

ROSIKRUCIAN

D I G E S T

1997 No. 3



The Meaning of Prayer



TREASURES FROM AN ANCIENT MUSEUM



AC 2425

ISHTAR

Ishtar figures, Persian, 1500 - 1000 B.C.

In ancient Mesopotamia, Ishtar (also known as Inanna in Sumerian) was the goddess of love and also, paradoxically, war. Over time, she became the most important goddess of the ancient Middle East and was universally popular. She was known by different names to different ancient peoples: Ashroreth to the Jews, Cybele to the Phrygians, Aphrodite to the Greeks, and Venus to the Romans.



AC 2426



AC 2452

The origins of goddess Ishtar date back into the mists of antiquity, but there is evidence of her existence at least as far back as the fourth millennium. During Sumerian times, roughly the third millennium B.C., she was known as Inanna. As Semitic peoples, such as the Akkadians, came to power around 2350 B.C., she became known as Ishtar.



AC 2490



AC 2474

Mesopotamian kings, from Sargon to Esarhaddon, became the spouses of Ishtar. The sacred marriage ritual between Ishtar and her beloved, the king, occurred annually during the New Year's festival. The king, who played the role of Ishtar's lover, would mate, either symbolically or actually, with the goddess, whose role was played by a priestess. Through their union, the fertility of the land, the prosperity of the people, and the continuation of cosmic order were assured. As goddess of war, Ishtar rewarded the love of her king by giving him victory in conquest. Iconographically she was shown with a bow, the classic weapon of war. She was often represented riding her sacred beast, the lion.



AC 2488

Though Ishtar/Inanna seems to have begun her career primarily as a fertility goddess, her character became more complex over time. Her forceful personality was multilayered and contradictory. Though she was the goddess of love, beauty, and fertility, destruction and ruination surrounded her in myth, as Gilgamesh, the hero-king of ancient Erech discovered to his misfortune.

—Victor Haskett, Museum Guide



Research on the Brooklyn Museum's collection is ongoing. Donations and bequests to facilitate acquisitions, research, and other museum projects are gratefully acknowledged.

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FRONT COVER

*An original painting by former Imperator
Dr. H. Spencer Lewis*

*Is prayer purely a religious practice,
or is it a powerful form of concentra-
tion capable of bringing outstanding
changes throughout civilization?*

The Meaning of Prayer

AMONG ROSICRUCIANS the question has often been asked: "Why does prayer have a place in Rosicrucian rituals and in the individual studies of its members when prayer is actually a religious subject or rite?"

It is true that prayer, in its usual field of consideration, should be left to theology. Prayer is commonly connected with all religious doctrine, ritual, and procedure. To the best of my knowledge, there is no form of religion in which prayer is not considered to be an important phase of religious practice.

So how is it that a subject usually related to religious practice and doctrine should have any consideration by an organization which is not a religion and not of a religious nature?

When you think about it, perhaps prayer should not be considered the exclusive property of religious practice merely because it is used as a religious rite.

by Cecil A. Poole, F.R.C.



In addition to being a theological subject, prayer can also be a very personal subject. Probably it would not be difficult to find examples of individuals who have never given even superficial consideration to any religion and yet have, at some time in their life, practiced the ritual of prayer. After all, various nonreligious organizations and institutions use prayer. Numerous fraternal orders, besides the Rosicrucian Order, incorporate prayer in one section or another of their rituals. Almost all legislative bodies, in many countries, have the custom of opening sessions with prayer, and in many cases have a regularly appointed chaplain for that purpose.

To gain an understanding of why prayer is so used, we must examine, in the broadest possible way, the meaning of prayer. As Rosicrucians, our particular interest should be in the mystical point of view, but we are also obliged, if we are to consider the subject at all, to study it in detail. Upon a technical or critical survey of the subject we will find that prayer is a process that can be applied to at least five different procedures, such as petition, intercession, adoration, contemplation, and concentration.

THE PRAYER OF PETITION

Petition is the simplest and, in a sense, the crudest form of prayer. To define petition bluntly, and in its most simple form, is to say that it is a process of asking for something for oneself. Simple petition then consists of making a request, and this can be done in the most selfish manner, or in a more altruistic form. An interesting observation is that we can use petition without having any true concept, or even respect, for God in our own mind. The cynic, the atheist, or the non-believer in any kind of God may, at some time in his or her life, involuntarily petition a higher force for help, or for something he or she wants.

Prayer in the form of petition is simply an acknowledgment by us that there are occasions in our life when we feel that our wants, what we believe to be our needs, cannot be fulfilled through our own efforts, and as a result we simply take the expedient of asking someone else to do it for us. Such a concept of prayer is of course extremely limited and usually very selfish. If we never use prayer except as a petition, we are then concerned with prayer only as an emergency measure or as a final and ultimate appeal when we are stopped in all other ways.

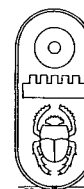
Intercession is the process of making a

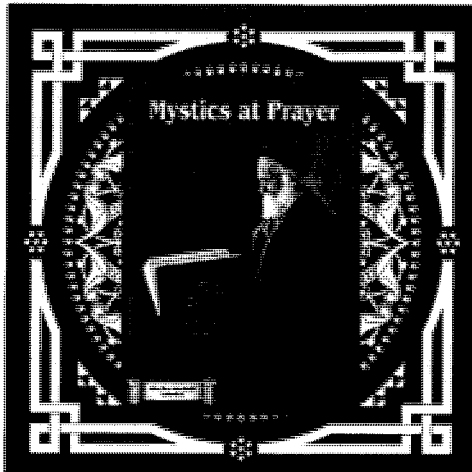
request for someone else, that is, to intercede on behalf of someone else. It is obviously a more ethical step and an indication of a higher moral value than the asking for something for oneself. If one asks help for another, the very process of making such an intercession to a higher force suggests an acknowledgment that the one so asking has respect, or even love, for God. It would not be easy to ask for someone else and use the same selfish motive that involves a simple petition. To intercede is to acknowledge the relationship that exists between human beings and between human beings and the Creator. The concept of the cosmic scheme of a supreme being must be reasonably well implanted in the mind of the individual who believes that through sincerity and by conscientious request he or she can bring some degree of aid and peace to another who either suffers or is confused.

APPEAL TO THE INFINITE

Adoration is considered to be a higher concept of prayer than intercession. Adoration is our responsiveness to powers and forces that are infinite in contrast with the finite existence of each of us as individual human beings. It is the process of using intellectual feelings or emotion, and even imagination, in directing acts of devotion toward God, such as is usually expressed in the more elaborate rituals, ceremonies, and sacraments of a religious body. It is not absolutely necessary, however, that adoration be expressed in this form. It can be found in the simple attitude and acts of the individual. Any human being who is able to realize and to establish a conviction with his own mind that the ways of the universe are purposeful and governed by a supreme intelligence raises his consciousness to a degree of respect and reverence for the force or being which so directs and makes all things purposeful and worthwhile. Adoration grows out of the relation of the limited abilities of the individual human mind and body to this infinite power.

As children we respected and had a degree of adoration for someone older than ourselves who could do something that we admired. Hero worship develops out of this childlike satisfaction of seeing someone else do, or be able to accomplish, the things which we consider beyond our ability. This same tendency carried on into our adult years causes us to express the same reverence for the very existence of life itself, for the manifestations, from day to day, of the universal or cosmic laws that cause us and





The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, has just released a new expanded edition of its popular classic, *Mystics at Prayer*. This new edition—reflecting the mystical aspirations of diverse world cultures—contains a carefully selected group of prayers found in the personal and private writings of many well-known individuals throughout history and in the liturgy of various religious and mystical movements. It also includes a special introduction entitled “How To Pray” by Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, former Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC. This unique collection of mystical and esoteric prayers from historic cultures and civilizations throughout the world will not only inspire you, but teach you how to pray effectively.

Mystics at Prayer was compiled by Emanuel (Many) Cihlar—a lifelong Rosicrucian who served as Grand Master of AMORC in Austria prior to World War II, and also served as Secretary to the International Rosicrucian Council in Vienna, Austria, in the 1930s. Frater Cihlar was the author of many mystical works, including *Mystics at Prayer*, which enjoys a worldwide circulation in several languages. He passed away in Vienna in 1967.

For more information about this new edition of *Mystics at Prayer*, please see the advertisement on the back cover of this magazine.

Each of us may adopt our own methods. One may find that adoration is best expressed in the elaborate ritual of some religious body, or that possibly it may be merely an expression of acknowledgment of this individual force in our daily behavior. No matter how we express it, adoration is still one form of prayer by which we acknowledge our limited sphere of being as a contrast to the infinite sphere of higher force.

Contemplation might be said to be that condition of alert passivity, or state of meditation in which the soul opens itself to the Divine. Petition, intercession, adoration, we have seen, are all somewhat active processes; they are active in the sense that we usually do something, even if it is no more than to make a request. Contemplation, on the other hand, is a step, we might say, in advance of adoration. It is passive, but also it is a means by which we try to become more alert to the existence of the infinite force to which we turn in order to petition, adore, or ask for some kind of help.

Contemplation is the process by which mystics relate to God. In their contemplations mystics believe, and in fact are convinced, that mysticism is the process by which human beings can come to know the ultimate reality and to relate themselves directly to the supreme being. Contemplation of the cosmic force and of God is the process by which we can be made more alert to the manifestations of higher forces in the universe. Meditation is the normal way to practice contemplation but, as has been indicated here, meditation does not mean doing nothing. As explained in the Rosicrucian teachings, meditation is a process by which the individual relates himself or herself more closely to the higher forces of which he or she is a part.

CREATIVE CONCENTRATION

Concentration, in almost direct contrast to contemplation, is active and creative. It is the process through which humans themselves can learn to participate and to use their own innate abilities. It is through concentration that humans learn to respect, and at the same time, to cooperate with the divine or cosmic laws.

Of the various processes of prayer already mentioned, some of you may question that concentration is a form of prayer, but actually, in the broadest sense of the word, it is the most active of all. The other processes which have been discussed here demand little actual participation on the part of the individual. In other words, in carrying out any of the four procedures, the most

extensive activity to be had is the saying of certain words, or the moving through certain steps, as in the case of rituals. Concentration, however, demands that the practitioner direct his or her attention and all his or her potential creative powers toward the solution of a problem or of mentally creating into actual physical being something that has previously been only a mental concept.

