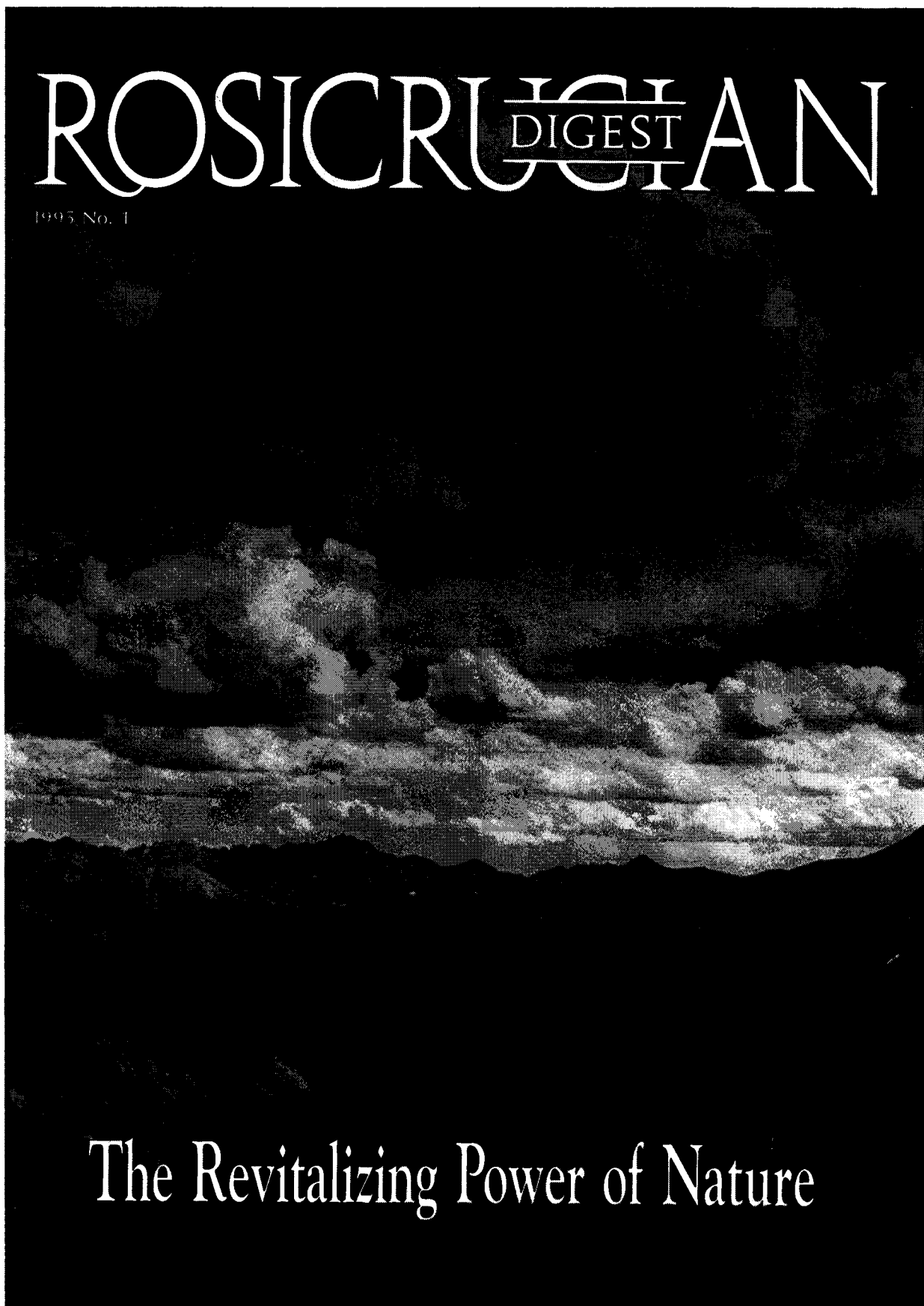


# ROSI CRU DIGEST GIAN

1995, No. 1



The Revitalizing Power of Nature

# TREASURES From Our Museum

The “science” of medicine in ancient Egypt fell largely into two categories: attempts to diagnose and cure illness, and practices designed to prevent disease from striking. The former involved surgical-doctors, priest-doctors, and magicians. The latter included, among other things, the use of amulets and imagery to invoke the assistance of protective deities. One of these protective “household gods” was called Bes.

Images of Bes have been recovered in great numbers from Egyptian houses where, it is assumed, he played the role of a friendly deity who oversaw the well-being of the family. His bandy-legged, dwarf-like body adorned all manner of household furniture and implements. Plaques, figurines and amulets of Bes, depending on their size and form, were either placed in niches around the house or were worn upon one’s person or fastened to some other object.

This pottery cup bears the face of Bes, with a wide mouth and protruding tongue, lion’s ears, and a lion’s mane for a beard. The vessel was most likely made from a two-piece mold. Although not visible in this particular photo, a seam is evident along the object’s side opposite the handle. An *identical* cup has been seen for sale on the art market, providing further evidence that the cup was made from a mold.

The Egyptians believed that harmful substances might find their way into the body through the natural orifices, mainly by the ingestion of bad food. It is likely that the image of Bes was intended to protect the drinker by purifying, or at least negating, the potential evils of the liquid within the cup. Or, it might be that this cup contained a doctor’s remedy. Scholars believe that physicians administered potions in everyday household vessels, since no evidence of specific pharmaceutical equipment survives. Perhaps the power of Bes, invoked by the image on the cup, was thought to enhance the healing power of medicinal drinks.

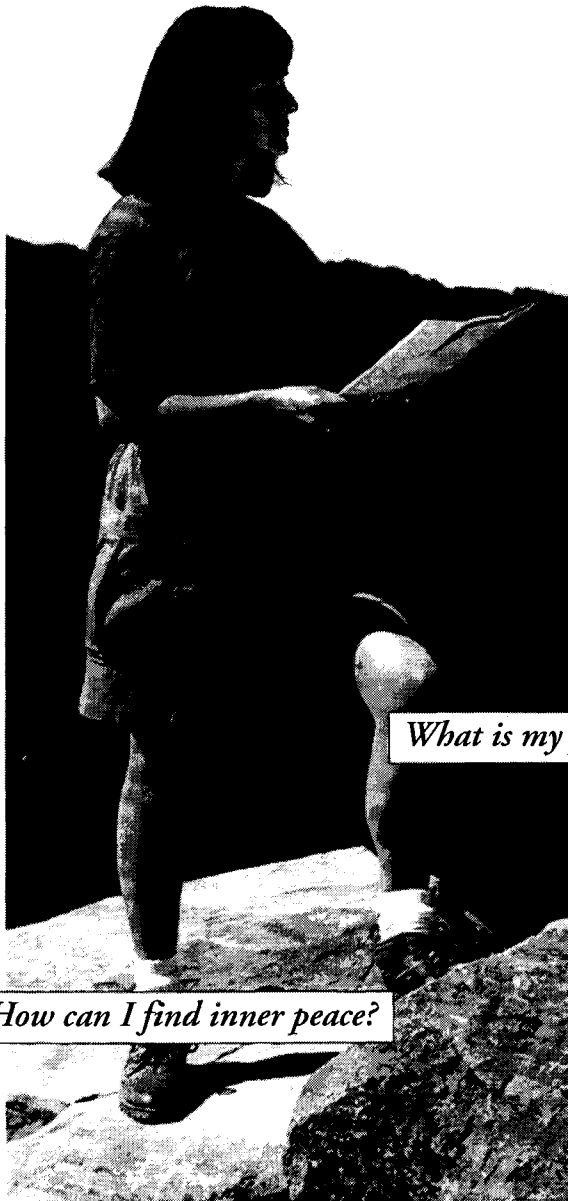
—Cynthia Stretch

RC 1704  
11 x 8 x 6 cms



*Research on the Egyptian Museum’s collections is ongoing.  
Donations and bequests to facilitate acquisitions, research, and other museum projects are gratefully acknowledged.*

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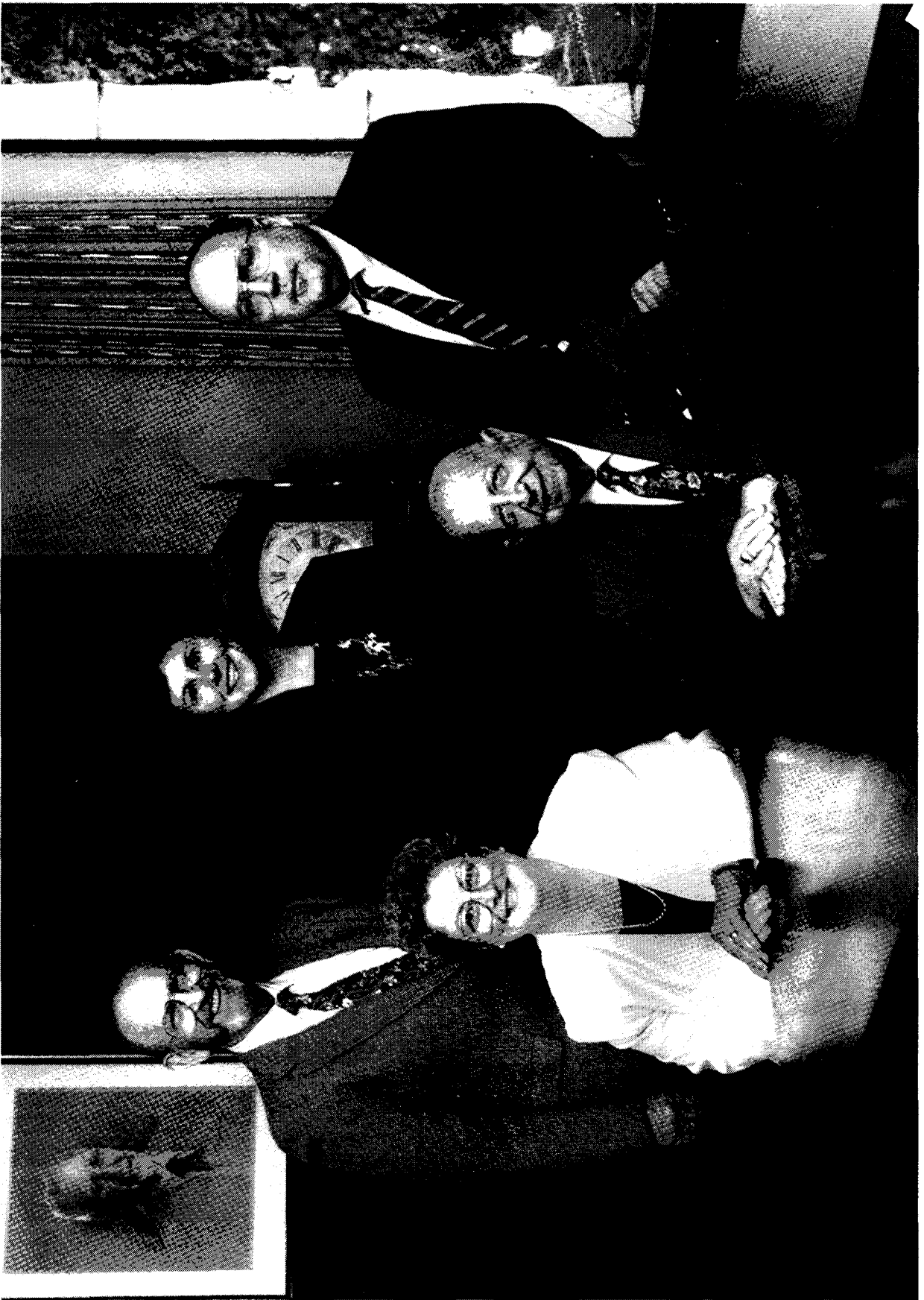
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### PHOTO:

