and is aware of this, they should not try to fight against their pride, for in so doing they give it even more force and increase its ability to be harmful. They should endeavor to acquire the opposite quality, in this case, humility. This entails calling on the most divine within their nature.

But how do we acquire the opposite quality of a fault we are aware of? It seems to me that the best way of achieving this is to first define the manner in which the quality expresses itself in everyday life. Having done this, we should make ourselves manifest it every time there is occasion to do so, until it is an

integral part of our soul and becomes natural. Returning to the example of pride, anyone wanting to rid themselves of this fault needs to implement humility. How exactly? By making themselves stop highlighting their merits, demonstrating their intellectual or any other type of superiority, or seeking to draw attention to themselves, and making themselves act in the service of Good in a totally impersonal way, and so forth. With time, this determined effort to be humble ends up becoming habitual, in other words, it becomes a law to the subconscious. Pride is then transmuted. This is the basic principle of the spiritual alchemy we should apply to each of our faults.

A mystic who has transmuted all of his or her faults into their opposite qualities then experiences the final stage of spiritual alchemy, Illumination. If not perfect, then he or she is at least very close to the state of perfection, to the degree that it can be expressed by human beings on Earth. The *materia prima* of their being, their soul, has then become pure and perfect. It is not just chance that the Rosicrucian alchemists symbolized the Great Work by a red rose, often with an aura of the color gold. Certainly, whoever has attained this state has brought about the celebrated “Chymical Wedding.” In other words, they have accomplished the union between their human Self and their divine Self, symbolized in the language of alchemy by the marriage of the king and the queen, and by the union of sulphur and mercury. From that point on, they truly possess the elixir of long life, for they have become a pure agent of the Divinity, and are no longer obliged to reincarnate.

In your mind, in your heart, and in your life, may alchemy take place!

Rosicrucian Utopia



God of all beings, God of all life,
In the humanity we are dreaming of;

Politicians are profoundly humanitarian and
strive to serve the common good;

Economists manage state finances with
discernment and in the interest of all;

Scientists are spiritualistic and seek their
inspiration in the Book of Nature;

Artists are inspired and express the beauty and
purity of the Divine Plan in their works;

Physicians are motivated by love for their fellow-
beings and treat both the soul and
the body;

Misery and poverty have vanished, for everyone
has what he or she needs to live happily;

Work is not regarded as a chore, but as a source
of growth and well-being;

Nature is considered to be the most beautiful
temple of all, and animals are considered
to be our brothers and sisters on the path
of evolution;

A World Government composed of the leaders
of all nations, working in the interest of
humanity, has come into existence;

Spirituality is an ideal and a way of life that
springs forth from a Universal Religion,
founded more upon the knowledge of
divine laws than upon the belief in God;

Human relations are founded upon love,
friendship, and fraternity, so that the
whole world lives in peace and harmony.

So Mote It Be!

With a Clear Mind 3

All Suffering Can Be Tolerated

ANY PAIN WHATSOEVER is acceptable where there is clarity. This sentence comes from Simone Weil, a French philosopher, whose human value is recognized by all, no matter what one's point of view.

I heard and welcomed these well-timed words, as a sign, one day in April 2004. Although I often have a difficult time in doing so, I have always thought that it was better to express the sorrow one may feel. Do we not say that words can heal pain?

“Any pain whatsoever is acceptable where there is clarity.” These words have given me support and enlightenment, and since then have helped me overcome difficulties. They have, of course, generated many questions from within. We proceed from one reflection to another as our mind wanders, leading us either to certainty or to even more questions.

Must we accept or suppress pain? How can we accept the unacceptable? What is this clarity accompanying our sorrow? Is it our inner fire? Divine Light? Or is this enlightenment simply the symbol of a falling mask, a being that reveals itself, or negative feelings finally admitted?

First, the coming of clarity is often difficult to bear, because it often leads to a painful realization before giving rise to peace. However, even if we naturally have a difficult time accepting some realities and truths, eventually, the move toward clarity is unavoidable.

Thanks to what is not said, to silence, to restraint, out of respect for others, to timidity, to fear or hypocrisy, we can

push back the moment of revelation; but for better or worse, sooner or later, the law will apply. It takes effect for everyone, even if “everyone” is not aware of it. When we take a spiritual approach to life and when our soul, our spirit, and our heart are in harmony with divine laws—or if you prefer, natural laws—a clear view may be offered to us, and things may appear very obvious. Only this light will clarify all things, the good as well as the bad, for it is akin to knowledge.

As opposed to knowledge, ignorance seems, in some ways, easier to live with. Ignorance can be gentle and protective. It can delude us and prevent us from being hurt.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” or “Blessed are the poor spirits.” For centuries, this saying has sparked many discussions and interpretations. Whether we choose the expression “poor in spirit” or “poor spirits,” this is the same as admitting that innocence or ignorance can protect us from adversity or bring us happiness. This also means that embarking on the path of knowledge is not without risk. But, no matter what, we must embark on the path and accept the light that illumines our steps, revealing the imperfection of our progress.

Embarking on the path is not a choice, but an obligation, and sooner or later we must go forward and face it. “Stepping forward can lead far.”

On the mystical plane, acceptance does not mean giving up; quite the contrary. Whether we are simply embarking on the path of knowledge, or if sorrow engulfs our heart, if we are enlightened by Divine Light that shines within and around us, and if we welcome the love of the benevolent beings who support us in adversity, then we will be able to affirm that “Any pain whatsoever is acceptable where there is clarity.”

I will end my message by leaving you with a poem from one of our brothers, George L. Hendel, entitled "Those I Loved." It may seem gloomy to you, but I find it pleasing and comforting. I think that it perfectly illustrates one of the aspects of this topic:

Those I loved with a passionate love
have hit me with harsh blows
they opened wounds within me
that never healed

I concealed them
in the depth of my suffering
as the only treasure
I had the right to hope for
it was nevertheless the most precious thing
that with humility on this earth
I received welcoming it with a smile
when my heart was tortured

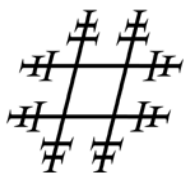
From its own torment
pain consumes itself
and consumes the pain
that burdened us for so long

It consumes all the pains
which gave us an empty gaze
which gave us heavy feet
and brought us back to dust

As above the horizon
a roving bird plays
in the wind with a cloud
my serene thought flies

Carrier of the memory
and of ineffable happiness
it shines forth—from now on—
a love without suffering

For those who read these few lines, if your spirit weakens and if your heart is in darkness, I wish you friendship to enlighten you. If your eyes are sad, may someone smile at you and extend a comforting hand when the path becomes more difficult.



IT HAS BEEN one of the basic principles of psychology for several decades to maintain that a problem cannot be resolved if its cause is unknown. From this has ensued the fashion of lengthy analysis with a therapist, hypnotic regression back to childhood or even back to previous lives, and so on. We can certainly identify our problems and reactions better if we are familiar with their origin, but does that in itself suffice? Should we revel in this principle, which excuses many of our attitudes and takes away our sense of being responsible? Should we be content to have found the rationale for our destructive actions, our devious words, and negative thoughts? An explanation can help us to understand, but is of no use unless accompanied by a will to change. And what if the really important thing is not knowing the root of our problems, but simply either accepting them (like in Zen) or combating them (like the knights of old)?

Our life is governed by rhythms and habits. We can move beyond our dislikes, fears, and phobias, but we have to want to. For instance, knowing why we are frightened in such or such a situation, or why we have an irrational fear of an object, an animal, certain circumstances, or certain people, is undeniably interesting on an intellectual level, but resolves nothing. So our reactions, or our lack of them, are primarily habits. To take a journey as an example: if the unknown makes us anxious, traveling can seem a trial to us; we may have qualms and be stressed the first time; the trip seems long to us; then, little by little, we get accustomed to it with experience, and what used to seem difficult and unpleasant appears straightforward; the trip seems shorter; we respond better; we get used to it.

We cannot go forwards by walking backwards, or climb life's stairways by going down the stairs. If we want to know what lies beyond the door which appears before us, we have to be bold enough to open it. While the past helps us to live the present and construct the future, it must not impede our evolution. "Where there's a will, there's a way!" For sure, we do not succeed on every occasion, but even if we fall down, we can get back up and make another start, this time differently, better, and better yet again. It is often said that "fortune favors the brave." I don't know whether this is always true, but we can certainly see that happiness and joy do not really favor great pessimists.

Difficulties, experiences, hardship, and suffering are an integral part of the human condition. No one escapes them, but what can make the difference, is the way in which we overcome them, and respond in the face of adversity. This, above all, is what "mastery of life" is. We are masters of our own destiny and we have our free will, at least in the way that we deal with our trials. With good judgment, and with care of course, we must therefore above all else try to move beyond our fears and our apprehensions, or to change our way of thinking, speaking, and reacting. The fact is, that at times we have been required to, we have simply had to, and have been able to, overcome our fears. So it is with many things in life; we just have to force ourselves a bit to begin with, and then we are off. Needless to say, knowing this does not shelter us from the ups and downs of life, and we are on the receiving end of events more often than we are the cause of them.

Picking up my original concept once again, I would like to stress the point that we should try hard to improve our behavior and to make our life evolve positively without waiting for anyone else, without seeking the culprit(s), without excuses, or remorse.

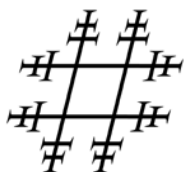
Even if we have had a difficult childhood, even if we think that “hell is other people,” even if ... whatever, that must not prevent us from pushing onwards. Whatever our choices may be, we have to take them on, and if they turn out not to be fortunate ones, that is no reason to hold others responsible. We must also be patient, for what we suddenly take for a catastrophe can later turn out to be a blessing. I am sure you have had this experience more than once, in various aspects of your life. You will perhaps be familiar with the saying “In seven years a misfortune will be an asset.” Personally I think that seven days, seven hours, seven minutes, or seven seconds can be enough. That too is the alchemy of life.

I have noticed that those who react to a problem in the most positive way possible attract what we call “opportunity,” another opportunity. We have a saying that a mystic must always be a living question mark. That is certainly absolutely necessary, and reflecting on things is just as important as meditating. However, we must not end up—through all the questions that come to our mind, and can even clog it up—wasting our lives and depriving ourselves of the simple joys and fleeting moments of happiness which we too often let slip past without fully appreciating them. We may be sharply aware of the world around us, of the barbarity that is prevalent on Earth, and of all the injustices which we are suffering individually or collectively, but let us never forget that, as the Belgian poet and singer Jacques Brel has said, we have to “see a good thing in every thing.”

If the flood of memories is overwhelming you, if grief is preventing you from breathing, if you feel your heart is broken, if you only see the ugliness in the world—then, with the strength of the spirit inside you, resist, seek the glimmer of light which is still shining in your soul, and in response use your willpower

to stand up straight, face up to the forces which are taking you towards the abyss, and declare with dignity and certainty: "I am pushing onwards, I am pushing onwards, I am pushing onwards..."

May trust, determination, and courage be yours.



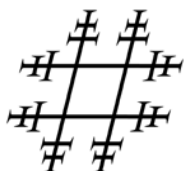
HUMANKIND HAS ALWAYS been seeking to rise above the shadows and climb towards the light. This rising up is slow and is often made through the trials encountered in daily life. Even if it does not always seem obvious, we are nonetheless on our way towards a world which is better and full of hope. Hope goes beyond what we call “belief.” Hope is life; that life thanks to which our soul grows, learns, and progresses. Belief on its own is not enough for such a blossoming.

When associated with religion, or even superstition, belief constrains us within dogmas which enslave and make prisoners of us, often preventing us from making progress. Fortunately these chains sometimes break, and we transcend the world of illusions and discover our inner self, which shows us the way; a long journey then begins. Our minds become unsettled, and the great and timeless questions about life occur to us—Is everyone’s fate determined in advance? How much free will do we have in our decisions? What can we do to change our destiny if our path is already laid out? What is life for? Why is the human condition on Earth so demanding? These are some of the questions which preoccupy us as human beings, as mystics, or as atheists, for even the latter wonder about things.

The answers do not seem obvious, and so it is not easy to settle our minds. Also, is there just one answer, or are there several? Our Inner Master knows, but are we keen pupils, listening for the answer? If we are, then the Inner Master will be able to pass on the answers to our heart and to our mind, and we will come by some of that Peace Profound so dear to Rosicrucians. I say

“some of” because, faced with the mysteries of life, we are and always will be in search of truth.

There is certainly nothing very original about these reflections, but the point is that regardless of my experience as an individual, as a Rosicrucian, and as Imperator of AMORC, I continue to wonder about things. And despite being sure about many things, I still have a long way to go before knowing, being fully versed in, and understanding all things. I still ask myself the questions that I did as a young child and then as an adult. This will doubtless be the case for you as well. Does this mean I am not a good pupil? It certainly does, yet I have complete faith in the Rosicrucian ideal and in the teachings which AMORC provides. While life has given me much hardship and disillusionment, as it has many others, it has also given me so many beautiful things and sublime emotions, that I remain in a state of hope and even belief, in the highest sense of the word. And I am able to declare: “Yes, I both hope and believe!”



VERY OFTEN COMPARED, these two verbs seem conflicting and incompatible, not in the sense of their grammar or spelling, but when associated with human nature, with the ego, with our way of seeing things, and with moral matters. The word BE has a more positive connotation in this context than the word HAVE.

BE reflects what we are, and we naturally associate it more with our qualities than with our faults.

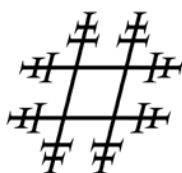
HAVE leads us to the verb “own” and the word “ownership.”

Our consciousness is then straight away ruffled, and in our mind the ideas grapple with each other, oppose and contradict one other: matter versus mind, rights versus duties, and so on. BE, as in “exist,” as in “life,” as in “intelligence.” HAVE, as in “worldly pleasure,” as in “abundance of possessions,” as in “desire.” With good reason therefore, we always insist that “it is better to be than to have.”

What if we tried to reconcile these two notions? To assign lovely images and noble words to the verb HAVE is straightforward and enjoyable, but to add a negative connotation to the verb BE is harder to picture; it is an exercise that is not pleasant to subject ourselves to, and furthermore I do not encourage you to do it. It is not necessary to diminish BE in order to appreciate HAVE. Let us try instead to bring the two together. Let us not reject one part of our dual nature, but simply endeavor to master it. When a slide towards jealousy, hatred, and dishonesty is brought about by desire, a spirit of

unbridled possessiveness and, quite simply, by anxieties and fears, it is vital to regain self-control, take an objective look within, and tame the dragon.

HAVE must let BE have its rightful place, and the two must live together. This is the forming of unity within self, the balancing of the scales, the yin and the yang, the black and the white, the day and the night, joy and sorrow, BE and HAVE!



FOR CENTURIES, men and women of goodwill have striven to make humanity better; among their number are naturally the members of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross.

In spite of the appalling assessment that can be made of the world situation, with many countries at war, we must continue to hope and, above all, each make efforts at our own level, according to what is feasible for us.

The Rosicrucian Order will adapt, as it has always done. Wherever war and religious extremism become rampant and prevent it from existing, it will protect itself, and wherever other forms of sectarianism do the same, it will act accordingly.

We know that nothing is established for all time, that everything is changing and everything is evolving. Nothing is fixed, everything is being transformed; this is the alchemy of life.

Many philosophers and humanists have set peace as their ideology. Rosicrucians, too, have always been at the service of peace—Peace Profound, to which they often refer in their writings, even if it is very difficult for them to experience and to maintain it.

The more that cruelty, violence, and destruction are exhibited in our world, the more that voices are raised in favor of peace. This is the working of the principle of duality which governs our lives and our minds. Rosicrucians therefore make a point of joining their voices with all those who are praying and striving for cooperation between peoples. In addition to their myriad

personal actions, Rosicrucians each year hold a special peace ceremony, which is open to all, under the aegis of AMORC.

In the humanist's heart, the word "peace" permanently resonates. As I indicated before, the first expression that comes to the mind of Rosicrucians at the mention of peace, is certainly "Peace Profound." In correspondence, they generally use the expression "With all good wishes for Peace Profound" at the end. These few words, sometimes written automatically, have a very significant effect. They are much more than a politeness or fraternal greeting.

The expression constitutes an invocation, the benefits of which the members of AMORC intend for the person they address it to, whether a Rosicrucian or not. The more its essence and power are felt internally, the more positive the effects of this invocation are on that person.

Peace Profound is not just a state of the soul. It is also a state of the heart and a state of the body. Indeed, it is only when someone combines peace in their body, their heart, and their soul, that they know the fullness of Peace Profound and can invoke its blessings for their human brothers and sisters, in full awareness of the source.

Peace cannot be separated from harmony, and neither can harmony be separated from the beauty of the world and from the radiance of God. This is what prompted a philosopher to say "So many hands to save the world, and so few eyes to contemplate it."

All mystics like to refer to the peace of the soul. This simply amounts to a state of spiritual fulfillment, accessible to those who have chosen to place their life at the service of God and of humanity. It is also the inner peace known to those who manage

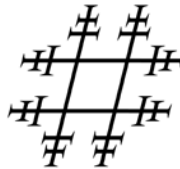
to live permanently in harmony. It is therefore the peace of the rose as well as that of the cross.

Peace is to look at life as a gift, despite its tests and its ups and downs. It is also to be able to accept a far from perfect body, sometimes one that suffers, then old age, and finally the departure to the beyond.

Peace is first of all to accept fear, then to be able to surmount it. It is when our urges and our emotions are at last controlled, and leave our heart still, like a day without wind. It is when the warrior that slumbers within us has laid down his or her arms.

If we have lost harmony, let us find it again. Let us be aware of the most beautiful aspect of our world. Let us allow God to shine forth through our conduct, and we will find peace.

And so, in accordance with a formula dear to my heart, I hope that you who are reading these lines may, throughout your incarnation in the years to come, have Peace Profound in you and around you.



Rosicrucian Contribution to Peace



- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I strive to express the best of myself in my contacts with others. |
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I use my intelligence and my abilities to serve the Good. |
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I feel compassion toward all those who suffer. |
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I look upon all as my brothers and sisters regardless of race, culture, or religion. |
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I rejoice over the happiness of others and pray for their well-being. |
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I listen with tolerance to opinions that differ from mine or even oppose them. |
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I resort to dialogue rather than force to settle any conflict. |
| <i>I contribute to Peace</i> | when I respect Nature and preserve it for generations to come. |

I contribute to Peace when I do not seek to impose
my conception of God
upon others.

I contribute to Peace when I make Peace the
foundation of my ideals
and philosophy.

EVERYTHING IS GOING better! Technologically, the advances in science and medicine have overcome old illnesses and prolonged life expectancy. Electricity lights up the world. The plane, train, and car have cut distances. Agriculture produces more. Information technology has speeded up communication. So everything is going faster, and everything is more efficient and comfortable. Does this mean that everything is going better in our modern societies? No, because humans are not progressing, or not sufficiently. Since human beings mysteriously appeared, we have not ceased enriching ourselves with material discoveries, which on the surface have improved our living conditions. We have been open to culture, have educated ourselves, we have observed, have read, and have written. But alas, humans have remained barbarians.

How long will we need, how many incarnations, to bring about a profound realization? Humanity is on the way, haphazardly, towards this, but the path is rocky! As well as the observations we no doubt have about ourselves, there is an instinctive reaction which compels us to take a hard, straight look at what people are capable of doing to other people in our so-called modern times. The current age is particularly violent, and this violence has nothing to do with geography or culture. It is very much linked to human beings. It goes without saying that talking about it resolves nothing, but to ignore it would be a failure to render assistance to humanity.

We of course owe it to ourselves to remain positive, and my duty is really to speak to you about pleasant things. But as

an inhabitant of this planet, I cannot help but notice, as you no doubt do also, the seriousness and the horror of certain things that are taking place. It would be lacking compassion to try and disregard them, and outright idealistic naiveté to state “everything is going better.”

Following any tragedy, our first reaction ought to be spiritual assistance. When we learn that there has been a hostage situation, an attack, a natural catastrophe, or whatever, we should immediately carry out spiritual work for those affected. However inconsequential and inadequate this work may appear in view of the drama taking place, it has an extraordinary power. At times such as this, all of our thoughts instantly become forces which, joined with all the others, form a sort of “universal bandage” and alleviate the suffering. They are the hand which holds that of someone dying, the arms of the mother cradling the crying child, and a thousand other impressions of gentleness and calm. Once this duty has been carried out—depending on the place where we are, and our philosophical, spiritual, or religious convictions—it should be followed, in the hours, days, and months which follow, by action that I shall describe as being more “outward.”

Depending on our means, our abilities, and the place where we are, we should endeavor to make a concrete gesture towards the victims, or in relation to the causes of what has happened. For example, if you are close to where a catastrophe or an attack occurs, or can get there, go and help materially or physically. If you prefer to write, write a letter, an article, or a book, and express your thoughts in it. You can also just try to change things positively by talking with other people. You can also, of course, make a donation, or why not take part in a demonstration. In a word: in some way or other, do not stay passive. Do not accept what is not acceptable.

I have been working for AMORC since 1971, and in the different offices I have held, I have read thousands of letters and met thousands of men and women, members and non-members of the Rosicrucian Order, and have shared with them their doubts and their pain, and also their moments of happiness and their hopes.