This is not the time nor the place to examine or set up the methods and procedures of concentration; those should be well known to every Rosicrucian through references made to the subject of concentration in the monographs of the degree where the subject is studied.¹ But, in general, when we concentrate, we are not only using the forces—that is, we are not only calling upon the power of God to help or work with us—but we are at the same time bringing into actual manifestation the powers of our own being. Concentration reminds us of the simple saying “the Lord helps those who help themselves.” This is true because it is the only procedure of prayer in which the individual attempts to take an active part, and as each of us learns more about the methods and procedures of concentration, gains efficiency of technique, we develop the ability to project this process into the creative achievement of humanity. Through the history of civilization it has been shown again and again how mental concentration on the part of many persons has brought radical and outstanding changes in the lives and behavior of masses of people.

The place of prayer in the life of an individual is something that cannot be defined by another person. To what extent and how you will use prayer will depend upon your religious concepts, if you have any. It will depend upon your habits and the conception of your own position in life and the cosmic scheme. Prayer in its formal phases or in an informal manner is a very personal thing. Although we can participate in public prayer in church, at fraternal meetings, or other activities, the ultimate use we make of it will probably always be more or less of a secret to the rest of the world. We do not normally reveal how and when we use any form of prayer, and that is as it should be, because the meaning of prayer in its ultimate analysis can be found in its fullest implications only in the relationship of the individual and his God.


Footnotes:

¹For further explanation about the function of concentration, see “The Science of Mysticism,” by Ralph M. Lewis, *Rosicrucian Digest*, 1997 #2 issue, page 6

MENTAL ALCHEMY

by Ralph M. Lewis, F.R.C.

Alchemists of old sought to change base metals into gold. But it is mental alchemy that brings us the more lasting treasures of happiness and peace of mind. Learn how to transmute your thoughts and ideas into new and useful ways of living.

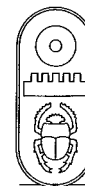


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the presence of god

*As Seen Through the Eyes of
Christian and Sufi Mystics*

*by Murshid Ahmaddin as-salik abd'allah
a.k.a. Laurence K. McCarty, F.R.C.*

WE ROSICRUCIANS receive our wisdom from eclectic sources, one of which is Sufism. But the Sufism I will discuss in this article is not necessarily a Sufism attached to any particular religion, as most people have been led to believe, for Sufism is not a religion or a philosophy, neither is it deism nor atheism, nor is it a special kind of mysticism, being free from the usual religious sectarianism. The very word “Sufi” comes from a Persian word meaning wisdom, and wisdom is the ultimate power.

“There is one God and one Truth, one religion and one mysticism, call it Sufism, Christianity, Hinduism, or Buddhism. As God cannot be divided, so mysticism cannot be divided. There cannot be many mysticisms, just as there cannot be many wisdoms. There is one Wisdom. When a person pictures mysticism as a branch of a tree which is truth, it is an error, for mysticism is the stem which unites all branches.”¹

Look deep within your heart where the throne of God resides. All is dark within the deepest recesses of your inner being. But it is not a darkness such as you experience on a cloudy night, or even when you shut your eyes. No, this is a darkness which is alive. It is this same darkness that you experience in certain mystical practices in Sufism, because if you strain your eyes into the darkness you will see tiny flecks of gold reflected all through inner space—minute points of light, like fairy dust—and you will feel with all your being the presence of God.

In Sufi practices where all the physical senses are blocked, the darkness that is experienced is reflected in literature written by certain Christian mystics. According to the *Theologia Mystica of Dionysius*, “What we apprehend and fear as abysmal nothingness may well be *luminous darkness* in the sense of the fount and origin of light, and is the God who can never be an *object* of knowledge. The darkness in which, as

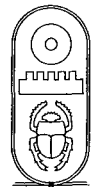
the scripture says, he makes his hiding-place, is not so much blackness and night as it is this utterly unimaginable void.”²

In a *Treatise to Timothy*, Dionysius says: “Thou Godhead beyond being, direct us to the height of mystical revelation, sublime beyond all thought and light; wherein the simple, absolute and immutable mysteries of Divine Truth are hidden in the *translucent darkness* of that silence which revealeth in secret. For this darkness, though of deepest obscurity, is yet radiantly clear, and, though beyond touch and sight, it overfills our unseeing minds with splendors of transcendent beauty.”³

There is one God and one Truth, one religion and one mysticism, call it Sufism, Christianity, Hinduism, or Buddhism. As God cannot be divided, so mysticism cannot be divided. There cannot be many mysticisms, just as there cannot be many wisdoms. There is one Wisdom.

And in another place, describing God Himself, Dionysius says: “He is both unutterable and unknowable, because beyond being He stands above all nature. He is truly revealed without covering only to those who pass above all things impure and pure, who go beyond all climbing of sacred heights, and leave behind all heavenly lights and sounds, and supernal discourses, and are taken up into that darkness where He truly is who is beyond all things . . . He lacks neither being, nor life, nor reason, nor mind, yet He

has no body; neither has He form, nor image, nor quality, nor quantity, nor bulk; He is in no place, nor is He seen, nor has He sensible touch; nor does He feel, nor is He felt, nor has He confusion and tumult, nor disturbance of material passions; neither is He without power, succumbing to the contingencies of sensible things; neither is His light in any deficiency, nor change, nor corruption, nor division, nor lack, nor flux, nor is He nor has He any other sensible thing. He has neither a soul, nor a mind, nor an object of knowledge; neither has He opinion, nor reason, nor intellect; neither is He reason, nor thought, nor is He utterable or knowable . . . but of Himself He is beyond all attributes and is perfect and alone the cause of all—beyond all negation the height of that which is entirely free from all and beyond all.”⁴



The divine darkness becomes invisible with light. Knowledge obscures unknowing. One understands this loss of light and knowledge in relation to that Truth which is transcendent. For that unknowing, reflected in his transcendent darkness, is concealed by every light and hidden to all knowing. And if anyone were to "see" God, and were to understand what he saw, he would not have seen God, but only a reflection of Him as seen in a mirror. "For He that is set on high above mind and being, exists beyond mind by the very fact that He is wholly unknowable and does not belong to the realm of being. And thus the divine darkness is the inaccessible light wherein God is said to dwell."⁵

From this last observation one can draw the realization that perhaps the *translucent darkness* that one sees in contemplation is the *inaccessible light*, hidden from our view, perhaps, by our lack of perfection. One might further assume that, since perfection is attainable, one will eventually be able to see this light as no longer inaccessible.

In the view of the German mystic and Rosicrucian, Meister Eckhart (1260?-1327), "God is utterly dark—the darkness behind darkness, the superessential darkness. The darkness of God is the darkness of mystery. What is the final end? It is the mystery of the darkness of the eternal Godhead and it is unknown and was



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never known and never will be known. So deep is this mystery of the Godhead that there God remains unknown to God. Whatever one says that God is, He is not; He is what one does not say of Him, rather than what one says He is."⁶

This "mystery of the Godhead"—a central theme in the esoteric literature of the world's major religions—has long been considered inexpressible by mystics and poets. A few have tried.

One of these was Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), the Greek Orthodox mystic priest, who has been called the mystic of fire and light. He expressed his mystical experiences and personal love of God in a language rarely surpassed by other mystics. "Hymn 25" of his *Hymns of Divine Love*, is a beautiful example:

*I remained seated in the middle of the darkness,
I know,
but, while I was there surrounded by darkness,
You appeared as light, illuminating completely
from Your total light.
And I became light in the night, I who was
found in the midst of darkness.
Neither the darkness extinguished Your light
completely,
nor did the light dissipate the visible darkness,
but they were together, yet completely separate,
without confusion, far from each other, surely
not at all mixed,
except in the same spot where they filled every
thing.
So I am in the light, yet I am found in the
middle of darkness.
So I am in the darkness, yet still I am in the
middle of the light.
—How can darkness receive within itself a
light, and,
without being dissipated by the light, it still
remains in the middle of the light?
O awesome wonder which I see doubly, with
my two sets of eyes,
of the body and of the soul! ⁷*

Similar images appear in the profoundly mystical poetry of the Spanish Roman Catholic priest and mystic, St. John of the Cross (1542-1591). In previous centuries Spain had been part of the Maghreb, and Islamic influences were still pervasive. Islamic literary images and Sufi symbols are evident throughout his poetry.

Through his ecstatic poetry St. John of the Cross conveyed the intensity of mystical union, likening his love of God to the ecstasy experienced by lovers. His poem "Dark Night" expresses this beautifully:

*One dark night,
Fired with love's urgent longings
—Ah, the sheer grace!—
I went out unseen,
My house being now all stilled;*

*In darkness, and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
—Ah, the sheer grace!—
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now all stilled;*

*On that glad night,
In secret, for no one saw me,
Nor did I look at anything
With no other light or guide
Than the one that burned in my heart;*

*This guided me
More surely than the light of noon
To where He waited for me
—Him I knew so well—
In a place where no one else appeared.*

*O guiding night!
O night more lovely than the dawn!
O night that has united
The Lover and His beloved,
Transforming the beloved in her Lover.*

*Upon my flowering breast
Which I kept wholly for him alone,
There he lay sleeping
And I caressing Him
There in a breeze from the fanning cedars.*

*When the breeze blew from the turret
Parting His hair,
He wounded my neck
With His gentle hand,
Suspending all my senses.*

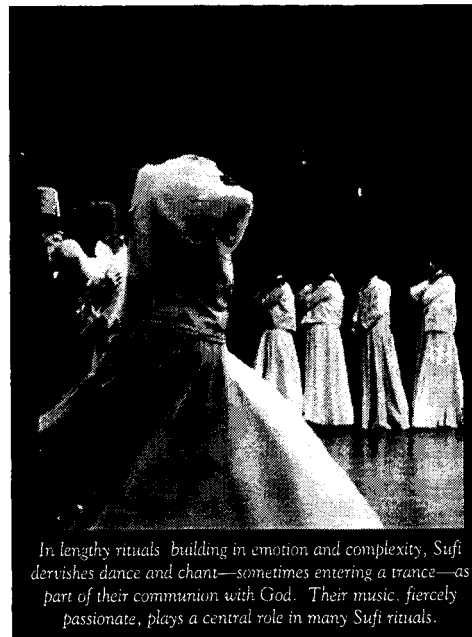
*I abandoned and forgot myself,
Laying my face on my Beloved;
All things ceased; I went out from myself,
Leaving my cares
Forgotten among the lilies. ⁸*

THE CREATION AS TEACHER

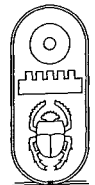
From the standpoint of Sufism, God is the only teacher.⁹ But since God is a spirit, formless and colorless, He exemplifies His will and works through His creation so that we can become channels for both God's voice and His actions. According to a traditional Hadith, "I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, so I made man."¹⁰ My eyes become that through which God sees, my ears become the channels through which God hears, and my voice becomes the trumpets through which God speaks.

