

# Rosicrucian Digest<sup>®</sup>

VOLUME 78 NUMBER 1 2000

**Creating a  
Sustainable Future**  
by H. Troy Stuckey, Ph.D., F.R.C.



MYSTICISM

ART

SCIENCE



# Treasures from our Museum

## Limestone Gazelle's Interesting Story

RC 1734

CAIRO, Egypt, October 1965: Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum Curator James French stopped by an antique shop in El-Mahdi Street to visit a dealer named Kamel Abdullah Hammouda.

Hammouda was one of a number of Egyptian merchants who at the time were licensed to export artifacts legally from Egypt. While chatting with the dealer, our Museum's curator noticed among the pieces on display a broken limestone carving that excited his interest. It showed a line of gazelles flanked by a representation of the sun. From the sun streamed rays of light, each of which terminated in a caressing hand. French recognized the carving at once for what it was: artwork from Pharaoh Akhenaten's royal city of Akhetaten (the site is known today as Tell el-Amarna).

French reported his Amarna find to Rosicrucian Emperor Ralph M. Lewis, who contacted the antiquities dealer to arrange for the purchase and transport of the artifact. Correspondence in our Museum's archives indicate that in February, 1966, Kamel Hammouda shipped the limestone carving from Port Said aboard a Greek freighter named the "Hellenic Sunbeam." The following month the carving arrived in New York and from there was transshipped safely to California.

The carving can now be seen in the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum's Amarna Gallery. Broken and deliberately mutilated in antiquity, the piece has a story to tell to anyone who pauses to study the work. Note first the line of animals to the right, and the delicate arching of the first gazelle's neck as it lowers its head to graze on grass. This sculpture suggests the sensitivity to the natural world and its beauty that was characteristic of the artwork sponsored by



Akhenaten and his queen, Nefertiti. To the left can be seen the Aten sun-disk, within which is mounted the royal cobra. Just discernible beneath the sun is the outline of a table heaped with offerings, which are touched by the radiant hands of the Aten in a gesture of benediction.

The hieroglyphic inscription to the right has been gouged with violent chisel-marks. This is likely to have been the work of Akhenaten's successors, who did their best to efface all memory of the "heretic king" and his attempts to impose Aten worship at the expense of the other gods.

But if you linger over the hieroglyphs, you will see that the vandal's hammer was not completely thorough. Just visible to the right is a double cartouche. With the exception of one letter, the inscription has been effaced. But on the basis of comparison with other artworks sponsored by Akhenaten, we can speculate that this double cartouche proclaimed the title of the Divine Sun, "who rejoices in the horizon." And beneath the desecrated cartouches can still be clearly seen the formulaic invocation *di 'ankh djet*, "given life forever"—an expression of hope, a gesture to the future, that would have been appreciated by the visionary of Amarna.

—David Pinault, Ph.D.  
Acting Curator  
Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum



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

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EDITOR

Robin M. Thompson

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Richard W. Majka

LAYOUT &amp; DESIGN

C. H. Kawashima  
Tricia McWhorter

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In this article I would like to explore the significance of a word included in the official name of our Order, the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis. I am referring to the word "mystical."

# The Meaning of the Word "Mystical"

by Christian Bernard, F.R.C.  
Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC



AS REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED in the Rosicrucian teachings, the word *mystical* does not indicate anything strange or weird. It does not connote either a state of permanent ecstasy or of attunement apart from the world, that is, apart from the problems and obstacles we face in our further evolution. Indeed, the term is often used in this latter sense, though to Rosicrucians it assumes far greater significance and denotes what we must be in the fullness of our nature. In other words, to Rosicrucians the word *mystical* denotes *balance* and *harmony*. Precisely, it mandates that the quality of our being must express itself in this balance and harmony.

In our individual expressions on this physical plane, the two polarities within us must always be in perfect balance. On the one hand we must be realistic and make allowances for our life in given external conditions, while on the other hand we must also be idealistic, and not disregard the profound aspirations of our mystical self.

Therefore, we exist on both planes and strive toward the lasting harmony of these two planes within us. We *strive*, for obviously, this ideal state of balance and harmony cannot instantly be attained. In reality, it results from our work, our study, and our experimentation—beginning with the Rosicrucian teachings and expanded upon by the collective meetings in our Lodges, Chapters, and Pronaoi. Even if our efforts are not as sustained as they should be, it is essential

that we constantly keep before us the ideal—the mystical—and all that it represents, for it is of great importance to us.

In fact, if we bear in mind that mysticism denotes harmony and balance at all times and under all circumstances, our conception of things and of our selves will be transformed, and, as a consequence, so will our lives also be changed. Certainly, when we encounter external events in life, as mystics we possess an inner strength through the calmness we have acquired or are striving to acquire. In this external life, we adapt ourselves to the laws of the universe, while at the same time remaining true to self. But therein lies a definite danger: namely, neglecting the other aspect of our mystical quality, that is, the inner aspect.