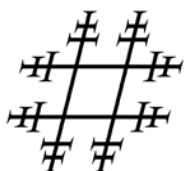
I am not sure if this has made me wise, because I imagine that if I was, my reactions would be different when faced with life's occurrences. I would probably be able to put tests and trials into perspective, and look at the world in a less involved way. I regret to say that this is not how it is, for I am always very moved by the misfortune of others, and by seeing the often apocalyptic tragedies of which too many of my human brothers and sisters are the victims.

A sociologist has stated that we are living through an era as important, in terms of changes in morality, politics, mindset, culture, and so on, as the one Europe experienced at the end of antiquity and in the years coinciding with the Renaissance. The difference is that our planet has now become "tiny," and that all countries and all human beings are affected. While good innovations spread rapidly, so too do bad ones, and they no longer concern one country or people at a time, but all the citizens of the world.

Does there still exist a haven of peace on Earth? Some places are certainly more pleasant to live in than others, but for how much longer? Is there a government where corruption is not prevalent? Is humanity's justice just? Are our state and civil services truly listening to and serving the people? How can we awaken consciousness and bring about love and courage in peoples' hearts?

You no doubt have your own answers to these perfectly reasonable questions we ask ourselves as citizens of the world. I am not anti-establishment. I am simply an activist for the right to life, respect, freedom, true justice, life, and peace. So work for good, according to your abilities—whoever you may be, wherever you may be. Work materially, physically, morally, and spiritually, where “chance” has put you.

Let us be men and women of good will, so that one day it may at last be said, in all truthfulness, with no cynicism or irony: “Everything is going better.”



WHAT IS Cosmic Consciousness? In answering this question, I would first like to make it clear that it is not a substance, but an essence. It is an attribute of the Universal Soul, which is an emanation of Divine Intelligence. We should not therefore separate it from all the forms of consciousness expressing themselves in the universe by means of the living beings inhabiting it. In other words, Cosmic Consciousness is always to be associated with the vehicles it uses in order to manifest, however simple or complicated these vehicles may be. On Earth, they range from the tiniest living creature to the most developed, the human being.

We may therefore say that it is Cosmic Consciousness that prompts living beings to evolve towards the perfecting of their own nature. It is thanks to Cosmic Consciousness that they perceive what is around them and respond to the external conditions they come upon in their evolutionary environment. Under its effect, they attract that which is in harmony with them, and use that which brings them a certain physical well-being. Conversely, they repel that which disturbs them or which is a threat to their wholeness. In this sense, we can say that the most elementary living form displays intelligence, for the Cosmic Consciousness within it drives it to manifest to the greatest extent possible the divine attributes which its nature, however primitive, makes it capable of expressing.

Throughout its evolution, meaning throughout its progressive adaptation to the environment and the mastery it exercises over it, each living being, however elementary,

develops a greater and better use of the attributes that Cosmic Consciousness is able to manifest through it. Thanks, therefore, to this living being, Cosmic Consciousness improves itself by using its capacity for intelligence and power. Running right through the infinite chain of living creatures, it finally permeates forms of life which are more and more evolved, meaning more and more aware of the Divine, in preparation for them one day achieving the perfection which is rightfully theirs.

These statements should not be taken to imply that the nature of Cosmic Consciousness is imperfect and limited. The only thing that is imperfect and limited is the way in which each living creature expresses the attributes of Cosmic Consciousness. In other words, Cosmic Consciousness is perfect in itself, and this absolute perfection in like manner permeates all living beings. Their apparent imperfection comes from the fact that each of them is only expressing a greater or smaller proportion of the attributes of Cosmic Consciousness. This boils down to saying that they are all gradually becoming aware of the Cosmic Consciousness which gives them life, and that it is this awareness that is limited in varying degrees.

On Earth, human beings are the living creatures best able to express the magnificence of Cosmic Consciousness. It manifests in humans by means of three principal planes of consciousness. First, a person perceives one's environment through one's objective consciousness, which comprises a purely objective aspect, and a subjective aspect. The objective aspect is concerned with the impulses or messages we receive through our five physical senses, that is, sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell; the subjective aspect corresponds to faculties such as reason, memory, and imagination. Second, humans are endowed with a subconscious, which directs and controls the involuntary functions, makes voluntary actions possible, and harmonizes

the functioning of all our psychic faculties. And third, humans possess within us Cosmic Consciousness in its purest state.

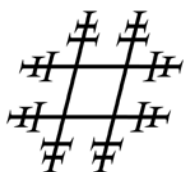
The three planes of consciousness to which I have just referred form a unity within human beings. However, it is only via the intermediary of the subconscious that we can access Cosmic Consciousness in its most perfect expression. For this purpose, we have to learn to know ourselves, and to reach the deepest part of our being. We have to progressively raise ourselves beyond the objective plane, so as to use our subconscious as the intermediary between our human self and the Divine Plane. This inner raising corresponds to contact with that which is most sublime within us, that is, the Divine Perfection incarnated in humans. At this final level, we are able to commune with that which is the most pure that Cosmic Consciousness can impart to us. From that time on, we are freed from the limitations of time and space. Only Transcendence, Immanence, and Permanence exist.

It is impossible to exactly describe the state which results from a communion with Cosmic Consciousness, for it transcends all the impressions belonging to the terrestrial world. In addition, while such communion does indeed immerse the human soul in an ocean of perfection, this does not mean this is Absolute Perfection. Through such an experience, one achieves the highest level of understanding attainable as an incarnate being, but even at this level the communion is only with one aspect of this Perfection. Further, this sublime state is temporary, for it is impossible to remain permanently on such a plane of consciousness.

It is important to understand that humans, every single one of us that is, must give help to Cosmic Consciousness at the same time as learning to receive help from it. To achieve this, it is necessary to direct our thoughts and our actions towards those centers of interest which are as lofty as possible. And while it is

true that we cannot achieve Cosmic Consciousness by means of objective consciousness, the latter must nonetheless be directed as often as possible towards constructive activities. It is only when we do this, that we can cross the portal to our subconscious and eventually attain Cosmic Consciousness. Therefore, the ultimate goal of our spiritual evolution is to rise back up the stream of Cosmic Consciousness that is flowing within us, and to raise ourselves from the illusory world of its terrestrial expression up to the purity of its Divine Source.

To conclude, I will add that when a human being succeeds in experiencing Cosmic Consciousness, they have fulfilled their consciousness of the Cosmic or, if you prefer, of the Divine. This state of fulfillment is that aspired to by all mystics in general and all Rosicrucians in particular. It is the culminating point of humanity's evolution through the long chain of lives on Earth. It is in fact the state of consciousness that each individual must one day experience. Once this is done, he or she is no longer under an obligation to reincarnate on Earth. To attain this, we will have to learn a lot more yet. For a long time, one life will follow another, but one day...



WE ARE AT A transitional time for humanity. A realization is taking place, that is for sure; it is imperfect and incomplete, but something new is ready to unfold. Unfortunately, this seems to be happening painfully, and the future of the world is still very uncertain. Can we foresee events, predict catastrophes, or sense in advance what humanity has yet to experience or undergo? I prefer to not answer these questions, but invite you to read or re-read the *Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*, a Manifesto published worldwide by AMORC in 2001. This work is an assessment of the state of our society; and also a warning, for human beings always have free will. We are not the playthings of a force, dark or light: our destiny is in our own hands, at both the individual and the collective level.

You may well think it is difficult to act, or even impossible, for as soon as an honest voice is raised, it gets silenced, or even worse. This happens often, and as the worldwide head of AMORC, I am in a good position to know. In spite of this, we must not be discouraged, for we must continue to act where we can. The first and most important action is, of course, spiritual action. We must endeavor to remain positive and pray for our planet and its inhabitants. Of course, remaining positive must not prevent us from seeing a situation clearly, and we must even accept that sometimes the truth shatters our dreams and illusions. The “kind” and the “just” do not always win, at least to start with. We all dream of a better world, where love and community will reign supreme, but that world is a long way off yet. We will all have gone through many incarnations before

what is called “the golden age” becomes a reality, presuming, of course, that we have not destroyed Earth along the way.

I have always considered myself to be a world citizen, and this feeling has grown with time, due no doubt to my many travels and encounters with people. This is a very strong and very inspiring feeling, and I like to think that my soul vibrates in unison with just one world. In the Rosicrucian Manifesto to which I have earlier referred, the “globalization of consciousness” is discussed, and this feeling, which is undoubtedly shared by millions of humanists and spiritually-minded people, is sure to grow. What is more, it is doubtless because this process is underway, that humanity is experiencing so many conflicts. It is the eternal fight of good against evil, of those who want to open up against those who want to keep things obscure, of evolution versus retrogression. There will certainly seem nothing new in these comments, for this is all very obvious, but to me they seem important enough to state again.

Humanity is experiencing major geo-political transformations and great changes in society. Ideas that were thought to have died out, are reappearing in a big way, while others that were thought to be established forever, are crumbling. Every nation is having its crises or revolutions, whether political or cultural. Everything is known, and is being made public. We know about, and are affected by, things that are happening even in countries several thousand miles from our own. Communication methods, which are limitless nowadays, have changed mindsets a lot. This opening up is certainly positive if anything, however we do not have to succumb to the negative aspects that come with it.

People often ask me my opinion on current affairs matters, and would sometimes like my view on some government decision or other, in different countries. AMORC is apolitical, and in

no circumstances do its officers have the right to take a stance on subjects connected with politics. The fact that the Order of the Rose Cross is apolitical does not mean that its members cannot be politically involved and exercise their free will in this sphere. Each is free to think and act as they see fit, in accordance with their convictions, their own experiences, surroundings, occupation, and so on. What members of AMORC may not do, is to campaign for some political party among people they are in contact with during their Rosicrucian activities. Neither do they have the right to insist that their Grand Master, or any other official, commits themselves or reveals their personal political opinions.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, much nonsense has been spoken against AMORC by individuals, groups, and governments repudiating any reference to God, or who were, conversely, under the hold of intolerant, all-powerful religious authorities. AMORC has at times been characterized as a capitalist movement with extremist tendencies, even an anti-communist network, or else as an anarchist party, an agent of international socialism, and so on. None of this of course makes any sense, and I maintain that what constitutes AMORC's strength is that, through thick and thin, it has always defended its right to political neutrality. This strength might also appear to be its weakness, for some of its enemies attack AMORC with vehemence, frowning on its apolitical stance. But if it were not on account of this, it would be on account of something else, in any case.

Humanity's source of wealth lies in our differences. The whole world cannot think exactly the same thing, nor experience the same feelings. This is why it is important to put the emphasis on "tolerance." Personally, I have friends of all political leanings.

This is not a problem for me, for while we may have different ideas in this area, we have many in common in others, and that is the main thing. What I have just said about politics applies to countless subjects, and what needed to be said about this, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, is said in the *Positio*. Here is an extract from it in connection with the subject just mentioned, politics.

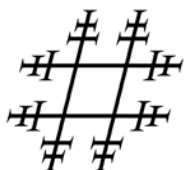
Concerning politics, we feel that a complete renewal of political systems is imperative. Among the important twentieth-century political models, Marxism-Leninism and National Socialism, founded on supposedly definitive social postulates, have led to a decline of reason and finally to barbarism. These two totalitarian ideologies have inevitably come up against the human need for self-determination, thus betraying our right to freedom while at the same time writing some of the blackest pages of history. And history has disqualified them both—forever, let us hope! Whatever we may think of them, political systems based upon a single, monolithic idea often have in common a desire to impose upon human beings a “Doctrine of Salvation,” which is supposed to free them from their imperfect state, and elevate them to a heavenly status. Moreover, most of these political systems do not ask citizens to think, rather to believe, which makes them resemble in effect “nonsectarian” religions.

Conversely, trends of thought such as Rosicrucianism are open and pluralistic rather than monolithic. In other words, they encourage dialogue with others and promote human relations. At the same time, they accept a plurality of opinions and the diversity of behavior

patterns. Therefore, such systems of thought feed upon exchanges, interactions, and even contradictions, which totalitarian ideologies forbid and from which they abstain. Moreover, it is for this reason that Rosicrucian thought has been consistently rejected by totalitarian systems, whatever their nature may be. From its very beginning, our Order has advocated the right of each individual to create and express her or his own ideas freely. In this respect, Rosicrucians are not necessarily freethinkers, although they are all free to think.

In the state of the world today, it seems to us that true democracy remains the best form of government—although certain weaknesses cannot be overlooked. In any genuine democracy, based upon freedom of thought and expression, we generally find a multitude of tendencies, as much among the governors as among the governed. Unfortunately, this plurality often engenders dissension, with all its resulting conflicts. Sadly, it is for this reason that most democratic states manifest divisions that continually and almost systematically conflict with one another. It seems to us that these political divisions, most often gravitating around a majority and an opposition, are no longer well suited to modern societies, and hold back the regeneration of humanity. The ideal in this regard would be for each nation to help promote the emergence of a government bringing together the personalities most capable of governing the affairs of state. In a wider sense, we hope that one day there will be a worldwide government representing all nations, of which today's United Nations is just the beginning.

This, then, is the only political position which I shall put forward for your consideration. My personal opinions (which I certainly have) will therefore remain private! However, in the bonds of democracy and fraternal universalism which unite us as human beings, I encourage you to vote for the politics of Universal Love, and to be on the side of the only being that wholly deserves it: your Master Within.



CONTRARY TO COMMON BELIEF, this concept is not specific to Christianity. The Holy Spirit constitutes, of course, the third aspect in the Christian Trinity, but this is just a particular application of its esoteric meaning. To fully understand the origin of this expression, we should remember that the word “Spirit” is as common in the Old Testament as in the New Testament. However, the meaning given to it differs between the two, this difference probably being due to the translators or to an intentional wish to alter its meaning.

In Genesis in the Old Testament, it is written: The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. As is confirmed by a comparative study of the Latin, Hebrew, and Greek translations of the Bible, the term “Spirit” (*Spiritus* in Latin) corresponds in this phrase to the Hebrew word *Ruah*, and to the Greek word *Pneuma*, which are used to designate both the Breath of God and the Soul. While in the Kabbalah, the Divine Breath is represented by the expression *Ain Soph Aur*, which means “Ineffable Light.” Thus the connections end up forming a link between the Divine Light and the Holy Spirit. This is in fact the sense in which this term is used by Martinists.

The link thus formed between the Divine Light and the Holy Spirit allows us to understand why the latter is associated with the symbolism of fire in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Earthly fire in fact traditionally represents the regenerative power of the Divine Fire, considered the agent of transmutation by means of which, according to Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the Man [Person] of Desire can attain the state of a New Man [Person].

Furthermore, the letters *INRI*, carved on the cross of the Master Jesus, have to be interpreted in this allegorical sense, these letters being the abbreviation of the Latin phrase *Igne Natura Renovatur Integra*, meaning “By fire, nature is wholly regenerated.” Applied to humanity, this esoteric phrase means: “By the Divine Fire, human nature is wholly regenerated.” In its Christian context, it indicates that Jesus, as the Purifier and Regenerator of the world, came to Earth to consume the sins of the whole of humanity and purify it of its collective karma.

As well as the properties inherent in its heat, fire is also a source of light, for the smallest flame throws out light. It was thus natural that fire should become the symbol of good and of truth, in contrast to the shadows which represent evil and error. Fire also symbolizes the Divine Light and the state of consciousness attained by the person who receives Illumination. This is precisely why messiahs, prophets, and avatars are always described as beings who have gazed on the Divine Fire or have been consumed by it. One of the most significant examples of this is given to us in the Biblical account of how God appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush. In addition, in Christian iconography, the apostles are often represented with a flame above their heads, this flame symbolizing the fact that they have been illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

Originally, the Holy Spirit therefore related to the Divine, and represented both the Light that the Divine spreads in the regenerated person and the Breath by means of which the Divine transmits this Light. This is the reason why initiates such as Willermoz, Boehme, Swedenborg, and Saint-Martin also see the Holy Spirit as the Word. Proceeding from this principle, the Gospel of John takes on another dimension, for we can then write it as follows: “In the beginning was the Spirit, and the Spirit was with God, and the Spirit was God.” Transcribing it in

this way permits a better understanding of why the Divinity was then divided into a Tri-Unity symbolized in Christianity by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This division into three was instituted by the early writers of the Christian Church at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, held respectively in 325 and 381 CE. Before this, Spirit had the traditional sense that had been given to it in the Old Testament, meaning, once again, that of the Divine Breath.

Having just referred to the Divine Breath, it seems of interest to add that mystics have always attributed two further functions to the breath. The first is of a purely physiological nature and consists in expelling the maximum carbon dioxide from the lungs, to purify and regenerate them. This is the objective of certain breathing exercises. The second function of the breath has a spiritual dimension, and enables concentration on the cosmic essence contained in air, or its focalization to a particular point, most often as part of a specific mystical exercise. Thus, in certain religious ceremonies and different initiation rituals, the breath is used to pass on to candidates a special influx and confer on them a quality, authority, sacrament, power, or some other attribute, making them a distinctive agent of the Divinity and an instrument of Its Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience. It is then up to the initiate to make good use of what has been thus passed on, and to use it for his or her mystic quest and own inner evolution.

It is clear that the Christian Tri-Unity possesses an esoteric meaning which transcends the anthropomorphic notion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, considered as the third person of this Trinity. From an esoteric point of view, the Father corresponds to Divine Thought, the Son to the Divine Word, and the Holy Spirit to Divine Action. According to this principle, the whole of Creation, visible and invisible, was conceived, set in motion, and

maintained in action by the Grand Architect of the Universe. Moreover, this triple work is found in humans, for people are endowed with thought, word, and action. This is the reason that all sacred writings expound, in more or less the same form, that humans were made in the image of the Divine. The aim of humanity's spiritual evolution is to realize this, and express this image in our daily conduct, thus reintegrating with our original state of Adam Kadmon.

In one of his writings, Willermoz perfectly summarizes this viewpoint. He says:

The first of the powers operating in God is the Divine Thought or Intention, which creates, conceives, and depicts within itself all planes of emanation and creation. It is the first agent of manifestation of the Unity. We call it Father of All Things and specifically attribute to it All-Powerfulness.

The next power is Divine Will, the second agent of the manifestations of the Unity. It is the Word and the expression of the Divine Intention. This is why we call it the Only Son of God and specifically attribute to it the All-Knowing Infinite Wisdom.

The third power is Divine Action itself, the great Fiat, which governs and carries out the perfect accomplishment of all planes of spiritual creation and emanation conceived in the Thought of the Father, taken on and determined by the Will of the Son. We call it Holy Spirit, for it is truly the Spirit of the Divine Unity and of all the powers conjoined.

In his work entitled *The Man [Person] of Desire*, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin also refers to the symbolism of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here is what he writes:

The Eternal, all-powerful Creator, whose infinite power extends through the universe of spirits and bodies, contains within Its immensity countless numbers of beings which It emanates from Its bosom as It pleases. It gives to each of these beings laws, precepts, and commandments, which serve as points of connection between these different beings and this great Divinity.

The connection between all these beings with the Being is so absolute, that no effort by these beings can prevent it. Whatever they do, they can never come out of the circle they have been placed in, and each point of the circle that they travel over could never for a moment cease being connected to its center. Even more so, the center could never cease being in bond, communication, and connection with the center of centers.

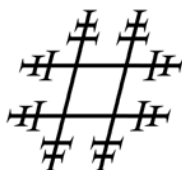
The connection of individual centers with the universal center is the Holy Spirit; the connection of the universal center with the center of center of centers is the Son; and the center of centers is the all-powerful Creator. In this way, God the Father creates beings, His Son gives them life, and this life is the Holy Spirit.

These explanations mean that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit correspond to spheres of activity belonging to the Divine, which consequently transcend Creation. This is why these spheres do not appear in the Tree of the Sephiroth. When we look at this Tree, we notice in fact that the three higher emanations, coming directly from Divine Thought, Word, and Action, correspond to Kether, Hochmah, and Binah. These three sephiroth, though, although they constitute the higher world, are still part of the world of manifestation. They designate attributes of the Divine, or more precisely the main laws by which the Divine manifests in the invisible world. Thus Kether

designates the first of the Divine's emanations, considered as the androgynous principle of Creation. Hochmah represents the second emanation and designates the masculine principle. And Binah, the third emanation, symbolizes the feminine principle. We find these three principles at the origin of all that exists, on both the material and the spiritual planes.

The question we may ask is why, in the Christian tradition, is Jesus likened to the Holy Spirit. In fact, in the New Testament it is often said that Jesus is "the Spirit incarnate," or "the one by whom the Spirit was made flesh." Along the same lines, Jesus is described as "Pure Spirit" and "Radiant Spirit." This is so, I believe, because Jesus is considered as having been the most perfect Avatar humanity has known through its successive ages of evolution. To put this another way, the Master Jesus is probably the only one to have achieved the highest state of consciousness that a person can attain at the end of one's incarnations. As such, he was the living expression of the Divine Word, in other words, the expression of the very Spirit of the Divine.

During periods of meditation, we can invoke the Holy Spirit that is the Divine Breath which purifies, regenerates, inspires, and illumines all beings. Each time we do this sincerely and with the hope that this Breath will enter our body and soul, we will receive a spiritual influx that will raise us inwardly, even if we are not aware of it.



VERY OFTEN indeed people have confided in me, saying “I feel alone,” “I am suffering from loneliness,” “I feel left out,” “I do not fit in,” “I have been abandoned,” and the like.