We are born of the denseness of the earth, so in order to become worthy mediums for God's message, we need to surrender our own wills and submit them to be trained through the Grace of God to receive the higher vibrations necessary to enable us to channel what He wishes to teach us. Through the process of the spiritual path known to us as Sufism, we first unlearn everything we have accumulated from birth, and then by purifying our bodies, hearts, and souls through the practices assigned to us, our vehicles gradually become transparent and capable of being a willing accommodation for God.¹¹

But it is not enough to just receive the higher vibrations, since there are three phases to every received teaching: reception, assimilation,



In lengthy rituals building in emotion and complexity, Sufi dervishes dance and chant—sometimes entering a trance—as part of their communion with God. Their music, fiercely passionate, plays a central role in many Sufi rituals.



and dispensation.¹² So one absorbs all that is taught into one's own being, making it a part of one's pattern of life, dispensing it then as if it were one's own teaching, but always keeping in mind and heart that God is the only Teacher, we are all extensions of His being and we learn from Him. If there is a difficulty, it comes from having an ego which sometimes gets in the way, causing the student's heart to become opaque so that he or she loses the way, thus falling from grace. But this does not have to be a permanent disability, and this is why we say that one must keep the mirror of the heart shining all the time.



So if we are to stand firm and not waver, we should never give up our earnest intention to keep this bright mirror clean—this mirror which reflects the translucent darkness in which God lives, moves, and has Its Being—by applying continuous layers of our enveloping love, never thinking about anything less than God, and letting nothing whatsoever distract us from this purpose. For the higher part of the contemplation of God is wholly caught up in darkness.¹³ And may this Divine translucent darkness be our guide!

Footnotes:

- ¹Quote from Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan. For more information about this man, see page 11
- ² *The Theologia Mystica of Dionysius*, translated by Alan Watts (The Society for Comparative Philosophy, Inc., Sausalito, California), p. 15
- ³ *Ibid*, p. 20.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 22-28.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.
- ⁶ *Breakthrough: Meister Eckhart's Creation Spirituality in New Translation*, Commentary by Rev. Matthew Fox (Doubleday & Co., New York, 1980), p. 175.
- ⁷ *Symeon the New Theologian, Hymns of Divine Love by St. Symeon the New Theologian*, translated by Rev. George A. Maloney, S.J. (Dimension Books, Penville, New Jersey, 1975), Hymn 25, p. 136.
- ⁸ *Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. & Otilo Rodriguez, O.C.D. (ICS Publications, Washington, D.C., 1973), p. 711ff.
- ⁹ Ten Sufi Thoughts of Hazrat Inayat Khan.
- ¹⁰ Traditional Hadith—a traditional saying of Mohammed.
- ¹¹ Quote from Sheikh ul Masheikh Ibn-al-Arabi.
- ¹² Quote from Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan.
- ¹³ *The Cloud of Unknowing*, translated by Clifton Wolters (Penguin Books, New York), p. 64.

THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

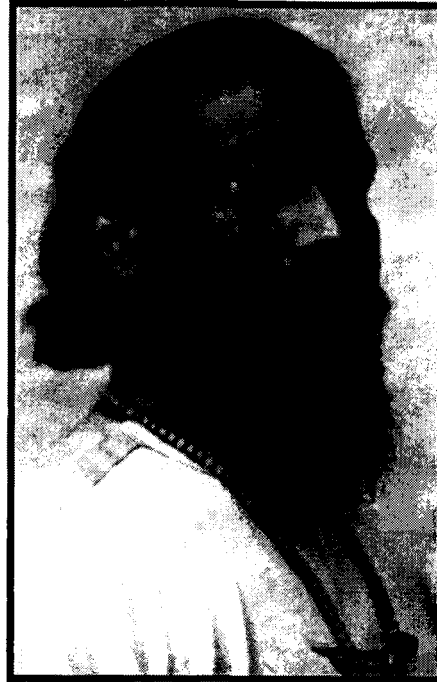
MISSION STATEMENT

The Rosicrucian teachings enable people to find themselves, turn their lives, and influence the universe. We are educators, students, and seekers devoted to exploring inner wisdom and the meaning of life. We offer an ancient time-tested system of study and experimentation which reveals the underlying principles of the universe. Our method offers practical tools applicable to all aspects of life. The Rosicrucian teachings allow individuals to direct their own lives, experience inner peace, and leave their mark on humanity.



PIR-O-MURSHID HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

The Man Who Brought Sufism to the West



Inayat Khan was born in the former Baroda State in Western India into a family of musicians on July 5, 1882. His family was long associated with Sufis. Largely through the art of music, the mystics of Islam and Hinduism had mingled and intermingled, each group making impressions on the other.

Inayat was first given initiation in the Chisthi School, which bases spiritual development on music. Its chief center is at Ajmir, India. By the time he left India, he had received training in what may be called "Four School Sufism," which is to say, he had received training in Chisthi, Kadri, Sohrwardi, and Naqshibandi Schools. The Sufism that was presented to the West was basically a synthesis of these.

Inayat went to Europe at the invitation of composers such as Debussy and Scriabin, and for some time he carried on the dual career of musician and spiritual teacher. During World War I his headquarters were in London; afterwards they were transferred to Geneva, Switzerland, with much of his time spent between there and Suresnes, near Paris, France. He visited the United States in 1923, and in 1926 returned to

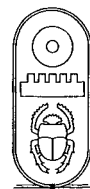
Europe, and from there travelled to India, where he passed through transition in February 1927.

Hazrat Inayat Khan was not the first person authorized to present Sufism in the English language, but he seems to have been the first to effectively bring Sufism to the Western consciousness.

Hazrat Inayat Khan taught us that religion has three stages: faith, love, and knowledge. So long as religion remains bound to faith and proceeds no further, it can be caught in the web of egocentricity. But if we extract love from time and link it to eternity, we become aware of this eternity—and then we begin to experience the real knowledge.

Besides Cosmic Monism, the other aspect of Sufism is that of the acceptance of Spiritual Hierarchy. It is this aspect of Sufism which both unites all the Sufi Orders and separates them from the generality of Muslims.

"Pir-o-Murshid" means "Leader and Teacher." "Hazrat" is a title given to one who has passed on.



Is the

ROSICRUCIAN ORDER

worth it

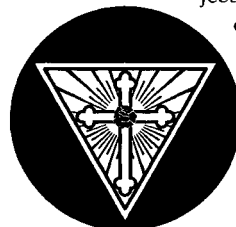
a
frank
discussion
among
members

RECENTLY a Rosicrucian Neophyte—a relatively new member of the Order—touched off a lively discussion among a group of Rosicrucians when he questioned the value of the Rosicrucian teachings—especially in relation to the necessity of paying dues, why “so much science” is included in the Rosicrucian monographs, and what of real value is he receiving from studying the Rosicrucian teachings. Rosicrucian students are encouraged to be “walking question marks,” and Rosicrucians love a good discussion, so this Neophyte’s sincere challenge began a vigorous discussion. The discussion turned out to be so interesting and helpful to the Neophyte that we thought it would be of interest to all members. Those taking part in the discussion gave permission for their comments to be published. We take this opportunity to share this discussion with our readers.

The discussion began when Frater E.B.—a Neophyte from Murfreesboro, Tennessee—presented the following challenge to a group of fellow Rosicrucians:

“Since I was seventeen I have been a serious student of occult philosophy. Now, at twenty-five, I have explored many avenues and I’ve visited some places along the path which I am not really happy about. I spent a year and a day with a practicing wiccan priestess learning about earth magic, and I have studied the

works of Israel Regardie of the Golden Dawn. I have become versed in the Kabala, and the workings of the ‘high arts.’ I have read so many books on the subjects of magic and mysticism that I cannot count them all. I would consider myself an adept, but in the Rosicrucian Order I am still a Neophyte.



“As I proceed ahead in the Neophyte studies, I am having some difficulty in understanding why there is so much science involved in the teachings. I became a student of Rosicrucian philosophy to grow as a person—to become more than I am—and to learn about truth and the path of light. However, the only subjects I seem to be studying are subjects I already know. I’m sure this sounds like I’m bragging, and I also understand that the lessons progress slowly to help us become ready when something of the arcane is presented to us. But as a college student living on a limited income, it really seems worthless to me to pay such a ridiculous membership dues. You see, I really can’t afford to just learn about things I already know. This knowledge may be worthwhile in the future, but so far I haven’t seen anything that leads me to believe so.

“I wonder, have any of the others present experienced such dissatisfaction? Does the Order become worth it all later? I have never been to a temple or a pronaos because I am unable to get to one. I know the Order has expenses to pay, but it is difficult for me to see why the monographs should cost me \$200 per year.

“So, if any of you have any helpful advice or good ideas, I’d appreciate hearing them.”

Rosicrucians love an interesting discussion, and response to our Neophyte’s bold challenge was immediate. Frater D.H. of Austin, Texas, rose to try to answer some of Frater E.B.’s questions:

“After hearing about the things you’ve studied over the past few years, I can see that the Rosicrucian teachings offer something those other paths do not: *integration*. In the Rosicrucian philosophy, what you call the ‘high arts’ are of little spiritual value until they are put to use in life. That doesn’t mean outer demonstrations of occult principles. It means the transmutation of your own consciousness: how you think, how you interpret, how you feel, how you react, and how you live.

“The Rosicrucian path seeks to integrate the individual personality—the ego, if you prefer—with consciousness of the soul personality. That can’t be done by simply reading.

“To accomplish this integration, the Rosicrucian mystic must be involved and active in the world of everyday affairs. The ways of doing this are diverse, yet there is a common thread: whatever the manner of involvement, Rosicrucians are always looking to see how cosmic principles are at work in human affairs, and are always looking for ways to apply cosmic principles in the service of God and humanity.

“The Rosicrucian way is not just an intellectual game; there are experiential and emotional elements as well. You can’t expect to be spoon-fed by the monographs. The monographs guide; you apply. Then you learn. All the while you meditate—and do the overall exercise—laying the groundwork for a quantum transformation of consciousness. There are no quick answers, no simple formulas, no instant karma—just hard work, persistent attunement, and patience.

Finding Revelations in Life

“Instead of looking for revelations in the monographs, try using the monographs to help you find revelations in *life*—for example, in the subjects you are studying in school. This can be done by study and meditation. Most subjects taught in schools are based on a thoroughly materialistic and rationalistic paradigm. If you can learn to look at these same subjects as a mystic, you will find it easier to break through the old paradigms and perceive things your classmates and professors have probably missed. This will give you a more complete—more holistic—viewpoint on all kinds of subjects.