## Our Life Transformed

As previously mentioned, we must be in harmony with external universal principles, but we must maintain this harmony with the awareness of what we generate within ourselves from the mystical point of view. If the inner aspect of the mystical is overlooked in the course of the encounters and activities of everyday life, and if its power and effectiveness for our existence in the manifested world are neglected, then we risk becoming materialistic, as it were, and giving priority to the purely outer aspect of our nature over the reality of our inner self. Therein lies one aspect of the danger. The other aspect—the opposite of the one we have just mentioned—

consists of ignoring material conditions and, ultimately, becoming ineffective under the pretext that our inner self must come first.

This is why the balance inherent in Rosicrucian mysticism must be our concern at all times. If we succeed in upholding this balance, we shall then dwell in the image of what exists on the non-temporal plane, on the plane of invisible reality; and we shall have applied the famous injunction "As Above, So Below" in order for the miracle of unity to manifest.

There is one essential point we must not forget: mysticism must keep its true value for us, and it follows therefore that our thoughts must be turned inward, toward the deep and real part of our humanness. We must not deny the words of the past, even though these words may now have taken on a different meaning due to our greater knowledge. It simply means that if the God of our Heart, the God of our Understanding, now represents a reality more advanced than before, it remains that God, in His essence, is still to our heart, to our understanding, and to us, on every level of our being, the supreme good and the protecting power whose true nature we cannot conceive.

Even if this principle is unknown to us and this power impossible for us to define, if we have the assurance that it is a reality that imbues our entire being and the external world, beneficial results will then make themselves felt. Here is where the third point of the triangle—that of manifestation—must come into consideration. If we succeed in this, we will find that instead of being under the influence of external conditions, we, *ourselves*, in our *reality*, will direct events and stamp them with the seal of truth.

## Through the Tempest

However, to be a mystic is not always easy, especially in the transitional stage of today's world at the dawning of a new millennium. If our thoughts are turned toward mysticism on the highest level, then even in the midst of a tempest,

we shall reach our goal by exhibiting greater courage and determination. And since the world is a unit, we shall unquestionably also help others through this difficult stage.

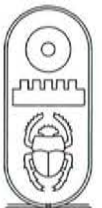
Now, is it necessary to remind you that for us being a mystic means being a Rosicrucian? This means not only having the *potentiality* of the Rose Cross, which is our goal, but also having an awareness that such a goal exists. Therefore, being a mystic and a Rosicrucian involves knowing where we are going, and toward which ultimate summit we are heading.

*"Being a mystic and  
a Rosicrucian involves  
knowing where we are  
going, and toward which  
ultimate summit we are  
heading."*

We must never allow the cloud of incomprehension, anguish, doubt, or discord to conceal from our view that summit toward which our aspirations must always be attuned. If the mist seems to thicken, let us dissipate it through the action of our inner and dedicated will, that will which manifests as the *Lost Word*. As Rosicrucian mystics we learn that the *Lost Word* conceals, but we also learn how to *be* this Word. We undoubtedly have earned the

right, through our long past, to walk on the slopes of the sacred mountain leading to Enlightenment, but the path is steep and dizziness may at times overcome us. Perhaps, we may feel tempted to stop on the wayside. Yet we must rise above this situation, because if we succumb to the temptation of resting, our companions will proceed on their way and it will be difficult to catch up with them afterwards. But if we become aware of our integration into the midst of our brothers and sisters, we shall find strength and courage, and we shall be able to rely on them and their goodwill.

As Rosicrucians and mystics, brotherhood is a part of our lives; brotherhood of the heart, the only true fraternity there is, attunes us to others and ensures that we and they are one. Let me conclude with this particular point of Rosicrucian mysticism: brotherhood. For beside all that I have tried to express from the bottom of my heart, brotherhood must always dwell within us, around us, and among us, and express itself through a true love which is understanding and selflessness. Δ





# CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

by H. Troy Stuckey, Ph.D., F.R.C.

**I**MPLEMENTING a paradigm shift is necessary for sustainability. A reevaluation of the way in which humans live is needed so that natural adaptation can continue for all species. It is apparent that the evolution of industrial capitalism has brought civilization into a time where our own survival is at risk. In the hope of creating a richer life for everyone, the resource exploitation that has manifested through modern

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*Frater Stuckey has a Ph.D. in Environmental Science, and while his doctoral work emphasized conservation biology, his undergraduate background is in History and English. Through his research, he has worked to promote a holistic way of thinking by combining the elements of his educational background. He currently works in the environmental field and actively publishes in environmental journals of science, policy, management, and the humanities on topics ranging from air pollution to waste management to bio-ecological forestry. His personal research projects revolve around creating a sustainable society and working to promote a unification of different disciplines through environmental education.*

culture's interpretation, and more importantly, implementation of world development now threatens every species on the planet. Basic biology stresses the importance of a cooperative ecosystem.

All species depend on one another. In fact, all parts of the natural environment—the air, water, soil, and all living things—are connected in the web of life. If any single component changes, then all others will be affected. This article reviews the consequences of the modern consumer way of life, evaluates the value of appropriate communication, and discusses one path for sustainable living for the future.