Irrespective of whether we are an extrovert or an introvert, we do not experience solitude in the same manner. Some say it does not exist, others that you get used to it. For my own part, I experienced a form of solitude as an only child, and am rather “interiorized.”

But things have been different for a long time, and I am delighted to have a large family today, or rather two large families, for I am a child of the Rose Cross, and consequently have thousands of brothers and sisters, friends, and fellow-travelers. I am never alone. You can have this same feeling by being aware that you belong to the great family of humanity.

The Latin origin of the word solitude is *solitudo*. The dictionary definition of solitude is “Situation of a person who is alone, momentarily or lastingly. Solitude is a state of abandonment, of separation, that a person feels in contrast with human consciousness or society.”

In daily life, solitude can be very distressing, indeed more distressing than anything, resulting as it sometimes does from a tragedy, a handicap, a final or temporary separation from someone dear, or from being abandoned. The famous nineteenth century French poet Alphonse de Lamartine wrote: “You miss one single person and the whole world is empty!”

There are people who are genuinely isolated, and others who, despite meeting lots of people on a daily basis and having plenty of contact at all times, feel terribly alone. This emotional isolation is therefore all in the mind, and it is vital not to get some sort of pleasure out of it, and not to build invisible walls that have no door or window, between us and others. People of course imagine that these walls protect, but this is not so, it is quite the contrary: with no exit to the outside, they suffocate us inwardly, prevent us from releasing our emotions, and confine us in an unhealthy atmosphere, noxious and harmful to our emotional and physical health.

Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word “loneliness” to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word “solitude” to express the glory of being alone.

—PAUL TILLICH

We can see that those who wallow about in deep solitude are seldom cheerful, communicative, and responsive to others. You will tell me that they may of course simply be thoughtful and deeply meditative people. In their own way, they may also be very happy, have great inner wealth, be content with their own company, and so on. I have no doubt that this is possible, and I know people like this. However, this solitude may in some cases be masking a discontent, even a tendency to what we term depression, a permanent obscure night. If this solitude includes silence as well, it may be confirming what I said previously. This is by no means always the case, and it is also true that an excess of chattering and expressiveness can be symptomatic of a huge feeling of solitude or of an inner emptiness.

When I said “solitude is holy,” I did not mean by solitude a separating from or a complete forgetting of

people and society, but a withdrawing where the soul may commune within itself.

— ALFRED DE VIGNY

It is well known that we have to be good company to ourselves, but this does not exclude being good company for others as well. Your response may be that generally people are far from pleasant and one cannot have too much to do with them, and that their all too obvious faults cause you more annoyance and distress than they do interest or pleasure.

What is the source of this feeling of solitude that we feel, that often leads us to say we are always alone? Is it because as we incarnate, we are leaving a family, the great universal Soul, with regret? Is it because our biological mother, in ejecting us from her body, forces us to become an independent being within a few moments, alone from that point on, launched out to discover another universe? Or is it the weight of responsibilities and duties required of us as a single individual manifesting?

In solitude, where we are least alone.

— LORD BYRON

When we have overcome an obstacle and triumphed over an ordeal, we are proud to have done it on our own, with no one else's help. A personal feat is often a better experience and feeling than a group success. From our birth to our death, there constantly re-occurs this basic principle, individuality, to which is added responsibility and, often, guilt. The latter may of course be collective, and connected to a nation or a group, but most often it is our own.

Coming back to this feeling of solitude that we all experience to varying degrees, we can say that it arises most often at difficult times, when we are sad or in pain. It is accompanied by a feeling

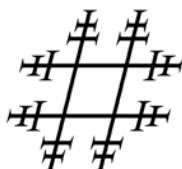
that others do not understand us, by the notion of not being appreciated for the actions and work we have carried out, of struggling all alone, of being neither supported nor helped: in brief, of being alone, utterly alone, in carrying a heavy weight and bearing the woes of the world on our shoulders.

Feeling we are not understood by another person or by other people, or—as the popular expressions go—“preaching in the wilderness,” “not getting heard even by shouting,” and so on, leaves a profound feeling of solitude in the heart. It will most probably be this way for a long time to come yet; this is part of our human nature; it is linked to our ego.

Readers of these reflections, remember that you are not alone!

I will take time to be alone today. I will take time to be quiet. In this silence I will listen... and I will hear my answers.

—RUTH FISHEL



IN INTRODUCING this subject, I will say that Harmony is the sister of Kinship, such as we can conceive and experience it in our daily existence. In a general sense, harmony corresponds to the state of consciousness one experiences when one is at peace with oneself, with others, and with nature. This supposes that harmony integrates three levels of expression, at the same time different, yet complementary.

To be in harmony with oneself means, first, accepting what one is physically. Clearly, we possess a physical body that we can judge as more or less attractive, in the loose sense of the term. However, there are no absolute criteria for physical beauty. This kind of beauty corresponds only to standards established by people themselves, and these standards are arbitrary, most often just reflecting a fashion or a fad. What is more, they are only important for those who deal in appearances, which reveals a superficial, if not an artificial, concept of existence. One cannot be happy in the long term by making physical beauty the basis of happiness, for it corresponds to the mortal and transitory part of our being.

From a Rosicrucian point of view, the world of appearances has no worth unless it reflects the Divine Reality which gives us life, and which it is our duty to express through our thoughts, words, and actions. This means that above all we should concern ourselves with our inner beauty, for on the plane of spiritual evolution, it alone is important. Furthermore, whoever is beautiful on the inside is also beautiful on the outside, whatever their physical imperfections, for the light that emanates from

the depths of their being gives them a radiance and magnetism that transcends their outer appearance. Conversely, nothing can mask an inner ugliness, for it always shows through, even with a person that some would describe as physically “beautiful.” Whatever the case, it is not the body that should be the object of worship, as unfortunately too often happens in modern, materialistic societies: rather, it is the soul that animates it.

Feeling well in one’s body is not sufficient to be in harmony with oneself. One must also accept what one is on the intellectual level. I have often had conversations with people suffering through not having done any higher studies, who apologize for (quote) “just being manual workers.” However, just having a powerful intellect or being cultured is neither an end in itself, a measure of kindliness, or a criterion of spiritual evolution. This is shown by the fact that many scientists are staunch materialists, and some have no compunction about using their science for evil purposes. Are not our hands the most beautiful and sophisticated of all tools? Therefore, what is more noble and precious than being able to use them to create things which are useful in our own and in others’ lives?

For mystics, that which determines the worth of a human being is the intelligence of the heart, which is to say, the willingness to serve others with one’s abilities, regardless of whether those abilities be intellectual or manual in nature. We all have talents and capacities that can contribute to the common good. Consequently, the best way to be in harmony with oneself is, on the one hand, not to blame oneself for what we do not know or cannot do, and on the other, to share the knowledge we have acquired and the know-how that we possess. In so doing, we cultivate in ourselves the conviction that we are being useful to others and are doing good, which results in a feeling of inner joy

and clear conscience. This feeling is the reserve of all who strive to express the best of themselves, while at the same time being happy to be what they are on the physical and mental planes.

Therefore, one cannot be in harmony with oneself unless one likes oneself as an individual, that is, as a soul evolving in a body. Of course, this love of self must not be self-centered or akin to vanity. It simply has to do with being a friend to oneself, which involves being tolerant of one's imperfections and weaknesses, as long as they do not affect our own integrity or that of others. In the same train of thought, there are many people who hold something against themselves, or blame themselves for something or other. This is a negative attitude, for it makes such people their own enemies and keeps them in a state of inner discord. Neither can this change anything about the past events that they blame themselves for, but infects their view of the future and often makes them bitter.

I truly think that the best way to be in harmony with oneself is never to compare oneself with others. As soon as we do this, we either judge ourselves inferior or rate ourselves superior. In the first case, an inferiority complex results that works against inner peace. In the second, our ego is flattered, which sets us against the purest aspirations of our soul. In both cases the result is a state of disharmony. The best way to avoid this disharmony is to start from the principle that we are each a unique being, and that this uniqueness is what constitutes our worth, both to human eyes and in the sight of God. Thus it is with ourselves that we should be comparing ourselves from day to day, month to month, year to year, for therein is the key to our spiritual evolution. And if we are able to say to ourselves as we go to sleep each night "I was better than yesterday," then we will have taken another step on the path of harmony.

Let us now see what can be said about the harmony we should maintain with others. First of all, it is clear that human beings were not made to live alone, separate from other people. You will also notice that since appearing on Earth, people have always lived in groups. This is so because our deeper nature has always prompted us to seek the company of others, first in response to our need for security, then to satisfy our desire for affection. This gregarious instinct remains powerful, and today explains the existence of families, villages, cities, regions, and nations. Humanity itself is the product of the fact that people have continually perpetuated our species and extended the influence of our race; thus forming one single body.

For obvious reasons, harmony with others should first of all be cultivated within our family. Indeed if we are not capable of maintaining harmonious relations with our spouse, our children, our brothers and sisters, and so on, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to be an instrument of peace in the world. Certainly, disagreements may occur with those close to us, but these disagreements should never develop into a power struggle giving rise to unpleasant words or deeds, all the more so as we have many more reasons to love those that love us, than to hurt them or wish them harm.

If it is true that we should strive to preserve harmony within our family, we should also cultivate it in our social and professional relationships. This is not always easy, because sometimes we encounter disagreeable people. But if this happens, let us make sure we are not the cause of the discord, for that would be failing in our duty, and would set in motion our own karma. And when we encounter an inharmonious situation, let us apply ourselves to re-harmonizing the atmosphere by setting positive thoughts, words, and actions against the negative thoughts, words, and actions which we are witnessing or are subject to. There have to

be at least two to fuel a power struggle. Whenever one occurs, whether with a work colleague, a neighbor, or stranger, let us refuse to be its second pole. In other words, let us call on our will so as not to become the second point of a triangle of discord.

Every person should feel they are a citizen of the world, and conduct themselves as such. Accordingly, each should pray and work for harmony to reign between all beings and nations. It is true that there is a tendency to favor the interest of one's own country, social class, and religion, if one has one. This tendency is unfortunately what explains why so many wars have punctuated humanity's history. Nonetheless, all people are destined to love one another, and to make Earth the paradise to which we aspire deep within ourselves. This involves behaving in a tolerant manner towards all races, nationalities, social classes, and religions, which amounts to us setting an example, by displaying a mentality and morality which are universal in nature; this should be our purpose, our task, and our ambition, when we say we are humanists and wish to work for the coming of a better world.

I have just said that Earth is destined to become the paradise to which all people aspire in varying degrees of awareness. This brings me to the third and last level to which harmony must apply, that is Nature itself. First of all, it surprises me that some "mystics" consider ecology to be an area having no relationship to spirituality. In arguing this absurdity, they claim that the Masters and Initiates of the past never mentioned this subject in their teachings, their preaching, or their sermons. This argument is complete nonsense. It is obvious that if (for example) Moses, Buddha, Jesus, or Muhammad never spoke on the subject, it was simply that the problem did not exist at that time. That does not mean, however, that people respected their environment then, but at least they did not have such dire ways of destroying it.

From a mystic point of view, Earth is humanity's temple, just as our physical body is our soul's temple. Not to respect it, not to preserve it, quite simply amounts to destroying the bedrock of our individual and collective evolution. It is also to annihilate a masterpiece of Creation, as everyone can admire the harmony and beauty of all that it has given birth to. Earth is effectively the Mother of all the living beings on it. Unfortunately, as everyone knows, humans have put her in grave danger through ignorance, negligence, or greed. Pollution of the soil, water, and air, intensive deforestation, and excessive exploitation of natural resources, all bear witness to this. It is clear that if nothing is done on a world level to remedy the multiple ills our planet is suffering from, then she is condemned to die a slow death, and we will all be responsible for this tragedy.

However, let us trust, and bank on the best in people. Let us at the same time exemplify respect for Earth and all it contains. Let us remember that Earth is the vehicle of the Universal Soul, such as it manifests via the different realms of nature. For me, it is clear that human consciousness is the product of a time-honored evolution that has been accomplished through plants, animals, and then humanity itself. And if humans are the most evolved beings on our planet, it is only because humanity is at a more advanced point in this evolution. Having said this, humanity forms just one link in the chain that life has forged since it manifested on Earth several million years ago. I will add here that human beings are the most fragile creatures in this chain, for we would be the first to disappear if the natural equilibrium came to be disrupted. However it may be, we have no authority over the so-called "inferior" realms. Quite the contrary, we have many duties towards them.

In relation to Nature, harmony thus consists in considering every living creature as an extension of ourselves, for brotherhood

and sisterhood has to include all the beings that life has put in the world: I am thinking especially of the animals which humans exterminate for commercial reasons or subject to all manner of unjustified suffering, whether in the name of barbaric traditions, for purely commercial reasons, or in the applying of an outdated concept of what constitutes science. But Earth is part of an infinitely more vast whole, that is, the Universe. Aside from the physical laws which were responsible for its formation several billion years ago, the Universe is the work of the universal and absolute Intelligence that we call “God” or “the Divine.” It is, as we know, composed of billions of galaxies, themselves containing billions of stars, some of which lie at the center of a solar system like our own. Such observations show both how great and how small humankind is. In fact, compared to Creation, and even to Earth herself, humankind is completely insignificant. But as the incarnation of the Divine Word, as a living soul, humankind is conscious of self, and also has the ability to contemplate and study the cosmos. In this respect, it is humanity that endows the Universe with its grandeur, its beauty, and its reason for existing. We are thus both actors in and spectators to the cosmic harmony at one and the same time, for we enable the Divine to contemplate Itself through us, and we draw closer to the Divine by studying Its works.

In summary, I shall say that harmony comprises love of oneself, of others, and of Nature: these are the three levels of expression of Universal Love, for humankind incarnate. When these three levels of love have become an integral part of our personality and our behavior, we live in perfect resonance with the God of our heart, and experience Peace Profound. I therefore wish you this divine resonance with all my soul, for therein dwells the source of happiness and the key to Illumination.

WHILE JOY is a natural and fundamental concept in the East, the same is unfortunately not the case in so-called Western societies. Known as *Ananda* in India, joy is an integral part of the spiritual quest for inhabitants of this part of the world.

Buddha is represented most of the time as laughing or smiling. Faced with a representation of him, whether it be a painting or a sculpture, a smile comes naturally to our lips, when we look at his face lit up with joyousness. He communicates his joy to us.

In Egyptian mythology, Osiris says to the one who has died: "Have you given joy? Have you found joy?" This endorses the importance of this state, because it is taken into reckoning at the time of the weighing of the soul, when the assessment of the life that is ending is being carried out.

Having just referred to the East, specifically to India, I would like to quote these words of wisdom from Ma Ananda Moyi, whose name means "imbued with joy."

The supreme Being is joy incarnate and this is why all creatures aspire to joy. Always seek to live in joy, to express joy in your thoughts and your deeds; feel joy's radiant presence in all that you see or hear; this will bring you true happiness. Sadness is disastrous for people; banish it from your thoughts."

To be joyous is not to be irresponsible or devil-may-care; it is simply to be positive, even naturally appreciative to life for the

good things it brings us; it is to allow the expression of our true human nature, our inner being, our deeper self.

Genuine joy is not superficial; it comes from the soul and the heart. It is spontaneous. Whereas pleasure is most often associated with the material and physical aspects of life, joy is connected to vibrations which are more subtle and more mystical. In sacred writings the word “beatitude” is thus often used, and the saints are often represented smiling, their faces radiant.

Joy is the companion of love. Therefore, let us be a sun to others, and we will experience pure joy, for a shining heart can light up the world. Let us fill our home and our life with joyousness. Let us smile, laugh, and through our attitude and example, share this joy. Let us be like the little child instinctively smiling at us, showing their happiness at communicating by means of their expression, their heart, and their soul.

The joy I am referring to is not associated with a fleeting pleasure, but it may be. We can come upon it, experience it, and live it in all life’s circumstances, even in the dark hours we inevitably pass through from birth to death.

This does not of course mean that suffering is synonymous with joy, and I have no admiration for willing martyrs, for those who wallow in a negative state, for those who beat themselves up or wrack themselves physically or psychologically, and so on. Contrary to what they might think, such people by their attitude are falling far short of pleasing God; on the contrary, they are offending God and insulting both life and nature.

In associating the concept of joy with trials, I would simply like to say that joy can allow us to overcome these trials, to understand them better, to rise above them. True inner joy is the reflection of a positive attitude to problems, and can transmute

many things, and above all show them in another light. It is “alchemy.”

Joy accompanies our efforts and gives us courage. It is creative, and a part of the Divinity which has been dwelling within us from our first breath. It is present everywhere, and can manifest at any time.

Joy can be hearing music or a song, a meeting, or sharing a discovery. It can overwhelm our whole being during a meditation, and we can come across it in a garden, on a road, and even in a hospital bed or in prison.

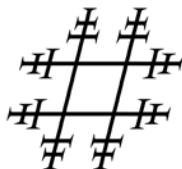
Joy can be long-lasting or fleeting; it is “the moment,” a glance at the stars, the satisfaction of a job well done, the peacefulness of a moment’s rest.

Joy is freedom of spirit, of thought, of word, and of action. And where Seneca said “True joy is serene,” I will say as a Rosicrucian: “Joy is Peace Profound.”

Supported by the wings of joy, let us take flight, and so find bliss.

I slept and dreamt that life was but joy. I woke and saw
that life was work. I worked and saw that work was joy.

—Tagore



Rosicrucian Invocation



God of my heart, God of my understanding.

I know that You are at the origin of the universe,
nature, and humanity itself, but do not
know what You think and what You feel.

Since Your existence became plain to me, I have
been seeking to understand the laws by
which You manifest through the visible
and invisible planes of Creation.

Your light shines deep within me and
continually lights the way for my
consciousness on the path of Good.

Your life gives vitality to my body, and makes it
the temple that my soul has chosen to
bring its spiritual evolution to fruition.

Your love accounts for my existence, and wakens
in me the desire to love all people.

May You grant me the will to perfect myself in
thought, word, and deed, that I may
become an agent of Your wisdom in
this world.

So Mote It Be!

HUMILITY, DIGNITY, AND COURAGE are three values which are often brought up in conversations. We say words to the effect that “you can only speak with first-hand experience,” and “understood well means expressed well.” My ideas will possibly therefore seem to lack in clarity, because I make no claim to have acquired these three virtues, although I am trying to get nearer to them in how I conduct myself. I have often needed courage, but I have also lacked it in certain circumstances of my life, something I regret. Dignity is something that I have certainly endeavored to show, but there too, I am aware that I have faltered, due to either ignorance, inexperience, or impatience.

As regards humility, at the risk of making you smile at the paradox, I believe I have always displayed this, at least this is a quality attributed to me by those around me and by those who have known me for many years. I draw no merit from this, because it is undoubtedly due to a form of shyness, an aversion to social chitchat, and my liking for the simple things of life. But it is also because while very young I was able to observe the damage that pride can produce. In my life as a Rosicrucian, and as a Grand Master and then the Emperor of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross, I have seen many of my brothers and sisters fall down without ever getting up again, and friends leave and betray their vows through not being alert to the negative aspect of what we call the “ego.” And most of all, I have been hurt so often that humility has been something I have had no choice about. Here am I then singing the praises of my own humility, but I would have to be given one out of the

three virtues I mentioned, otherwise I could be accused of being falsely humble!

Humility is a virtue which is often poorly understood, and it is important that we do our best to define what it encompasses. Humility should not in fact be a difficult thing to acquire for the person who, by studying life's lessons closely, realizes as they progress that they still have a lot more to learn. Whatever degree of evolution we may have attained, we should realize that there is still a long way to travel and, presuming we have perfectly assimilated all the things that made up the stages we have already passed through, we should keep in mind that one life is not enough to prove ourselves.

Humility therefore has to be practiced in relation to our advancement on the path of evolution, and we must be watchful. We should at no time ever give the impression that we have attained a stage of "achievement" which allows us to display a superior attitude. When, full of our convictions and of everything we have learned, we find ourselves among a group of people in an environment different from that in which we usually move, whether it be professionally, culturally, or mystically, let us not attempt to highlight our knowledge or to impose our ideas. Of course, putting what we know at the service of others is positive, interesting, and helpful. But there is an appropriate balance to everything, and we should join in and act with hearts and minds that are humble and are ready to receive. It is essential for us to always consider ourselves as students, and never as masters, for that is a status that we cannot give to ourselves, which could only be acknowledged by beings far greater than we. Our responsibility here is thus considerable, not only to others, but also to ourselves, to those who have gone before us, and to God.

Let us display humility not only in our spiritual work, but in our daily life among others too. Can it be so hard to measure

how small we are in relation to the divine majesty? And what are we individually, all alone on our own, among all our human brothers and sisters, wherever on Earth's surface they may be? Individuality has never outdone multiplicity; it has never given its sanction for a superiority over others, however long we are on this physical plane, in whatever field it may concern! We are a link in a long chain, and we should remember this. We should be aware that we are side by side with other seekers, and also among those who have not yet been drawn to the light.

We generally do not give enough thought to all that we owe to what is around us and those who compose it. Without them, what would we be? What would be our purpose, and how would we be able to serve, that is, fulfill the most noble task that can be allotted to a human being? Writing these words makes me recall a great humanist who has now passed on, Abbé Pierre, who was French, a European, and above all, a world citizen. For several decades he embodied the trilogy of humility, courage, and dignity. This great mystic chose to put his abilities, enthusiasm, and love for his neighbor at the service of the most disadvantaged. His reputation, like that of Mother Teresa, extends beyond borders. He has left the shadows and gone to the light, but his message will abide. I refer to him because he seems to me a good example of what can result from a combining of humility and service.