“You question why there is so much science in the monographs. That’s because science is involved with nature’s laws as they are manifested in the material world. For example, why should I look again at the stuff I slept through in physics class years ago? Because I know the Rosicrucian teachings are going to take it a few steps further—putting modern science in the context of mystical understanding.

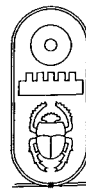
“I’m not sure I’ve answered your questions or fully addressed your concerns, but I sure hope this has given you a few crumbs for thought.”

At this point, Frater K.D., from Portland, Oregon, entered the discussion:

“Frater E.B., you indicated that you are pretty new in the Order—a Neophyte—and you are having some difficulty in understanding why there is so much science involved in the teachings? You indicated that you became a student of Rosicrucian philosophy to become more than you are now—to learn about truth and the path of light, but that the only thing you seem to be learning is what you already know.

“To me, also, the Neophyte lessons seem to be presenting very basic, even very ordinary, ideas. I do know however that the higher teachings are to be found in the Neophyte Degrees in a somewhat hidden fashion. In addition to covering similar topics as the Temple Degrees, hints and ideas are presented which, if realized and followed-up on, can lead the Neophyte to many interesting conclusions.

“You also said that you understand that the lessons progress slowly to help us become ready when something of the arcane is presented to us.



“Well, if you are looking for arcane secrets, I think you’re looking in the wrong place. The Order presents mysticism as a natural and understandable path. The traditional knowledge is presented slowly over the course of the degrees, which lets the student mature as he or she pursues the path. This maturing is subtle and may not be readily apparent to the student, but the day will come when he or she can look back on where they have been and they will see how far they have progressed.

“In regards to your remark that you are a college student on a limited income and it seems worthless to pay such a ridiculous membership dues just to learn about things you already know: well, if you are only learning things that you already know, it may be that you are not looking deeply enough into the monographs. Perhaps since it looks like familiar material, you are not paying enough attention to it.

“Now I don’t mean to sound harsh or unfair, but perhaps the Rosicrucian path is not what you are looking for. I cannot be the judge of that. All I can tell you is that after being in the Order a few years, I feel that I have a much better grasp of the Cosmic and mysticism than I did when I began. This understanding didn’t come from learning any particular secret, but from being a Rosicrucian student trying to figure out these issues week after week.”

Frater E.P., of Ste-Foy, Quebec, Canada, now entered the discussion:

“I have been listening to this discussion with great interest. I too am twenty-five and been down many other paths. I used to be a wiccan priest, successfully practiced black and white magick, studied with a Marabout (Islamic African sorcerer), etc. I’ve been a member of AMORC since 1994, and I have recently been asking myself the same questions as you. Why the slow progress, and why so much science?

“Obviously, we both have been—and still are—searching for *something*. I used to study and practice magick for the ‘power.’ But, since I joined AMORC, I’ve discovered something: the Rosicrucian path has nothing to do with controlling forces and changing your destiny just so it pleases your ego. It’s about *mastering* your life.

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Control vs. Mastership

“The difference between control and mastership is quite simple. As a student, you’ve probably had teachers who demanded respect from their students by imposing a very high degree of formality in dealing with their students. This is about control: the students act respectfully and, as soon as the teacher is out of sight, they call him or her names. No true respect there!

“But you’ve probably encountered some teachers who don’t have to impose anything to earn their students’ respect. These teachers are usually very popular and conversant in their fields of expertise. We often call them ‘master teachers’—not so much because of the sum of their academic knowledge, but because of who they are.

“So, what’s my point? I think magick and most of the fascination with the occult is a quest for control: control of other people, control over life, etc., while Rosicrucianism is a quest for *mastership of self*. In the Order we learn how cosmic forces and laws work, and how we can live in harmony with these forces and laws. This may sound like so much rhetoric, but my experience has proven to me that AMORC is much more effective than any other group or study I’ve experienced so far in my short life.

“In closing, I would recommend that you meditate on *ego* and its pitfalls. Why? From my experience, *ego* can block your evolution on the path. Sometimes it’s difficult to admit that what we know isn’t worth anything. For example, I’m well versed in magick and the occult, but has it brought me closer to illumination? No, quite the opposite!

“So I’ll close my part of this discussion with a quotation from the greatest master of them all—Master Yoda:

Luke: “Is the dark side stronger?”

Yoda: “No, no. Quicker, easier, more seductive.”

“May you find peace in your heart, and the bright side of the force be with you!”

To this, our Neophyte, Frater E.B., replied, “I am really enjoying taking part in this discussion. Right now, hearing about your experiences

and ideas is probably helping me more than reading the monographs.”

Soror S.B., from Dayton, Ohio, then entered the discussion:

“Frater E.B. touched off this discussion when he asked some important questions and expressed some valid concerns as a new member of the Order. Judging by the responses you’ve received, Frater, you’ve really touched a nerve!

“You indicated that you began studying Rosicrucian philosophy in order to grow—‘to become more than I am.’ Stick with it and you will!

“You expressed your desire to ‘learn about truth and the path of light.’ Again, stay the course, and you will!

“And you indicated that the only things you seem to be learning are things you already know. Hey, been there!

“You also commented that you have read so many books on mysticism and magic that you can’t possibly count them all, and that you consider yourself an adept, but in the Order you are still a Neophyte.

“Yeah, we’ve all been there too!

“In regards to your concern about why there is so much science included in the Rosicrucian teachings, I believe the monographs emphasize the fact that Rosicrucians achieve results by using natural laws—not any form of ‘supernaturalism.’

“So, when you question whether any of the rest of us have experienced such dissatisfaction, and does the Order become worth it all later, you’ve touched a nerve in that we’ve probably all experienced these same concerns and had these same questions.

“Among the Rosicrucians I’ve met, I can only think of one who *didn’t* come to the Order after first exploring many other paths. The experience of finding the early monographs ‘too basic’ is so common that it’s practically a cliché. In my own case, I remember skimming through the monographs at breakneck speed, impatient to get to the ‘good stuff.’ How I regret that now! There is so much important information hidden

between the lines. The long-term member who goes back and re-reads the early monographs and is shocked by what he or she completely overlooked is *also* a cliché!

“Imagine if you were to try to design a course entitled ‘Mastery of Self.’ How would you write your lessons so that *all* of your students, no matter what their backgrounds, would understand? You have to start with the basics, define your terms, introduce the basic topics, etc. This is especially true in the Rosicrucian studies, where words and terms sometimes have very specific, traditional meanings which are different from the way these words and terms are used in other systems. For example, Rosicrucians define the word *Spirit* in a completely unique way.

Importance of the Exercises

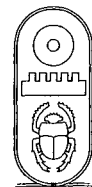
“Beyond this, many of our fratres and sorores have commented eloquently on the need for slow and steady development. However, being ‘ready’ is not just a matter of having all the background knowledge and being familiar with all the definitions. What is critically important is that you consistently and regularly do the various exercises to develop certain centers in both your physical and psychic bodies. This cannot be done overnight or, as someone said, during a weekend seminar.

“The Rosicrucian lessons are an orderly, systematic method for development of mastery. You cannot become an instant master any more than you can jump out of a sickbed and run a marathon. The books you read on running while you were flat on your back may have given you the knowledge, but they haven’t done anything for your body. A period of gradual development and application is required; mental, spiritual, and psychic ‘muscles’ must be stretched and strengthened.

“Believe me, the day *will* come when you will find the lessons sufficiently challenging! In the meantime, do the exercises and work your ‘patience muscles,’ knowing that others have done the same before you.”

Soror M.D. of Williston, Vermont, then broke into the discussion:

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the Way

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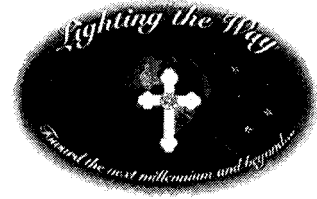
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IMPORTANT NOTICES: We would like our members to be able to fully participate in all planned activities and, if at all possible, we urge you to take your First Degree Initiation at a Lodge near you prior to the convention. The First Degree Initiation at the Convention is limited to 50 participants.

- RCUI Classes are available from Monday, August 10 to Wednesday, August 12. For more details, contact '98 RCUI, c/o Hamilton Pronaos AMORC, P.O. Box 57273, Jackson Str., 2 King Street West, Hamilton, ON L8P 4X1.
- A block of guest rooms has been dedicated to our members, and you may reserve your room by calling: 1-800-668-3656.

continued from page 15.

“Regarding benefits, when you were in grammar school, there were probably a number of times you asked yourself, ‘Why do I have to learn this? I won’t need it when I grow up!’ Now you are in college, and those lessons that seemed so inconsequential before have helped you become a student who can learn and assimilate, as well as providing the necessary background knowledge so you can continue your classes. While you are in college, you will also gain some knowledge you feel you will never use, but someday, years from now, a faint memory of that lesson may assist you in solving a problem.

“The AMORC lessons are like that. Like you, I have a strong background in magick and other disciplines. However, I have found that AMORC clearly explains everything I learned in the past and renders it understandable. AMORC also has made it easier for me to discern what practices are truly in harmony with humanity and the Cosmic, and which practices are disruptive and deceptive. In other words, AMORC enables its students to learn to discern and make decisions based on principles built of substance. As far as the emphasis on science, isn’t it nice to know that the healing energy we send to others is not merely imagination but has a physical explanation?

“As with any type of study, an individual will receive only what he or she wishes to receive. But, take it from another old ‘war horse,’ when you read the monographs with an open mind, you will find they are much deeper than you may have originally thought.

“As far as the dues is concerned—when you apply the Rosicrucian principles and trust the Cosmic, the opportunities appear. As with any number of members, my husband and I are on Social Security, which is supplemented by freelance writing. When it’s time to pay our dues—or rent, or whatever—the means somehow appear. The law of AMRA is also very beneficial. Also, remember to pay yourself first. I put 10% of whatever money comes in into a savings account. That shows the universe that I feel I am worthy of receiving. Sure enough, we manage quite well and actually do more than when we were making the big bucks.

“Take time to think about this. Do you want an instant fix or magic bullet that will bring you all the knowledge of the universe in a

short time but may cause you to fizzle before you can apply what you have learned? Or, are you willing to take more time, really learn the principles from the depths of your being, and establish a way of living that will serve you well? Ironically, there are no instant fixes, because knowledge always has to be assimilated at the rate proper for the student to learn.

“Frater, we have all given you the benefit of our experiences, but you are the only one who can make the choice. Know that you have our love and support.”