▷  
*The English Grand Lodge Board of Directors—  
seen here in the Board Room in Rosicrucian  
Park—guide and direct the affairs of the English  
Grand Lodge. Standing (left to right) are C.E.  
(Gene) Bledsoe, Director; Kristie E. Knutson,  
President and Grand Master; David Burnet,  
Treasurer; and seated are Sandra W. Huff,  
Vice President and Secretary; and Albert Hugh  
T. Doss, M.D., Director.*



# Message from the Imperator

## Time and Space

by Christian Bernard, F.R.C., Imperator, AMORC

EVER SINCE the dawn of civilization, humans have tried to understand what *time* is. According to anthropologists, the first guide used by humans to that end was the alternation of day and night. In other words, early humans begin to associate the passing of hours with natural occurrences such as day and night—light and darkness. This first approach to time was positive, for it enabled humans to understand that a phenomenon was involved which went on with regularity and against which they were powerless. Moreover, it gave rise to a primitive notion of chronology, that is, of the succession of hours and events.

In connection with this, no one can say exactly when humans first grasped the meaning we now give to the words *yesterday*, *today*, and *tomorrow*; but when humans gained access to these three dimensions of time, our conscious life was radically transformed, for it found itself divided between the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*. Granting an ever-increasing importance to the division of time, humans devised increasingly accurate instruments to measure the passing of time in order to have at our disposal a frame of reference for the best planning of our daily activities. Time thus became a basic element of human existence, to the same degree as the food we need to survive.

When we observe today's frantic pace of life, we are forced to admit that the race against time, which humanity started centuries ago, has never ceased to accelerate. Such a state of affairs is unfortunate, for it is proof of our inability to master an element which should *serve* us instead of *enslave* us. If all humans

were to grant to this element the place which it rightfully deserves, they would understand that as long as they try to adapt to the material idea they form of time, they will stray away from the natural laws and principles which should guide their existence.

This is because time is not a material condition but solely a product of human consciousness. Therefore, it is impossible to master time except by calling upon our loftiest mental faculties. Now, experience proves that humans actually seek to conquer time by means of purely limited mundane data. In so doing, we only strengthen the power of our own illusions regarding time.

### Space

Space, as defined in most dictionaries, is the infinite expanse separating and surrounding objects. That expanse, according to current definitions, is the origin of the three dimensions which we can perceive and which, as you know, are *length*, *width*, and *height*—the latter being sometimes compared to thickness. It is obvious that such a definition is very incomplete on the mystical plane, for it takes into account only visible space.

But, there exist invisible planes which, to certain faculties of our consciousness, are quite as perceptible and real as our physical universe. On the other hand, even on the scientific plane, such a manner of defining space does not correspond to a sufficiently accurate description of the material world and of everything constituting it. Indeed, it is easy to show that the mere fact of knowing the length, width, and height of an object does not enable us to know of what it is made. This is why, for

centuries, Rosicrucians have stated that the different forms of matter which integrate into space occupy not three but *four* dimensions—the fourth being defined by the form's vibratory nature.

In our daily life we have become unable to separate time from space. When we travel to a specific place, we cannot help thinking about the duration of our trip, for very often it is important for us to arrive as quickly as possible, so as to do what we have planned as soon as possible. Because of this urgency, we have acquired the habit of no longer living in the present moment, but of always anticipating the future.

For centuries, humans have undertaken a veritable race against time. It is obvious that

such a race is also a challenge to the mastery of space, for one of our greatest concerns is to succeed in covering a maximum distance in a minimum amount of time. Our obsession in conceiving ever-faster cars, trains, planes, and rockets is clear proof of this. It is certain that some day we will succeed in traveling at record speeds and in exerting a great deal of control over the space-time continuum. But, from a mystical standpoint, we will never be able to master space-time by resorting solely to science and technology; for, we repeat, consciousness alone can transcend the limits which time and space will always impose upon our physical body.



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*It's easy to just look out the window and realize what a magnificent world this is and how lucky we are to live on it.*

—Astronaut Norman Thagard on viewing Earth from Mir Space Station

## *The Purpose of the Rosicrucian Order*

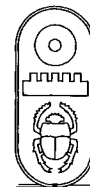
The Rosicrucian Order, which exists throughout the world, is a nonsectarian fraternal body of men and women devoted to the investigation, study, and practical application of natural and spiritual laws. The purpose of the organization is to enable everyone to live in harmony with the creative, constructive cosmic forces for the attainment of health, happiness, and peace. The Order is internationally known as the ancient Mystical Order Rose Crucis and, in America and all other lands, constitutes the only form of Rosicrucian activities united in one body. The A.M.O.R.C. (an acronym) does not sell its teachings. It gives them freely to affiliated members, together with many other benefits. For complete information about the benefits and advantages of Rosicrucian affiliation, write a letter to the Address below and ask for the free booklet, **The Mastery of Life**.

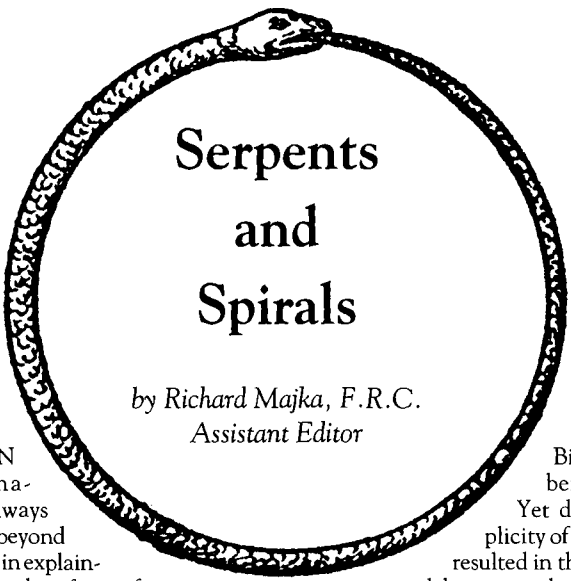
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# Serpents and Spirals

by Richard Majka, F.R.C.  
Assistant Editor

**H**UMAN imagination always craves something beyond the commonplace in explaining the whys and wherefores of existence. Things about us, as they are, leave us dissatisfied. We know that there is more to a grain of sand, for instance, than what we see and touch. We know that it contains a hint of the divine—that in the very simplest of things are elemental truths that somehow link such things, and us, to the Divine.

And so such things in our world provide us with a wide array of speculation. For instance, the lowly snake that slithers on its belly through the grass or in the trees is a source of fascination for us—perhaps more than most other animals in this world.

What is it about the serpent that fascinates us so? Is it the sinuous, ropelike body, the glistening colors, the fixed gaze of the serpent? Or is it the knowledge that somehow this disturbing creature can, when we are not looking, take on fearsome dimensions and suddenly assume the monstrous proportions of a dragon, a huge serpent that ravages the countryside and scorches all things living and nonliving with its fiery breath?

But the snake has other guises. It can coerce us into action, possibly against our will, in much more subtle ways. You see, the serpent need not always compel us; it can beguile us because in folklore it is an animal of much intelligence, as evidenced by its piercing gaze. The best example of the serpent beguiling man is one well known to you. Perhaps “the fall of man” is the most memorable story you heard as a child when various

Biblical tales were being recounted. Yet despite the simplicity of this story, it has resulted in the centuries-old debate as to the basic nature of humans. Have we been expelled forevermore from the Garden of Eden? Have we fallen from divine grace? Do we have hope of ever entering once again into an intimate relationship with the Supreme Being?

Let me quickly recount the story as told in the Bible:

“The first man and woman had been created by God and dwelled blissfully, unthinkingly, in the Garden of Eden.

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made: And the serpent said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

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“And the eyes of them both were opened.”

And as a consequence of this awakening humans realized their apartness from all godly creation. No longer could they remain one with all other unthinking things. By having a glimmering of divine awareness, after being persuaded by the serpent, they were seemingly a threat to God and had to be driven from the Garden of Eden.

What was the instrument of this change in mentality? The serpent—which you will note is described as being “subtile.” It too has an intelligence that sets it apart and leads to its being likewise damned by God. “Thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”

Now it should be asked, Why was the snake chosen for this dubious role of leading humanity down an unhappy but necessary path?

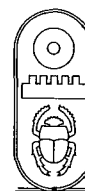
The snake is a figure—an archetype—that occurs in virtually all cultures of the world and has been worshiped in many lands. Even in Ireland, where snakes don’t live, much significance is given to the fact that St. Patrick drove them from that land.

Snakes fascinate humans with their often beautiful colors and symmetrical scales; their piercing, unblinking eyes; their sinuous, silent slithering. They are so unlike most other animals. Although we humans are attracted to snakes, we likewise experience some form of repulsion. Perhaps it is the venom of certain ones. Or maybe it is the wisdom attributed to them—which might not be justified, but the steady unnerving gaze of the jewellike eyes can lead one to think otherwise.

And thus the serpent is viewed as a worthy rival and tempter of humanity. This is especially true in folk tales when the lowly snake that crawls in the dust takes on a more



From *De Lapide Philosophico*, by *Lambsprinck*, Frankfurt, Germany, 1625





Caduceus

incredible guise of the monstrous dragon who invokes dread in the most heroic of men and gives battle to many a hero, such as Lancelot, Beowulf, Perseus, St. George, the archangel Michael. The dragon is a worthy rival: its wisdom makes its strength and fierceness exceedingly dangerous, and thus rendering it the most difficult of all animals to overcome in combat. The claws are of such sharpness that they can disembowel a human; its breath burns like a flame; its body is covered with scales as hard as the hardest stone, thus blunting the keenest sword. Yet in his quest for truth the hero must persevere in destroying this monster.

#### Unstified Forces of Nature

It is easy to understand why the serpent came to represent the unstified forces of nature. In many cultures, in fact, the serpent was associated with the creation of the world, where the formless, flowing, writhing energies coalesced into the waters of the oceans. Such primal energies are manifested, on a lesser scale, in each living creature that is brought into being. Although this life flow is necessary for existence, a person cannot advance unless he tames and refines such inner urges—in effect, he needs to “slay” the inner dragon.

This flowing energy just described may be noted in two important symbols used in Western countries to denote healing, as serpents were said to have such knowledge. The first is

the rod of Aesculapius—a wooden staff with one snake entwined about it. Aesculapius was worshiped throughout ancient Greece as being the god of medicine. He appeared in various myths in the form of a serpent and thus this animal was kept in shrines sacred to the god. Virgin priestess who tended the snakes gave omens of health and plenty—suggesting a cure to the sufferers in dreams or visions.