Serge Toussaint, Grand Master of the French-speaking Jurisdiction of AMORC, has written the following about humility:

We are but a speck of stardust in the immensity of the universe, a drop of water in the great cosmic ocean. Yet, while it is true that as people we are nothing much, the soul incarnated in us gives each person the ability to reflect the Divine Wisdom and be an agent of its works among humankind. But the only way to achieve this

consists specifically in acquiring humility, a virtue which by itself represents a certain degree of evolution.

I would like to add to this quotation that, in the celestial order, there is no inferiority. We must do all in our power to eliminate from ourselves the ego, at least in its negative aspect, in other words that element which distinguishes between us and that which is external to us. Using our ego wrongly cannot strengthen the links which join us to others: quite the contrary, it is divisive, and lies at the origin of our poor judgments, our negative criticisms, and our assessment of ourselves in relation to others, this assessment naturally always being in our favor.

How can we understand and love, if we are at the mercy of the working of our ego in this way? How, either, can we judge that we are progressing on the path of impersonal knowledge, if what results is just a glorification of our objective self? To be humble is to be able to forget ourselves in our relations with others. It is to take the view that, whatever our role, responsibilities, and place in society, we are, and continue to be, servers. It is in serving others that we find ourselves and fulfill our inner nature, for in so doing we make our share of the divine spark vibrate within us, in unison with that of all living beings.

True humility cannot be feigned. It is not satisfied with words alone: it is active, to the extent that anyone around us can feel it unreservedly. "Be gentle and humble of heart." This famous instruction reminds us continually of our duty. But humility is above all the aggregate of our thoughts, of our meditations, and of our study of what are called "the great eternal truths." Humility is an act of love, perhaps the greatest act, for it allows us to understand others, to be with them, and to be available to comfort, encourage, and help them at every juncture.

Humility has nothing to do with weakness. On the contrary, it is a demonstration of courage; for, to start with at least, it

requires a battle with oneself and with the objective self; until the point where, being certain of the divine presence within us, we become by nature humble in thought, word, and deed. Humility lies at the source of many other qualities and virtues; and since these bring us closer to others, they also bring us closer to the principles of humanity and dignity.

All beings endowed with reason have a predisposition to this same dignity, which should be a language common to humanity. The concept of humanity, a long time theoretical and which was depicted by the writer Victor Hugo as being “radiant and reconciled,” entered history as a drawing together of the whole of humankind. There is no humanity without humans. All men and women are its members, and any mistreatment of one single individual is a mistreatment of everyone.

Being dignified does not in any way mean behaving as if we feel superior to others, in whatever field it may be, and expressing a form of disdain towards them. Dignity is respect for ourselves and for others. It requires mastering what we say and what we do. By this I do not mean that it involves using language which is outdated, literary, or overly intellectual. But every word spoken should be accurate, and consistent with the morality of our time. In this way, we show respect for others, just as much as for ourselves.

We are, of course, subject to errors and inconsistencies, but we should quickly realize them and put them right, and also forgive ourselves for them. To be dignified can also mean refraining from talking a lot without saying much, while ensuring this silence cannot be construed as contempt. It is avoiding making negative judgments about anyone, for this rapidly leads to destructive thoughts and words, which will certainly harm those concerned, but will also harm ourselves. Indeed, how would we be able to experience inner peace in attuning ourselves to vibrations of

such a low level as gossip or insult, for example? To be dignified is therefore to be able to keep calm and remain silent in certain circumstances.

To be dignified does not mean, of course, that we should be cowardly and refuse to give help to another person if the need arises. Quite the contrary, if someone is attacked either physically or verbally in our presence, we have a duty to intervene. Let us remember that we are not perfect, and that no one is while they are on this human plane, limited by the objective self, and by his or her tendencies and reactions. We can make the assumption that what others do to us, we ourselves have done or will do; for according to the law that we have a series of incarnations, we must have succumbed to a fault or a weakness prior to having mastered it.

If it should happen that we find ourselves in a situation where our reactions would inevitably be negative, let us try mentally closing ourselves off for a few moments in the “mystic cloak of wisdom,” so as to find our strength and not lose our dignity. And ultimately let us check on ourselves, and be careful not to think or act in a manner that would be out of line with our highest ideals. Let us also be able to show ourselves worthy of what we choose. Let us respect everything that has been passed on, everything we have learned from others and from our own experience. There is much to say on dignity, just as there is on humility, and these two qualities should regularly be the object of our thoughts and meditations. It is certain that if you subject yourself to personal examination on these two points, you will arrive at a conclusion better than the one I have just outlined.

Let us now examine the last component of our trilogy, and try to define some aspects of courage. Courage is strength; it is not aggressiveness. We often liken to courage what is simply fearlessness, in the restrictive sense of that term. Similarly, we

speak of courage in connection with acts of war, actions taken against someone else, or sharp assertions which are often just the expression of an agitated self. Courage means confidence and firmness, first in relation to oneself. It requires courage to make a fair decision, even if this is not at first fully appreciated as such. It also requires courage to take the side of the weak against the strong, and to defend great ideals. But it also requires a lot of courage to set out on the “royal path” of knowledge, and on the harder, often very thankless, path of service to others.

To be courageous is also to show compassion on a daily basis to all those who are suffering. It is to move forward, whatever the obstacles may be, in what we adjudge the *summum bonum*—the greatest good, as we understand it to be. In this realm courage has to be accompanied by humility and dignity.

But courage is not without danger: this lies in excess and its outcomes. As an example, if care is not exercised, there is a risk that having the courage of your convictions leads to intolerance and even fanaticism. When this happens, courage can lead to a lack of understanding and a negative response, meaning its noble objective is not attained. Courage thus involves being cautious, even watchful. But would it be consistent with our definition of courage, if we failed to be courageous enough to face up to such risks, which are to be found in the excess of a quality?

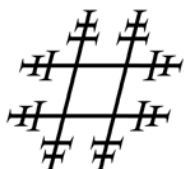
We must never shirk our responsibilities, and should thus demonstrate courage. Whatever we may do, let us do it well, and always have in mind these words: No half measures. In this way of thinking, courage is also connected to effort and thus to work, not just allegorically or in reference to the inner work that we must carry out on ourselves every day. I am referring to our daily, material, professional work. We must sometimes show willpower and overcome our lack of drive, our laziness, or tiredness, whether well-founded or not.

Thanks to courage, we can overcome many things, and if it happens that we lack it, let us admit it, and come to terms with what we are. Let us be neither envious nor jealous of the work, the strength, the endurance, or the understanding of other people. Let us be aware of the limits of our abilities, and look at ourselves as we are. Having done this analysis, let us endeavor to improve how we behave. Let us not wallow in a state of laziness and weakness, and let us draw, deep within us, on will, the sister of courage and dignity.

Let us be humble, let us be dignified, let us be courageous! In so doing, we shall be demonstrating our fraternal love, manifesting our compassion, and we shall never be alone: we shall be receptive to the instructions of our real self, and thus fulfill the Divine Will, which is always good, and ceaselessly aims at the greatest good of each and every one, as long as we heed it and allow it to express itself through us.

Let us learn to let go, to not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the circumstances and conditions of this world, constantly remembering that at the heart of ourselves, as at the heart of all human beings, there forever stands a silent and watchful guardian: the Master Within. This is the prime element of the divine spark present within us.

And so I shall conclude by wishing you humility, dignity, and courage in your every thought, word, and deed.



Rosicrucian Ontology



The Divine is the Universal Intelligence that thought, manifested, and animated all Creation according to unchanging perfect laws.

All of Creation is permeated by a Universal Soul that evolves toward the perfection of its own nature.

Life is the vehicle for cosmic evolution, such as it manifests in the universe and on Earth.

Matter owes its existence to a vibratory energy that is propagated throughout the entire universe and which permeates each atom.

Time and space are states of consciousness and do not have any material reality independent from humans.

The human being is a double being in his or her nature and triple in her or his manifestation.

The soul incarnates in the body of a child at the first inhalation, making the child a living and conscious being.

Our destiny is determined by the manner in which we apply our free will and by the karma resulting from this.

Death occurs with the last breath and results in the final separation between the body and the soul.

The spiritual evolution of humans is ruled by reincarnation, and its ultimate purpose is to reach Perfection.

There is a supra-human kingdom, formed by all the disincarnated souls populating the invisible world.

After completing its spiritual evolution, the soul of each human being reintegrates with the Universal Soul in all purity and lives in the Divine Immanence in full consciousness.

With its twelve major laws, this text summarizes the Rosicrucian Ontology, meaning the ideas Rosicrucians have about Creation in general and humans in particular. We must nevertheless indicate that these laws are not dogmatic.

FROM A TRADITIONAL point of view, it is said that human beings were created in the image of God. Thus, at the moment of our creation, humans received “strength.” On the mystic plane, this strength is our ability to concentrate each of our thoughts, words, and actions towards the Divine Absolute. It represents the state of consciousness that is designated by the name “Christ state,” “Buddhic state,” and many others. For my part, I will call it the “Rose-Croix state.”

The strength to which I am referring is perfectly illustrated in the allegorical story of David and Goliath; this is a profound illustration of its power. Using a pebble, the young David strikes down the giant Goliath, hitting him fatally in the center of his forehead. When we know that in this story the future king David symbolizes the power of spirituality, and Goliath that of materiality, we better understand to what extent thought is victorious over matter. This shows that the strength which must be ours is not that of the body, but that of the soul.

We find another illustration of this principle in the eleventh card of the tarot, where strength is symbolized by a young woman holding a lion’s mouth open using just her hands. It is clear that the strength thus represented is not in any way physical. Here again it symbolizes the supremacy of the strength of the soul over that of the body. This does not mean that bodily energy cannot serve a spiritual end, quite the contrary. The body and its functions in fact serve as a vehicle for the soul, permitting it to evolve while in contact with the material world.

In speaking, we use the vocal organs to express what we are thinking. When doing this, we are calling on a part of our physical

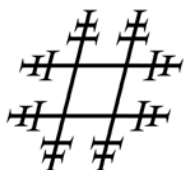
force. The best proof of this is that the intensity of our words is very closely linked to our mental and emotional state at the time. So when we are irritated or angry, we tend to concentrate a greater than usual force into our voice. Conversely, when we pray aloud, the words we speak become a vague whisper.

The force of our words often reflects our inner condition, that is, the condition of our soul. The same can be said for the movements we make. An act of ritual, for example, is completely different from a gesture of annoyance. The interesting thing about this body-mind-soul connection is that we can take action to alter our inner state by observing the intensity of the force we are manifesting in our behavior.

Going back to the example of anger, becoming aware that we are speaking loudly and that our gestures are belligerent ought to prompt us to act on ourselves, and calm down. Unfortunately, through lack of will or control, we do not always think of doing this. Conversely, when we are praying or meditating, we ensure that we are calm and relaxed, so as to be inwardly receptive.

And so I think that the force or strength of the human being lies not only in the power of mental concentration, but also in the ability to control what is said and done, meaning one's words, gestures, and actions. In so doing, the person will be placing their whole being at the service of the soul which is evolving through them, and contributing positively to their spiritual evolution. This realization is the key to true strength, and to the mastery of self.

May strength always be within you, and may it help you to go through life in peace and with success.



Rosicrucian Ethics



Be patient; patience fosters hope and makes time an ally on the path of life.

Be confident; self-confidence is a source of fulfillment, and the trust we place in others is a source of friendship.

Be temperate; temperance will prevent the fall into excess and provide appeasement.

Be tolerant; tolerance broadens the spirit and supports human relationships.

Be detached; detachment is a proof of freedom and promotes inner prosperity.

Be generous; generosity benefits the giver as much as the receiver.

Be honest; integrity leads to a peaceful conscience and brings serenity.

Be humble; humility brings growth and respect from others.

Be courageous; courage grows daily and brings strength in adversity.

Be non-violent; non-violence generates inner harmony and spreads peace among beings.

Be benevolent; benevolence gladdens the heart and embellishes the soul.

Being all of these, we can say that you are wise,
because wisdom is the application of these
virtues.

This text expresses the importance Rosicrucians give
to ethics, based on the awakening of the
noblest virtues of the human soul and its
most divine properties.

HAPPINESS! What is happiness? Everyone considers this question and it occupies our thoughts from our earliest years right up to our last breath. Everyone asks for it and longs for it. If we think we lack it, we complain of its absence and envy that of others. We often think that happiness is for tomorrow. And then momentarily we think it has touched us with its grace; we rest within its sweetness; we reflect it, we express it.

Is happiness elusive, or can it be lasting? Does it come from without, or from within? Is it possible on Earth? You will have asked yourself these questions, just like the billions of human beings who have preceded us, and like those populating our world today. This notion of happiness—defined as a bliss of the soul, the mind, and the heart—has even interested the scientific world. Recently, studies have been conducted in several universities to try to comprehend and clarify this great mystery.

Scholars, teachers, doctors, and brain specialists from various countries, all with different approaches, have reached common findings that in many aspects tie in with the Rosicrucian conception, and thus with the mystical or philosophical conception of happiness.

I found this research interesting, and before providing a summary of them for you, I would like to share the following adage for your meditation: “Happiness is recognized by the noise it makes when it is going away.” Therefore, the advice I would give you is to hear, to see, and to live happiness when it is present. Live and enjoy the moment. Happiness can be for now, and not only for tomorrow.

Happiness is a state of mind; we must want happiness and not feel we are unfit for it. Too many people turn down something happy, small or large, for fear that it may only be fleeting, that it may not last, that it will inevitably be followed by something unhappy, etc. And so, through fear of suffering, they close their hearts and minds to the happiness that presents itself, rather than running the risk of being sad and disappointed later.

This way of thinking and acting is negative; it effectively closes the door to all joy and bliss. Since happiness is above all, a state of mind, it can be fairly recurrent—even lasting—in spite of the vicissitudes that attend the human condition, the unhappy experiences and trials, the disillusionments and the betrayals. Fulfillment and well-being, and therefore happiness, can be ours quite often, as I said. Those of optimistic or positive temperament are by no means spared from problems and difficulties of all kinds, but they, more than others, are able to “bounce back,” adapt, and change a negative situation into a positive one. Personally, I do not always have this ability, but I have the luck and the happiness of sharing my life with a person who has enough for two, and even more!

Of course, we must not confuse happiness with pleasure, even if pleasure may be a part of it. Humanity has many desires—we cannot wonder about the nature of happiness without first reflecting on the nature of desire. We all know that happiness does not depend solely on the satisfying of our desires. Whether they are aware of it or not, all human beings are seeking happiness, not as an incidental goal, but as a final purpose, alongside which every other aspiration appears secondary. Some people claim that they are not seeking happiness, but rather, glory, power, and wealth. But in reality, it is the quest for happiness that is motivating them, for although they are not aware of it, this is

what they are seeking through the quest for glory, power, and wealth. We therefore have to be careful not to confuse happiness with the need, desire, or aspiration that can make us happy.

Let us think of happiness as calmness of the soul and consider a happy life to be based on inner serenity. Our soul aspires to peace, hence the need to search for well-being within ourselves. Seen in this way, happiness is actually calmness of the soul, the feeling of bliss that is in fact like an art of living. It is not a question of a chance harmonizing with the divine part of our being, but of a continual communion, written into our daily program. We can therefore say that happiness should be sought in the activities of everyday life and not outside of company.

As Socrates said, “Likening pleasure to happiness leads to a superficial life.” Humans can become the slaves of pleasure if we seek happiness through it. But is that not the exact opposite of happiness? Therefore, be wary of the seeking of pleasure in itself, for it may lead you into the permanent whirlpool of dissatisfaction. In reality, such pleasure is not happiness, but an illusion of it.

Since happiness is like a state of completeness, it takes for granted living in harmony with an established order—that is to say, in conformity with the laws that govern humanity in particular and the universe in general. This state can only be perceived by the intermediary of our Inner Self. Happiness is thus our heart’s fragrance, our soul’s emotion. Just like a guardian angel, if we want it to be, it can be a traveling companion, a source of tranquility and serenity.

Here is now a seven-point summary of some scientists’ view of happiness. Members of AMORC will notice much similarity with the Rosicrucian view of things. The first point will perhaps surprise you:

1. It has been observed that people who define themselves as happy, all pursue an orderly and clean environment. They like order both at home and in their thinking. Tidying our belongings, our papers, our books, and so on, is like sorting our experiences and drawing more benefit from them. Being organized and punctual helps us to feel we have charge of our life, and are not victims undergoing events. This concurs somewhat with an adage often used within AMORC: "Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish."

If you are one of those who has trouble sorting your papers, and tidying your cupboards and mind, make an analysis of the situation and judge whether the disorder surrounding you, or that in your mind, is contributing to your happiness; or whether, on the contrary, it represents a source of preoccupation for you, an anxiety and therefore a stress that too often blocks your way to true serenity, to Peace Profound.

2. This first point is not contradictory to the second one: We must be able to be content with what is good enough. We often say words to the effect that "if it has to be done, it has to be done well." This will ever be an eternal truth, and in general, we are used to the idea and are convinced that all efforts must be made in order to attain the best, that is excellence, whether at work or in any other field. But it must be acknowledged that this challenge often leaves us with a feeling of personal dissatisfaction. This is why ultra-perfectionists are more often unhappy than happy. Therefore we should be able to do things, in part, to discriminate, to weigh, and to define our priorities, because people permanently seeking perfection can no longer open themselves up to

the sensation of contentment that they need in order to be happy. Having said this, I know people who are only happy in the complete and perfect accomplishment of a task, whether that is intellectual or otherwise. Harvey Spencer Lewis, Emperor of AMORC from 1915 to 1939, exhorted us in one of his messages, to put ourselves fully and unreservedly into any act or ideal, the proviso being to see it through to completion. So my conclusion is that we must give the best of ourselves in everything we do, but not to the point of becoming deaf and blind to the world around us. In our tenaciousness to do well, let us not close the door to happiness, whether it is our own or that of those close to us.

3. A third condition is necessary in order to experience happiness. It can be summarized as follows: Live the present moment. Here again, science agrees with philosophy, for this principle is one of the basic precepts of the Rosicrucian teachings. Happiness is a chain of little pleasures that we have to be able to seize. Appreciate the pleasant side of each moment, like being content on feeling the warmth of the water in the shower in the morning, without thinking of all that awaits us in our day's work. Make the most of a ray of sunshine, the song of a bird, the smell of fresh bread at the bakery, and any other pleasant sensation that is fleeting and unexpected. Even in dark periods of our lives, even in turmoil and suffering, we must uninhibitedly and wholeheartedly seize the flash of joy that crosses our sky, even a second of which may be termed happiness!
4. Having carried out experiments, it seems that experts have discovered the region of the brain that influences our well-being. This zone comes into activity when we

experience something new. The sensation of happiness can be provoked by anything that takes us out of our routine, such as a new project in life or in work, a different journey that exposes us to discover other landscapes, coming across something new, or just a walk in a previously unknown town. Discovery and newness are in this way, catalysts for the sensation of happiness. This fourth discovery takes us to the fifth reason contributing to lasting happiness or something close to it: activity.

5. Work is one of the main sources of satisfaction and therefore of happiness, for it is in activity that we experience that almost magical forgetting of self. Boredom leads to depression. Therefore, if you are no longer of working age, as understood by our society, then dedicate yourself to other, voluntary activities. You will agree that an investment put into an altruistic cause is a great stimulation in and of itself. Do not miss out on it, for helping others gives rise to incomparable happiness. Spiritual work directed to others should also be carried out daily; this is both helpful for them and stimulating for yourself or the person doing the work.
6. Another finding that has been made concerns age. We often refer to the fulfillment of old age and many people over sixty say they are happier than when they were young. It appears that with time, we learn to appreciate more intensely every sensation of satisfaction. Therefore if you are young, strive, without waiting for old age, always to see the positive aspect of your life and of the material and spiritual conditions in which you are evolving. Of course, you have no doubt not yet

fulfilled all of your dreams, but be proud of what you have already accomplished.

7. The seventh and final point revealed by the scientists tends to show that the “miracle remedy” for unhappiness and the key to the greatest happiness, is kindness. Yes indeed, the people who say they are happy are for the most part, more kindly, more pleasant, and more generous than others. Kindness, attention given to others, and compassion are crucial factors in the attaining of happiness. I will add that these outpourings of the heart should not remain internalized, and therefore suppressed. They should be expressed and manifested in practical ways.

I encourage you to carry out a little assessment. For whom have you done some good lately? Have you thought to thank those who have helped you? Have you paid a compliment to your partner, your children, a neighbor, or a work colleague? When you do this, you will be giving the other person a pleasant moment of happiness, and will be contributing to your own well-being too. Do we not say that “the greatest happiness is that which we give to another”?

In sum, we can say that science believes that happiness associates a region of the brain with behaviors, even with ways of thinking, which make us happy: being active and altruistic; living in the present; being orderly and organized; accepting things, events, and age with serenity; and above all, being kind and loving. This is very close, similar indeed, to what Sages in general and Rosicrucians in particular have always propounded.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle thought that “the truly determining cause of happiness is found in activity conforming

to virtue.” It is true that we often refer to virtue. It is a characteristic of a virtue that, as soon as it is put into effect, it is synonymous with freedom. In fact, the more virtues we express in our judgments and behaviors, the more we free ourselves and are conscious of our liberty.