At this point, Frater M.D., of Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada, entered the discussion:

“I too have wondered about these things. I have nothing against science, but it seems a bit silly when the monographs indicate that the information being offered is strictly confidential—for members-only—when you can find some of the same material in any ‘profane’ bookstore. When I first joined the Order I hoped to possibly learn more about the ancient mysteries and mythologies that have been passed down through the ages within the Order. However, Frater, if it is strictly mythology that you want to study, please visit your local library or bookstore. If your interest is strictly philosophy, you should spend your time in those places as well.

“The study of the mysteries is science. The mystery schools of ancient Egypt were the beginning of science as a field of study. No, they didn’t have particle accelerators, and they didn’t need them! You see, ‘As Above, So Below’ constitutes a mental microscope that successfully peers into quantum states.

“The mysteries represent the immutable laws of the Cosmos. If the mysteries, then, by definition include only natural laws, why is there the expectation by some students for magick and colorful stories? I didn’t ‘hire’ AMORC to be my entertainer. I have enough entertainment re-evaluating my own preconceptions.

“Earlier in this discussion a member claimed to be an adept. That is the greatest testimony of the arcane nature of the teachings. The member was so full of his own ideas that he could not discern what was before him. And so it is that the wicked are fed poison in their favorite desserts, and the greatest secrets are widely published and known to none.

“AMORC’s system of study is designed to give its students a well-rounded education. Special benefits of learning through this system of study include a true understanding of mystical laws and principles, and a full understanding and development of our psychic faculties. If you were given only the methods for conducting healing or only the statements relating to Rosicrucian ontology, you would not have a complete understanding. You would not be able to defend yourself in conversation about what you have learned because you would have learned nothing. You would not understand ‘why’ a principle or law works. You would have only *belief* or *faith*, without foundation.

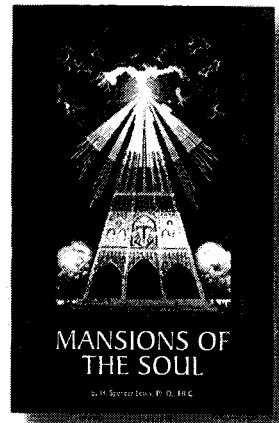
Applying the Principles

“It is not AMORC’s intention to turn out ‘yes people.’ We come to AMORC because we expect *understanding*, *proof*, and *application*. We are *thinking* men and women, and for our hard-earned money, we expect to receive the opportunities promised us.

“In my opinion, the Order has delivered. In fact, sometimes our interpretation leads us to greater improvement of the teachings. That is the wonderful part. The Rosicrucian teachings do not prefer ancient belief over current evidence. Some Rosicrucians feel that such action is an adulteration of the teachings. Hey, get yourself some ancient texts and live in the Dark Ages if that’s your fancy! But think about this: do you really believe that those wonderful schools of ancient wisdom planned on establishing knowledge for only their generation and then committing all future generations to believing as they did? The very fact that the mystery schools investigated nature instead of holding fast to the dogma of the times testifies to the opposite! We’re right on track!”

At this point our brave young Neophyte, Frater E.B., concluded the discussion by saying, “I just want to give a big hug to all of you involved in this discussion. What has been said here has really helped clarify a few things for me. I realize from this discussion that the Rosicrucian Order has helped many of you and that you have found satisfaction in the Order. Thanks so much, and may the Love and Light of the universe flow into each of you to fill your being so that you may continue with the Great Work.”

△



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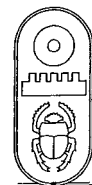
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The
IMMORTALIZED
WORDS
of
Two Rosicrucian
Philosophers

Meister Eckhart and

Sir Francis Bacon



THROUGHOUT HISTORY the Rosicrucian Order has counted among its initiates a number of master philosophers—thinkers of the highest caliber—who demonstrated a complete understanding of both the material and metaphysical worlds. Both Meister Eckhart and Sir Francis Bacon can be counted in this esteemed category. The following article is excerpted from a new edition of the Rosicrucian Order's *The Immortalized Words of the Past*—a collection of the inspired writings of fifty-eight enlightened personalities who made a difference in the history of civilization.

MEISTER ECKHART (1260-1328)

JOHANNES ECKHART was born in Hochheim, Thuringia, Germany. He joined the Dominican Order at Erfurt and rose to the position of Vicar. He has been called the father of the German mystics, also the philosophical creative genius of the German mystics and the father of German speculation. The famous Eckhart manuscripts are recognized by the German Rosicrucians and by the Rosicrucian Order throughout the world as the work of a Rosicrucian. He was a learned member of the Dominican or preaching order and for some time *lector biblicus* at the University of Paris, also of the Dominican College of St. Jacob where he was given his title Meister (Master) by Pope Boniface VIII.

It is not exactly known, but it is thought that Eckhart graduated in Cologne in the Scholasticism of Albertus Magnus (1205-1281) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), whose system was at that time rapidly acquiring its hold. He held different administrative and political posts in the province. He was well known because of the fact that he preferred teaching in what was termed the "vulgar tongue" in contrast to scholastic Latin. He gained a great number of followers among the masses at large and the laity. The growth of his following and popularity alarmed the church authorities. They accused him of numerous things, principally because of the fact that he preached in the "vulgar tongue" instead of Latin. He barely escaped being declared a heretic by the Church in 1329, after his death. The charges were numerous—in fact, he was charged with preaching seventeen different, heretical doctrines.

In his thinking Meister Eckhart was influenced by scholasticism, Neoplatonism, and Arabic and Jewish concepts.

It is a pleasure to give Rosicrucian students the following excerpts from Meister Eckhart's writings.

THE DIVINE BEING

No man can tell of God exactly what he is. According to St. Dionysius, God is not anything we can say or think. St. Augustine cried: "I who

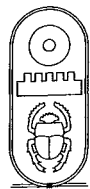
have ever been in God and ever more shall be, would sooner I had never been and never should be than that we found a single word that we could say of God. Were we compelled to speak of God, in that case I should say: Verily, in no sense is God comprehensible nor yet unattainable. God is what thought cannot better." Nay, I declare God beggars human thought; he transcends all human conception. No man knows what God is. Aught that a man could or would think of God, God is not at all. It is the nature of the soul not to be satisfied except with God. But all that heart can desire is small, is insignificant compared with God. Yet man's thought may be never so rich or so rare but his desire outstrips it. So he transcends man's desire as well as transcending human thought.

St. Dionysius says God is naught. Meaning that God is as incomprehensible as naught. St. Bernard says, I know not what God is; but what I know not that he is that same is he. A heathen philosopher maintains that what we know of the First Cause is rather what we are ourselves than what the First Cause is. For that passes understanding. And in this strain the heathen doctor argues in his book, "The Light of Lights," that God is super-essential, super-rational, super-intelligible, i.e., beyond the natural understanding. . . .

Dionysius and Gregory both teach that the Divine Being is not comprehensible in any sense; not to any wit nor any understanding, not even to angelic mind even at its clearest. It was said by a philosopher that whoso knows of God that he is unknown, that man knows God. For it is the height of gnosis and perception to know and understand in agnosia and a-perception. To know him really is to know him as unknowable. As the master puts it: If I must speak of God, then I will say, God is something which is in no sense to be reached or grasped; and I know nothing else about him.

POVERTY

The really virtuous man does not want God. What I have I want not. He makes no plans, he sets no store by things. As God is higher than man, so is he readier to give than man is to receive. Not by his fasts and vigils and his many outward works does a man prove his progress in the virtuous life, but it is a sure sign



of his growth if he finds eternal things more and more attractive than the things that pass. The man who has a thousand marks of gold and gives it all away for love of God is doing a fine thing; yet I say, it were far finer and far better for him to despise it, setting it at naught on God's account.

A man should orient his will and all his works to God and having only God in view go forward unafraid, not thinking, am I right or am I wrong. One who worked out all the chances ere starting his first fight would never fight at all. And if, going to some place, we must think how to set the front foot down we shall never get there. It is our duty to do the next thing; go straight on, that is the right way.

There are five kinds of poverty. The first is devilish poverty; the second, golden poverty; the third is willing poverty; the fourth is spiritual poverty; the fifth, divine poverty.

The first, or devilish poverty, applies to all who have not what they fain would have, outward or inward. That is their hell.

The second, golden poverty, is theirs who in the midst of goods and properties pass empty in and out. If everything they own was burnt the effect on them would be to leave them quite unmoved. Heaven must needs be theirs and they would have no less.

The third is willing poverty and belongs to those who, renouncing goods and honours, body and soul, leave everything with right good grace. These give judgment with the twelve apostles and by pronouncing judgment it is their judgment day who, knowing what they leave, yet set another in their heart and mightily bestir themselves about their own departures. Such are the willing poor.

The fourth are spiritual poor. These have forsaken friends and kindred, not merely goods and honour, body and soul; further they are quit of all good works; the eternal Word does all their work while they are idle and exempt from all activity. And since in the eternal Word is neither bad nor good, therefore they are absolutely empty.

The fifth are godly poor, for God can find no place in them to work in. Theirs is riddance without and within for they are bare and free

from all contingent form. This is the man: in this man all men are one man and that man is Christ. Of him one master says, "Earth was never worthy of this man who looks on heaven and earth the same." This man is object-free in time and in eternity.

SIR FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626)

SIR FRANCIS BACON, Rosicrucian Emperor, English philosopher, statesman, essayist, Lord Chancellor of England, and—according to many literary critics—the recognized author of the Shakespearian plays, was born at York House in the Strand, London, on January 22, 1561, of noble birth. In April 1573 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Fond of the sciences, he diligently applied himself to the various sciences of the time. Later he says of his real aspirations in the *Interpretatione Naturae Prooemium*: "I found I was fitted for nothing so well as for the study of truth; as having a mind nimble and versatile enough to catch the resemblances of things and at the same time steady enough to seize and distinguish the subtler differences; as being gifted by nature with a desire to ask, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to consider, carefulness to dispose and set in order; and as being a man that neither effects what is new, nor admits what is old, and that hates every kind of impostor, so I thought my nature had a kind of familiarity and relation with truth."

In 1584 Bacon took a seat in Parliament. At the close of 1591 Bacon was acting as the confidential adviser of the Earl of Essex, who was Queen Elizabeth's favorite. Bacon proposed in 1613 to the King that Sir Edward Coke be advanced to the King's bench. This change of legal position opened the way for Bacon to become Attorney General. Four years later, in January of 1618, he became Lord Chancellor of England. His various literary works at that time were well read, and although severely criticized in some circles, were bringing him recognition. His most celebrated work was *Novum Organum*.

It is only in recent years that the true story of Bacon's accusation and trial has become known. Bacon's political power and prominence, as well as his literary ability, aroused considerable enmity and his enemies accused him of bribery. At first the charge was dropped. Later,

the charges became so complicated, so extremely difficult to prove innocence, that he was tried and convicted. He was fined an enormous amount and sentenced to a long period in prison. However, the fine was removed and he only served four days of the sentence. He was permitted to again practice at the bar, although he never again held a seat in Parliament. He continued his literary work.