#### The Caduceus

The other ancient symbol, the caduceus, is closely associated with Mercury, who, like Aesculapius, was said to be the son of Apollo, the sun-god who often took the form of a divine serpent. The caduceus is shown as a rod entwined about by two snakes which were subdued by Mercury and wound themselves around the staff that had been conferred upon him by Apollo. This power to tame such conflicting natures is enhanced by the wings which cap the staff, as they represent the radiance of one who has achieved balance and a wholeness by uniting the two opposing forces.

These two diagrams used in the Western world reflect Eastern mystical concepts, being derived from a figure well known among the Indian yogis. This is the *Brahmadanda*, “the stick of Brahma,” which indicates the three channels of *kundalini* or “serpent fire” traveling up the spine. The columnar *Sushumna* is shown between the two opposing spiraling serpents of positive and negative energy currents that course through a system of force centers or *chakras*.

To revert to our original story regarding the Fall of Man, we will note that once again we have the column, now in the form of the Tree of Life, around which the serpent is coiled. The tree symbolizes upward growth; the serpent, a change in consciousness that leads to wisdom. We have here the transformation of the serpent.

Yet the Patriarchs of the Bible saw all this in a different light. This primal energy of the soul, these raw psychic energies and inner potentialities, so frightened them they that placed the serpent in the Garden of Eden on the Tree as the Tempter. We mystics know, however, that the essence of the serpent cannot be denied. This is the key to the serpent’s wisdom—this change in consciousness, for with the movement upward, we circle upward much as is done with the kundalini energy.

### *Spherical, Spiraling Movement*

Yet does this movement necessarily form a circle? No, for although the circle in mystical thought represents perfection, we can say more accurately that such movement is not necessarily on just one plane; rather it moves spherically and thus evolution occurs in spirals.

For example, consider this: each year we enter a new cycle; each spring growth begins and as the year progresses, changes occur to indicate modifications in life. On a smaller scale, each day brings small changes; and on a larger scale, as Rosicrucians we know that each seven-year cycle brings us to a new stage in our existence. Consider how we are continually evolving, although such change is not always apparent to us. Yet it is so, for as Heraclitus taught many centuries ago, all is change. Nothing can ever remain the same.

Along these lines, Raymund Andrea, former Grand Master of the United Kingdom wrote: "Esoteric unfoldment is never an uneventful progress along a straight line. It ever proceeds in spirals. We return again and again, apparently to where we were, but a little wiser on each spiral through perfectly mundane experiences which force the truth of life upon us. It is up to the aspirant to achieve all he can upon each spiral of the way."

The spiral may also yield much more extraordinary experiences. The day will surely come when we are in a place where we haven't been for many years. We perhaps hear a long-forgotten sound, smell a long-forgotten scent, see some thing that is long-forgotten. A an overwhelming significance is attached to this experience. It cannot be explained; it is beyond all explanation. Emotion surges upward from the very marrow of our being and suffuses our being. We suddenly realize, "Yes, I have been here before; I have encountered this person before. Yet I am different; and so are all of these other things."

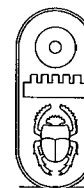
Compounded with nostalgic emotion, we realize the beauty and pain of change. But we know it must be, for all creation tends to transformation. In this lies wisdom, for man by being apart from God can observe and marvel at change and divine creation. In this way, by partaking in God's wisdom, our realizations enhance all Creation and bring all a little closer to perfection. And so we have the

lowly snake to thank for parting us from the Godhead so that we may grow and share in Divine wisdom.

In conclusion, let me invoke one last image of the snake—one out of so many. This is the Ouroboros of the ancient Gnostics and alchemists. In the form of a great circle, this serpent is shown biting its own tail. Its body is depicted in two colors, reflecting light and dark, signifying to the mystic that the material world is good and bad, perfection and imperfection, but all bound together as one. This thought is emphasized by the words that the serpent's body encircles: "One is all."



Among the Gnostics the Ouroboros was the serpent of paradise which planted within humanity a yearning for knowledge. Thus it was thought to be good since it rightly directed humans to knowledge despite all obstacles. For us, today, this mighty serpent remains a valid symbol of the life that we each need to follow. For in learning about the truths of existence on all levels—from the seemingly most trivial to the most universal—we must free ourselves from all shackles to allow our consciousness to spiral upward into higher, more cosmic realms.  $\Delta$



# Nagarjuna

## The Alchemist

by Todd Fenner, Ph.D.

**I**N THE WEST, names like Michael Maier and Paracelsus appear over and over in the history of alchemy. In the lands of India and Tibet, the name Nagarjuna appears. There, and even further east, his name inspires the same thoughts as do Aristotle, Galen, and Aquinas in the West. Nagarjuna is honored as philosopher, mystic, physician, alchemist, and saint.

He was born around the year A.D. 100 in southern India, in the area now known as Andhra. Like many early saints and mystics, details of his life are sketchy, many of them surrounded by mystery and legend. Perhaps this is even more the case with regard to India, because prior to the Middle Ages, she had few historians. Consequently, many aspects of Nagarjuna's life are still hotly debated by scholars. However, whether one believes in all the legends or not, one cannot doubt their impression on the minds of millions in Asia, even today.

The earliest datable biography of Nagarjuna comes from Kumarjiva, a Buddhist missionary in China who lived in the fourth century. He states that as a youth, Nagarjuna studied magic and became skilled in the art of invisibility. However, after a mishap involving the king's harem that resulted in a narrow escape, he decided it would be best to take the vows of a Buddhist monk.

Another story, the one most accepted by the Tibetans, says that Nagarjuna became a novice monk while a boy, a common practice in Asia. The story says that when Nagarjuna was born, his parents took him to a seer who predicted that the boy would die in seven days.

The death, he said, could be avoided for seven years if the parents would provide a banquet for a hundred monks. This was done and the baby survived. When the boy approached the seven of seven, his parents sent him on a trip. It was on this trip that Nagarjuna met his future teacher, Saraha, who recommended that the child be trained as a monk. It was believed that the karma from such an act would help the child avoid death.

### *Psychic Abilities*

Under Saraha, Nagarjuna became adept at both meditation and medicine. He also developed considerable psychic abilities. Nagarjuna used these abilities in conjunction with a vast intellect. This combination enabled him to make his great contributions to Asian thought.

An important example of this is the story behind his name, Nagarjuna, which means "Conqueror of nagas." Nagas are a class of beings who are half-serpent and half-human. They are supposed to dwell in or near watery places. Common in Indian myth, these beings are believed by some scholars to have been the original mermen and mermaids of later European myth.

Legend states that the Buddha (563-483 B.C.) hid a number of treatises among the nagas which were to be discovered at a time when people were ready to receive them. These treatises were collectively known as the *Prajnaparamita*, a Sanskrit name meaning "The Perfection of Wisdom."

Once the king of the nagas fell seriously ill. Nagarjuna, who by this time was a famous physician, was sent for. He came and with his skill cured the king. In gratitude, the king let Nagarjuna study the sacred texts. So the *Prajnaparamita* eventually came to the human world again, and Nagarjuna acquired his name.

The texts discuss the path to enlightenment and in particular dwell on the concept of

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*The author received his Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Wisconsin in 1979. His dissertation topic was Medicine and Alchemy in the Buddhist Tantras. Mr. Fenner knows Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Pali.*

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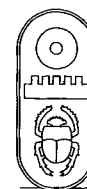
In this Tibetan block print Nagarjuna is being given an offering by a naga, a being who is half human and half serpent. The snakes around Nagarjuna's head are symbolic of his name (naga=snake).

emptiness. They became a cornerstone for Asian philosophy. Nagarjuna spent many years interpreting these texts, and his work eventually became the basis for the most influential schools of metaphysics in Tibet.

In other fields, Nagarjuna also had equal impact. As a physician, Nagarjuna is said to have been the chief redactor of the *Sushruta Samhita*. This book is still being widely printed in India and is considered one of the pillars of classical Indian medicine. Its chapters range from surgical techniques to the diagnosis and treatment of varied diseases. Included are chapters on toxicology, pediatrics, mental disorders, and theories on pharmacology.

#### Nagarjuna's Alchemical Work

Through his interest in medicine Nagarjuna became involved in alchemy. Everywhere in the world, alchemical traditions have seemingly had two concerns: changing base substances into noble ones and creating medicines that would promote youth and longevity. In different areas of the world one aspect may have been emphasized over the other, but both existed. In India, the emphasis was on finding an elixir of life. This aspect of alchemy was considered an important branch of Indian medicine, termed *rasayana*. This name was applied to transmutation of metals as well. ▶



Nagarjuna had become a master of the medical aspect of alchemy, but he wanted to learn about the transmutation of metals as well. The story of his search, like the one concerning his name, has its mystical elements.

Nagarjuna had heard about an alchemist named Vyali who lived on an island. Vyali had the reputation of being extremely secretive, so Nagarjuna thought he might have some difficulty obtaining the alchemist's secrets. Nagarjuna devised a plan which involved the use of two charms, which he prepared. He meditated and was led to the island where Vyali lived.

Once on the island, Vyali wanted to know how Nagarjuna had gotten there. Nagarjuna showed him one of the charms and implied that he had used it to find his way. Vyali agreed to teach Nagarjuna alchemy in return for the charm. Vyali took the charm, thinking he had Nagarjuna prisoner, and so felt free to reveal his mysterious art. Nagarjuna, after learning what he could, meditated, using the second charm as an aid, and returned.

As a master of the art of gold-making, it is said that Nagarjuna used his knowledge to provide for the needs of fellow monks at his monastery during a time of economic depression, when it became burdensome to the people to support the institution. Legend also states that he considered making enough gold for all people to be lifted from poverty. He was dissuaded from this idea, however, by the argument that creating so much gold would serve only to create more strife.

Nagarjuna had yet another contribution to make. He helped to develop the then nascent practice of Tantra. Tantra is a meditational exercise that involves the transformation of the meditator into the deity meditated on. It also involves the transformation of ordinary surroundings into divine ones. There are different grades and classes of Tantra, all involving initiation and proper training. Because of the transformation of the

ordinary into the divine, the practice has been termed by some Tibetans "inner alchemy."

### Long Life

It is said that because of his mastery of alchemy, Nagarjuna lived for many years. The Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang, who traveled in India in the first half of the seventh century, reported that Nagarjuna's knowledge of elixirs enabled him to live *several centuries*.<sup>\*</sup> Such claims, plus the variety of work produced by Nagarjuna, have led some Westerners to say that there were two or more Nagarjunas. This cannot be authenticated, however.

For all the good that Nagarjuna did, his life ended tragically. His friendship with the king of the region was as well known as his mastery of alchemy. Both the king and Nagarjuna were long-lived and the rumor spread that somehow their lives were magically linked. It was whispered that if one died, so would the other. The crown prince, knowing that since Nagarjuna was an alchemist and might live forever, feared that he would never become king. The prince then devised a plot to kill Nagarjuna. It is said that Nagarjuna knew of the prince's intentions but, because of his compassion for all beings and his disattachment to his own life, would not interfere with his murderer.