Comenius, an eminent seventeenth-century Rosicrucian, encouraged humankind never to deviate from its goal: happiness! Harvey Spencer Lewis conceived ideal happiness to be in a peaceable and friendly environment. On a par with Mother Teresa, whose joyfulness was sublime, Sister Emmanuelle said:

Happiness is quite simply to rejoice in what we have and what we are, without comparing with others, to give priority to simple human relationships. It is to take the time to experience selfless exchanges, to warmly share with those around us.

In conclusion, my view is that in the absolute sense, happiness is to be found in the ability to love all beings and to respect all that lives. Once inspired by such a love, we feel one single positive and constructive desire being born within us—namely, to use our gifts and talents to serve, help, comfort, guide, and bring peace. Seen from this perspective, the quest we have to pursue is simple, for it consists in cultivating serenity and developing the intelligence of the heart. This requires maintaining pure thoughts, speaking helpful words, and making sure that our actions are constructive. In so doing, we allow our soul to express its wisdom and to contribute to the harmony in us and around us.

Have no doubt that the source of happiness is located in the deepest part of ourselves, and if you abide by the adage “Know yourself, and you will know the universe and the gods,” then, believe me, you will know more than the universe and the gods: you will know happiness!

LIKE A TORCH, wisdom burns within us and ought to give light to each of our thoughts, words, and deeds. I have previously talked about wisdom in a writing entitled “The Inner Pilgrimage,” which appears in my book, *So Mote It Be!*, published in 1994. Allow me to repeat a section of it again, as it illustrates my view of wisdom very well. I should add that this extract is especially aimed at Rosicrucians.

To be wise means being thoroughly familiar with all aspects of human duality and to apply the mastery of these aspects in all of our relationships. Wise is the one who always shows the way to follow without ever imposing it and who never does for others that which they are always well advised to do for themselves. Wise also are those who know how to be silent when they should just listen, and to speak when they can and must be heard. The true wise person is not the one who speaks well about wisdom, but the one who is favorably spoken of because of the wisdom of his or her actions. From all the foregoing, it follows that true wisdom always listens more than it talks, much less than it acts, and never acts without thinking ahead. To show wisdom does not mean to want to absolutely reform the evil we believe we see in others, but to harmonize with the good that we are certain to perceive within them. Broadly speaking, the mission of wisdom is to preserve harmony where it exists and to do everything possible to put it where it is not.

To hold in one's hand the sword of wisdom and to use it wisely is not an easy task, even for a grand and noble knight. Great is the temptation for people to believe they are wise just

because they wear this sword upon them. To convince ourselves of this, all we need to do is to think again of the legendary and initiatory epic of the Knights of the Round Table. Excalibur, the sword of power, broke when through ignorance and pride, young Arthur invoked its magical power to defeat the Knight Lancelot, who symbolized nobility and idealism. It was only because of his deep repentance and his immediate and definitive realization of his error that the Lady of the Lake restored to him the sword of kingship. So it is with the sword of wisdom—if we use it with impunity to satisfy our ego's wrongful desires, we will turn it into an instrument of madness and evil power. It is not by accident that Kabbalists have always taught that madness is the opposite of wisdom.

Therefore, a pilgrim-knight of the Rose-Croix must understand the true meaning of the word “sage” before it is too late. In order to do so, it must be learned through initiation that, just as it is not the cowl that makes the priest, so the sword, whatever it may be, does not make the Knight. To carry the sword of wisdom on oneself without being wise is tantamount to gazing at daylight while being blindfolded. It is only by uniting the Cosmic Power of Wisdom with the human virtues of the sage that one can attain the ideal state of the Rose-Croix Knight. The ancient mystics spoke about the Wisdom of the Sages because they understood the necessity for this union. It is also perhaps for this same reason that King Arthur, after having received Illumination, cried out, pointing Excalibur toward the sky: “Earth and King are one!” Had he not indeed just attained the state of Rose-Croix wherein Wisdom and Sage are actually one?”

What I said then about wisdom seems to me just as true now. I would however, like to provide a few more details. Too many mystics confuse knowledge with wisdom. Knowledge is

to know, whereas to be wise is to understand and apply what we know. To illustrate, many people have read many works, including sacred, religious, or philosophical texts. But who can say that they have understood and integrated everything contained in these writings? How indeed can we apply in our daily lives, a knowledge that we have not understood? The problem is thus, where wisdom is concerned, to know what we are talking about, and to only talk about that which we are sure we have understood.

This should instill modesty, for we can never be truly certain of the understanding we have of something. It is preferable, in this regard, to put into daily practice a special quality that we have perfectly incorporated, than to speak eruditely about all the virtues without being able to apply any of them. Humanity's goal, in fact, is not so much to acquire knowledge, as to apply it.

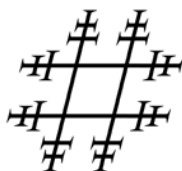
When the Master Jesus taught people to love one another, he also said that there was no commandment greater than this. What could be simpler than to say, read, or write the phrase "Let us love one another." Everyone knows of it, but who understands the essence of it enough to put it into practice in daily life?

When we reflect on the meaning of this special commandment, we see that it reveals the ideal of behavior that all people will one day attain, but that only some have achieved. Moreover, the very few who have actually achieved it were more than just wise. Each of them could have been called "Christ." Since the state of wisdom must be attained before the Christ state, it follows that there exists a commandment that is easier to follow for the evolving beings that we are.

This more attainable commandment is one that the wise person is capable of keeping to, which I think may be expressed by the statement, "Let us understand one another." In other

words, let us learn to know one other and appreciate one another as we are, for we are not yet able to love our neighbor as ourselves. Let us strive to apply this mutual understanding in all of our human relationships. In so doing, we will accomplish much more for our evolution and for that of the world than we will by reading the greatest precepts—Christian and other—without understanding them.

If we manage to bring this commandment into our lives—not by loving all beings, but by not detesting any of them—then by our very attitude, we will have grown closer to great and genuine wisdom.



Listening, Speaking 19 Communicating

WE ARE APPRECIATING more than ever the importance of communication, at both the individual level and the collective level. The history of humanity—our history—has always been punctuated by wars, fanaticism, and acts of aggression of every sort. Often, such tragedies and ill-feeling have come about where communication was refused or was impossible. Listening and speaking are what bring about communication.

Of the objective senses humankind is endowed with, hearing has a key importance.

When it is functioning well, no particular effort is required for sounds to reach us easily. It is even difficult for us to curb them, to the extent that it can seem we are being assaulted by them. Sometimes words are like sounds or a noisy background, and in these cases we hear but without listening.

In order to listen and establish communication with the other person or persons, we must be genuinely there, and attentive. Our mind must not stray. Our thoughts must not disperse, and our center of interest must be restricted to the words of the person we are speaking with at that time. Our ears and our mind—also our heart—must be open.

If our attentiveness is insufficient, or if we are distracted, then we are not really listening. This can give rise to misunderstandings and failures to comprehend, provoking justifiable indignation on the part of the person that we are not listening to. To sum up, listening is an essential act requiring particular attentiveness and adequate concentration.

Listening is a subtle thing, and has nuances that we learn to recognize in conversing. This conversing between humans is a need which is natural, practical, and useful; it is satisfying to the mind. It can be related to a need for information, or a need to give or receive advice. Whether we agree or not with the views held, when we are listening, we are learning; consciously or unconsciously, a part of our being is responding.

True listening cannot take place unless a real and sincere exchange is established between those communicating. This presupposes a wish, at the outset, to share and to communicate. This is why it proves difficult to converse on subjects where opinions differ. Listening becomes difficult then, for each person is preoccupied more with the need to assert their opinions than with the wish to listen to those of others.

Most of the time, what ought to have been a dialogue ends up in a debate, an argument, or even a serious dispute. Does this mean that people should limit themselves to communicating only with those who share the same ideas? No, provided there is truly an exchange of points of view.

Experience demonstrates that very often, dialogue occurring between people whose ideas have nothing in common turns into a forceful interchange where each tries to convince the other. In such circumstances, what ought to be communication and a sharing of ideas becomes a conflict between different egos.

If we are listening—in the broadest meaning of this expression—not only do we open ourselves up to others and to the world but, even when there is silence, we can hear and understand others regardless of the absence of words. We can pick up the true nature and the intentions of the person we are speaking with. Through their words, we can find the way to the person's heart and get closer to their deeper personality. Beyond

the words uttered and emotions displayed, communication then becomes a genuine exchange and—even better—a communion.

Listening is proportional to the harmony established between persons, whether during an intimate conversation between two people, or by means of a wider assembly; for example between a teacher and pupils, a lecturer and audience, and so on.

Listening can be mental, emotional, or intuitive. In the case of the first of these, thinking has to come into play, as does an objective understanding of what is said. Each word has its importance and needs to be selected well.

In the case of emotional listening, the voice, gestures, and look carry as much importance as the words that are spoken. Silences can be painful, heavy, unbearable, or scornful, and just as injurious as words can be. Conversely, a smile, or a friendly or kind gesture, can touch us and cheer us just as much as a pretty turn of phrase.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, we have intuitive listening. This occurs during silent communion. Do we not say that “words are made of silver and silence of gold”? In convents and monasteries, there is a vow of silence, but words also have their place, because reading the Bible aloud is practiced daily, and religious chant—in Latin or otherwise—has always echoed among the vaults.

We may think of silence and speaking as complementary, and every bit as necessary and important as one another. We should without doubt follow the advice of Marian Edelman: “Learn to be silent and hear what is real in you, so that you may hear it in others.” An extremely wise woman I know said to me recently about silence: “We put three years into learning how to talk, and a whole lifetime into keeping quiet.”

Beyond the sounds, words, gestures, and looks, listening allows us to transform an exchange into a communion as I was saying before. The relationship with the other person then goes beyond word of mouth: it is established from soul to soul.

Every person has a duty to listen to nature, the universe, and the God of their Heart, and to establish a dialogue between their objective self and their spiritual self. If you are reading these pages, then you are no doubt interested in philosophy and in what is generally known as mysticism or spirituality. This being so, it is likely that you are working in a general way to perfect yourself, and more particularly to cultivate the art of communication by developing your sense of listening.

If listening has to be a golden rule, then so too does speaking. Speech is the verbal expression of thought and, like listening, it is basic to the communication between living beings. Every day, we exchange ideas through words; we express our needs, show our satisfaction or disagreement, and so on. That is why individuals—when deprived of speaking—have difficulty making themselves understood by others. They can, nonetheless, do their best to establish contact at a level beyond words.

The language used by people today is different from what it was. It is the result of a very long evolution through time. Specialists on the subject think that, before it became a mode of communication, speech was a means of expression.

In the beginning, sounds and shouts represented primarily an emotional state and were used to manifest fear, joy, anger, or pleasure. It was only later that words came to represent ideas. Many strong feelings, moreover, are references to speech: for example “I give my word,” “I take back my word,” “My word is my bond,” “You went back on your word,” and “Respecting the deceased’s last words.”

Since the dawn of humanity, the voice has been used in incantations, invocations, prayers, mantras, and even martial arts. Rosicrucians ourselves make use of certain vowel sounds during our work.

Without providing a thorough explanation, we may say that vowel sounds are the carriers of an energy that is physical, psychic, and spiritual; which affects matter and consciousness. This is why Rosicrucians intone them to have an effect on certain pathological states of the body, or to awaken certain latent psychic faculties. Intoned correctly, vowel sounds vibrate in harmony with the most constructive forces of nature and the universe. Intoning them therefore enables us to receive the positive influence of these forces.

If speech is the expression of our thoughts and emotions, it is also—above all else—vibration. It can be either constructive or destructive. In other words, it can bring about discord or restore harmony: a word can injure or cheer.

When they part from the mouth, words form a bridge to the one listening to them. The same applies to mental communication or the transmission of thought. A link is woven which allows exchange between two beings or a group of people. Through our own words and those of the other person, we can—just as I was saying in regard to listening—open the way to the heart and soul of the one we are speaking with.

The human voice is therefore a link between the visible and invisible planes. It is the expression of the creative power of the Divine Word. Jesus “preached the good word” and it was by means of the word that the angel Gabriel became the Annunciator angel. It was also through a voice that Moses received Illumination, and that Muhammad became prophet of Allah: “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet.”

The story of the Tower of Babel, and hundreds of others, indicate to us the importance of speech. A multitude of books would be required to assemble all the traditional, religious, and cultural references to speech, the voice, and words.

Many traditions indirectly refer to the sacred Word, as an expression of Divine Thought. The Word, the Lost Word, the Language of the gods, the Logos, the Ptah, the parable (derived from the same root as parole, the French for “word”), the good word, and many other expressions are all references to this link between divinity and humanity.

The voice can be the most beautiful of all music, and chants—whether primitive, tribal, or religious—have always been a means of communication between people and an expression of the soul. That is why they affect us deeply, move us, heighten our joy, or flood us with sadness.

As regards emotion, we can feel whether someone is calm, worried, or annoyed solely by the sound and intensity of their voice, which creates in the atmosphere a vibratory energy that exactly conveys their thoughts and emotions. When a person is angry, their manner of speaking is such that it negatively disturbs their immediate environment. Their negative vibrations even affect those present, who in turn may become edgy or irritated.

Conversely, a perfectly calm person who is pleasant and positive may, just by speaking, transform a bad atmosphere and restore harmony. It is quite common, upon entering a place, to feel whether there have been arguments, shouting, abusiveness, or great sorrow there. The place itself, the walls and the furniture, are temporarily or permanently imbued with these vibrations. The same goes, of course, for those very positive places where there is consistently joy and calm.

Having our free will, we can use speech—and hence words—either constructively or destructively. In absolute terms, we should only use them for a positive purpose, for otherwise we are contributing to the creation of thought-forms which are negative and consequently harmful to the physical and psychic well-being not only of ourselves, but also of those who hear us.

If we consider our planet as a living entity, we can say that unpleasant words (just like unpleasant thoughts) pollute its aura, resulting in negative vibrations which come back to us like a boomerang. Our behavior, unfortunately, is often far from what would constitute ideal thinking, doing, and saying. Too frequently and without thought, we use unsuitable, destructive, harsh, and harmful words. In general, we speak poorly, but also too much, whereas the art of speaking well consists among other things of making oneself understood properly with a minimum of words, hence the phrase “Well thought-out, well stated.”

The words we say are significant, and are often the reflection of what we are thinking. It is said that “the words betray the thought.” Yet sometimes after a lively discussion, an animated exchange of opinion, or an actual argument, we hear it said by way of an excuse that “I didn’t mean what I said,” as if our mouth and tongue worked in isolation from our thoughts and emotions. But is this so? Should we not, really, see here our thought briefly escaping, as if it was closed up in a strongbox which the emotion of the moment unbolted, allowing its unintentional release?

A great many works have been written about words, both the nice and the nasty ones, and about communication in general. In conversations between friends, or in interviews with celebrities, one question regularly comes up: “What is your favorite or least favorite word?” Although it is limited, this little test is quite revealing. What is your own answer?

What emerges from all these words that you have “listened to” in reading these lines is that we must learn to master our thoughts and words, to genuinely listen, and to speak openly.

To conclude, here are three excerpts from sacred texts that I offer for your meditation: the first is from the Qur’an, the second from the Gospel of John, and the third goes back to Ancient Egypt.

A good word is like a good tree whose roots are solid and whose branches reach the sky. Allah willing, it gives its fruits in all seasons. A bad word is like a bad tree that has been uprooted from above the ground; there is no firm place for it.



In the beginning was the word
And the word was with God,
And God was the word.
The word was in the beginning with God.
Through it everything came about
And without it not a thing came about.
What came to be in the word was life
And the life was the light of people
And the light in the darkness shines
And the darkness could not apprehend it.



Ptah, the Great, is the Thought and the Tongue of the deities, and Thought is what gives rise to all that is seen manifest. And the power of Thought and of Tongue came from Ptah.

Extracts from the Charter of AMORC



Tradition - Ethics - Humanism

AMORC unreservedly and unequivocally condemns practices that violate human dignity, individual integrity, and personal property. AMORC also strongly objects to the tarnishing of traditional and philosophical values by those acting as impostors, who are bringing these values into disrepute in the eyes of public institutions and public opinion. For this reason, the ethical principles that AMORC has always held are restated in this Charter:

1. AMORC is legally constituted and registered as a public-benefit, educational organization, and consents to answering for its activities to the relevant public authorities.
2. It conducts its activity in the field of endeavor applicable to it in a peaceful fashion, and refrains from anything that might undermine public order or the authority of the State.
3. It never lays down one single ideology or dogma for its members, and respects the plurality of religious and philosophical beliefs.
4. It refrains from all political activity and discussion, and allows each of its members freedom of opinion in this field.

5. It does not use any method of persuasion or manipulation that might subvert the free will and choice of the individual.
6. It never presents the views or the work of any of its officers to its members as the only articulation of the truth.
7. It allows each of its members to remain completely free to leave the organization at any time, without being harassed in any manner whatsoever.
8. It opposes any form of racial or ethnic segregation.
9. It categorically condemns the indoctrination of children, as well as any breach of the laws on schooling and education.

Note: the Charter comprises 19 clauses.

THE SAYING “If you want to be beautiful, stop for one minute before your mirror, five before your soul, and fifteen before your God” sums up rather well one of the goals that every human being should pursue. To honor Divine Beauty should be our most important objective; it is one that cannot be achieved unless we ourselves become beautiful. When I speak of beauty, I do not of course mean the bodily beauty that many attach too much importance to, and which at present, has unfortunately become an absurd cult. I am thinking instead of the beauty of our inner sanctuary, which whatever the external appearance of the temple to where it resides, may at any time radiate in the form of a magnetism that nothing and no one can distort or weaken.

Ugliness should not be considered in this respect as a lack of physical beauty, but as the expression of a great paucity of spirituality. What makes a lightbulb beautiful, however pure the shape and quality of its glass may be, is above all the degree of luminosity it is capable of emitting. The same is true of the human being. As long as the person goes on hiding their inner light under a bushel, they remain a prisoner in their body, and can at best only manifest a veneer of what seems beautiful to them.

It is mysticism alone that can give us the power to unveil our spirituality and set free the virtues hidden in our soul. Let us take truth for example. There is no error more serious than refusing to see and hear the truth. This is so because God is One, but errors are many since ignorance has an unlimited number of followers. What makes an individual beautiful is knowledge of

self; that knowledge can raise them up to the farthest stars and bestow on them the gift of Divine Consciousness.

Let us also observe that it is not by chance that the state of Christ Consciousness is symbolized in the Kabbalistic Tree by the sephiroth Tiphereth, itself the symbol of the Adamic Beauty on Earth. Is it not said that the Master Jesus himself came to manifest Divine Beauty?

Let us strive to emulate the beauty of intention and action that motivated the Master Jesus throughout his ministry. This does not of course mean that we should think we are him, seeking to flatter our own ego by self-importantly imitating what we think we know of him. It just means that we should do everything we can to increase awareness of beauty on the part of the people around us, and help their sense of what is beautiful to move towards a higher embodiment.

I think that this goal is difficult to attain through art, for at this point in human evolution, it is still too imperfect an expression of Divine Perfection. It is true that there are many masters who, through music, painting, sculpture, and other branches of art, have embodied thought-forms of great purity and perfection. But for most people, such works are beyond what they are capable of sensing and understanding, where beauty is concerned. This is no doubt the reason that an inspired painting is, for some, the epitome of ghastliness, and why for others, decadent music is the height of inspiration.

None of this means of course that there is no such thing as Universal Beauty. It simply shows us that incarnate human beings, before being able to discern the existence of such beauty, remain long-term prisoners of our false conception of what is beautiful. In this book there is another chapter also devoted to beauty—namely beauty through art.

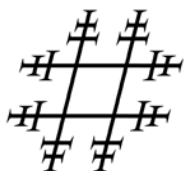
It is only by evolving towards higher and higher planes of consciousness that each person can raise the veil and draw nearer to the magnificence of true beauty. Until humans attain a certain degree of evolution, all we do is project into our environment, the meaning that our minds give to beauty. In other words, we seek what is beautiful through the eyes of our body and not through the eyes of our soul. In this respect, we can say that there are as many criteria for beauty as there are individuals, and this is true when we compare all civilizations and all forms of society, even current ones. We can observe though, that there are certain things that everyone agrees emanate beauty, reflect harmony, give rise to inspiration, or bring calm.

Just to present a few examples, I suspect you have never heard it said that a sunrise or sunset, or a starry sky, are ugly things. Things are altogether different if you ask several people what they think about the beauty of some object or another. You then obtain variances between different concepts of beauty, each of them being the result of the education, personality, and inner evolution of the individual. It is thus simple to see that the problem of humans is not that we are insensitive to Universal Beauty, but that, in most cases, we are not conscious of it, do not know where to place it, and are unable to express it in what we think, say, and do.

As I have just stressed, every person is sensitive to the beauty that manifests by means of nature. We should therefore lead those around us, and even a wider group of people if we can, to reflect on the why and how regarding this sensitivity to beauty. In so doing, what we will be gradually leading them to is this: instead of continuing to make do with that which encompasses the beauty of nature and the universe, they will be consciously taking part in it—as performer and spectator. Let us guide them to want to open the *Book of Man [Humanity]* and the *Book of*

Nature. Let us inspire them to want to know and understand the laws that are operating in them and around them.