Present-day researchers and biographers say, as it is known also to Rosicrucians, "On the whole, it appears that Bacon's own account of this painful episode is substantially correct." He stated he had received offers of bribes which he had never accepted. He affirmed that his intention was never swerved by a bribe, and in several cases, his judgment seems to have been rendered against the parties attempting to bestow the bribe.

The remainder of Bacon's life was spent in a work far more valuable to the world than anything he had accomplished in his earlier years, politically or in the field of law. The following selection is excerpted from Bacon's *Novum Organum* (New Instrument or Implement) and reflects his strong views on the importance of seeking new knowledge and instilling renewed vigor in the pursuit of science and knowledge. In reading this, bear in mind that Bacon's world looked backward in history to the Greeks and Romans for scientific theory and Bacon was challenging the intelligentsia of his day to seek new discoveries in the realms of knowledge.

ENCOURAGING THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

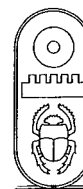
It seems to me that men do not rightly understand either their store or their strength, but overrate the one and underrate the other. Hence it follows, that either from an extravagant estimate of the value of the arts which they possess, they seek no further; or else from too mean an estimate of their own powers, they spend their strength in small matters and never put it fairly to the trial in those which go to the main. These are as the pillars of fate set in the path of knowledge; for men have neither desire nor hope to encourage them to penetrate further. And since opinion of store is one of the chief causes of want, and satisfaction with the

present induces neglect of provision for the future, it becomes a thing not only useful, but absolutely necessary that the excess of honor and admiration with which our existing stock of inventions is regarded be in the very entrance and threshold of the work, and that frankly and without circumlocution, stripped off, and men be duly warned not to exaggerate or make too much of them.

For let a man look carefully into all that variety of books with which the arts and sciences abound, he will find everywhere endless repetitions of the same thing, varying in method of treatment, but not new in substance, insomuch that the whole stock, numerous as it appears at first view, proves on examination to be but scanty. And for its value and utility it must be plainly avowed that that wisdom which we have derived principally from the Greeks is but like the boyhood of knowledge, and has the characteristic property of boys; it can talk, but it cannot generate; for it is fruitful of controversies but barren of works. So that the state of learning as it now is, appears to be represented to the life in the old fable of Scylla, who had the head and face of a virgin, but her womb was hung round with barking monsters, from which she could not be delivered. For in like manner the sciences to which we are accustomed have certain general positions which are specious and flattering; but as soon as they come to particulars, which are as the parts of generation, when they should produce fruit and works, then arise contentions and barking disputations, which are the end of the matter and all the issue they can yield.

Observe also, that if sciences of this kind had any life in them, that could never have come to pass which has been the case now for many ages—that they stand almost at a stay, without receiving any augmentations worthy of the human race, insomuch that many times not only what was asserted once is asserted still, but what was a question once is a question still, and instead of being resolved by discussion is only fixed and fed; and all the tradition and succession of schools is still a succession of masters and scholars, not of inventors and those who bring to further perfection the things invented.

In the mechanical arts we do not find it so; they, on the contrary, as having in them some breath of life, are continually growing and becoming more perfect. As originally invented they are commonly rude, clumsy, and shapeless; afterwards



they acquire new powers and more commodious arrangements and constructions; in so far as men should sooner leave the study and pursuit of them and turn to something else, than they arrive at the ultimate perfection of which they are capable.

Philosophy and the intellectual sciences on the contrary, stand like statues, worshipped and celebrated, but not moved or advanced. Nay, they sometimes flourish most in the hands of the first author, and afterwards degenerate. For when men have once made over their judgments to others' keeping, and (like those senators whom they called *Pedarii*) have agreed to support some one person's opinion, from that time they make no enlargement of the sciences themselves, but fall to the servile office of embellishing certain individual authors and increasing their retinue.

And let it not be said that the sciences have been growing gradually till they have at last reached their full stature, and so (their course being completed) have settled in the works of a few writers; and that there being now no room for the invention of better, all that remains is to embellish and cultivate those things which have been invented already. Would it were so! But the truth is that this appropriating of the sciences has its origin in nothing better than the confidence of a few persons and the sloth and indolence of the rest. For after the sciences had been in several parts perhaps cultivated and handled diligently, there has risen up some man of bold disposition, and famous for methods and short ways which people like, who has in appearance reduced them to an art, while he has in fact only spoiled all that the others had done. And yet this is what posterity like, because it makes the work short and easy, and saves further inquiry, of which they are weary and impatient.

And if any one take this general acquiescence and consent for an argument of weight, as being the judgment of Time, let me tell him that the reasoning on which he relies is most fallacious and weak. For, first, we are far from knowing all that in the matter of sciences and the arts has in various ages and places been brought to light and published; much less, all that has been by private persons secretly attempted and stirred; so neither the births nor the miscarriages of Time are entered in our records.

Nor, secondly, is the consent itself and the time it has continued a consideration of much worth. For however various are the forms of civil polities, there is but one form of civil polity in the sciences; and that always has been and always will be popular. Now the doctrines which find most favor with the populace are those which are either contentious and pugnacious, or specious and empty; such, I say, as either entangle assent or tickle it. And therefore, no doubt the greatest wits in each successive age have been forced out of their own course; men of capacity and intellect above the vulgar having been fain, for reputation's sake, to bow to the judgment of the time and the multitude; and thus if any contemplations of a higher order took light anywhere, they were presently blown out by the winds of vulgar opinions. So that Time is like a river, which has brought down to us things light and puffed up, while those which are weighty and solid have sunk. Nay, those very authors who have usurped a kind of dictatorship in the sciences and taken upon them to lay down the law with such confidence, yet when from time to time they come to themselves again, they fall to complaints of the subtlety of nature, the hiding-places of truth, the obscurity of things, the entanglement of causes, the weakness of the human mind; wherein nevertheless they show themselves never the more modes, seeing that they will rather lay the blame upon the common condition of men and nature than upon themselves. And then whatever any art fails to attain, they ever set it down upon the authority of that art itself as impossible of attainment; and how can art be found guilty when it is judge in its own cause? So it is but a device for exempting ignorance from ignominy.

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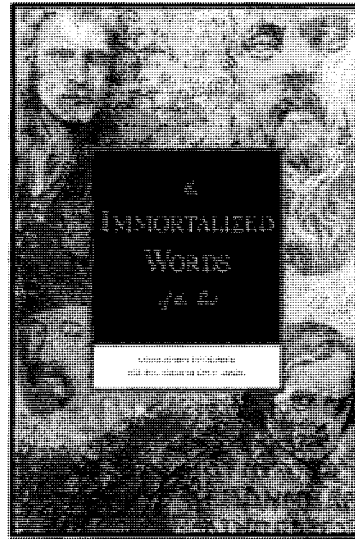
*Some books are to be
tasted, others to be swal-
lowed, and some few to be
chewed and digested.*

—*Sir Francis Bacon*

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On this tenth anniversary of the passing of former Rosicrucian Imperator Ralph M. Lewis, the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, has just published a new edition of *The Immortalized Words of the Past*—the last AMORC book prepared under his direction. In many ways *Immortalized Words* represents the culmination of Frater Lewis' lifelong study of philosophy and the great philosophers.

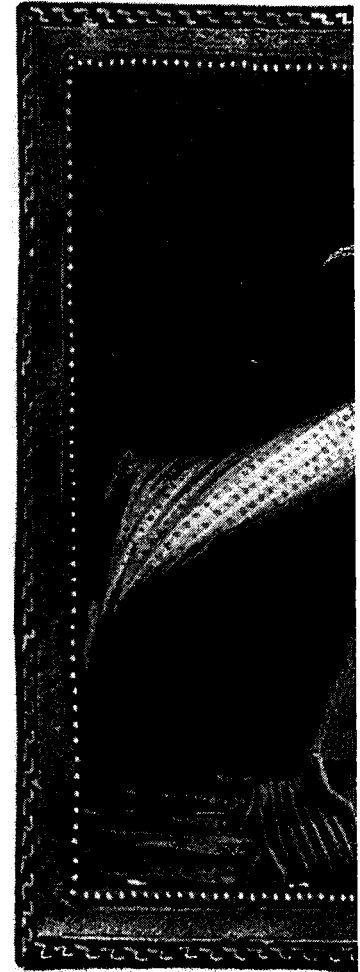
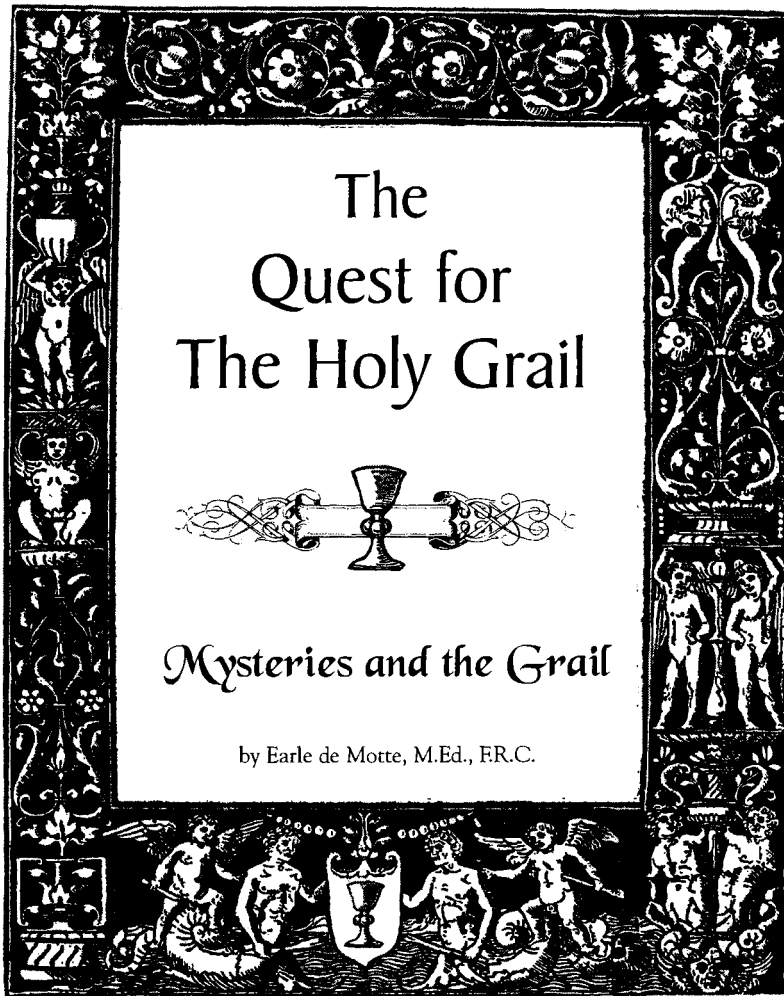
In the preface to the first edition, Frater Lewis wrote: "The greatest wealth that a civilization has is not alone its buried natural resources . . . The advance of mankind is determined by relation of the past to the present, and which also is often a prescience of the future. There is a touch of the divine, of *immortality*, in the preserved works of the great thinkers of the past. At least they gave us a foundation upon which to stand to envision a tomorrow."