Legend states that when the great Nagarjuna died, all the trees about the area withered. Legend also states that his body is still around, being guarded by eight protectors until the day the Buddha Maitreya appears in the future. At that time, Nagarjuna will return to once again spread his light in the world. Δ

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<sup>\*</sup>Hsuan Tsang, Si-Yu-Ki, *Buddhist Record of the Western World*, translated by Samuel Beal, Susil Gupta, Calcutta, 1958, Vol. 4, p. 416.

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*Note on pronunciation: For the Sanskrit names and words in the text, the letter "a" sounds like the "a" in "father". The letter "u" sounds like "oo". The letter "i" usually sounds like "ee".*

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See you at RCUI Summer Session

June 12 - 30, 1995

(For more information, see current issue of *English Grand Lodge Bulletin*.)

# The Artistic Process in Mysticism

*The evolution of the artist  
directly parallels that of the mystic.*

by Melanie Braun, F.R.C., I.R.C.

A FRIEND who is an architect was considering buying a house for his family. He had found a solid, spacious brick house at a reasonable price. Yet there were major drawbacks. The space was not arranged properly for his needs, and the former owner had abused the house so that it now had cracked paneling, holes gouged in the walls, and a dilapidated appearance in general.

But as the architect walked through the house, he saw not only its present condition but how it could be remodeled to suit his needs. He “saw through” the walls to envision a large living area; he noted that a family room could easily be added to the back of the house; he “saw” a doorway through a wall where there was none. Eventually the house was remodeled to become exactly what he had envisioned.

The architect was using an *artistic* way of thinking to visualize and manifest something on the physical plane. One might say, “Yes, but he was trained to do exactly that—it’s his profession.” True, it is his profession, but he was calling on a way of thinking that each one of us can develop. In fact, artistic thinking can be a way of life that results in an increased power of visualization, a satisfaction and awe which come through the experience of beauty, and a heightened sense during meditation—which is itself an artistic activity.

Our contemporary society and educational system tend to focus on what is termed *left-brain* or intellectual learning and perception, and the results are apparent everywhere: mechanical and technological excellence, but

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*Melanie Braun—a member of AMORC’s International Research Council—is music coordinator and a pianist at the School of Eurythmy in Spring Valley, New York. She is particularly interested in the role of the spiritual in the creative process.*

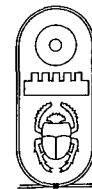
at the expense of humanity and beauty. Children who are not taught to think artistically and creatively grow up deprived of a sense of wonder and beauty. Yet we all need beauty in our lives, and learning to think and act artistically can heighten our awareness and experience of beauty.

What is it that artists—painters, musicians, poets, architects, dancers, and others who work with creative energies—bring to life that we can learn from? What is this state of mind that one might call the *artistic process*? How does it relate to our mystical study as Rosicrucians and students of life?

We must first define a state of being that we will call the *artistic realm*. This objective state seems to exist outside of our subjective, sentimental emotions. In fact, it includes very strong emotion that is in the collective subconscious rather than our personal feelings about ourselves and the world. To tap into this realm, we must prepare ourselves properly and go through various levels of activity and realization before experiencing pure artistic expression. It is here that art lives, is expressed, and can be enjoyed by everyone, despite our individually different perceptions of it.

## *The Artistic Process*

Reaching this realm of beauty follows a path that we can call the *artistic process*. It is a process common to all creative people—be they geniuses like Mozart or Leonardo da Vinci, or the struggling artist who has a vision but difficulty putting it into words or images. The process begins with a burning love for what we are doing and a desire to bring into physical manifestation the beauty we have experienced on the inner level. This desire includes both a need for emotional and spiritual satisfaction and growth for ourselves, and a need to serve humanity by spreading the light of this beauty. ▶



When these factors are present, the next step becomes easier to realize and results in immense rewards for those who persevere. This involves the preparation of the mind and body for the work it must do. For the professional artist, this means acquiring the technical ability and knowledge which becomes the means for the performance of his art: for a painter, the knowledge of colors and how to mix and use them with the correct strokes; for a musician, the technique of playing on an instrument and the knowledge of style and music history; for the architect, the ability to draw and measure and put ideas on paper in the correct fashion. The importance of this step cannot be overemphasized. If we should receive an idea or a vision, but we lack the proper reflexes to bring it into the physical plane, the idea remains in the creative realm without manifestation.

#### *Inspiration*

When we are prepared, a remarkable event occurs: the phenomenon of *inspiration*. A term often used for “getting an idea,” inspiration literally means “to breathe in,” to receive ideas as naturally as the taking of a breath.

The culminating step in the artistic process is the realization of ideas on the physical level. The artist accomplishes this in a variety of ways: composing or performing music, painting a picture, designing a building . . . using his knowledge and skill to express all the elements and ideas which have been forming within him.

Let us now examine more closely these steps in the artistic process with a view toward applying them to our own studies and lives, remembering that we all have some of the artistic within us, just as each of us is intuitive by nature—although some have developed these talents more intensely than others.

**1. Desire:** “It is the yearning desire of all who have the creative imagination . . . to make some permanent addition to the world of spirit.”<sup>1</sup> The spiritual world is made more understandable in our minds by artists who have seen and depicted it in music, poetry, and painting. Because artists work more in symbol than in actual reality, the archetypal subconscious is awakened and they begin to see into the higher spheres. From out of a concept, the artist creates a symbol, and this artistic creation becomes the symbol of that concept. No

matter how mundane the actuality turns out to be, the artist still has the artistic image in his mind.

For example, the River Jordan has become in poetry and art a symbol for the “crossing over” from death to life, or the threshold of an intuitive experience. In the artistic realm, this river is holy, mystical, and the most beautiful river in the world. But if one travels to Israel and comes upon the River Jordan at one of its least attractive points, one may wonder why this image endures. The truth is that once the image has been created in the artistic realm, it no longer matters what the “reality” is; the symbolism lives in the spiritual world and continues to inspire us.<sup>2</sup> This forms the basis of the artist’s desire to create. The artist is literally in love with the art and desires with all the heart and senses to have it speak through him.

In mystical study, we can apply this principle by realizing that without a similar burning desire to enter into the mystical state and improve one’s life, it is almost useless to go through the motions. Thus, we learn from the artist that emotion must be called upon to accomplish some higher activity. There can be no real progress without an intense desire to go forward at the expense of self-gratification and comfort.

When entering the world of the artistic, whether it be for expression in one of the traditional media or for creating a place in which meditation can live actively and with fulfillment, we step out of time and into eternity . . . we are immortal and are participating with all of a similar nature in these activities.

**2. Preparation:** When a musician steps on stage to perform, it is the culmination of a long process. The actual presentation may only take a few minutes, but the musician goes through an involved, lengthy preparation before the composition can be presented to the public. The first step of preparation, of course, involves the technical skill developed by the musician over many years of learning and practice. Without this skill, he could not play a note. Also present in the consciousness is a learned sense of style and tempo, aided by the musician’s natural talent. The musician begins by intensely studying the composition on a mundane level—playing each section of the piece and working out difficult passages so



they become easily performed. The musician needs to know the piece of music like a friend.

During this process, one often goes through a kind of “dark night,” a time when old habits die and are replaced by the message of this particular repertoire. It may even seem impossible to proceed ahead! Then, after continued and patient work, the fingers suddenly move correctly and the music begins to take on its own life. The musician then begins to move into the artistic realm where everyday frustrations and weaknesses are transformed by the beauty which he is producing under his fingers. And when he finally performs the piece, hopefully he has prepared the way for *inspiration*.

In mystical study, our preparation is twofold. First, we help to develop our inner senses by performing various exercises—making their performance a regular habit even when we are not inspired. Second, we learn various principles taught in the monographs, analyzing them and attempting to understand their significance and application. In this way we master techniques that will meet our needs in times of trouble as well as in everyday life.

**3. Inspiration:** This subject has fascinated thinkers since ancient times. It remains a fleeting concept which can be explained only by its results. It is not under the control of the will, but can appear at any time. However, by working with the principles of discipline, patience, and preparation described above, combined with a burning desire, we can open the channel for this highly desired state to be achieved. Inspiration may happen during intellectual activity, but it does not work through the intellect. It can be triggered by a stimulus coming through the five senses, and can come as a full picture or merely as a “vague feeling” or intuition.

The exact source of inspiration is unknown to us. Stating that it is only some sort of implantation in the mind from the Cosmic only serves to relegate it to the realm of mediumistic activity. From wherever it arises, it jars the deep recesses of the subconscious, bringing to the surface that stored information necessary to accomplish the artistic activity. Many creative artists have described it as a feeling that something is actually being dictated by a higher power; most say that they went into a kind of alternative state when the inspiration entered them. All have a feeling

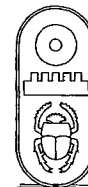
of absolute certainty that this information must be used and shared. Accompanying the inspiration is a sense of compulsion and restlessness to finish what one has started. This explains the accounts about famous creators who isolated themselves, working furiously until the work had been realized. During such periods the artist seems to take on an aura of invincibility—towering over the everyday problems of life.

In our studies, we have all experienced the isolated incident when an inspiration suddenly revealed to us a truth when we had been working to understand a concept for some time. Perhaps something coming through the senses triggered the subconscious to come to the surface, and immediately all the different aspects of the idea became integrated into one whole perception. Through this experience we gained insight into a problem or a concept that then, in effect, changed our lives and brought our understanding to a new level. This is the experience of inspiration common also to the artist. In other words, when we receive such an influx, we are experiencing something akin to the creative inspiration experienced by great artists, composers, or poets. Our revelation may not seem as large or all-encompassing, but it is certainly as important and of the same nature.

The early morning is especially conducive to receiving such inspiration, especially if one experienced a “block” in the creative process the night before and felt a need to “sleep on it.” Sir Walter Scott, when at a loss for material, once said, “Never mind, we shall have it at seven o’clock tomorrow morning.”<sup>3</sup> This attitude is typical of the experienced creators who know that inspiration cannot be forced but will come when one is most open to the influx of higher energies. Other suggestions include creating a suitable environment for the reception of inspiration; finding a quiet place, such as a Rosicrucian sanctum, where there is minimal distraction; and establishing a regular rhythm for artistic activity, rather than waiting until one is “in the mood.”

**4. Realization:** Again, we can learn something here from the accomplishments of inspired people who have, when speaking about the creative process, given some important pointers that we can use in our lives.

One thing mentioned repeatedly is immediately writing down any ideas or thoughts



that come after an inspiration experience has taken place, or after sending the message to the Cosmic Mind that you would like a particular problem solved. Any detail, no matter how seemingly insignificant, that has some relation to the subject at hand, may prove later to fit into the picture in a vital way. These "first thoughts" can provide the framework on which the whole creation or solution can grow.

Creative geniuses have two principal means of developing the initial seed or idea. One procedure is to live continuously with the idea, thinking it through intensely over a period of time. As the thought processes begin to work, the shape of the creation begins to progress. Mozart worked in this manner. His inspiration was such that once he received an idea, it could take shape in his mind almost immediately and so completely that he was soon able to write down the entire work without error.