This is what I have done my best to do through these reflections; I hope that you will find, within you and around you, sublime Universal Beauty.



Tribute to 21 Harvey Spencer Lewis

IT IS WITH GREAT emotion and a feeling of gratitude that I write this chapter dedicated to the exceptional man, Harvey Spencer Lewis.

A rare personality, major figure in Rosicrucianism, pioneer, trailblazer, and someone resolutely modern, Harvey Spencer Lewis had his sights set on the future, and on what he liked to call “the Cosmic.”

While his message drew its source from the past and the Primordial Tradition, in his life he was creative, active, dynamic, persistent, and full of hope. His ideas, his words, writings, and techniques have since been taken up by numerous groups, people, and writers, some even freely appropriating them. His life and work were completely devoted to the Rosicrucian ideal through the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross.

The life of intense service and work that he lived caused an early end to his incarnation, but the inheritance he left behind has remained in the hearts of those that knew him and, in turn, of those that have succeeded him; and is now in the hearts of all those who, today, are following the path he set out.

More than a century ago, in 1909, H. Spencer Lewis completed what he himself called “the journey of a pilgrim to the East,” the geographical East for the one who was in America, and also the symbolic East, from whence each morning comes the light. This young man was going to the meeting of his life. He was meeting his destiny, and entering the amazing and mysterious history of the Rose-Croix.

When he crossed the Atlantic to return to the continent which the inhabitants of the new world called “old Europe,” did he suspect that a hundred years later, brought together under the aegis of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross, men and women of all races, of all social standing, of all religious outlooks, would be paying homage to him? Thanks to his intuition, courage, and perseverance, the Rose Cross, which at the time was under cover and in secrecy, has come out into the full light of day, and has been able in its turn within a few decades to light up the hearts and the souls of hundreds of thousands of beings searching for Knowledge.

Within AMORC, we often refer to this rare person. Through his writings, journals, books, talks, photographs, and so on, Rosicrucians know the life and journey of this exceptional mystic. With his name is of course connected that of his son, Ralph M. Lewis, who was Emperor of the Rosicrucian Order from 1939 and then throughout forty-eight years of work, service, and devotion. Also connected with the name of H. Spencer Lewis are his most loyal companions on the Rosicrucian Path. I am thinking of Peter Falcone, James Whitcomb, Louis Babcock, Al Williams, Jeanne Guesdon, Martha Lewis, and many other personalities who, with him, have written a chapter of the great history of Rosicrucianism. When I was younger, I had the honor of meeting some of them. I was struck by their radiance and above all by their absolute loyalty, as well as the love and admiration they expressed when they referred to their deceased Emperor, brother, and friend.

The life and work of this great man were so significant that they are impossible to describe in a few lines. Therefore I encourage those of you who have not already done so to obtain the book entitled *Harvey Spencer Lewis, Master of the Rose Cross*.

This title was a most obvious one, for there would have been no more correct way of putting it.

In reading the above book, you will see how cultured, wise, and visionary Harvey Spencer Lewis was. So as not to alter either the letter or the spirit, no changes have been made to what he wrote. As you read, therefore, you should take account of the period he was writing in, that is, the first half of the twentieth century, between 1916 and 1939. This was before Europe was at peace, at a time when racism and nationalism were rife, before the profusion of all sorts of books about psychology, psychoanalysis, well-being and personal examination, before the “hippie” era. In short, before the so-called “New Age” movement.

In putting this work together and re-reading what he wrote, I have realized even more what an extraordinary being Harvey Spencer Lewis was, endowed with so many qualities. He was a great mind of his time, of all times.

The book dedicated to him is just a reflection of his work, a minute part of his thoughts and writings. He was a prolific writer, loving as he did to share with those he called his “fratres and sorores.” Yes indeed, Harvey Spencer Lewis addressed what he said to women every bit as much as to men, at a time when women did not yet have the recognition that was rightly and truly theirs, even within the highly rarefied world of esotericism. For him, and for the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross, all men and women, all races and peoples, and all backgrounds had equal standing. Here too, he was a pioneer that others later emulated.

Assuredly, some will be able to say that he had an imagination which was a little excessive, and that he liked to romanticize his experiences and his writings. It is true, but it is why today we

still enjoy reading his works. It is also why he was able, as I was saying before, to bring forth the spirit of the Rose-Croix and make them better known. He liked to imagine, to narrate, and to share. He could enchant his audience, which was sometimes composed of people who were skeptical and enclosed within the iron collar of religion. He made people dream and hope; he put things across.

Of course with a critical mind, in the light of current knowledge, the advances of science, archaeological discoveries, and so on, one can always reject such or such idea propounded by Harvey Spencer Lewis—just as on the other hand, we can have admiration, because many of his assertions which were at times presumed speculative, have been demonstrated and proved true.

Members of AMORC can verify for themselves the virtues of visualization, intuition, and of all the so-called “psychic” phenomena, the study of which is presented in the monographs they receive each month. These principles go with them, and they experience them every day, in different forms. They are either very pleased that they follow them, or they chastise themselves for not having applied them, which would have enabled them to avoid setbacks.

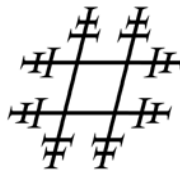
Of course, not everyone always displays absolute confidence in what they are taught, and this is a very good thing. Rosicrucianism is not in fact dogmatic, and we owe it to ourselves to always be cautious. And as we customarily say, we should always be “walking question marks.”

I refer to the Rosicrucian teachings as given today, because Harvey Spencer Lewis put them into writing. In accordance with his wishes, they have been revised and continue to be. It is clear, too, that had he lived in our time, he would have had

no hesitation about making use of the tools of communication available to us in this twenty-first century.

As Imperator, I often have to make decisions about the course to set for the Rosicrucian Order, about adapting its rules, and ensuring the continuance of its activities. At these times, and when doubt sets in, faced with a particular situation to deal with, I think of Harvey Spencer Lewis and say to myself: “What would he have done?” He was daring, even ambitious, for AMORC, which is why throughout the time he was given in his incarnation, he visualized and brought about great and wonderful things. To illustrate what I am saying, I invite you to read, or re-read, one of his pieces entitled “Reaching the Roof,” which follows. You will then understand the spirit which drove him.

From his first meeting with the Rose Cross and his initiation in Toulouse in 1909, he left his mark on Rosicrucianism in particular and the world of esotericism overall. From the bottom of my heart, I hope that in centuries to come the true standing of Harvey Spencer Lewis—aside from AMORC, its structure, and members—will be formally recognized. May the soul of he who was an initiate, philosopher, humanist, and Imperator of the Rose Cross, be assured of my gratitude and that of all the Rosicrucians who have followed in his steps.



REACHING THE ROOF

by Harvey Spencer Lewis, 1932

NOT LONG AGO a contractor started to build a home in the suburbs of this city, and I was interested in watching the care with which he constructed the foundation. It appeared to me that a very fine and attractive home was to be built on the concrete walls which he planned and constructed so carefully.

Shortly thereafter I met the contractor at a luncheon and asked him how his new house was progressing, and was astonished to hear him say that he was just completing the roof. "Why," said I, "you have reached the roof very quickly."

"Yes," replied the contractor, "you know when some persons build, they plan a roof that is very close to the ground and does not take much time or much effort to build up from the foundation to the roof."

I could not help pondering over his rather philosophical statement because it contained a whole bookful of thought. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons why so many persons in the world today have not achieved a higher or greater place in life is that they have too easily reached the roof. In all of their plans, in all of their considerations, desires, and ambitions, they visualized a roof that was very close to the foundation, and after their structure was completed and the roof in place, their building was lowly, humble, insignificant, and probably insufficient to represent their true possibilities in life.

Truly one can dream too vaguely, too ambitiously, or too magnificently, and place the roof of one's contemplated structure far beyond feasible heights, but it is very seldom that

the ones who do this fail to reach an impressive height in their desire to reach the roof. They may fail to fulfill their plans, but in their attempts to do so they often rise far beyond those who are ultra-conservative and too careful. Of the two classes of individuals, the one who is extremely conservative or pessimistic, doubtful, skeptical, reserved, and hesitating is the loser in life's great game. He starts out with limitations self-imposed, and it is seldom that he reaches beyond those limitations. The one who is overambitious and who seems to hitch his wagon to a star and who thinks the sky is the limit and that nothing is beyond his capabilities is more apt to achieve success and at least accomplish something magnificent than those who are self-restrained.

I have heard economists and some of the most eminent financiers in America say that the only way that young married couples or young persons individually ever accumulate vast material holdings or become possessed of real material wealth is by getting into debt and by assuming large contracts and obligations, and then being forced to meet them. They say that more homes have been acquired by young couples who have plunged themselves into the obligation of paying for a beautiful home than by those who attempted to save for it and buy such a home when sufficient funds were at hand. However true this may be, I do know that the man or woman who mentally conceives and plans a great structure or career in life and determines to make good in these plans is the one who generally succeeds in doing so.

The greater the ambition, the greater the enthusiasm and the desire to make good. The higher and more lofty the goal, the more determination is exerted to reach it. Commonplace obstacles that deter and disparage the individual who is attempting to reach only a mediocre place mean nothing to the one who has a great plan or an enormous idea to work out.

Resorting again to the illustration of the building of a home, we can see that the man who plans to build only a four-room bungalow, twelve by fourteen feet in height, and build it quickly with a limited amount of money and time, will become greatly discouraged in his efforts to complete such a building if the day he starts to lay the foundation the rain pours upon the ground and continues to do so for a number of days until the ground is wet and soggy. And if, after the rain is over, a few days of snow and freezing temperature come, and after this a period of cold and cloudy weather, he will surely abandon his plans of going to work to start his home. If, then, he meets with a few disappointments in securing the right material or the right amount of capital, he will probably be discouraged completely, and permanently abandon the whole enterprise.

Such a person in planning a small and limited structure expects to complete it within a very short time and have it over with. Any obstacles that delay the matter for weeks or months are equivalent to obstacles which prevent him from achieving his end altogether. With the man who is planning a structure that is to take years to complete and which he knows will have to be carried on through all kinds of weather and through divers conditions and circumstances, the obstacles that delay him a few weeks or a few months at a time seem inconsequential in comparison to the time that he knows must be spent to eventually realize his desires, and he is, therefore, unaffected by them to any serious degree.

I remember well the plans for our own organization when it became apparent that I would have to work out most of the details for the development of the Rosicrucian activities in America for the new cycle under my direction. I might have given much thought to the possible delays, the inevitable disappointments, and the personal problems that would confront me. Considering

these, I might easily have arranged to construct an organization that would have had a good foundation but a roof not too high above that foundation. But instead of doing this, I allowed my mentally created structure to tower into the skies to enormous heights and I raised the roof of the structure so high that from where I stood in the picture I could not see where it was nor what it looked like. In fact, I never felt sure that there was a roof upon this mental structure or that a roof was even necessary, for it seemed to me that the only thing to consider was the making of the foundation so strong and the walls so supported that story after story could be added to the building in its rising heights without limit and without fear of collapse or weakness.

The plans seemed to be beyond reason, and many were the serious warnings given to me that I was undertaking too great a work, too great a structure to be accomplished in a lifetime, or by any moderate sized group of individuals. Every possible or potential obstacle was carefully pointed out to me. As months and years passed, most of these obstacles made their appearance in due form and due time. Every predicted interference and hundreds unsuspected by even the most wise of builders likewise presented themselves. But since the work was an enormous one, the task a magnificent one, and the structure so bewildering in all of its dimensions, the obstacles, difficulties, problems, and delays were taken merely as a matter of course and really spared us all in our efforts.

What the structure is today is a result of the great plans. Whether these plans will all be realized in my lifetime or not is immaterial. The very greatness of the work has carried us on in its ponderous and overwhelming vastness. We are also hopelessly entangled in the scheme of things and we have no more fear of the ultimate being attained than we have of our long and carefully laid foundation crumbling away.

True, we have not reached the roof and it is not our ambition to reach the roof rapidly. The roof is still so far beyond us that we can only think of the work we have to do on each rising level of each new section of height accomplished in our work.

How different is all of this to the conservative, limited plan of those who hesitate and fear to build and plan magnificently! It is only through the broadness of vision, through the unlimited heights of our ambitions, and the very greatness of our ideals that we really lift ourselves up and beyond the commonplace. The Rosicrucian organization in America is planned to be in its present cycle just what it has been in each of its previous cycles in this and other lands; namely, an unusual, distinctive, magnificent structure of unlimited and unrestricted heights of attainment. It must not only battle its way in attempting to rise above the pull and influence of earthly matters as it reaches up into the heights of glory, but it must push its way through the clouds that gather in the heights above the earth and often darken and obscure the heavens beyond. It means work and sacrifice and a steadfastness of faith, as well as a determination to bear the burden of the cross until the heights are reached, and then raise that cross upon the very pinnacle.

To those thousands of members and readers who have expressed their joy and pride of being associated with the work of this kind, let me urge that in their own lives they plan with the greater vision in mind and with the illimitable heights as the true domain of their creating, and in this way find the joy of reaching out and beyond the average and the commonplace into the unique and the exceptional.

Do not be in such a hurry to reach the roof of the structure that you will plan it too close to the earth.

Extracts from the Rosicrucian Declaration of Human Duties



It is each individual's duty to respect others, irrespective of race, gender, religion, social status, community, or any other apparently distinctive element.

It is each individual's duty to respect the religious and political beliefs of others, as long as they do not harm human beings or society.

It is each individual's duty to be benevolent in thoughts, words, and deeds, in order to be an agent of peace in society and an example to others.

It is the duty of each individual who is of legal age, and in a fit condition to work, to do so, whether it be to support his or her needs or his or her family's needs, to be useful to society, to grow personally, or simply not to sink into idleness.

It is the duty of each individual who is responsible for raising or educating a child to instill the child with courage, tolerance, non-violence, generosity, and more generally, the virtues that will make the child a respectable and responsible adult.

It is each individual's duty to consider the whole of humanity as his or her family and to behave in all circumstances and everywhere as a citizen of the world. This means making humanism the basis of his or her behavior and philosophy.

It is each individual's duty to respect and preserve Nature, so that present and future generations can benefit from it on all planes and consider Nature a universal heritage.

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

For as much as I am writing this piece as a member and the head of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross, I will pass on to you my main convictions: mystical, philosophical, and humanist. They are seven in number, but the list of them could have been much longer, so rich are the Rosicrucian teachings.

Here, then, are some reflections which seem fundamental. Proceeding from them, we can construct pillars of convictions which rise up to infinity. We can discuss, philosophize, and advance as far as our mind allows us to, and then obtain, as well, as much as our heart can receive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From a mystic point of view, God is the Intelligence at the origin of the whole of Creation and all it contains on the visible and invisible planes. While it is impossible to know God as

such, we can, and even must, learn to respect the laws by which God manifests in humans, in nature, and in the universe. This requires studying these laws, which Rosicrucians do through their teachings.

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

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

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

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

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

From the Rosicrucian point of view, it is therefore at the moment of birth, and not conception, that the soul enters the child, making him or her a human being in his or her own right. Conversely, it is at the moment of the last breath, when death

occurs, that the soul leaves the body for good. All the religions and traditions are agreed on this point.

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

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

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

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

In our behavior each day, we can, and should, be getting closer to it.

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

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

When we do not know about others, in all of their aspects, we run the risk that intolerance, failure to understand, rejection, isolation, and many other negative feelings may arise within us. Conversely, when we know about others, or want to find out, we open up intriguing horizons, immerse ourselves in a permanent “fountain of youth,” and stimulate our creativity. Knowing about others is sharing, giving, joining in, uniting, and bonding.

But this bonding with others is only possible when it has already happened within us, and that is where knowing self comes in.

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

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

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

The immortality of the soul—whether referred to by the Egyptians and Greeks of antiquity, the faithful of current religions, mystics generally, or Rosicrucians in particular—is a universal principle which is present in different forms in all religions and all traditions. From the mystic point of view, death is a passage, a “transition,” from the earthly world to the spiritual world. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the separation from

loved ones is a very painful trial. This passage—which might also be called “the return”—has, since time immemorial, always been accompanied by a ritual aimed at helping the deceased to cross the threshold to the beyond in the best conditions possible.

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

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

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



Text of poster from streets of Paris, 1623



We, the Deputies of the Higher College of the Rose-Croix, do make our stay, visibly and invisibly, in this city, by the grace of the Most High, to Whom turn the hearts of the Just. We demonstrate and instruct, without books and distinctions, the ability to speak all manners of tongues of the countries where we choose to be, in order to draw our fellow creatures from error of death.

He who takes it upon himself to see us merely out of curiosity will never make contact with us. But if his inclination seriously impels him to register in our fellowship, we, who are judges of intentions, will cause him to see the truth of our promises; to the extent that we shall not make known the place of our meeting in this city, since the thoughts attached to the real desire of the seeker will lead us to him and him to us.

WE TALK ABOUT the fallibility of the flesh, but consciousness may also be at error. If we start from the principle that the soul of an individual is evolving towards the perfection of the universal Soul from whence it came, then humanity's objective consciousness is the reflection of an understanding of the Universal Consciousness within. Mortal consciousness is subject, on the one hand, to the illusion of the senses, and on the other, to the errors in interpretation of the impressions coming from without or within. Human reasoning itself is imperfect in that its functioning is limited.

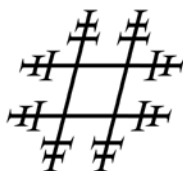
We know to what degree human consciousness is prone to error. Our soul's earthly vehicle, that is, our body, belongs to the finite world of matter. As such, it is subject to the imperfections of the earthly world, often succumbing to errors in demeanor. For each error committed, the body and consciousness are each liable to the progressive law of karma: these two forms of karma are closely linked and based upon the global nature of the being.

Karma, or the "law of compensation," acts where the body is concerned, in such a way that an individual learns to respect the natural laws governing it. When these are violated, it results in negative effects that appear in the form of suffering and physical illnesses. These illnesses and suffering are experiences for the soul to gradually learn to master their causes, thus contributing to the soul's evolution; this does not of course mean that they are a *sine qua non*.

As soon as we strive to act in harmony with the laws that govern our body and consciousness, we contribute to our general well-being and experience a certain tranquility. We see, therefore, that it is only a perfect knowledge of these laws that enables us to keep in good health and to raise ourselves up toward spiritual ideals.

Let us take one example among many: that of the smoker. Someone who has been a heavy smoker for a long time should not be surprised if they develop lung or heart disease—perhaps even fatally. The same principle applies to consciousness. If, during the course of our incarnation, our thoughts and our emotions are not directed toward that which is most positive, and if we do not free ourselves from ignorance, then we are at error, with all the consequences involved, on both the material and spiritual planes. Nonetheless, I think it important to stress the fact that not every trial is automatically of karmic origin, which also means that neither are every health problem and accident.

The Rosicrucian teachings present the opportunity of accessing knowledge and becoming freed from ignorance. Our Inner Self—that is, the God within us—in fact possesses all of the qualities and attributes of Divine Wisdom. This is why we must open up to this Wisdom and allow It to express Itself through us.



WE DO NOT all have the same concept of God. We may say that there are almost as many ways of believing as there are individuals, in spite of the religions and their highly elaborate structures, their firm foundations, and their ceaselessly-stated dogmas. But the great mass of believers throughout the world have one point in common—namely, a lack of understanding of divine laws; this leads people to have many unanswered questions despite their leading a spiritual life. When a misfortune strikes them or affects someone near to them, their faith seems to be shaken, and the following questions then arise: “Why does God not provide for my needs? Why does God not see the reverence that I have for God? Why does God not reward my efforts—I am a good, brave, and religious being?” Or perhaps: “That person didn’t deserve that! It’s unfair!” What is even more astonishing is that this line of argument is often taken up by non-believers; such a contradiction will always amaze me, for to what justice are they referring, unless it is a divine, invisible one? Not fair in relation to what? And to whom? As for the question “Why them?” I am tempted to reply “Why not them?”

A summary of the argument most often taken up by atheists is that, if there was a good and compassionate God watching over Earth and humanity, there would not be so much hatred and suffering. This may be a valid point of view, and it is not up to me to call into question the way a large part of humanity thinks. It surprises me, however, when in times of distress or pain, these people who say they are non-believers, cannot refrain from referring indirectly to the Divine Power, or even by appealing to it.

The laws governing the universe are the same—whether we believe or not. The Sun comes up in the same way for believers as it does for atheists. Death takes them away identically, and ordeals and problems spare no one. It is right that this should be so, for experiences are just as necessary to us as food is to survive. We can gain something from each of life's lessons and feed our soul with each new discovery. If we were deprived of the experiences that the human condition offers, how would we be able to learn and to evolve? This is the reason we must strive to take a philosophical approach to the trials and obstacles that come our way.

The difference between someone who is spiritual and a so-called materialistic person lies in their way of perceiving and rising above their trials. My view is that trials are easier to come to terms with and to accept when we have faith. But as I have said, this faith does not exempt us from the uncertainties of life. In certain circumstances and situations, pain can be so strong that we lose heart; this too is a part of the nature of the human beings that we are.