This collection of inspired writings represents the vast body of knowledge reflecting the advancement of humanity through the ages. Presented in chronological order so the reader may discern the pattern of civilization, each excerpt is accompanied by a brief biographical sketch of its author.

Some of these enlightened personalities were honored during their lifetimes as great statesmen, scientists, and educators, while others, forced by circumstances to work at menial tasks, stole precious moments to write down the knowledge they received through the influx of Cosmic Illumination. Many of these courageous thinkers struggled against persecution by dogmatic, narrow-minded authorities, suffering poverty, imprisonment, and death through their efforts to bring the light of truth to the world.

The collected works of the individuals included in *The Immortalized Words of the Past* would fill many volumes, but within this book you will find the quintessence of philosophical, metaphysical, and scientific thought. You will be guided through a fascinating journey of the mind and spirit as you experience the wisdom revealed by those who pioneered the highest avenues of human expression.

For more information about *The Immortalized Words of the Past*, please see the advertisement on the back cover of this magazine.



FOR SEVERAL CENTURIES before the first written accounts of the Grail legend appeared, Europe had suffered through a dark age of turmoil and despair. Living conditions throughout Europe were poor and the spiritual life of the people was at a low ebb.

Feudal Europe was divided into dozens of competing fiefdoms and feudal states. There were no national political entities. For example, the same lord might hold lands in both France and the Holy Roman Empire. Smaller kingdoms and principalities were constantly at war with one another and territorial boundaries were redrawn at a terrible cost in human life and suffering. Violence, insecurity, misery, and intolerance marked the state of society.

Earle de Motte, M Ed , F R C —a former teacher of history and languages, and a college principal—has done extensive research on Grail history, symbolism, and literature in the Western Mystical tradition. He has traveled throughout Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia, visiting many historical and mystical sites of Rosicrucian interest. Frater de Motte has led the Rosicrucian Order's Holy Grail Tours to Grail sites and served as Rose-Croix University instructor on these unique tours. He resides near Melbourne, Australia, and is an AMORC Grand Counselor Emeritus.

The only central authority covering a wide area, in a spiritual sense, was the Church of Rome. But its ability to temper civil and political excesses was limited due to a number of factors. In launching the Crusades against Islam, the Roman Church saw an opportunity to turn the energies of warring political units in Europe against a common foe.

Following Mohammed's death in 632 Islam expanded rapidly. In the East, the Holy Land was conquered in the seventh century and Moslems penetrated outposts of the aging Byzantine Empire. Toward the West, Islam spread rapidly across North Africa, and by the eighth century, had conquered much of Spain. From Spain, Moslem armies poured across the Pyrenees into France. Initially repelled by the Franks and later Charlemagne, the Moslems eventually reconquered much of Spain. In the ninth century the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily came under Moslem control, and they repeatedly invaded Italy, plundering Rome and besieging the Pope in his own fortress.

By the eleventh century Christian Europe, although still divided, was strong enough to begin a counteroffensive.



Kings of Leon, Castile, Aragon, and Navarre, aided by French knights, recaptured almost half of Moslem Spain. French knights founded the kingdom of Portugal. The Moslems were driven out of Corsica. And a Norman adventurer, Roger de Hauteville, conquered Sicily by 1091. The First Crusade to recover the Holy Land began in 1096.

The Crusades

In these wars of one faith against another, it was expected that the spiritual kingdom of God on earth would be further strengthened by enlisting the combined might of temporal power on its side. The unifying symbol was the Holy City of Jerusalem—holy in fact to three contending faiths. But the objective was to ensure that Jerusalem would be kept within the Christian fold.

From the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, the Crusades, aside from their excesses, did much to achieve some pan-European solidarity, reduce internecine conflict, and increase religious fervor. A renewal of the human spir-

it and a new period of intense activity in religious thought and political life began to manifest, as evidenced in art and architecture, in literature and scholarship, and in movements that presented a challenge to church doctrine.

At the mystical level, centers of Gnostic, Hermetic, and Kabbalistic thought dotted the landscape. To a great extent, contact with Islam—a result of the thrust of Arab expansion towards Europe—was instrumental in bringing about these developments. During the Crusades, Christian knights were on the front line in the conflict between Christianity and Islam. However, contacts were also made at a higher level between the Knights Templar and the knightly orders of Islam. First-hand knowledge of the ancient mystery schools as they survived in Palestine, together with Arabian science, alchemy, and Sufi mystical practices, was available to Crusaders who were influenced by their contacts. The most important result of Crusader contact with the Arabs in Palestine, and with Islamic states in Western Europe was the opening up of a track of communication between two opposing religious cultures. Both were unyielding in doctrine. But at the mystical

level, the separation of the three monotheistic faiths—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—all having a common source, were coming close to each other again.

A Rich Blend of Cultures

During the Middle Ages Spain was a meeting point of the three religions and three world views. Christian, Moslem, and Jew were able to live there under tolerant rulers, and scholarship of a cosmopolitan character flourished. This attitude spread gradually to other parts of Europe. Troyes, in France, was one of these centers, where Chrétien de Troyes wrote his Lancelot and Perceval romances, giving emphasis to ideals of chivalry, courtly love, and individual initiative. Troyes was also a center of Kabbalistic thought, a place where the “white monks” or Cistercians were established and whose leader, St. Bernard, had made it possible for the Templar movement to be established under the authority of the Church.

Languedoc and Provence in Southern France were regions where “new age” movements seemed to be replacing Rome as a center of spiritual influence. This was the land of the Cathars, Rosicrucians, Kabbalists, the Black Virgin cult, Gnostics, and of European and Sufi mysticism. The troubadours, who came out of this region, carried some of the region’s “heretical” ideas all over Europe. In Spain, Toledo and nearby cities, had impressive libraries, where many Classical, Sufi, and Hebrew texts were to be found. According to Wolfram von Eschenbach, who wrote the Hermetic version of *Parzival*, the source of his work was a document found in Toledo, written in “heathen” script. In many of Toledo’s public buildings, churches, and cathedrals, one sees evidence of a successful blend of Christian and Moslem styles in art and architecture. The tolerance of both Christian and Moslem cultures in Spain can be clearly seen in a Templar Church in Segovia, not far from Toledo, which displays a painting of a Moslem at prayer.

This changing scene in Europe constituted a serious challenge to the Church, which had strengthened its position at the end of the millennium as the recognized head of Christendom. Now new challenges, new “heresies,” were causing much discord: there were Cathars with their Manichaeic doctrine, Templars who were

allegedly practicing heathen rites, the feminine thrust of Gnosticism associated with the Magdalene cult, the Alchemists and their mysterious practices, and Grail Christianity or mysticism being spread by the troubadours and poets in the courts throughout Europe.

In response to these movements the Church took several steps, among which, it raised or encouraged Mary’s status as an object of adoration, and it occasionally eliminated individual Alchemists—claiming they were sorcerers. However, the Grail poets were neither officially condoned nor condemned because of their skill in walking the razor’s edge between orthodoxy and heresy. This may be noted in the group of Grail literature called the *Vulgate Cycle*, the work of Cistercian monks, who worked both Catharistic and Orthodox themes into the content of the romances.

We have previously called attention to the anonymously written *Perlesvaus* and Wolfram’s *Parzival*. Both these works contained Christian, as well as unorthodox and pagan elements. Celtic and Oriental references, aspects of astrology, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, and secret initiatic sequences are skillfully woven into the narratives.

New Spirit in Religion & Philosophy

The essence of this new spirit in religion and philosophy is well stated in Malcolm Godwin’s comment on the Perceval story. “Perceval,” he says, “embodies the search of medieval man for some higher knowledge which would give some significance and meaning to life, which the Church was unable to offer” (Godwin, page 176). It may be described as a kind of Grail Christianity which focused on esoteric mysteries, as against Church teaching in which the exotic form mattered more. The two greatest threats from within the Church were settled to its advantage when in 1244 and 1308 respectively the Cathars and Templars were annihilated as overt and organized groups—in both cases they were annihilated by force of arms and papal authority. Their ideas and practices, however, persisted in other forms and places, in secrecy, as if by some historical necessity or inevitability.

What is described as a secret initiatory tradition, modeled on the ancient mystery schools, survived in Europe in various forms, as had such

traditions in the past during times of intolerance and persecution. The view being presented in this article is the view of some writers in the area of esoteric studies: that the Grail myth was a projection into literature of this secret tradition. Had the Grail myth been reconstituted from earlier folklore or tribal myths, the Grail myths may have simply become part of a general collection of local mythology. They became more important however because they had a double intent in their reconstituted forms, and were read or heard across Europe.

The underlying philosophy behind the heroic tales of the Grail knights was a declaration in favor of an alternative to the life specified in Church teachings. This alternative lifestyle advocated personal responsibility in the shaping of one's life, through the application of effort and endeavor, and the use of free will. To achieve man's divine purpose, the individual was to be the initiator of his own destiny, not merely the passive recipient of the grace of God to be received as a gift or earned by faith and prayer. As one writer puts it: "The Knights of the Round Table went in quest of the Holy Grail . . . they undertook a commitment, they did not stay in Camelot and pray that the Grail would come to them" (Knight, page 163). Clearly, the Grail writers were presenting a different view of "salvation" and how it was to be achieved.

Galahad, the Hero-Knight

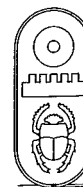
The Perceval story points the listener or reader towards an understanding of life, of certain mystical truths relating to birth, death, and regeneration. Just as Christ was a model for all Christians, so Perceval represented the finest example of medieval man. With greater Christianization of the myth, Perceval was replaced by Galahad to make the hero a more Christ-like figure. In any of these versions, however, their effect on people at that time must have been considerable. The stories possessed a secret transformative power. One could imagine the troubadour and minnesinger playing the part of the initiatory "master," taking the "neophyte" (the reader or listener) through the joys and ordeals of the journey. The initiate is charged spiritually. He may feel at the end of the journey "twice-born" and become aware that he is in possession of certain secrets.