Industrialization ushered in many of the modern destructive and exploitative technologies that society currently deems as appropriate. These industrial practices were allowed because they created an improved life for humanity. As the process continued, products were conceived as important, and marketed as such, and the masses of the world's population became "sold" on such ideas. Priorities were placed on the value of the accumulation of money. Furthermore, the



money that was generated was used to encourage spending on consumer products that were advertised as items that would make "civilized living" comfortable. Evolving under the auspices that consumer lifestyles were acceptable, society continued to grow, seemingly unchallenged by the natural ecosystem.

## Our Current Situation

Recognizing that these facts were a part of a natural course that was set into motion centuries ago, it is now necessary to modify our behavior patterns and shift the emphasis of society's values. The reason is simple: modern consumer lifestyles are not acceptable on the world stage. In fact, the current practice of humanity is the same as it has been for thousands of years—conquer and control the land, the resources, and the animals. Governments were designed around laws that supported these notions, and the coupling of technology with population growth has manifested a swarm of humans and their by-products that is rapidly depleting the earth. Before long, if we continue on this path, the sheer impact and number of humans will wipe out our dependent structures—not necessarily capitalism and the consumer society, but biological diversity. And when biological diversity is threatened, then all species are at peril.

## A Catalyst for Sustainable Life

Paradigm shifts do not happen suddenly or easily. Rather, they occur as the result of hard work and through the pragmatics of well-planned visions. With this in mind, we will explore one alternative that will help the pendulum swing in a new direction. It involves the shifting of science and industry to a more earth-centered value system, as opposed to one motivated by money and personal greed.

Our way of life has brought us many wonderful things, but also brought about a real crisis. The impact of modern human culture could perhaps be the single greatest catalyst in the history of the species. Not only are the lifestyles and patterns of human behavior capable of destroying our own species, but in the process, a mass extinction event is possible. The fact that the planet is out of balance is due to human interaction. The combination of massive human reproduction and the encouragement of a con-

sumer society have brought about a disharmony that is impacting the entire world ecosystem.

Writers such as John Firor address the fact that humanity has depleted the earth's ability to balance nature. In his book, *The Changing Atmosphere—A Global Challenge*, Firor emphasizes that "major changes in actions and attitudes, and an unprecedented amount of international cooperation" need to take place in order to redefine what it means to be human.<sup>1</sup> He contends that at the current pace of industrial development, the changes that are being inflicted on the earth are too rapid, and these fast-paced changes will inevitably bring about a mass extinction of species. To lessen humanity's impact on the planet will allow for more time so that adaptation can take place, thereby securing the balance of nature.

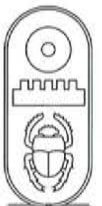
Writers such as Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine argue that when humanity began to disassociate itself from nature, modern science was born in an effort to place definitions on the very being of nature. Evolving from this system of thought, human beings continue to perform small tasks for short-term gain, while invoking a larger obstacle. In other words, in taking a short-term view, the problem continues to grow. The problem is quickly leading into an irreversible process of mass extinction.

While science attempts to understand nature, the reality is that human beings understand very little about the greater ecosystem. Humans attempt to control nature through science and industry. The irony is that humans can by no means control nature. Nature does not pay attention to humanity's rules. On the contrary, the laws of nature allow for humanity to exist, and if humans break these laws, the balance is lost.

Staying within the spirit of Prigogine, one of the few consequences we can surely count on is that out of this apparent chaos will come a higher order. As a species, we can only hope that the higher order includes humanity. Therefore, in order for us to survive and thrive as a species, we must actively participate in the natural process to secure sustainability.

## The Role of Language

The way culture presents material to us can be risky when it comes to sustainability. Communications and mass media have dramatically influenced culture, and as such, culture is a tool that can be used to guide and redirect industry and



consumer practices onto a more sustainable path. In her book, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*, Donna Haraway states that "the point is about drama and choices about what to popularize, what to focus on. . ."<sup>2</sup> Her statement is well founded in the sense that media moguls control what people read, watch, and buy in the consumer society. Much of what is viewed from the perspective of mass media is culture-enhancing but ecosystem-destroying—an interesting perspective since media provides the illusion that life is being improved through the consumer process. Ironically, much of what is encouraged by the media will eventually tear down the very culture it attempts to create. The point is that the narrative we live by is generated by those empowered through media and mass communications, and they are supported by a trusting culture that has inadvertently placed its future in the hands of a small decision-making minority who does not understand the basis for survival. Indeed, this is an interesting paradox.

Mass communications and media assist the thought-processes of culture and influence accordingly. Based on this premise, it is logical to address the issue of what people should be led to believe, or at least if the greater culture is destined to be guided, people should at least be guided in the sense that what they are encouraged to consume is "species friendly."

### Creating the Catalyst

It is vital that we realize on a mass scale that our own existence is at risk. People in positions of power need to guide greater culture to a level of existence that encourages survival of the species. An important tool in this process is learning to use language differently. Ideas of sustainability and survival need to be encouraged and incorporated into greater culture through the tools of language. It is exceedingly important that humans challenge themselves to reevaluate the artificial world of culture, and begin to see themselves as equal players with all other species in the scheme of life and existence.