Monarchs, heads of state, high religious dignitaries, those holding important positions of responsibility in their country or in the world—no one is exempt from having troubles, even when thousands, or indeed millions, of people pray for them and wish them safekeeping. There are occasions when some special assistance or other is even wished upon them. That is most certainly commendable and the positive thoughts that are all directed towards the person in question can only do them good. But that will not exempt them from going through the experiences necessary for their evolution. They will have to learn, understand, and assimilate, like any other individual. There are no living beings, societies, organizations, religions, undertakings, or communities that exist outside of the scheme of divine laws.

In the same way, a mystic is not exempted from ill health or fatigue caused by work that is exhausting. Similarly, just because a person devotes 90 percent of their time to the service of others, or to a useful undertaking, it does not mean that they can sidestep natural laws and be safeguarded from pain. No matter the degree of evolution and beauty of their soul, they are still subjected to the same requirements as all of the other human beings dwelling on this planet. Experiences, even painful ones, are necessary to them; it would be unfair for them to be deprived of those experiences.

Let us take the very well-known instance of Jesus. Was he spared? Did he not undergo fatigue, bodily injury, humiliation, and misunderstanding? Many people still wonder whether this extraordinary individual was in fact divine, on the basis that if he had truly been of divine birth, he would have been protected. But we are all of divine birth. We are all an emanation of the great Universal Soul! Those who think that Jesus, great spiritual personalities, philosophers, saints from all walks of life, or even great leaders, should have had or should have a life free from any ordeal, are gravely mistaken. They are blinded by the admiration and love they have for those who are the object of their veneration.

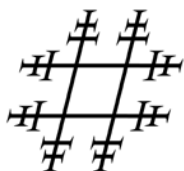
Why be a believer and revere God then, if the outcome is the same for everyone? Why ask for God's help? Because to harmonize with God is to harmonize with ourselves; it is a precondition to be clear-sighted and enlightened, to hear and listen, appraise and assess, reflect and understand. It has been said: "Ask and you shall receive." But it has not been said that you would cease to evolve, and that you would be above natural laws!

Our goal should be to give more thought and more attention to the spiritual principles of life so that we can better grasp, understand, and accept our human nature and the material

world. If we cannot avoid our tests and trials or insist that God gives us an exemption, let us endeavor to put into effect the “life forces” that are in us and around us. Let us remember past lessons, overcome present obstacles, and, armed with these experiences, let us foresee problems of the future.

Some philosophical and religious systems claim that physical suffering is necessary in order to evolve, and that its effect is redemptive. This is incorrect. Such a manner of thinking is utterly devoid of good sense, as well as any knowledge of natural laws. Physical suffering can certainly change our perception of certain things, help us to put into perspective problems that seemed insurmountable, and perhaps make us more patient, but there is no need to provoke and feed it, neither does it need to be of a long duration for us to have a realization. The soul and the body alike can gain as much from even a brief unpleasant experience as they can from prolonged suffering.

By way of conclusion, while we can and should ask for God’s help, we must be aware that this help may not come in the form and manner we expect it. We should call on God, but God is free to reply as God wishes and as God must. Always remember that you are the master of your destiny, the captain of your soul, and that God is the breath of wind that will help you to guide the ship that is your life, to a more beautiful land. With God’s help, your crossing—from your birth to your death—will be easier.



Extracts from the
Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis (2001)



We hope that one day there will be a worldwide government representing all nations, of which today's United Nations is just the beginning.

Excessive rationalization by science is a real danger that will threaten humanity sooner or later.

The problem now posed by technology stems from the fact that it has evolved much faster than has human consciousness.

We presume that the disappearance of the great religions is inevitable and that, under the influence of a worldwide expansion of consciousness, they will give birth to a universal religion.

We feel that morality should instead relate to the respect that any individual should have for oneself, for others, and for the environment.

In order for the arts to participate in the regeneration of humanity, we believe that they must draw their inspiration from natural, universal, and spiritual archetypes, which implies that artists "ascend" toward these archetypes, rather than "descend" toward the most common stereotypes.

We defend the cause of a humane society making all individuals citizens of the world, which implies putting an end to all forms of racial, ethnic, social, religious, or political discrimination or segregation.

O Spirit of Life, breathe Your grace into us.
Take us by the hand and raise us.

— Richard Baxter, seventeenth century —

PRAYER IS PART of a spiritual practice growing from the desire to raise one's soul towards the Divine. The act of praying is composed of a set of oral or mental formulae, and it is possible to apply to it, the Law of the Triangle, familiar to Rosicrucians.

Prayer may be described as embodying three points, the first being the desire manifested through and in the intention. In other words, we can see the very term “praying,” as defining a mystical process that enables the act of prayer to be set in motion—this setting in motion stemming from an inner desire, constituting the original impulse, without which prayer cannot manifest to its fullest and most perfect extent. But the inner desire must be concentrated by the consciousness, into an impression that is more clear-cut and thus able to be assimilated by our understanding. The concentration of our desire to pray is fashioned in the intention, and an analysis of the intention makes valid, or not, the act of praying. This intention must be as pure as possible so as to endow the prayer with a form of articulation that is truly intense and genuinely heartfelt. The intention should also be based on sincerity and simplicity. Done in this way, the genuine desire to pray constitutes the impulse required for the setting in motion of prayer, which is both

thought-out and wished for, in its purest sense. In this respect, the affirmation that says, “the desire to pray is in itself a prayer” is wholly justified.

The second point of this triangle of prayer is the act itself, which manifests in and through the form of words or invocation. While our first point, the intention or desire, constitutes the initial impulse without which prayer cannot be set in motion, the second point manifests in and through an invocation, which may be oral or mental. Whereas the intention activates the being in a specified direction, we can see the invocation, in terms of its meaning and its form, as reflecting and endorsing this same direction. Thus the content of the invocation infers that there is a close relationship with the intention that is inspiring it, and the form given to the invocation will be oral or mental, according to the nature of the call within.

There are prayers whose content seems to express more explicitly, either appreciation, confession, or intercession. In the prayer of appreciation, we are acknowledging the majesty of God and expressing our gratitude for blessings received. Confession is usually used in an act of remorse, and whose objective is to declare one’s regret to God for having offended God by violating certain moral ideals. The aim of intercession is to ask God for help, inspiration, support, and so on—for ourselves or others.

The slant given to the invocation’s content therefore depends on the specific intention, and this intention determines the emotional intensity applied in the invocation. Thus, the setting of prayer in motion is a private act whose value has meaning only to the soul that is praying. This act then slowly develops into the elation of the being, leading on to spiritual communion. This is where the third point of our triangle comes in: the status.

The status brought about by prayer is manifested in and by communion, which requires entering into silence. This mystic solitude, or temporary withdrawing, is essential. Released for a few moments from time, space, and matter, we let ourselves go into another reality—let ourselves be taken to another realm.

In conclusion, the process of prayer, as symbolized by the three points—desire, act, and status—and manifested respectively by the intention, the invocation, and the communion, is simply the expanding of an inner condition originating deep within the person who is praying with sincerity and belief. I would like to finish with three prayers that reflect the aspects of this process: appreciation, confession, and intercession.

The first prayer is by Augustine (fourth century CE). It expresses gratitude:

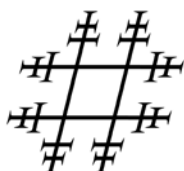
Lord, when I look at my own life, it seems that You have guided me so carefully and tenderly that You could not have been taking care of anyone else. Yet when I see how You have wondrously guided the world and are still doing so, I am amazed that You should have had the time to look after someone such as me.

The second prayer is by Zoroaster (sixth century BCE) and indicates a genuine repentance:

All that I should have thought and did not think, all that I should have said and did not say, all that I should have done and did not do, all that I should not have thought but thought nonetheless, all that I should not have said but said nonetheless, all that I should not have done but did nonetheless—for these thoughts, words, and deeds, I pray for forgiveness and painfully repent.

The third is a prayer of intercession of immense wisdom:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.



IN THE EXPRESSION *Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross*, there is the word “mystic.” This word does not designate anything odd, strange, or nebulous. Neither does it designate a state of permanent ecstasy. A person referred to as a mystic does not live isolated from the world and its problems, nor do they escape the trials and uncertainties inherent in the human condition. However, this word is too often used pejoratively, to represent someone who is often gentle and kind, true enough, yet who is in the main irrelevant, unrealistic, and lacking in all logic, being too utopian or “dreamy.”

The word “mystic” in fact encompasses something much wider. It indicates that we have to manifest equally the two polarities of our being: we have to be both realistic and idealistic, which means taking account of material occurrences, without neglecting the profound spiritual aspirations of our soul. These two concepts are often pitted against one another: and yet it is essential for them to be functioning with each other. We must endeavor to maintain this state of balance by daily work on ourselves. I use the word “endeavor,” because being absolutely consistent and objective in respect of our habits, responses, and urges is not a task which is easy or straightforward. Our actions are often different from our intentions, and it is difficult for the result to be what we were hoping for, or rather, what we had set for ourselves. Nevertheless, even if our efforts are not always as sustained as they ought to be, it is essential that we keep in mind that a mystic should reflect harmony and balance.

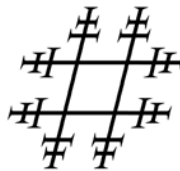
When we approach life as mystics, we are inwardly more strong, and a dynamic calmness, which many people can feel, emanates from us. The soul-force that we then carry is generally liked, even admired. But this force can also be the subject of envy or jealousy, and can spark animosity in some people. It is generally thought that only beauty, wealth, and social success generate negative feelings, however, this is not the case. Peace, profound, calmness, and inner strength in a person can be sufficient to disturb others. This is why a so-called mystic can be the object of unfounded attacks, even if their living conditions are in many ways unenviable. People do not understand why such a person can remain positive, despite their problems and tribulations. So, even in their misfortune, people become jealous.

Conducting oneself as a mystic is not therefore an easy matter, but the amount of work to be accomplished and the difficulty of the task are of little consequence for the one who has faith, personal convictions, and a radiant inner consciousness. While their thoughts are often directed inwards and they meditate and pray for others daily, they should not exclude from their life all contact with society and its realities. On the contrary, their enlightened spirit can bring much to those around them, whether few or many. Should they be fortunate enough to have a talent or a profession where they are in touch with the general public, what they say will bear promising fruit. Their voice and words will be an expression of the Divine. Whatever his or her circumstances and field of activity, a mystic must accomplish the union between the two worlds, the temporal and the intemporal, the material and the spiritual, so that the miracle of the one thing may be accomplished, and he or she may make manifest the well-known dictum "That which is above is like that which is below."

Being a mystic is to perceive that there exists a goal, that we are advancing towards a final summit, towards which we are being guided. Our guides are our virtues, among them courage and perseverance. When there appears in our sky the cloud of incomprehension, fear, doubt, and strife, and it threatens our progression on the path, let us act as mystics. The path leading to Illumination is arduous, and the temptation to stop our progress is at times strong. Vertigo can unsettle us, and the mist can grow thicker. Let us disperse this with our inner will and keep our eyes fixed on the summit. Let us not complain about what remains to be accomplished, but instead rejoice in the journey already traveled.

That which applies to our inner course and our evolution also applies to every other area of our lives, for, as I was saying before, students of mysticism are not ethereal creatures cut off from the world and its realities.

Let us be mystics, attuned with others, and, with a true communion of the heart, let us be as one!



Extracts from the Rosicrucian Code of Life



Knowing that the purpose of all human beings is to perfect themselves and to become better, strive continually to awaken and express the virtues of the soul which gives you your life. In so doing you will contribute to your evolution and will serve the cause of humanity.

Listen to others and speak advisedly. If you have to criticize, be sure it is constructive. If you are asked an opinion on a subject you are not familiar with, humbly admit your ignorance. Never permit yourself to lie, gossip, or slander. If you hear malicious comments about another person, do not just obligingly support them.

Behave in such a way that all those sharing your life or living in contact with you see in you an example, and feel the wish to be like you. Guided by the voice of your conscience, may your moral sense be as pure as possible, and may your primary concern always be to think well, to speak well, and to act well.

Be tolerant and defend the right to be different. Never use the faculty of judgment to blame or to condemn another, for you cannot read into hearts and minds. Think of others with good will and leniency, and see the best that there is in them.

Show generosity towards those who are in need or who are less favored than yourself. Every day, be sure to carry out at least one good deed for someone else. Whatever good you do for others, do not boast of it, but thank the Divine for having allowed you to contribute to their well-being.[...]

WE LIVE IN a world where channels of information are becoming more and more numerous, more and more rapid, and more and more powerful. Thanks to these channels, the links between different areas, countries, and continents have improved dramatically and are, indeed, limitless. It is now possible to hear about an event that has just happened on the other side of the world, within just a few minutes of the event's occurrence. This is obviously indicative of great progress and shows that, thanks to technology, humankind is exercising a degree of mastery over time and space. However—as with everything that humankind has created through science—what ought to be useful, can unfortunately be detrimental. It all depends on the use to which it is put.

As we all know, human intelligence can be used to do bad as well as to do good. For example, there are currently scientists engaged in projects aimed at humanity's well-being, while others spend their time developing weapons to destroy and kill. Such is the twofold disposition of humankind. According to which ideals people pursue and the way in which we apply our free will, we either work in the service of peace and harmony, or make ourselves the agent of war and strife. In other words, we are “angels” or “demons” in very many spheres—and to a certain extent, the news comes into this category .

Everyone should agree that the news has a big effect on mindsets and behaviors. Unfortunately, those who are delivering it—or making it—too often tend to set themselves at the level people expect. By so doing, they feed desires and needs that are not always constructive. Within the press, some newspapers and

magazines specialize in portraying events where they know they are going to garner public opinion to their side, using particularly well-selected photographs or other media in order to shock, if need be. While the level of consciousness attained by humanity is higher than in the past, many people feel more attracted by the tragic elements of current affairs than they do by happy and positive events.

What goes for the press is also the case for broadcasting in general, the Internet, and all other forms of media. For example, the current affairs on TV, shows the same tendency to bring to the fore, news that appeals more to “voyeurism” than to the nobler part of the human being. In other words, it is inclined to cover events employing images generally portraying misery, violence, crime, and so on, in addition to all sorts of catastrophes. Experience unfortunately shows that this type of news has a large audience, which in turn explains why it is so exploited.

It is not one of my intentions, as part of these reflections, to analyze the psychological reasons that cause people to experience a certain attraction to dramatic situations and the ill fortune of others. Instead, my goal is to draw attention to the danger represented by news, which overly emphasizes the tragic events of daily life. Whether we are conscious of it or not, being confronted on a daily basis with current affairs that focus our attention on commentary or images of violence, hatred, strife—and generally on scenes portraying the unhappiness in the world—constitutes a real mental poisoning, with all its resulting negative consequences: depression, anxiety, pessimism, unhappiness, and so forth . . .

It is certainly normal to keep people informed about what is happening in the world, for we need information, and it points out what is nasty and reprehensible in human behavior;

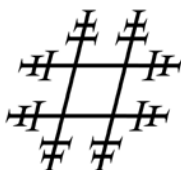
it also enables people to think about matters that go beyond our concern with ourselves alone, and it develops our compassion. This being the case, the key role of the news should be the raising of consciousnesses. Accordingly, rather than focusing on society's defects and the weaknesses of humankind, the news should encourage people to become better, and to resist that which is instrumental to war, racism, crime, fanaticism, and the passions that are degrading to the human race. When a catastrophe occurs somewhere, rather than seeking a "scoop at any price," with shocking images and reports, the media's purpose in their presentation of the news should be to increase compassion and assistance for those affected.

By giving priority to what is sensational, that is, to events that cause a sensation upon humankind's most instinctual nature, the news is moving away from the laudable mission it could have. By bringing to the fore the most dramatic or sleazy current affairs in the way that it does, it produces a collective visualization that puts into motion energies of the same sort. When millions of people are concentrating at the same time on depressing or degrading news, they generate negative thought-forms that subtly create and maintain the misfortune or the pain. These thought-forms also explain why more and more people feel anxious, as they are undergoing the influence of the negative energies generated in this way.

When those in charge understand that it is better to highlight the positive events rather than the negative ones, which are part of the daily news, they will give society the chance of raising itself up, enabling it to create a better future for itself. This is not to say that we should hide from the dramatic events of life. Instead, it means that it is not necessary to say everything and show everything about human weakness and the misfortune of

humankind, especially when the information provides nothing that is of any use to those who hear about it.

Each human being should strive to transmute the pessimism that currently predominates, into an optimism based on a coherent, yet confident analysis of events. Whenever, therefore, we have the chance to speak with others about the news, no matter whether that pertains to the local, national, or international outlets, we should always endeavor to highlight those aspects that show—beyond how it may appear—that the world is evolving towards ideals more and more humanistic in nature. At the same time, we should pause and send out positive thought-forms to all those who are suffering either physically or psychologically. Whether we are aware of it or not, the power of thought is great. Consequently, we must use it in a useful and constructive manner.



Beauty in Art 28 or the Art of Beauty

BEAUTY IS closely linked to the arts and, as a result, to the areas the arts are connected with. Both emotion and reason must be our guides when we contemplate the artistic works that are accessible to us, so that we only choose those that elevate us in consciousness. Beauty is in every manifestation, to varying degrees. Music, painting, sculpture, dance, as well as nature and the things humankind does, can kindle the feeling of beauty. And we should become more attached to the perception of beauty than to the arts themselves. Indeed, while the aim of aesthetics is to engender the feeling of beauty, its etymological meaning is “perception,” the translation of the Greek word *aisthetikos*. This therefore means that beauty is perceived and felt before being an object of contemplation.

Plato may be considered the founder of the science of beauty. He thought that there exists beyond manifested things an absolute, spiritual “beauty,” which administers beauty to all that exists on the earthly plane. He also said that the more pure our thoughts are, the better we perceive and feel universal beauty, which according to him was an emanation of the Divine. Of course, beauty does not only express itself in the visible world, and is not limited to how things look. There is also inner beauty, that of the soul, which transcends the body and shines through it.

The transcendental nature of beauty can be compared to the impulse that carries us towards everything that is akin to the Good, as was magnificently expressed by the great Neoplatonist Plotinus. This inspired mystic had a fondness

for revealing beauty by associating it with what he referred to as the “inner eye,” which he said has to open when we perceive what is beautiful in all things and all beings. This is what he stated:

The soul, therefore, must be accustomed first of all to contemplate beautiful pursuits, and next beautiful works... After this, contemplate the souls of those who are the authors of such beautiful actions. How, then, may you behold the beauty of a virtuous soul? Withdraw into yourself and look; and if you do not yet behold yourself as beautiful, do as does the maker of a statue which is to be beautiful; for this person cuts away, shaves down, smooths, and cleans it, until the sculptor has made manifest in the statue the beauty of the face which he or she portrays. So with yourself. Cut away that which is superfluous, straighten that which is crooked, purify that which is obscure: labor to make all bright, and never cease to fashion your statue until there shall shine out upon you the deity-like splendor of virtue... For one who beholds must be akin to that which one beholds, and must, before one comes to this vision, be transformed into its likeness. Never could the eye have looked upon the Sun had it not become Sun-like, and never can the soul see Beauty unless she has become beautiful.

The perception of beauty follows a progression. Beauty has to appeal to the senses, and then to the mind and the emotions, before reaching the soul itself. There is an artist behind every work of art, but when considered perfect, it transcends the personality of its creator, and expresses an aspect of the Divine. God, in the sense of Universal Intelligence or Consciousness, is therefore present in the pure and genuine feeling of beauty,

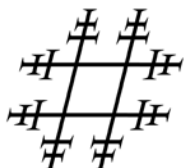
for beauty is one of God's attributes. Speaking of beauty in art, Augustine said:

Beauty is the inevitable, albeit half-erased, imprint of the Divine Hand. For a work of art to be truly beautiful, it must be part of those ratios which bring this world into being. In all the arts, proportion and harmony are what please. When there is harmony, all is beautiful. This harmony yearns for equality and unity. Beauty always takes the form of unity.

While Divine Beauty can be directly perceived and received through inspiration, it is only when the artist gives it material form that it becomes beauty for the ordinary person. It is then a work of art, the quintessence and archetype of which arise in the higher planes of Creation. This means to say that beauty—such as it manifests here below through nature and humanity's works—should lead us to become aware of Divine Beauty. This is to say that its purpose is to raise us in consciousness towards the Divine. This is because our soul is an emanation of the Universal Soul, and it feels and expresses that which is most divine in itself by means of that which is beautiful.

While it is important to be receptive to beauty and to avail ourselves of it on all planes, it is equally important to manifest it—meaning create it, apart from within the arts. Therefore in each of our thoughts, words, and actions, we should endeavor to express beauty, and thus demonstrate the harmonic relationship that connects us to the Divine, as we conceive and feel the Divine to be. The more spiritually evolved a person is, the more aware they are of beauty, and the more they become able to create it in and around themselves, thus generating a trace of the Divine on the earthly plane, for the delight of humankind.

In conclusion, we should cultivate our awareness of the beauty of things, not for the things themselves, but for the harmony that radiates from them, which through them is manifesting Divine Beauty. To be aware of what is beautiful is to open a window onto the Divine World and draw closer to Divine Wisdom; it is to experience Universal Love, of which it is said is the life and light of all things in the universe. Thus Rumi was moved to say: “That which the Divine said to the rose thereby making its beauty unfold, the Divine said to my heart and caused it to be a hundred times more beautiful.”



The Judeo-Christian 29 Aspect of Martinism

IF “CHANCE” HAS put this book into your hands, and if you have never heard of Martinism, I would like to offer you a brief introduction to it. The following is from a booklet entitled *The Light of Martinism*; your copy may be obtained on request from the headquarters of the Traditional Martinist Order, by visiting its website, or via AMORC’s website.