Such conclusions have been reached by a number of writers who have pursued research

into the Grail myth. It was G.A. Heinrich (*Parzival and Wolfram von Eschenbach*) who first noted that what Perceval experienced was less of a series of adventures than a series of initiations. Jessie Weston explored the idea of the myth being a reenactment of ancient vegetation rites. And it was W.H. Nitzsche who stated that the more advanced readers of the romances "could identify a hyper-text by secret words or gestures learned only through initiation" (Harrison, page 93).

More recently, Trevor Ravenscroft points to the symbols appearing in the Perceval story as a clue revealing the method of the traditional initiatory schools, namely, the passage of the initiate through seven degrees of progress towards enlightenment. It is to be noted that, in making this comparison, the symbols in the Grail Quest are not identical with but similar to those of the ancient mystery schools. They represent broadly the experiences of the initiate as he proceeds from the state of foolish innocence to that of the fullness of mystical understanding. Some degrees are represented by birds—the raven, peacock, pelican, phoenix, and eagle—to indicate the inner journey into the unconscious, the messages received from it, the workings of the imagination, the refinement of the initiate's feelings, his exploration of the inner world and his reactions to it, and the expansion of his consciousness through space. The older degree of "warrior" or "soldier" is replaced by the "knight"; this is the Grail knight who brings justice to the world by the use of a discriminating sword. Where a degree used to be the "Persian" or "Egyptian," we have a nameless Perceval at sometime during his life receiving his name in an intuitive flash; he becomes an identity through the "conversion of suffering". The lion encountered by Gawain, Perceval's alter ego, symbolized the acquisition of control over his unconscious prejudices. The highest degree was the Crown or Grail Kingship.

As a final comment it would be of interest to look at the intentions (as far as we can interpret them) and ideas presented in the Grail romances of two of the most important writers, namely, Chrétien de Troyes (*Legend of the Grail*, c. 1180) and Wolfram von Eschenbach (*Parzival*, c. 1210). Both Chrétien and Wolfram were, speaking figuratively, masters of instruction by way of the romantic drama. Both were communicating some "secrets" of the mysteries relating to the purpose and destiny of humanity, the cor-



respondence of life with the cycles of nature, and the message of return to primordial man. The approach of the soul towards the Grail, in Chrétien's poem, was represented as an individual quest. The individual struggles towards wholeness (to use the language of depth psychology), that is, towards the Grail. The struggle was necessary to heal the splits in the individual's psyche in order to achieve self-realization or spiritual health. It was the same with Wolfram's hero—the splits could be identified as those between nature and "supernature," between Earth and Heaven, between illustration and reality. The Grail was the point of reconciliation or merging of these opposites.

Wolfram was no less concerned with the individual man than was Chrétien, but he broadened his horizon. This was in keeping with this more emphatic esoteric orientation. He wanted to save the human race, and saw the individual as participating in some cosmic purpose. And incidentally, this was in harmony with the teaching of the Church, which discouraged the individual and unmediated search for salvation. But to Wolfram, the closed system of one faith was not enough. The Grail Quest was for humanity as a whole, starting with a reconciliation of the three antagonistic faiths—a reconciliation that transcended doctrinal differences at the mystical level. In essence this was the way of the Alchemist, the Kabbalist, and the ancient initiatory orders.

One must also clear up a misunderstanding here. Wolfram's idea that the Grail Guardians were "bred to the pure life" and his tendency to emphasize the importance of the ancestral (that is, the family lineage) factor has been misconstrued by some. The most nefarious distortion occurred after Richard Wagner's presentation of Wolfram's message in his operatic trilogy based on the Grail sagas. When Adolph Hitler came to power, he twisted the theme of spiritual leadership to suit his own racial superiority theories. As we know, the consequences were disastrous. A truer understanding of Wolfram's esotericism identifies the Grail Guardians as the most advanced, mystically developed group, coming

from all lands and cultures, bred in the initiatic tradition, and representing the vanguard of humanity's progressive involvement on the mystic path.

It is this mystical aspect that was the "mystery" that Wagner attempted to present in his Grail operas, and he succeeded. The visual perception of the individual's quest to his "center," magnificently dramatized, with all the strength of the music medium, pointed to the Biblical story of the fall and redemption of humanity. In terms of the core of any religion, Perceval's story represents humanity on a return track to its own divinity. Psychologically, it demonstrates to us all the "process of the inward way of reintegration, the engrafting of the new self upon the old" (Wilmshurst, page 6). In mystical terms, "both the true hero and the mystic have to die to their egos, die to the idea of who they are, in order to be reborn as something else or something greater" (Godwin, page 228).

The theme of this article, the Grail in Mystery, may be seen as an application of the symbolic power of the Grail to transform individuals and humanity as a whole. Its greatest mystery is that it has such a hold on our psyche. We reach out and we reach within in order to understand the Grail's secret; if we come to know it, such knowledge is beyond compare. It may be less mysterious when, through striving, we come to know that we are participating in the mystery, and in so doing derive the utmost satisfaction from being aware of our contribution to a vast energy force shaping the universe. Such knowledge must give one the power to attract all of humanity to search for order and meaning in the complexity of life in this world.

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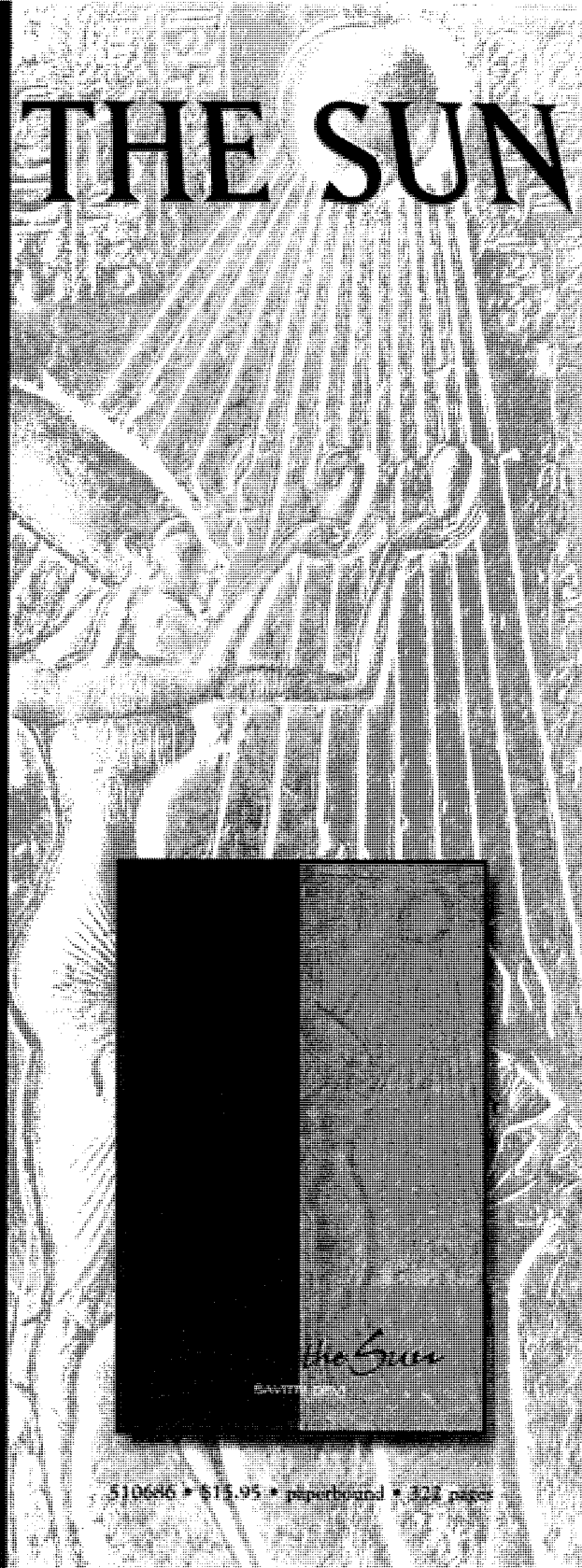
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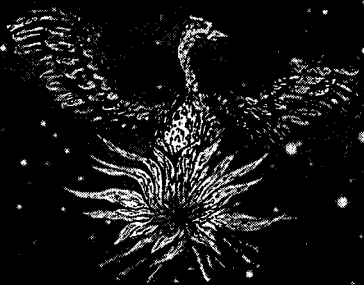
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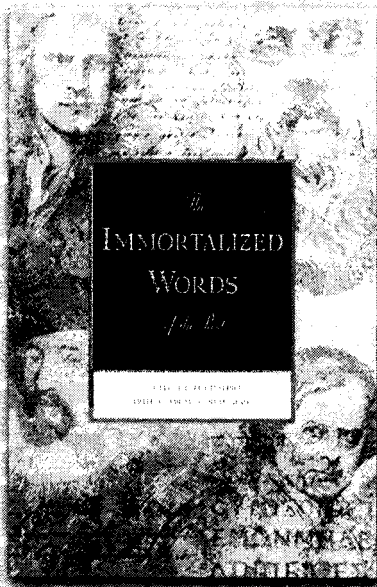
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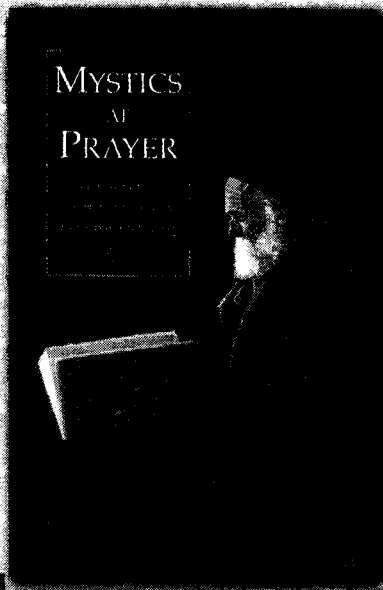
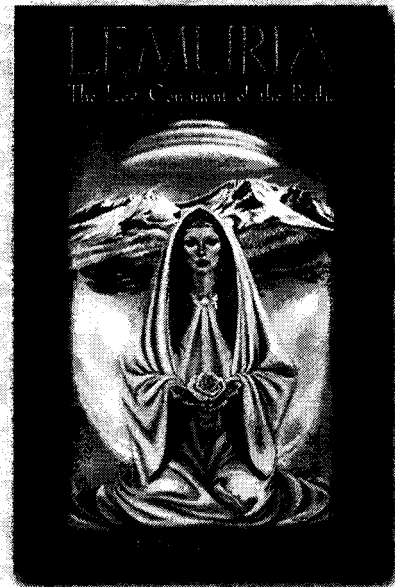
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