Neil Evernden's book, *The Social Creation of Nature*, explores the influences of language on culture. He describes how there are language barriers between various advocacy groups supporting the givers and the takers of life. Without clear lines of communication, language can cause confusion, and in reality our culture that was built by language has socially created an environmental crisis.

Many groups are attempting to bring about a sustainable society. Industrialists believe that their products help sustain life, and environmental groups believe that their actions will also lead to the survival of the planet. Regardless of their motivation, humans from both sides of the debate have had a strong effect on the world. Industrial society controls and owns the earth's natural resources. They also control the human resources whom they employ. Environmental groups control the same resources but in different ways. Each group attempts to define the earth, thus illustrating the fact that their causes are motivated by their ability to be human. As Evernden describes, humans could perhaps destroy the very notion of what they attempt to save.

Both groups are misguided. Neither group has the right to lay claim of ownership. Simply, there must be an about-face. A new communication between people needs to develop in order to recognize that humans are a part of nature, and sustainability is dependent on our ability for human culture to live within the bounds of nature. People need to recognize that in order for the human species to prosper within nature, a balance must be found. Nature cannot be controlled or directed, we can only direct our path to follow nature's path on the intertwining road of life.

Nature's wildness must be preserved, and so too humanity's vital connection with this wildness. Humanity's "wild" aspect—our intuitive, creative, spontaneous side—is culture, and with this recognition, that aspect of human wildness can and should remain, just in a more refined and sophisticated manner which allows for the raw wildness of all other species to continue onward. A harmonious co-existence needs to manifest, but it must be initiated by humanity because it is likely that all other species already adhere to this universal law of nature.

### Conclusions

People must live in a sustainable way, thereby supporting a practice that is friendly towards all life. With so many people currently living in an unsustainable fashion, how do we incorporate this plan into the mainstream of culture? The answer is simple: we use the most distinguishing aspect of humanity, which is our ability to communicate through language. Because most of societal development has been a gradual process, a slight twitch of the current system will most



likely go unnoticed, but in theory, it should be successful. The first thing to do is to modify industrial practices. Through the encouragement of environmentally sound practices, economic development can still be achieved while simultaneously creating a sustainable future. As new markets develop with simple messages and slogans that encourage sustainability, the masses of society will gradually move towards these products. To use the language of capitalism, we will incorporate the law of supply and demand. Our demand is a sustainable future, and with this demand, the suppliers, or rather those who control consumerism, will supply that demand. And as new earth-friendly markets are developed, a pendulum swing will occur that will secure our future as a species.

#### Footnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Firor, John *The Changing Atmosphere—A Global Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) p. 125.
- <sup>2</sup> Haraway, Donna *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989) p. 311.

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- Haraway, Donna *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
- Prigogine, Ilya and Stengers, Isabelle *Order Out of Chaos* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984).



## In Memoriam

Arthur C. Piepenbrink, F.R.C.

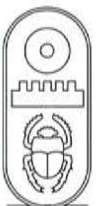


Arthur C. Piepenbrink, Supreme Secretary of the Rosicrucian Order for many decades, passed through transition and experienced the Great Initiation on December 9, 1999, in San Jose, California. A dynamic speaker, a wonderful teacher, and a kind and decisive administrator—Frater Piepenbrink was known and loved by Rosicrucians throughout the world.

Born on July 1, 1922, in Illinois, Frater Piepenbrink grew up in a Rosicrucian family where he was exposed to an exciting mixture of progressive, philosophical, religious, and educational ideas. The Order's philosophy struck a responsive chord in the youthful mind, and at the age of 19, while living in Chicago, Arthur Piepenbrink joined the Rosicrucian Order. During WWII Frater Piepenbrink served as an officer in the U.S. Army Air Force. Following the war, he obtained a college education, majoring in speech, languages, and school administration. Frater Piepenbrink began his work for the Rosicrucian Order in the summer of 1950 as a teacher at Rose-Croix University in San Jose. In 1951, after completing his Master's Degree at the University of Chicago and a brief stint in management training, he accepted a full-time position with the Order as a traveling field representative—traveling widely throughout North America to speak on behalf of the Rosicrucian Order. In the ensuing years he served as Dean of Rose-Croix University, Extension Director, and Grand Regional Administrator, before being appointed AMORC Supreme Secretary in 1963.

As Supreme Secretary, Frater Piepenbrink took a proactive role in the ongoing upgrading of the Rosicrucian monographs, was a consistent contributor to the *Rosicrucian Forum*, wrote special presentations for the AMORC traveling Courier Car representatives, was instrumental in creating the "Mysteries of the Mind" seminar series, and formulated a series of three hugely successful all-day seminars. Always interested in the communication of ideas, he traveled extensively for the Order, lecturing to members and the public alike on the benefits of the Rosicrucian way of life. His book, *In the Image of God*, demonstrates that a harmonious, imperturbable life is possible by practicing moderation, love, kindness, and acceptance. Following thirty-seven years of service, Frater Piepenbrink retired in 1987. It is no exaggeration to say that he was a strong force for good for the Rosicrucian Order in the second half of the twentieth century.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Soror Elizabeth Piepenbrink, and their daughter, Colombe Alexandra.