The Traditional Martinist Order is an initiatic Order and a school of moral chivalry with its roots in the Western esoteric tradition. . . . Martinists study the natural relationships between the Divine, the universe, and humanity. . . . If we wish to understand our true nature, we must look toward the Divine, says Saint-Martin, for “we can only read ourselves in God, only understand ourselves in the Divine splendor.” If we are no longer in a position today to reach this understanding, it is because we have made the error of separating ourselves from the Divine and losing ourselves in the world of appearances, the temporal world. We have, to some degree, fallen asleep to the spiritual world. Our inner Temple is in ruins.

In our work, Martinists use neither theurgy nor magic, for we conform to the ideal of the Unknown Philosopher—to guide humanity by a natural path to the supernatural. For this, it is not necessary to amass intellectual knowledge, because to progress on the path of reintegration, “it is not the head that we should rack, but the heart.”

The Martinist uses two “books” in this work: one is the Book of Nature and the other, the Book of Humanity. Nature is “the true horn of plenty for your present state . . . it is in effect the meeting-point of all created virtues. Thus, all these Divine virtues, ordained by the Great Principle so as to cooperate in our rehabilitation are always in existence around us.”

This means that God has sown the symbols of His wisdom in nature, that we may find it by ourselves. Nature is thus an immense reservoir of learning for the Initiate.

Martinism originated in France, and goes back to the eighteenth century, to a period of great political and economic unrest. At the origin of this movement lie Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and his writings. After his death in 1803, the Order kept a low profile until 1888, when it restarted its activities officially. Martinism’s history is very eventful and, I would suggest, worth taking an interest in.

While I hold the title of Emperor within the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross, as worldwide head of the Traditional Martinist Order (TMO), I am assigned the title of Sovereign Grand Master. As such, I have now had the opportunity of speaking to my Martinist brothers and sisters for several decades at conventicles, in Heptads, and during Conventions. The Martinist teachings have their own tone, which complements but is different from that of AMORC. From among the discourses I have given, I have chosen quite a general one, which obviously I have shortened and modified so it is appropriate for all. This text is not entirely, therefore, the one that my Martinist brothers and sisters had the opportunity of hearing, but they will understand why this is.

Following this text, you will find an interview from a January 2010 history magazine, to complete this brief introduction to the TMO.

The Judeo-Christian Aspect of Martinism

There are many who tend to think that the Martinist path is limited to the traditional principles of original Christianity. This way of seeing things is not incorrect, but it is very incomplete, because the essence of Martinism makes it a tradition which brings together Christian “gnosis” and Jewish mysticism. It therefore seems that I should go back over certain ideas showing that, at the historical level as well as the mystical one, the Traditional Martinist Order is a Judeo-Christian movement, in the most honorable sense of this expression.

From a historical point of view, it is important to understand that the socio-political events that made the appearance of Christianity possible are connected to the cultural and moral values already established by Judaism. It is not a chance occurrence that the same land, Israel, was the cradle of these two great religions. Jerusalem still remains, today, the only city in the world where Jews and Christians can claim equal justification for the deep connections binding them to that place. What is more, the same thing can be said in regard to Islam, since Jerusalem is also a very sacred place in the heart of Muslims.

From a mystical point of view, the advent of the Christian era could only have occurred in Israel, for at that time it was unique in possessing the human conditions making such an event possible. It is therefore not surprising that this country should have given rise to two of the greatest avatars humanity has known: I am of course referring to Moses and to Jesus. The sacred texts tell us that Moses received the Law, the spirit of

the Law, and the spirit of the spirit of the Law. Jesus preached Life, the Way, and the Truth. Consequently, we cannot fail to recognize that they were both sent to bear witness to the same Light, and to the glory of the same God.

If we refer to the histories of their lives as reported in the standard works, we notice that a very close link between these two exceptional beings is made by most experts: both were founders of ethical systems which far surpass the religious dimension alone. Indeed, Moses is being increasingly officially presented as the founder of the Israeli nation, and Jesus as a philosopher who came to strengthen and bring into general use the moral and civic codes established by his predecessor. I stress the fact that history does not really seek to pit the message of Christ against Mosaic thought, but that this is done by the religions, which were founded on their own interpretation. Everyone is aware, indeed, of the abyss that was dug over the course of centuries between the Jewish and Catholic authorities. Things being as they are today, for reasons which I do not have to go into, the majority of practicing Jews have chosen to see in Jesus just one prophet among many, while for their part, Christians seem to have forgotten that there is more to the Old Testament than Genesis. Nonetheless, when we refer to the works left to us by those who have more deeply explored the mysticism of these two religions, we notice the esoteric link existing between Judaism and Christianity. To be frank, no mystic can deny the clearness of this link, and if they do, then they cannot hope to go very far in their spiritual quest.

From both the historical and the mystical viewpoint, there do not, therefore, exist an Old and a New Testament: rather, there exists one single Testament, concerning two periods of time which are not opposed to each other, but which—quite the opposite—complement each other at all levels. With this in

mind, I recommend that you read or re-read the Bible, working on the basis that it is made up of two books, the second shedding light on the meaning of the first, and the first serving as the cornerstone for the second. To make an analogy with Martinism, they complement each other just like the “Book of Nature” and the “Book of Humanity,” which are so dear to Martinists. If the Old and New Testaments have been cemented so tightly together by human hands that they form one single book, it is obviously because it should be this way. The Old Testament gives an account of how to apply God’s commandments, and thus establish on Earth a kingdom governed in the name and to the glory of the Divine. The New Testament relates what has to be done at the individual level, in order to construct the heavenly counterpart of this earthly kingdom.

And so we see that the two great books of the Bible form a duality in the expression of the Divine Word. This duality becomes clear, if we will just think about the fact that Moses himself announced the coming of Jesus, and that Jesus stated many times that he had not come to abolish the law of the prophets, but to fulfill it. It thus becomes clear that Jesus is for the New Testament what Moses is for the Old Testament. Each was sent by the Great White Brotherhood and, using the knowledge acquired in the Mystery Schools of Ancient Egypt, they established the foundations of two paths of reintegration, the first at a collective level, and the second at an individual level. The mission of Moses was thus to unveil to humanity the symbolic descent of the “I am,” and that of Jesus was to show the way to follow so that each person would go back up again into the Kingdom of the Father, like the prodigal child.

Certain texts record that Moses was a member of a community of Essenes that had been established on Mount Sinai, and that the Law was revealed to him in the temple of

this community. These texts also say that when the Temple of Solomon was destroyed in 587 BCE, the Ark of the Covenant was entrusted to the Essenes of Sinai, while the sacred objects from the Temple were passed on to the members of an Essene community living by the Dead Sea at the same time. These texts further say that the Essenes from the Dead Sea gave the name “Community of the New Covenant” to their community, for they knew that the Master Jesus would be one of theirs several centuries later, and that his mission would be to bring about the changeover between the cycles of the Old and New Testaments.

It is difficult to establish the authenticity of these claims; however, there are traditional records which confirm that these two Great Initiates were Essenes. In a recent analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some historians have established numerous similarities with Mosaic precepts. The two seem to have a common basic philosophy, for we find the same references to the oppositions of life, as they are symbolized in the Kabbalistic Tree, particularly in what the Essenes described concerning the struggle of the Children of Light against the Children of Darkness. Everything thus points to the Jewish and Christian traditions being intimately linked, even if only by the single fact that they merge in the ancient wisdom of Essene thought, which is itself lost in the Primordial Tradition. It seems obvious, therefore, that two mystic currents which are so close cannot be opposed to one another, and that those who imply the reverse are doing so either through ignorance, or through a deliberate wish to detract from the truth.

The Traditional Martinist Order has always based its teachings on the esotericism of the Bible, and consequently on the esotericism of the Old and New Testaments. It is thus a Judeo-Christian mystic Order, in the most traditional sense that can be given to this description. Having a look at certain symbols

used during Martinist rituals would suffice to illustrate what I say, but I am not prepared to do so in this article. Martinists will understand what I am referring to, and if, as you read these lines, you wish to know more about this, I invite you to join the TMO. You should be made aware, though, that among the symbols used in this work, there are many which are there to be a constant reminder that Jewish and Christian mysticism constitute the two pillars of the same traditional Temple.

Besides the symbols, the words spoken in the Martinist rituals are also a constant reminder of the Judeo-Christian essence of Martinism. This is why the Divine is called the “Grand Architect of the Universe,” to which the Kabbalists used to refer. Alongside this reference to the eternal God of the Old Testament, Martinists also refer to the Cosmic Christ *Ieschouah*; that is, a Divine Force of which Jesus was the earthly incarnation. We can also call upon numbers to demonstrate that Martinism imparts Jewish mysticism just as much as it does Christian mysticism: you will no doubt be aware that the number 7 is the number of the Old Testament, while the number 8 is that of the New Testament, and these two numbers play a big role in Martinist symbolism.

The first duty of a Martinist is, in her or his thoughts, words, and actions, to implement the virtues demonstrated by all the Masters who have influenced the moral, cultural, and spiritual evolution of humanity. Another duty is to contribute to the coming of a universal religion. Such a religion can only come about if humanity manages to understand that all the current great religions come from a single Tradition. In this piece, I have confined myself to the clear link uniting Judaism with Christianity, but I could have compared other religious currents in the same way, and made the same observations about their esoteric unity. Whenever the situation presents itself to us, it is

vital to make it known that it is humanity's ignorance that sets religions against one another; and that any Buddhist, Muslim, Jew, and Christian, if truly applying the spirit of their faith, can see Buddha, Muhammad, Moses, and Jesus as different incarnations, for different peoples in different times, of one and the same Divine Word.



Interview

The Traditional Martinist Order is today considered the most dynamic Martinist movement. Present throughout the world, it works via various jurisdictions based on written and spoken language, each directed by a Grand Master and under the supervision of Christian Bernard, who holds the office of Sovereign Grand Master.

A.H.: *Christian Bernard, you are the current Sovereign Grand Master of the Traditional Martinist Order. Without going into its history, which is dealt with at length in this magazine, can you tell us in a few words what the TMO is?*

C.B.: It is by definition a philosophical, initiatic, and traditional movement which goes back to Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the eminent eighteenth century French philosopher. Its purpose is to perpetuate the teachings he passed on to his students. Today, these teachings can be received in two ways: orally, by attending a Heptad or an Atelier; and in written form, by the home-study of material sent out from the Order's headquarters.

A.H.: *But Louis Claude de Saint-Martin did not create a Martinist Order as such, did he?*

C.B.: No. In his lifetime, he only taught a few students, whom he chose cautiously. The tradition is that after his death a Circle formed, known by the name *Société des Intimes* (Society of Intimates). Those who belonged to it met from time to time and discussed the writings of the Unknown Philosopher, Martinès de Pasqually, and Jakob Boehme.

A.H.: *What do the Martinist teachings deal with?*

C.B.: In a general sense, they offer an esoteric approach to the major subjects which are characteristic of the Judeo-Christian tradition, such as the origins of creation, the fall of humanity, the reintegration of beings, the true mission of Christ, the science of numbers, heavenly symbols, angelology, and so forth; the Kabbalah is studied, as is the hidden meaning of the Old Testament and the Apocryphal Gospels, and much else.

A.H.: *What do you mean when you say an “esoteric approach?”*

C.B.: To Martinists, it is clear that many subjects in both the Old and New Testaments have a symbolic and allegorical dimension. And so if we want to understand their deeper—and maybe their hidden—meaning, it is necessary to go beyond a literal interpretation. It is the specific purpose of the Martinist teachings to decipher the mystical truths contained in the Bible, while also drawing on the exegeses and the apocryphal writings.

A.H.: *Can you give us an example?*

C.B.: According to Genesis, the world was created in six days. It is clear that such a thing is not possible. Similarly, humanity cannot stem from an original couple, Adam and Eve. These accounts in Genesis in fact equate to ontological, cosmological, and cosmogonical laws and principles which are explained in Martinism.

A.H.: *How long are the Martinist teachings?*

C.B.: They consist of three degrees each requiring two years of study, before moving on to a final degree called the “Circle of Unknown Philosophers.”

A.H.: *It is said that initiation is crucial in Martinism. What is the truth of this?*

C.B.: To be considered a genuine Martinist, you must indeed have been initiated in a Temple by an initiator who has been duly initiated into Martinism, and so on going back in time. This initiation has a double purpose: to transmit to the receiver the spiritual influx which makes him or her ritually a Martinist; and to admit the initiate in the traditional manner into the Martinist lineage.

A.H.: *But what does that mean for Martinists who study the teachings at home and do not attend a Heptad or Atelier?*

C.B.: They can be said to have access to the Martinist teachings, but not to truly be part of the Martinist lineage. They can, though, be initiated in a Temple whenever they wish.

A.H.: *At first glance, it might be thought that the Martinist teachings are very intellectual. Is this the case?*

C.B.: It is a fact that Martinist study, whether in the oral or the written form, requires work of a reflective nature. But it would be a mistake to think this intellectual procedure is all there is to Martinism. We also have to learn to feel the emotional aspect of Martinism. We should recall that Louis Claude de Saint-Martin himself said in this respect that “It is not the head that we must rack; it is the heart.” What is more, Martinism is often described as the “Way of the Heart,” which is most telling.

It should also be stated that the Martinist teachings are every bit as practical as they are theoretical. They therefore incorporate many experiments whose purpose is to awaken our inner consciousness, and thereby increase our sensitivity to that which is most divine in us and around us, which of course presupposes that we are spiritually inclined.

A.H.: *Do you have to be either Jewish or Christian to become a Martinist?*

C.B.: No. Martinism is open to any person who is interested in Judeo-Christian esotericism, whether or not they belong to the Jewish or Christian religions. For those Jews and Christians who are Martinists, experience shows that the teachings they study within the Order enable them to better understand the ontological foundations of their cornerstone religion.

A.H.: *Is the Traditional Martinist Order open to women?*

C.B.: Of course. Women were allowed into Martinism from the eighteenth century. The same applied at the time of Papus.

A.H.: *Does the TMO have any political involvement?*

C.B.: No. It is completely apolitical, which is why it has among its membership people whose views are different in this field, and are even opposite.

A.H.: *You are also the worldwide head of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rose Cross. Why this dual office?*

C.B.: Because AMORC has been sponsoring the TMO since the beginning of the twentieth century, and 90 percent of Martinists are Rosicrucians. The Grand Masters of AMORC are all Grand Masters of the TMO as well. Having joint responsibility for these two related Orders means that the respective activities can be conducted in perfect unison.

A.H.: *And how many Rosicrucians are Martinists?*

C.B.: About 20 percent. This is explained by the fact that not all Rosicrucians are necessarily interested in Judeo-Christian esotericism.

A.H.: *What difference is there between Martinism and Rosicrucianism?*

C.B.: As I mentioned, the Martinist teachings have a Judeo-Christian undercurrent, which does not mean, however, that they are of a religious character. The Rosicrucian teachings are wider and more universal, in the sense that they are connected to the Primordial Tradition and transcend all religions that exist or have existed. You could picture the Order of the Rose Cross as a tree, of which the Traditional Martinist Order is one branch.

A.H.: *And is there a link between Martinism and Freemasonry?*

C.B.: I am not a Freemason, but from what I understand certain Masonic rituals are very similar to Martinist rituals. This is mainly explained by the fact that Martinès de Pasqually, initiator of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, belonged to Freemasonry.

A.H.: *Do Martinists have the opportunity to meet other than at the meetings held in the Heptads and Ateliers?*

C.B.: Yes. The TMO regularly organizes Conventicles which are held at regional, national, and international levels, enabling Martinists from varied backgrounds to meet and to work together. In this respect the TMO is a true Fraternity.

A.H.: *In one sentence, how would you define the Martinist ideal?*

C.B.: It is an ideal of spiritual chivalry, based on the desire to develop wisdom within oneself, in order to make a better world.

A.H.: *As Sovereign Grand Master of the TMO, what view do you have of the world today?*

C.B.: The same view that I have as head of AMORC. To be exact, I think that humanity has gone away from the Divine, and that it risks losing its soul in its mad rush towards materialism: it needs to connect again with a true spirituality, that is to say a non-religious spirituality, based on the esoteric ternary of Humanity–Nature–God, as conceived by Martinists, the Rose-Croix, and other mystics.

A.H.: *What is their concept of God, then?*

C.B.: They see in God the intelligence, the consciousness, the energy, the force (the name does not matter) which is at the origin of Creation, and which manifests through it according to laws which are impersonal, unchanging, and perfect. Indeed, the happiness to which the whole of humankind aspires is to be found in studying and keeping to these laws. But people must become more aware of them, and act more in accordance with them.



The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC

Purpose and Work of the Order

The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is a philosophical and initiatic tradition. As students progress in their studies, they are initiated into the next level or degree.

Rosicrucians are men and women around the world who study the laws of nature in order to live in harmony with them. Individuals study the Rosicrucian lessons in the privacy of their own homes on subjects such as the nature of the soul, spiritual alchemy, meditation, developing intuition, classical Greek philosophy, energy centers in the body, and self-healing techniques.

The Rosicrucian tradition encourages each student to discover the wisdom, compassion, strength, and peace that already reside within each of us.

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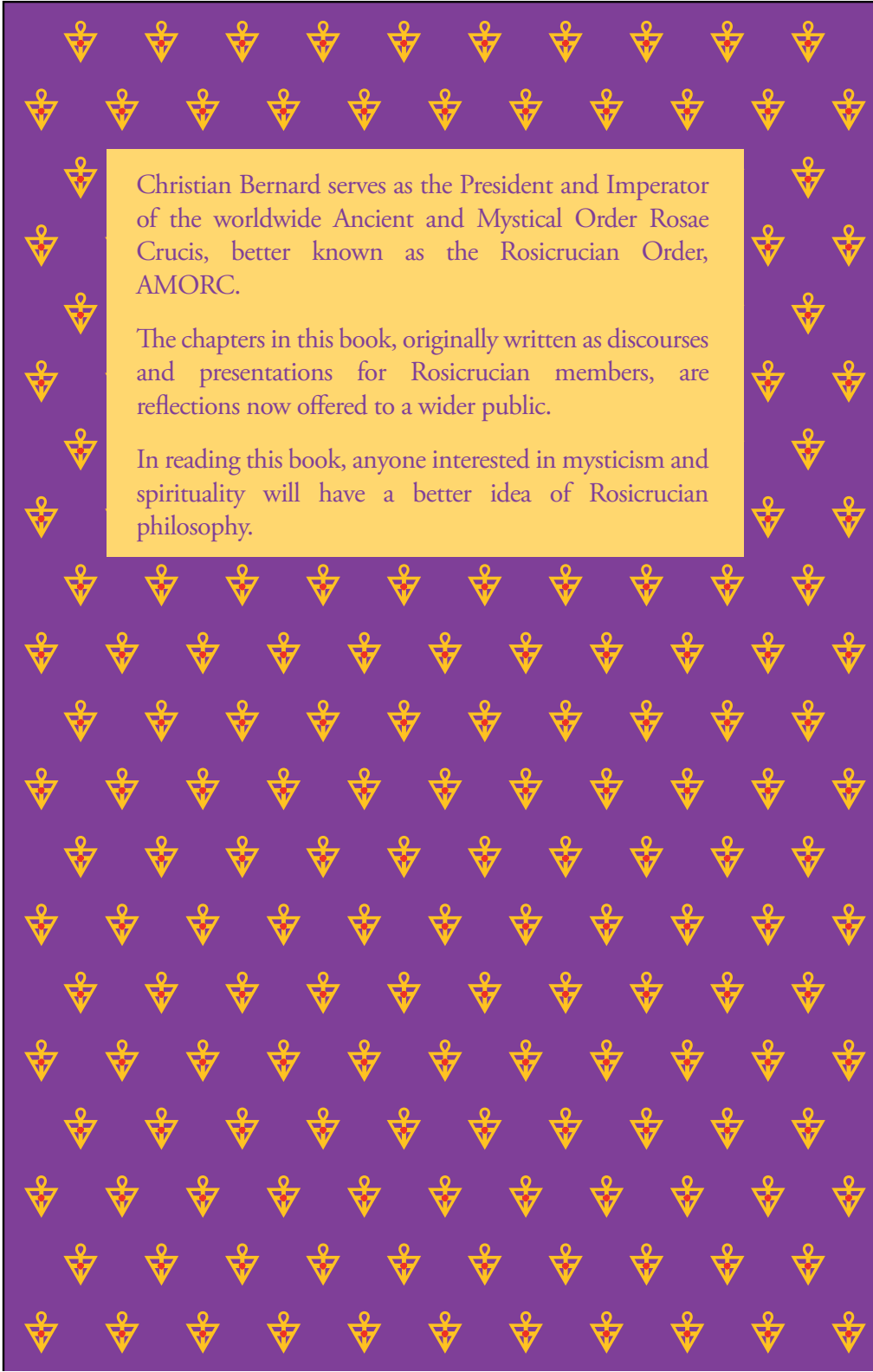
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Christian Bernard serves as the President and Emperor of the worldwide Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, better known as the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC.

The chapters in this book, originally written as discourses and presentations for Rosicrucian members, are reflections now offered to a wider public.

In reading this book, anyone interested in mysticism and spirituality will have a better idea of Rosicrucian philosophy.