Most of us cannot claim to have such a direct contact with the subconscious, and we need a work method which will give it time to sort out the information relevant to solving our problem or coming up with an expression of the initial thought. This is true for many composers and writers who say that they work through the idea briefly, then put it aside to mature. At a later date, when the solution comes to the surface of the consciousness, the composition is revised or developed until the desired result is achieved. They also note that the idea can change shape and appear again in a new form, more understandable to the artist. We can compare this with the Rosicrucian method of visualization, in which we create the desired result in the thought processes and then release it so that higher energies convey it into the environment where it will attract the proper circumstances for fulfillment.

The concept of visualization continues in the mind of the artist when the idea is being worked through for realization. Percy Bysshe Shelley, when writing, could "throw a veil over his eyes [so that] all the features of a scene were reproduced in a form more pure and perfect than they had been originally presented to his external senses."<sup>4</sup> The process is described not as a mere "seeing" with the mind's eye, but as a full sensory experience as if one were actually there—even the smells and sounds are present. The thought images

do more than just receive a description in the poem; they become *alive*. They are created in the mind and life of the reader as well as taking form in the realm of art, there always to remain in an Akashic note for anyone to access them. Some of them become for us archetypes of higher truths; others remain as further material for inspiration for artists and mystics alike.

**5. Rewards:** The gradual results of merging oneself with the realm of the artistic or mystical world, and working within it, tend to involve a decline in the importance of the individual personality. People are able to retire the intellect from irrelevancies and unite themselves with the "great sea of life."<sup>5</sup> By experiencing the greater view, the petty differences and problems of everyday life seem insignificant. By allowing cosmic energies to inspire us, we come to trust our inner selves more and live by their rules rather than fighting them. The experience of beauty we receive gives us a humility in the face of nature and art; the process which we have worked through provides a way of approaching a project or a problem and solving it consciously and without fear.

Thus, from our study of the artistic process, we can see that the evolution of the artist directly parallels that of the mystic. The difference is that as mystics, we may be more conscious, or at least more aware of why we want to connect with our inner self and why we want this connection to permeate our whole life. The tragedy of art's gradual decline in the public consciousness lies in a growing reluctance to cross the threshold to spiritual knowledge. Moreover, when we are not exposed to these expressions of the spiritual realm, we find it more difficult to enter therein. Only through the creation of new thought forms and archetypes in this realm by inspired artists and mystics will such forms be brought into physical manifestation. Art maintains this connection between the two realms and serves as a channel in realizing the ideal. By studying the artistic process, we can learn to master the energies of inspiration which enter into our lives as human beings.     Δ

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Henry T. Bailey, *The Magic Realm of the Arts* (Davis Press, 1928), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Rosamond E.M. Harding, *An Anatomy of Inspiration* (W. Heffer & Sons, 1948), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.



## The Healing Mind

by Kristie E. Knutson, F. R. C.

Grand Master

ACCORDING TO Hermetic Tradition, it was Hermes Trismegistus, over two thousand years ago, who first articulated the great principle that all things begin in the mind, and that images held in the mind affect the world around us.

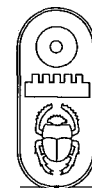
A thousand years ago, the legendary Persian physician Avicenna said, "The imagination of a man can act not only on his own body, but even on others and very distant bodies. It can fascinate and modify them; make them ill, or restore them to health."

The power of the mind/body relationship is central to the Rosicrucian Order's teachings regarding metaphysical healing. According to our monographs, there exists but one Intelligence, one continuum of consciousness in the universe. In our degree work we are given techniques which aid us in attuning with the Cosmic Mind, and thus help enhance our ability to serve as a channel of the healing energy of the Cosmic. To this end, the monographs are clear—it is not we who heal others; rather, is the Love of the Cosmic directed by our minds which does the healing.

The Rosicrucian teachings further tell us that in the realm of Mind, there is no time or space. Therefore, healing is instantaneous with thought, unaffected by distance or physical barriers. And, since Divine Intelligence exists in every cell of every organ of every person, we are encouraged to focus our efforts on the whole being of the one we wish to help, rather than on specific ailments or problems. It is sufficient to send thoughts of balance, harmony, and love for perfect healing to manifest. The Divine Wisdom within the recipient's body knows best how to direct the healing energies received.

As many of us have reason to know, the effects of metaphysical healing can be far reaching and powerful. Here at Grand Lodge, we receive literally hundreds of letters each year from those who have been helped by the work of the Rosicrucian Council of Solace. One member wrote to us the following:

"I received your letter yesterday and want you to know that I appreciate your metaphysical aid very much. Contacting the Council of Solace gave me a sense of confidence going



into surgery. The gallbladder removal went well although it was complicated. The gallbladder was entwined around the upper intestine . . . instead of where it was supposed to be. It was very inflamed and scarred according to surgeon.

"I walked very soon after regaining consciousness, and I never lost strength even though on IV for several days. I have had practically no pain, and I eat anything I want to eat. I came home on the sixth day and began driving my car the next week and doing exercise in the swimming pool. So the doctor said I'm about 50% recovered, and I hope to be fully recovered by my next appointment . . ."

Another frater from New York recently wrote: "You will be pleased to know that, yes, [my friend] did very well in the life-saving operation. Her case was a rare pheochromocytoma, which, usually (95%?) is not diagnosed until one of its random occurring one or two minute attacks of [violently high] blood pressure . . . kills the victim.

"The removal of the tumorous one or two adrenal glands atop the kidneys is considered a permanent and total cure. The operation, usually four hours long, took only two hours. The inserted system to control pain in . . . the local area was not needed. On the fourth and fifth days she used a few mild pain pills. On the third day she was walking, and [walking] unaided on the fifth day. Now, on the tenth day, her second day home, she has been up and down the deep cellar stairs on her own, cooks, makes beds, does laundry, etc.

"Her vital signs returned towards normal 'rather quickly' we were told . . . Certainly, 'prayer' is effective."

#### **Council of Solace Aids Recovery**

Lastly comes a letter from a member which speaks of more dramatic results: "I want to thank the Council of Solace for the attunement done as regards to [my friend's] cancer of the thyroid. Upon [a succession of diagnostic tests, all tests were found negative, much to the joy of the family, and surprise/doubt of his doctors *despite the proven battery of tests.*"

Those seeking the aid of the Rosicrucian Council of Solace or who utilize Rosicrucian healing techniques with themselves or their families are clearly told that these techniques are not intended to replace normal medical

care. Used in conjunction with traditional medical attention, however, these techniques can be extraordinarily helpful. Over the years, the tens of thousands of letters received from recipients of Rosicrucian metaphysical healing report common experiences: reduced pain; reduced swelling; rapid healing and recovery; and a subjective sense of ease and well-being. While the Rosicrucian Order would never make irresponsible claims about "miraculous healings," many individuals attribute remarkable recoveries at least in part to the effects of metaphysical aid.

Are these findings the result of a placebo effect? In other words, simply because recipients believe they will be helped, do they distort their actual experience, reporting effects which are not actually there? Or is there some factual basis to their experiences? As it happens, a growing body of scientific evidence supports the centuries-old Rosicrucian tenet that mind can affect matter at a distance; it can enhance the ability of another's body to heal itself; and it can pass through all barriers to do so.

Dr. Larry Dossey, co-chair of the Panel on Mind/Body Interventions, Office of Alternative Medicine, National Institute of Health, recently reported the results of a survey of scientific literature dealing with the effects of what he terms *prayer*—the focusing of healing thoughts, or what Rosicrucians would call *metaphysical healing*.

"I found experiments indicating that prayer positively affected high blood pressure, wounds, heart attacks, headaches, and anxiety. In other studies, subjects affected by prayer included water, enzymes, bacteria, fungi, yeast, red blood cells, seeds, plants, algae, moth larvae, mice, and chicks. Among the processes that had been influenced were the activity of enzymes, the growth rates of leukemic white blood cells, mutation rates of bacteria, germination and growth rates of various seeds, the firing rate of pacemaker cells, healing rates of wounds, the size of goiters and tumors, the time required to awaken from anesthesia, autonomic effects such as electrodermal activity of the skin, rates of hemolysis of red blood cells, and hemoglobin levels . . . If the technique being studied had been a new drug or a surgical procedure rather than prayer, it almost certainly would have been heralded as a 'breakthrough.'"

### Healing Effects of Mind

Most recently, in a widely publicized study, cardiologist Dr. Randolph Byrd designed an experiment to evaluate the effects of prayer or metaphysical healing on 393 patients in the coronary care unit in San Francisco General Hospital. Over a ten-month period, the patients were assigned to either a group that was prayed for by home prayer groups or to a group that was not focused on with prayer. The study was designed according to rigid criteria as a randomized, double-blind experiment in which neither the patients, doctors, or nurses knew which group the patients were in. The findings show the prayed-for patients responded differently from those not prayed for:

- They were five times less likely than the unprayed for group to require antibiotics.
- They were three times less likely to develop pulmonary edema, a condition in which the lungs fill with fluid as a consequence of the failure of the heart to pump properly.
- None of the prayed-for group required endotracheal intubation, in which an artificial airway is inserted in the throat and attached to a ventilator, while twelve in the unprayed for group required this support.
- Fewer patients in the prayed for group died.

Scientific support of the efficacy of metaphysical healing techniques comes from many areas of scientific investigation. For example, in 1964 Irish physicist John Stewart Bell showed that if distant objects have once been in contact, a change thereafter in one causes an immediate change in the other—no matter how far apart they are. Thus, Bell's theorem demonstrates that at certain levels—perhaps the levels associated with mind—causality is non-local; objects need not be present with each other to be affected by each other. Phrased in Rosicrucian terms, since there is but one Mind, all things are in contact with each other. Therefore, mind may affect the world around it, regardless of distance and time.

Current scientific studies also support the long-held Rosicrucian contention that that metaphysical healing is best which focuses on the whole being, rather than on specific ailments or problems.

According to a recent article in *Natural Health* magazine, the Spindrift organization in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, has investigated which kind of prayer works best: directed or non-directed prayer. Directed prayer has a specific goal, image, or outcome in mind. It attempts to steer healing energies in a precise direction, such as praying for a cancer to be cured, the pain to go away, a stroke to resolve itself. In contrast, non-directed prayer is open-ended, with no specific outcome in mind. Healing thoughts are sent with no attempt to "tell the Cosmic what to do."

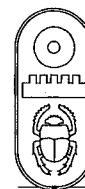
The study involved growing mold on the surface of rice agar plates that bacteriologists routinely use. The mold was stressed by washing it in an alcohol rinse so as to damage it and retard its growth. A string was then placed across the mold, marking it into side A, the control side, and side B, the prayed for side.

When directed prayer was used to encourage the growth of side B, nothing happened . . . . But when directed prayer was replaced by undirected prayer . . . side B began to multiply.