# ROSIKRUCIAN HISTORY

from Its Origins to the Present

## Part I

### Egypt and the Primordial Tradition: The Metamorphoses of Hermes

by Christian Rebis, F.R.C.

translated from the French by Richard Majka, F.R.C.  
Assistant Editor, Rosicrucian Digest

**O**FTEN QUESTIONS have arisen regarding the origins of Rosicrucianism. Although a consensus of researchers place its historical beginnings in the 17th century, we are of the opinion that the genesis of this movement dates from much farther back. Such was the belief of German alchemist Michael Maier. In his work *Silentium Post Clamores* (1617), he described Rosicrucianism as having arisen from the Egyptians, the Brahmans, the mysteries of Eleusis and Samothrace, the Magi of Persia, the Pythagoreans, and the Arabs. Several years after the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614) and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615), Irenaeus Agnostus, in *The Shield of Truth* (1618),

felt no hesitation in declaring Adam to be the first representative of the Order. The Rosicrucian manifestos likewise made reference to the same source: "Our philosophy has nothing new in it; it conforms to what Adam inherited after the Fall, and what Moses and Solomon practiced."

### The Primordial Tradition

Adam, Egypt, Persia, the Greek sages, and the Arabs were conjured up for good reason when speaking of Rosicrucian origins, as all of them alluded to a concept which was very widespread before the coming of Rosicrucianism. This concept—the Primordial Tradition—first appeared in the Renaissance, especially after the

(left) Pythagoras among the Egyptian priests. Drawing by C. Laplante, in *Vies des savants illustres (Lives of the Illustrious Scholars)* by L. Figuier, Paris, 1884, Lib. Hachette.

rediscovery of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a group of mysterious texts attributed to an Egyptian priest, Hermes Trismegistus. From him, this idea of a primordial revelation, of which Egypt was the cradle, would have considerable repercussions.

Our purpose is not to describe Egyptian esotericism in full, but rather to indicate how this heritage was transmitted. The route connecting Egypt to the West is long and offers a varied landscape. We will not discuss all of its details, because this description would occupy an entire volume. However, certain salient points will allow us to understand Rosicrucian origins. To engage in such an undertaking it will be necessary to follow a trustworthy guide, and Hermes appears to be the character most noted in the ancient writings. Indeed, the history and myths relating to this personage are particularly rich in information concerning our purpose at hand.

Since antiquity, Egypt's civilization has been much admired. Its mystery schools, which acted both as universities and monasteries, were the guardians of its wisdom. These schools experienced a distinctive flowering under the rule of Akhnaton (1353-1336 B.C.), especially after he introduced the concept of monotheism. The Egyptian religion is particularly intriguing because of its mysterious cults. In the

Egyptian pantheon, Thoth, the ibis-headed god, enjoyed a special illustriousness. The scribe of the Divine Tribunal, Thoth was considered to be the inventor of writing and the personification of astronomy, medicine, and magic. He was the Light of Ra in its nocturnal aspect, which made him the initiator into the mysteries. He was the husband of Maat, goddess of justice and truth. These qualities made him the symbol of the Egyptian mysteries, and this is perhaps the reason why Thoth would experience several interesting metamorphoses over the centuries.

## The Greeks and Egypt

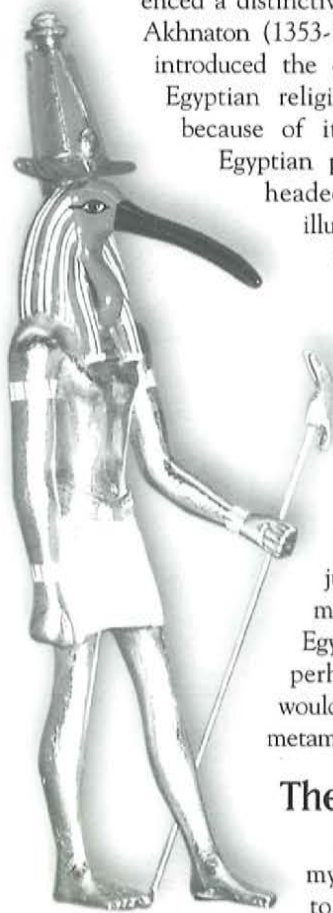
According to Herodotus, the mysteries of Greece owed much to Egypt, as the great sages of

ancient Greece obtained knowledge from their Egyptian teachers. Many among them were initiated into the Egyptian mysteries, thus assuring the transmission of this learning into the Greek world. The first of seven great sages, Thales of Miletus (624-548 B.C.), studied under their priests and measured the pyramids with Solon's help. Plutarch declared that Thales brought back Egyptian geometry to Greece. Solon (c. 640-558 B.C.) went many times to Egypt and discussed philosophy with the priests. It is he who transmitted the stories concerning Atlantis to the Greeks, and these were repeated as well by Plato in his *Timaeus* and *Critias*. Thales encouraged Pythagoras to journey to Egypt. According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras studied in the Egyptian temples for twenty-two years. After his departure, he settled in Crotona, in Italy, where he founded a school and continued to teach just as he had in the Egyptian mystery schools. According to Apollonius of Rhodes, Hermes, by way of his son Aithalides, was the direct ancestor of Pythagoras.

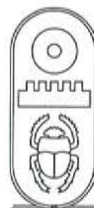
Diodorus Siculus stated that Orpheus traveled to Egypt and was initiated into the Osirian mysteries. After returning to his homeland around the 6th century B.C., he instituted new rites that were called the Orphic mysteries. Plutarch remarked that the Orphic and Bacchic mysteries were really of Egyptian and Pythagorean origin, and Diodorus Siculus reported that the rites observed in Eleusis by the Athenians were similar to those of the Egyptians. In the 5th century B.C. Herodotus visited Egypt. In his writings, he described the Osirian mysteries celebrated in Sais. The Greek philosopher Democritus of Abdera (c. 460-370 B.C.), discoverer of the atom, was initiated along with him in the Egyptian temples and was taught by the geometers of the Pharaoh. Plato (427?-347 B.C.) remained three years in Egypt and was initiated by the priests. One of his disciples, Eudoxus of Cnidus (c. 405-355 B.C.), a mathematician and geometer, also made the voyage to the land of the Nile. While there, he was initiated on both the scientific and spiritual planes. Strabo also journeyed to Egypt, remaining with the priests of Heliopolis for thirteen years.

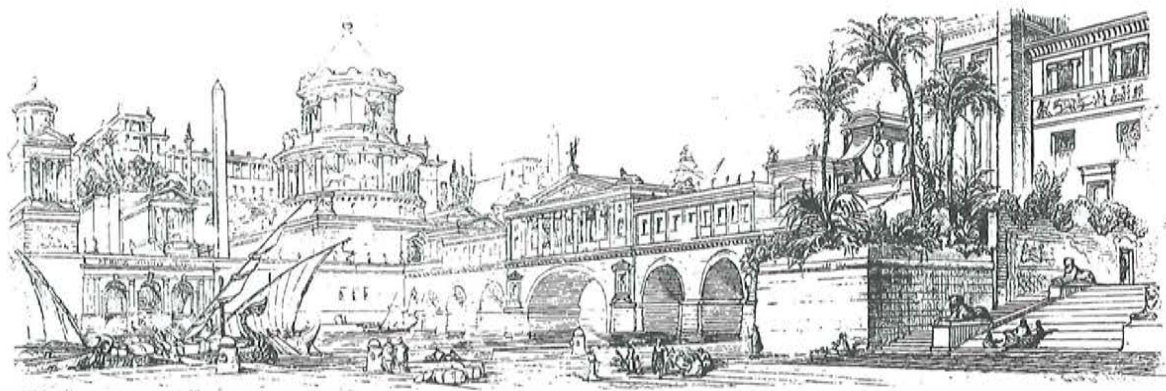
## Thoth-Hermes

The Greeks gradually appropriated the most celebrated heroes and gods of Egypt. Beginning in the 2nd century B.C., Hermes, the son of Zeus and of the nymph Maia, was believed to be descended from Thoth. The



The god Thoth.





The port of ancient Alexandria. Engraving in Picturesque Egypt by G. Ebers, London, 1885, Cassell & Co., Ltd.

Egyptian god's son was Agathodemon, who in turn produced a son named Hermes. The latter, considered to be the second Hermes, was called *Trismegistus*—that is, “Thrice-greatest.” Hermes is the guide of travelers to the otherworld. Zeus provided him with winged sandals which allowed him to speed along like the wind. Before long Thoth and Hermes were thought to be one and the same.

## Alexandria

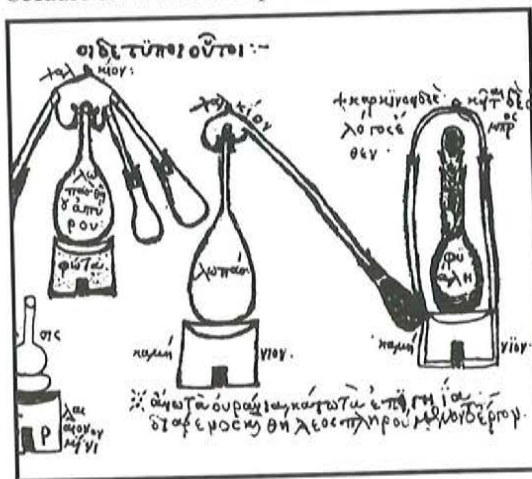
With the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C., the assimilation of the Egyptian culture by the Greek world was accelerated. The focus of this activity occurred in the city of Alexandria, established in 331 B.C., where the waters of the Nile mixed with those of the Mediterranean. A crossroads of Egyptian, Jewish, Greek, and Christian cultures, it acted over the centuries as the intellectual center of the eastern Mediterranean. Therapeutae, Gnostics, and various other mystical movements developed around this city. Its library, enriched by more than 50,000 volumes, gathered together all of the knowledge of the era. Alexandria was also the crucible where Greco-Egyptian alchemy flourished.