One of the most difficult experiences of life is seeing others suffering ill health, emotional problems, financial challenges, seeing others in pain. But—as our Rosicrucian studies tell us and science increasingly affirms—we need not feel ourselves to be helpless bystanders. Ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things through use of the mind. Everyone possesses the ability to heal the sick, and to bring harmony to discordant situations.

### The Celestial Sanctum

*is a cosmic meeting place. It is the focal point of cosmic radiations of health, peace, happiness, and inner awakening where cosmic benefits of a specific nature may be received. Nonmembers as well as Rosicrucian students may participate in the Celestial Sanctum contacts. Liber 777, a booklet describing the Celestial Sanctum, will be sent to nonmembers requesting it. Address Scribe S.P.C., Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, 1342 Naglee Ave., San Jose, California 95191, stating that you are not a member of the Order and enclosing thirty-two cents to cover mailing.*



# Story As Healer

by Beverly Lauderdale

**I**N EXPLAINING the healing power of words, Madeleine L'Engle in a lecture (and in her book *Walking on Water*) spoke of her nine-year-old granddaughter. The child, hit by a truck on her way home from swimming, could not receive pain killers because of a head injury.

"As she returned to full consciousness, she said to her parents and grandparents, 'I love you,' and then, 'Read to me.' So we read to her, hour on hour. When our voices would tire and we would slow down, we would immediately hear, 'Keep on reading,' and so we kept on.

"Story was pain-killer, quite literally. When her brain was focused on story, then it was not on the pain center. Story was a more effective pain-killer than any chemical medication."

And while author L'Engle relived this experience, I remembered pain years ago as a child, long before I had considered story as a healing agent. Yet, like L'Engle's granddaughter, my younger self realized on some subconscious level that that was what was necessary. So I whispered to my mother, "Tell me a story."

Unprepared, she stammered through a false beginning until her voice faltered.

"It doesn't matter," I said, "just make up a story where something good happens."

She nodded, and after thinking a moment, and undoubtedly drawing upon her knowledge of my fear of heights, she began. "Tina and her friends went to the county fair. No one would ride the ferris wheel with her, so bravely Tina bought one ticket and marched up the ramp. The attendant—and Tina thought his eyes glinted strangely—snapped the bar across the seat. For a second she breathed in odors of popcorn and hot dogs before the motor revved. The seat swayed and Tina sucked in her breath. The wheel revolved and Tina gazed over fairground tents, the night-blackened nearby fields, and the

distant lights of her town—miniature they seemed. Then suddenly the motor sped up and . . ."

While Mom colored in the introduction, I saw, smelled, touched, and tasted the carnival atmosphere. I rode that ferris wheel, which in this fantasy spun free from its earthly anchor and whirled across the sky into an enchanted land. When my body relaxed, I quit battling pain. My mind submitted to the spell of action, character, dialogue, setting, and suspense—to the boundaries of fiction. And in those boundaries I knew, as well, safety.

## *Tell Me A Story*

Slightly over a year ago a considerably older version of me awoke from anesthetic to ask my husband, "Could you tell me a story?"

He grinned. "Well, let's see. Once upon a time a man and a woman walked along a deserted beach on a spring morning. Their dog Ranger loped ahead. Waves crashed and spray covered the woman's sunglasses. She laughed and paused to wipe them clean.

"Hey,' the man called out, 'Ranger's found something,' and through her streaked glasses she watched the golden retriever digging frantically at a mound.

"While she stuffed a Kleenex back in her jeans her husband hurried ahead. 'Quick,' he yelled, 'it's . . .'"

Before sleep interrupted the episode I stood on a sandy shore. Sunglasses weighed against the bridge of my nose and I flinched when spray splattered each lens. Sun glinted from the retriever's red-gold coat, while thundering waves dulled his barks.

For in listening to story, in responding to it, we transcend the present apparent condition and environment. Not trapped by humanity's version of time, by humanity's definition of reality, we soar. And in that marvelous freedom we mentally move away, allowing the healing process freer reign.

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And as L'Engle's talk continued, I replayed the opening scene from the movie *The Princess Bride*. Grandfather steps into the bedroom of a child recovering from a cold. He carries a book, one beloved by the child's father. However, the contemporary youngster, geared to computer games, shows little interest until Grandfather reads. The majesty of sentences, the wonder of adventure, lure the boy from his bed, from his virus, into a world of brave deeds and adventure.

In participating in the brave deeds and adventure offered in stories, conditions beyond the physical may be healed.

In absorbing narratives of courage, we visualize and empathize. We are likewise tested and challenged. Beyond supplying us with strength, beyond inspiring us with the belief that if "she/he can do that, so can I," stories enrich us. For the duration of the conflict and resolution—and in a larger sense forever—we assume an added dimension to our personality. Empowered either by bravery or understanding we broaden concept of self.

When my daughter, miserable and homesick, telephoned from camp, she dissolved into tears. I held onto the phone, searching for words. Finally I suggested, "What are the good things there?"

Though her tears she shakily mentioned a nice counselor, a chocolate dessert, "and yesterday we went to the aquarium."

"Remember guppies in our fish tank?" I asked. And in a stream-of-consciousness manner we wandered from fish to fowl to animals, and almost simultaneously recalled the sign advertising horse rides, tacked to a derelict barn.

"Mom," her voice was stronger now. "You tell it again."

The thin wire uniting and yet separating us vanished as I began to recount the experience. We crossed a rutted lane and together approached the old barn. Her hand slipped into mine. We squeezed fingers but released the grasp to swat flies.

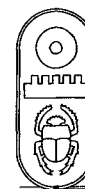
"The owner appeared from some dark stall," I said, "bearing with him the smell of leather and perspiration. He had but one arm which he raised to reposition his hat. He stared for a minute and said, 'Yup, Charlie's the horse for you, been in the movies, you know . . .'"

Two weeks later when she returned home my daughter said, "I made a list of good things to think about when I was feeling sad. Not a list of how lovely the sky is or how pretty a flower smells. Those are but pictures. Instead I picked out happenings with a beginning, a middle, and an end."

In discovering the valuable ingredients of *story* she had found an antidote for pain, an avenue toward healing. Δ

### ***Front and Back Covers:***

Our Front Cover photograph features the glory of nature from atop North America's Continental Divide—the Colorado Rocky Mountains—by Rosicrucian photographer Donna Rae of Boulder, Colorado. The illustration on our Back Cover comes from a fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript and features an ancient alchemical symbol—the Ouroboros—the dragon feeding on its tail, which is emblematic of the eternal, cyclic nature of the universe. The coloring of the dragon is symbolical: green is the color of the beginning, and red is associated with the Great Work. The writing is in Greek.



# Good Health Can Be A Laughing Matter

*Research suggests that laughter can bolster resistance to disease  
and provide relief from pain.*

IT'S difficult to dispute that humor is psychologically good for us. After all, it's hard to feel angry or stressed in the middle of a hearty laugh. But it's less taken for granted that our physical health is aided by the one-liners and day-to-day humor of friends and co-workers. However, such humor is healing.

This idea is far from new. Cultures as diverse as the ancient Greeks and the American Ojibwe Indians have integrated humor and healing. Even in the Bible it is written that "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). The idea is as old as time, but only in recent decades has this idea become accepted by the mainstream medical community. Doctors are now taking laughter seriously as a complement to traditional methods of treating and preventing illness.

## *Laughter and Immunity*

The new interest in humor is partly a result of studies linking stress with lowered immunity. While emotional and physical stress can wear down the body's ability to fend off illness, research suggests that laughter can bolster resistance. Researchers from Western New England College monitored immune-boosting chemicals in groups of students who watched either humorous or serious videotaped programs. In students who watched humorous films, the concentration of these protective chemicals rose. Those who watched the more serious films showed no change.

Laughter can also help you stay healthy by giving your heart, lungs, and muscles a mild workout. When you laugh heartily, your blood pressure and heart rate rise slightly, then rebound. Your facial and abdominal muscles benefit from laughter's gentle exercise and a massage. In fact, muscles throughout your entire body relax as the result of hearty laughter.

Further, during laughter, your brain may even be releasing endorphines, the same stress-

reducing substances released during exercise. Dr. William Fry of California's Stanford Medical School refers to laughter as "inner jogging." Twenty seconds of laughter, he explains, can double your heart rate for three to five minutes—the equivalent of three minutes of strenuous rowing. (Couch potatoes can take some comfort that those hours spent laughing at sitcoms are not entirely wasted.)

## *Healing Humor*

In his 1976 book *Anatomy of an Illness*, editor and author Norman Cousins described his struggle with a disease that led to inflammation of his spine and joints. Confined to a hospital bed and in severe pain, Cousins decided to work on a personal theory that laughter is truly good medicine. Surrounding himself with good humor—dished up by hearty friends and acquaintances, along with humorous audiocassette tapes and movies—Cousins discovered that ten minutes of hearty laughter would give him two hours of pain-free sleep. Mr. Cousins eventually completely recovered with a further appreciation of humor's great value.

Since then, other studies have confirmed this link between laughter and pain relief. As a result, more hospitals are using humor to help patients battle pain from disease or the side-effects of treatment. Cold, clinical wards are being remodeled into cheerful, home-like settings. Some hospitals and convalescent homes are integrating humor into the lives of their patients through movies, comedy television channels, and even cartoons.

## *Making Time to Laugh*

Laughter comes naturally and often to most of us. But in stressful situations, when a laugh would be most helpful, humor often gets put on the back burner—shoved aside by the stresses of the moment. Here are some simple ways to use humor to enhance your life and the lives of those you care about:

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- *Be aware that people have different styles of humor.* If your spouse doesn't appreciate your puns, it doesn't mean he or she lacks a sense of humor. Some people appreciate wordplay, others love irony, and others really go for slapstick silliness. Try to spend at least some time each week with people who share your sense and style of humor.

- *Look for the comic absurdity in the world around you.* Oh, how our modern-day society could use the likes of Mark Twain today! Twain easily saw through the foibles and hypocrisies of his day, and humorously articulated these perceptions to people of his time and all times—causing us to laugh at ourselves even today. After all, the stress and strain of modern living have made millions eager to find new coping strategies. For many of us, it is easy to see the comic absurdity all about us. However, if you find this difficult, try watching *Seinfeld*. This is a show supposedly about “nothing,” but it's really all about how the minor annoyances of daily life—double parkers, snooty salespeople, officious bureaucrats—can be truly hilarious.

- *Keep a book of your favorite cartoons in a nearby desk drawer* for comic relief during

stressful moments at work. Or buy one of the many laugh-a-day calendars. A friend of mine who works in a stressful office environment always keeps several of her favorite cartoons handy. A quick glance at one or two favorite cartoons in stressful moments can easily help relieve the stress of the moment and pull you through difficult times.

- *Invite friends over for a comedy film festival.* Feature videocassettes of your favorite comedians—whoever makes you laugh! Viewing these with friends is especially enjoyable because comedies always seem much funnier when you're with other people.

- *If someone you care about is in the hospital, consider sending humorous books or cartoons instead of flowers.* Or if you know your friend loves the comedy of, let's say, Jerry Lewis, bring in a VCR and a couple of movies and spend the evening laughing together. You will have a great time and both be healthier for it!