Alexandria gave birth to a new science in the form of alchemy, a continuation of ancient Egyptian practices that was transformed and revived by Greek thought. Its originality consisted of offering a concrete and universal discipline free from the grasp of religion. Hermes Trismegistus, represented by Alexandrian alchemists as being the founder of this art, became the new transmitter of the ancient Tradition. However, we should note that alchemy already existed in China and India. Among the Alexandrian alchemists, Bolos of Mendes (100 B.C.) is a notable figure, often being described as the founder of Greco-Egyptian alchemy.

In 30 B.C., Alexandria became the capital of the Roman province of Egypt. The Romans assimilated the Greco-Egyptian Hermes into Mercury, their god of commerce and travelers. Mercury-Hermes was the messenger of the gods, the conductor or guide of souls. Rome rapidly adopted Egypt and its cults. Plutarch, a friend of Emperor Trajan and a member of the sacerdotal college of Apollo of Delphi where he became the grand priest, also sought knowledge along the banks of the Nile. He was initiated there by Clea, a priestess of Isis and Osiris. In his book *On Isis and Osiris*, Plutarch spoke of the “works called Books of Hermes” and stressed the importance of Egyptian astrology. He also added that many authorities declared Isis to be the daughter of Hermes.

## The Corpus Hermeticum

Three centuries before the Christian era, texts that are now called the *Hermetica*—because their authorship is attributed to Hermes



Alembics and vases for digestion, in Synosius, a Greek alchemical manuscript (National Library, Paris), taken from Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs. (Collection of Ancient Greek Alchemists), by M. Berthelot.



Trismegistus—began to take shape. This literature expanded considerably from the 1st century B.C., and in the Nile Delta region the composition of the Hermetica continued until the 3rd century A.D. Written in Greek, an Egyptian form of esotericism is quite apparent. Clement of Alexandria (150?-220 A.D.) spoke of the forty-two books of Hermes which the Egyptians carried about in their ceremonies. Iamblicus attributed 20,000 books to Hermes, whereas Seleucus and Manetho mentioned about 36,525. The most celebrated, written between the 1st and 3rd centuries, are the seventeen tracts which were gathered together under the title of *Corpus Hermeticum*. They are composed primarily of dialogues between Hermes, his son Tat, and Asclepius.

The first of these treatises, Poemandres, discusses the creation of the world. The Asclepius is also an important text as it describes the religion of the Egyptians and the magical rites they practiced for attracting cosmic powers meant to animate the statues of the gods. Finally, the fragments of Stobaeus constitute the third group of the Hermetica. These are composed of thirty-nine texts and consist of dialogues between Isis and Horus regarding the creation of the world and the origin of souls. These texts, generally attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, claim to be translated from the Egyptian. In truth, they contain few authentic Egyptian elements. They are essentially characterized by Greek philosophy, but also by Judaism and Zoroastrianism. They do not compose a coherent whole and present numerous doctrinal contradictions. We will come back a little later to these texts.

## Pax Romana

In the 2nd century A.D. the Pax Romana established peace throughout the Mediterranean world. In this era, we find a veritable passion for past civilizations: the Hindus, Persians, Chaldeans, and above all the Egyptians. Fascinated by Egyptian temples that were still in operation, rich Romans flocked to the land of the Pharaohs. Apuleius, a Latin writer intrigued by the mysteries, also went there. In *The Golden Ass* he described for us the Egyptian mysteries in his colorful manner.

Along with alchemy, magic and astrology assumed an important position. Claudius Ptolemy, a Greek living in Alexandria, wrote the *Tetrabiblos*, a treatise which codified all the principles of Greek astrology (with Egyptian and Chaldean influences): signs, houses, aspects, four elements. Ptolemy was not merely an astrologer,

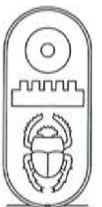
he was also an astronomer to whom we owe geocentrism and the theory of the epicycles which dominated science until the 17th century. It is Ptolemy who transmitted Greek astronomical knowledge to the West. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 213), a Greek church father, drew in his *Stromateis* a portrait of the Egyptian astrologers of his time, who always had to be ready to recite the four astrological books of Hermes.

Olympidorus (5th or 6th century) presented alchemy as a sacerdotal art practiced by the Egyptians. The Leiden and Stockholm papyri (2nd century) depict the metallurgical procedures as effectively being linked to magical formulas. In the 3rd century, Zosimos of Panopolis settled down in Alexandria so as to dedicate himself to alchemy. The first well-known alchemical author, he bestowed upon this science his concepts and symbolism. But his alchemical writings do not simply revolve around laboratory work; they also discuss the transformations of the soul and entail a mystical quest. Alchemy expanded so greatly in the 3rd century that Emperor Diocletian, disturbed by a possible devaluation of precious metals, promulgated an edict prohibiting the practice and condemning alchemical texts to the flames.