By following these simple and fun-to-use guidelines you will find that humor—wonderful, healing humor—really can enhance your life and the lives of those you care about. Δ

## AMORC Convention, Prague

*Eastern Europe's First Rosicrucian Convention*

**Prague, Czech Republic**

**October 7-8, 1995**

The Czech AMORC Administration, the German Grand Lodge, and the Supreme Grand Lodge announce with great pleasure this first Rosicrucian Convention in Eastern Europe. Rosicrucians from throughout the world are invited to attend this exciting event in the fascinating city of Prague. The entire program will be conducted in several languages, including English. For more information, please contact:

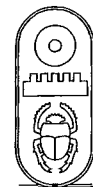
**AMORC Convention, Prague**

*c/o Grand Master Kristie Knutson*

*Rosicrucian Order, AMORC*

*1342 Naglee Avenue*

*San Jose, CA 95191*



# Following A Spiritual Path in A Materialistic Culture

by Angela Onorato, M.A., F.R.C.

*May I live simply so that others may simply live.—Gandhi*

**B**UDDHA SAID that life is suffering. Our desire nature creates suffering, and this in turn keeps us coming back on the wheel of incarnation. According to Buddha, the way to eliminate suffering is to eliminate attachment to the desire nature. The eightfold path tells us how to accomplish this.

Eastern philosophy views eliminating the desire nature or the attachment to desires as one of its primary goals in achieving enlightenment. Why do we have a desire nature? Is it possible to eliminate our desire nature? And if we can, should we do so?

Rosicrucian philosophy holds that we should not negate our legitimate physical, economic, and emotional needs. This seems to suggest moderation in all things, finding the so-called "happy medium." Rosicrucian philosophy also states that abundance is our natural state if we properly apply cosmic laws.

For those of us who live in industrialized, urban Western societies, the results of our material wealth abound. The question then arises: How do we maintain our spiritual integrity while living in a culture which constantly flaunts materialism as the answer to life's problems?

I became interested in this topic due to my own struggles with my strong desire nature. I find myself constantly wanting all of life's material pleasures while questioning whether they will truly satisfy my deepest yearnings. Over the years I have cycled through times of relative ease and abundance as well as times of great simplicity, voluntarily and involuntarily. Yet I have been amazed at how little I really need during such times of scarcity.

I feel that those of us who live in an advanced technological society "need" more in the way of material goods than those who live in so-called third world or developing nations. The technological advancements of the 20th century—the automobile, telephone, television, and microwave oven, to name just a few—have now become the staples of life for the average person rather than the luxuries of the privileged few. One could certainly make the decision to live without them; however, he or she would seemingly be relegated to the periphery of society.

I have known a number of people who have either partially or totally "dropped out" for a period of time. When they decided to drop back in, many could appreciate a simpler standard of living. However, most of them returned to the mainstream culture and did not choose this reduced lifestyle as a permanent way of life. Rather, they have selected elements of it to suit their personalities and lifestyles.

## **Mass Media Creates "Needs"**

The endless choices and possibilities of a materialistic society make it nearly impossible for anyone but the most dedicated ascetic to follow a simple lifestyle. So many diversions in Western culture distract us from seeking greater meaning in our lives. We want more and more of what we did not want in the first place. In a materialistically driven culture we are made to feel inadequate if we cannot fully satisfy all of our material needs. This creates what I like to call *false suffering*.

Legitimate suffering is the normal response to genuinely tragic events in life, such as poverty, war, and natural disasters. False suffering, on the other hand, is the result of a belief that we are inadequate because we lack something that we think we should have. Mass media with its slick images and dependence on advertising for profitability is in-

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*The author holds a Master's degree in Transpersonal Psychology and has presented workshops at Rosicrucian retreats.*

tended by its very nature to create false suffering and discontent. When our outer identity is defined by what we own, and not by who we are, we perpetuate an endless cycle of buying things to alleviate our suffering and alienation.

Westerners are now realizing that our astonishing level of consumption of the world's resources cannot go on indefinitely. Moreover, despite our great material wealth, we do not feel satisfied at the deepest levels of our being. How, as mystics, can we disregard the distractions of everyday life? How can we build more contentment into life? This is a complex question and the solution will differ for each individual. Here are a few suggestions about where to begin.

- Identify your priorities and goals in life, and then go for them. Making a list is a good way to become focused. Set up six-month goals, one-year goals, and five-year goals. Then reevaluate these goals periodically to see if they are still worthy of pursuit. Reevaluating helps you weed out any goals that once seemed laudable but are now unsuitable. This is also a way to keep focused on the truly important things in life. The key is to make goal-setting a constantly evolving process rather than a stagnant one.

- Develop a hobby or activity that gives you considerable inner satisfaction. Obviously, serving the Order is one way. Others might include volunteering time to what you consider to be worthy causes or engaging in a physical activity or an artistic pursuit. The important thing is participating in some activity or pursuit where you are both giving and receiving so that life seems more gratifying and enjoyable.

- Learn to be content with what you have and where you are. Take an inventory of your life. Look at all the good you have given and received in your life up to this point. Give thanks for what you do have and for what you

have accomplished so far. Our monographs suggest that we reflect each evening on what has transpired during the day. Wake up giving thanks every morning that you have another day to pursue your life's path.

- Finally, cultivate a spiritual practice—preferably on a daily basis—that allows you to tune into the Cosmic, God, your Higher Self so that you can detach yourself from daily life for a while and connect with a force greater than yourself.

Upon reflection it came to me that our desires are the result, in part, of our imagination. Our imaginations are infinite and therefore our desires are probably infinite as well. How do we then solve the paradox of having an infinite desire nature while at the same time enjoying life's bounty?

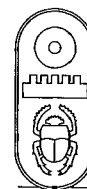
The solution appears to be twofold. First, it is not wrong to want the good things that life offers, whether they are material, such as a new car; or ephemeral, such as a harmonious home or work environment. Perhaps what we need to do is to become more *discerning* about what our deepest desires and wants are and then proceed when it is clear what we should do to achieve them. It can also be a process of development. Sometimes we need to achieve a particular goal so as to realize that it doesn't necessarily bring us the satisfaction that we thought it would. In this way we can then move on to the next stage of progress.

Second, we must learn to not be too attached to a particular outcome or a particular means of attaining it. Once we have done what is within our power to do, we must show a willingness to allow the Cosmic to determine both the outcome and the means to attain it.

Thus, through a discerning attitude and a healthy detachment from predetermined results, we allow the Cosmic to show us a pathway through life in this materialistic culture.

*Between living and dreaming  
there is a third thing.  
Guess it.*

—Antonio Machado  
Spanish Poet



# What's New at Rosicrucian Park?

**A**LTHOUGH Rosicrucian Park has been around for nearly 68 years, beneficial changes and improvements are ongoing. Here is a quick update on some of the latest improvements around the Park.

In the Egyptian Museum, a ten-minute, large-screen video now welcomes museum visitors at the new visitor orientation center. This exciting and informative program—narrated by a lively “scribe” who talks about objects he “remembers” from his past life in Egypt—introduces visitors to the museum, features some of the objects on display, and explains what visitors are going to see as they walk through the museum’s galleries. A grant from a non-member helped pay for the video filming, and a local electronics store donated the TV. Once inside the museum, visitors will find the museum Gift Shop in new, enlarged quarters, where an expanded collection of interesting gift-shop items are on display.

The Egyptian Museum’s focus is on education, and AMORC is proud of its ongoing educational contribution to the community. Museum and Planetarium Director Robert Pedretti, a former school principal, has used his experience to great advantage by preparing instructional materials for teachers to use in conjunction with school field trips to the museum and planetarium. During the past year the number of school groups touring the Egyptian Museum has increased markedly. In fact, 40,000 students visited in 1994! While enjoying the museum’s specially developed curriculum-related program, these impressionable young people explore the mysteries of the past—and reach for the future’s possibilities.

In keeping with the Egyptian Museum’s focus on education, the museum’s Art Gallery is being used by students at a nearby school—which happens to be a special school attended by some of the most promising art students in the San Jose area. Through the museum gallery, students have an opportunity to display their art in a professional environment—

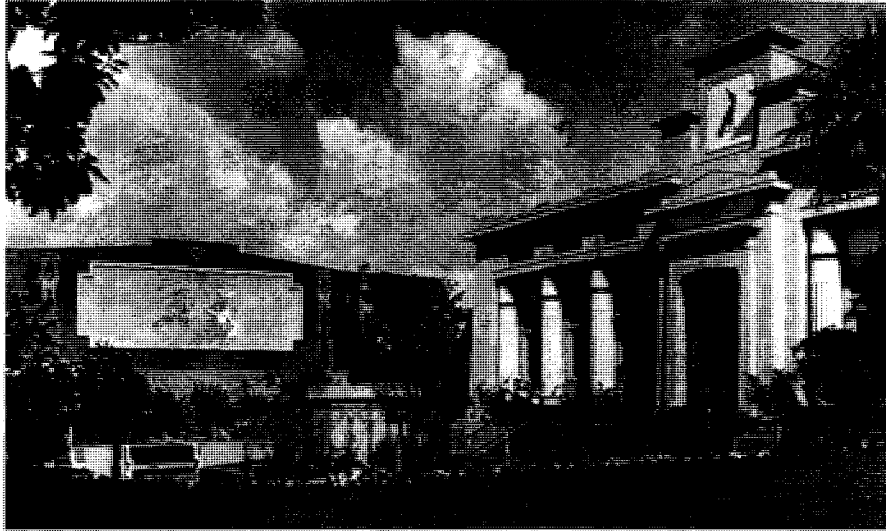
just as they would in a commercial gallery—where it can be viewed by thousands of museum visitors. Through this experience students learn how to prepare their work for display and even how to host the opening of each show.

## *Alexandria Bookstore*

Our Alexandria Bookstore has also been remodeled, thanks to the efforts of a local member who donated his services to redesign the entrance to the store and build beautiful shelving units and displays—making Alexandria even more of a pleasure to visit. Many member and nonmember visitors report that the peaceful, inspiring ambience of this metaphysical bookstore lures them back time after time.

In addition to offering books and gifts, Alexandria also hosts author signings, concerts, and lectures. There are also plans to make the bookstore the venue for a cultural center—offering a lively program of lectures, workshops, and seminars—which will bring an even greater number of visitors and potential members to Rosicrucian Park. And, future plans call for opening a second bookstore in the San Francisco Bay Area, which will further expand the Order’s presence in the community.

Both of these new projects—the creation of the visitor orientation center in the Egyptian Museum, and the remodeling of the new Alexandria Bookstore in the Francis Bacon Cultural Center—have been made possible in part through funding provided by the *Dr. Albert A. Taliaferro Memorial Fund*. This fund was established as a tribute to the memory of Frater Dr. Albert A. Taliaferro—an outstanding Rosicrucian teacher and leader for 55 years. Both of these essential projects help the Egyptian Museum and Alexandria Bookstore fulfill their purpose more effectively—and both significantly enhance the public image of our beloved Rosicrucian Order.



*The enduring beauty of Rosicrucian Park: At the very center of the Park, the Fountain of Living Waters provides a quiet, meditative setting in front of the Rose-Croix University Building. Constructed in 1934, this building has served the Rosicrucian educational needs of generations of AMORC students. Further enhancing the Rosicrucian educational experience is the Alexandria Bookstore in nearby Francis Bacon Center.*

### **The Grand Temple**

Built in 1949, the Grand Temple's air conditioning, heating, and electrical systems are now over forty years old, and upgrades have been sorely needed for several years. Renovations are now underway. The original electrical system has been completely stripped and replaced, a new heating system is in place, and by the end of the year a new air conditioning system will be installed. The entire exterior of the Temple has been completely repainted. Inside the Temple, the robing rooms, cloak room, and the Martinist Temple are also newly painted, and the Temple's interior fixtures have been carefully cleaned. In certain areas new light fixtures were installed, adding further luster to the Temple's newly polished tile floors.

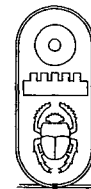
### **Tale of A Parking Lot**

Most people visiting Rosicrucian Park don't think twice about our parking lot, but it too has its history. Back in the early 1980s AMORC received permission from the city of San Jose to build a parking lot because the parked cars of the large number of employees at that time caused a good deal of congestion in the surrounding residential neighborhood.

This congestion was compounded by the proximity of a busy traffic court just across the street. As a result, there was insufficient parking close to Rosicrucian Park, Egyptian Museum and Planetarium visitors often had to park blocks away, and our neighbors did not appreciate having their driveways blocked by the large number of parked cars.

Since that time, much has changed. The Spanish Grand Lodge has moved to Mexico and our staffing is considerably smaller. And the busy traffic court has also moved away. As a result, over the past few years, the parking lot has been considerably underused. And though the lot is usually less than half full, we still must pay the costs of maintaining it—including expensive property taxes.

In view of these changed circumstances, the San Jose City Council performed a usage study and determined that there was no longer a need for a parking lot of this size. They granted permission to the Order to sell half of the parking lot, allowing us to invest our equity in a revenue account where it will be earning interest instead of going to waste. The funds earned as a result of this sale will now be available for expansion projects, such as cul-

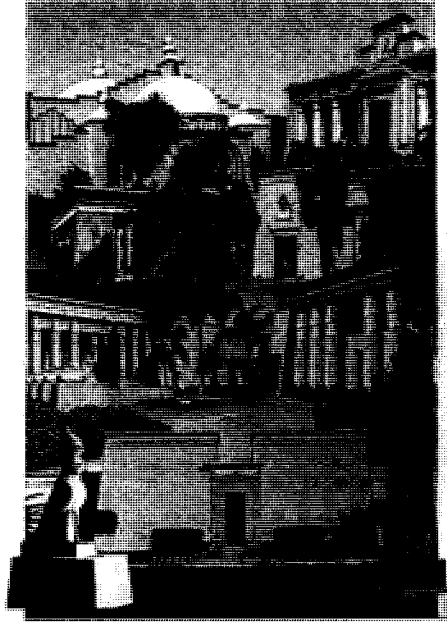


tural centers, grants to Regional Committees, the expansion of the Order into China, and so on.

### Grants to Regional Committees

We are fortunate in having many talented and enthusiastic members who are willing to donate their expertise in serving the Order. Each region has a committee of members, administered by a Grand Councilor, which is the vehicle for the many creative projects you have read about in the *English Grand Lodge Bulletin*. Although the talent and labor is donated, many of these projects also require funding for services and materials not available through the member volunteers. In order to support these efforts, Grand Lodge has established a grant program for Regional Committees which funds thousands of dollars to Regional Committees each year for projects which help promote the Order. Some of these grants have been instrumental in the development of new seminars, a promotional video, and booths which can be used at new age fairs and expos, and much more.

So, although Rosicrucian Park is almost 68 years old, new and exciting changes are continually being done to the Park, keeping it young and vital. Change, as our monographs say, is an integral part of life.



Important structures of Rosicrucian Park include (from top, left to right) the Planetarium, Rose-Croix University Building, Akhnaton Shrine, Rosicrucian Research Library, Egyptian Museum, Grand Temple, Administration Building (center) with Horus Statue and Heliopolis Obelisk.

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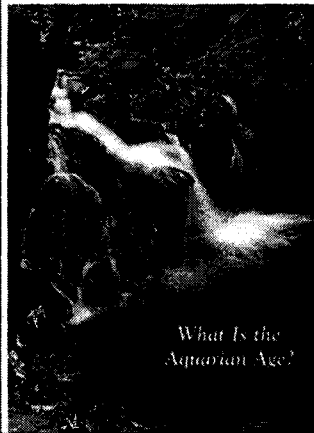
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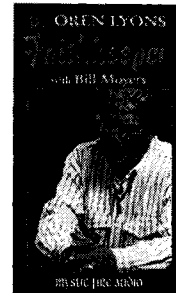


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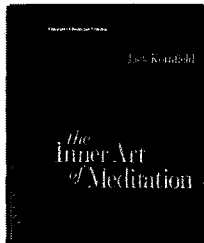
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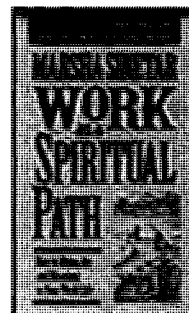
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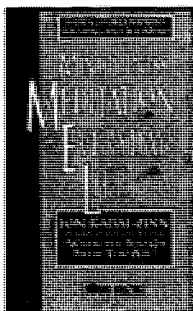


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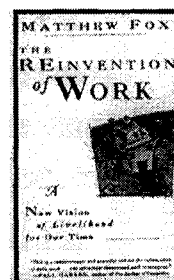
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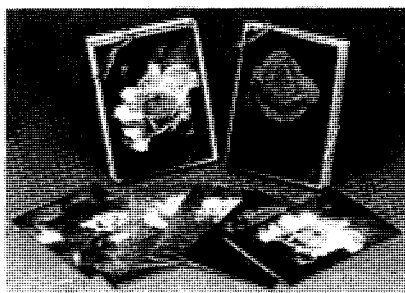


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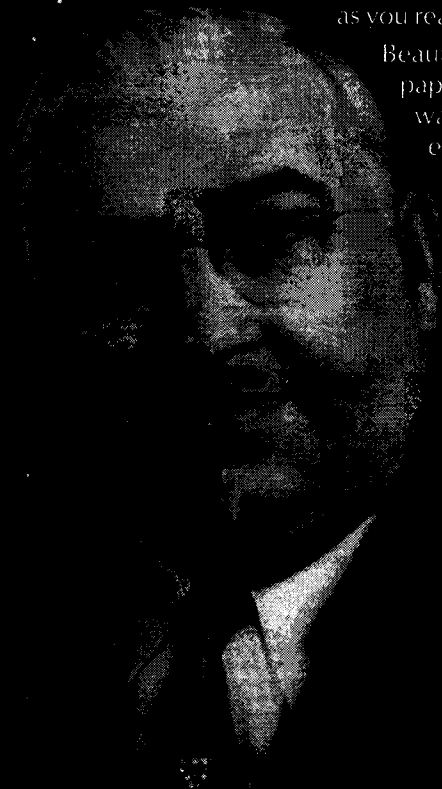
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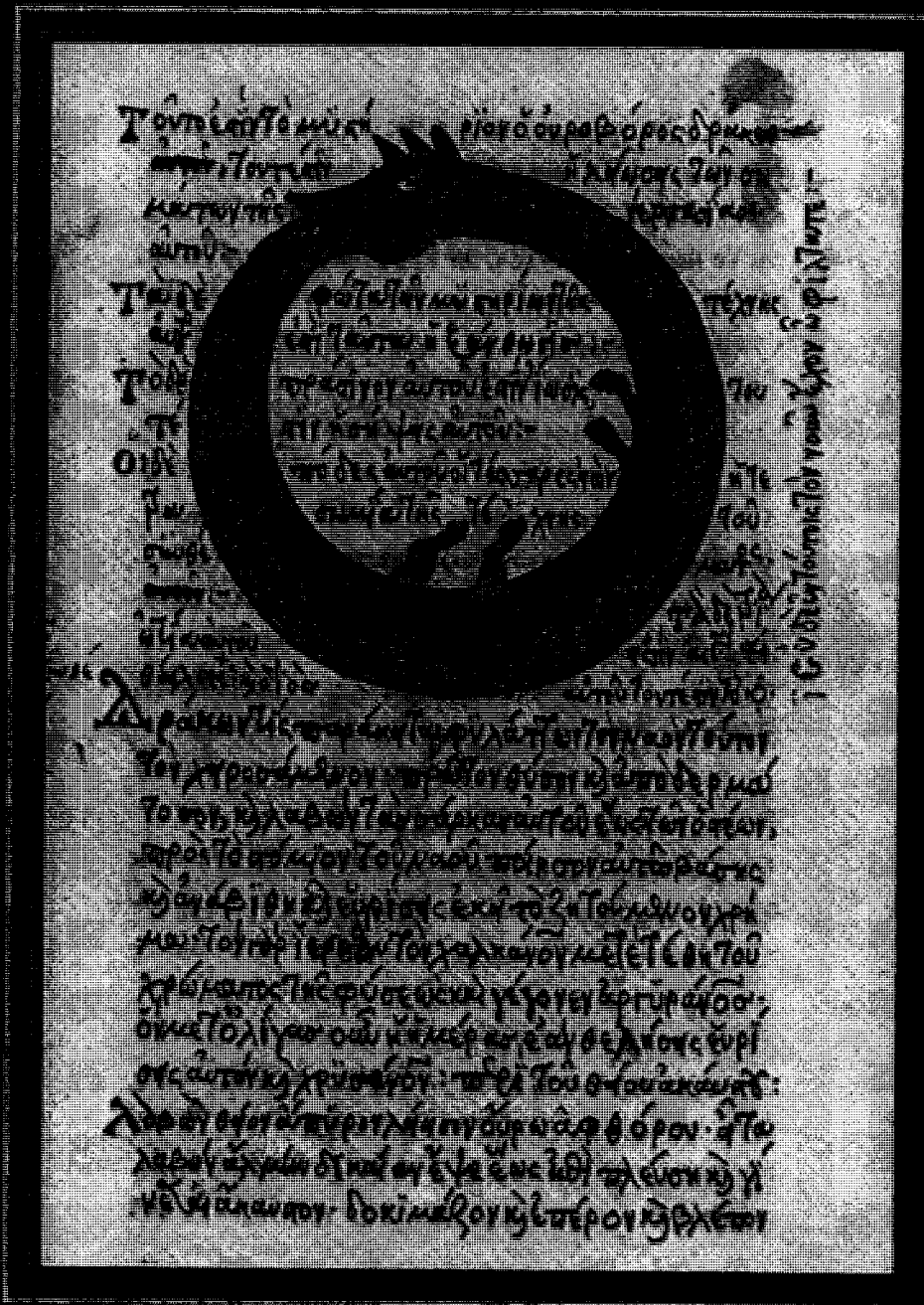
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