## Neoplatonism

Neoplatonists were considerably interested in Egypt. Iamblichus (c. 240-c. 325), who was initiated into the Chaldean, Egyptian, and Syrian rites, is an enigmatic individual. Some extraordinary powers were attributed to the "divine Iamblicus," the head of a Neoplatonist school. While in prayer, his body was said to rise more than ten cubits from the earth, and his skin and clothing were bathed in a beautiful golden light. Egypt held a chosen spot in his writings. In *De Mysteriis (On the Egyptian Mysteries)*, Iamblicus presented himself in the guise of Abammon, a master of the Egyptian sacerdotal hierarchy and an interpreter of Hermetic teachings. He also promoted theurgy and Egyptian divinatory practices. A little later, another Neoplatonist, Proclus (412-485), also strongly characterized by theurgy, believed himself to be part of the "chain of Hermes." He had great influence on Sufism and on such Christian thinkers as Johannes Scotus Erigena, Meister Eckhart, and many others.

Nevertheless, this era saw Egypt fading away before an ever-expanding Christianity. Alexandria played an important role in the many controversies that distinguished the beginnings of this religion newly imposed by Constantine. In the 3rd century,



the Egyptians abandoned hieroglyphs and adopted the Coptic script for transcribing their language. The Copts adapted the secret knowledge of the Pharaohs to Christianity. Before long, Emperor Theodosius promulgated an edict against non-Christian cults, thus marking the end of the Egyptian clergy and their ceremonies.

## The Christians and Hermes

The church fathers generally loved to delve into mythology so as to reveal the beginnings of the Gospel. Hermes Trismegistus continued to garner respect among them. Lactantius (250-325), in his *Divinarium Institutionum* (*Divine Institutions*), saw Christian truth formulated before the advent of Christianity in the Corpus Hermeticum. St. Augustine (354-430), a notable church father, in his *City of God*, made Hermes a descendent of God. He had read the *Asclepius* in the translation by Apuleius of Madaura, but even though he admired Hermes Trismegistus, he rejected the magic revealed in this work. Clement of Alexandria liked to compare Hermes-Logos to the Christ-Logos.

Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363) attempted a brief return to the cults and mysteries. He enacted measures against Christians and restored paganism. Influenced by Neoplatonism, he extolled ancient theurgy. This return was brief, however, and by 387 the Christian patriarch Theophilus undertook the destruction of the Egyptian temples with the idea of transforming them into places of Christian worship. Nonetheless, on the island of Philae an Egyptian temple continued to function. It was not closed until 551, by order of Emperor Justinian. It will be noted that the Egyptian temples remained active between the 1st and 6th centuries—that is, during the period which covers the composition of the Hermetica. It is often remarked that these texts are pessimistic regarding the future of the Egyptian religion, which leads us to think that they were written in an Egyptian setting by a priestly class. Fragments from the Egyptian wisdom may repose in the Hermetica, but they are expressed in an indirect fashion, having been submitted to the process of Hellenization.

Alexandria had been the starting point where Egyptian teachings entered the Greek and Roman worlds. It was where the ancient Tradition was reformulated into alchemy, astrology, and magic. This point of departure, after having scattered such wisdom into a greater portion of the Orient, was already disappearing by the 6th century, and the Arabs now took up the torch.

## The Sabaeans

Alexandria was seized by the Arabs in 642, a date which marks an end to this city's days of glory. However, the Arabs did not make their first encounter with esotericism after having conquered the city. Rather, they had been aware of Hermes long before this era. The Sabaeans are an example of this. They were the inhabitants of the mythical kingdom of Sheba, which was supposed to be a place of earthly paradise. In ancient times it was also called Arabia Felix (Happy Arabia) and was said to be the land of the phoenix. The Bible states that the queen of this land, the queen of Sheba, visited King Solomon. The location of her land was not specified, but the Koran indicates that it was in southern Arabia (modern-day Yemen). Centuries later Christian Rosenkreuz visited the area so as to gather together the marvelous knowledge deposited there.

The Sabaeans were notable astrologers, and Maimonides indicated that this knowledge assumed a predominant role among them. Tradition claims that the magi who greeted Christ came from this legendary land. The Sabaeans possessed both the Hermetic alchemical writings and the Corpus Hermeticum. Being knowledgeable in such subjects, it is they who introduced science into Islam, although they themselves evolved on the fringes of this religion. The Sabaeans claimed to have originated with Hermes, to whom they dedicated a special cult. They produced some books whose contents, they claimed, had been revealed by Hermes, such as the *Risalat fi'n-nafs* (*Letter about the Soul*) and the *Liturgical Institutions of Hermes* by Thabit ibn Qurrah, an eminent figure of Sabaeism in Baghdad (c. 836-901).

## Idris-Hermes

The 7th century signaled the beginnings of Islam. Although the Koran did not make any reference to Hermes, the hagiographers of Islam's early centuries identified the prophet Idris, mentioned in the Koran, with Hermes and Enoch. This assimilation helped to link Islam with Greco-Egyptian traditions. In Islam, Idris-Hermes is described as both a prophet and an intemporal personage. He is sometimes compared to al-Khidr, the mysterious intermediary and sage who initiated Moses and who plays a fundamental role in Sufism as a manifestation of the personal guide.

Abu-Ma'shar, an 8th century Persian astrologer who became celebrated in Europe by the name of Albumazar, drew up an account tracing the

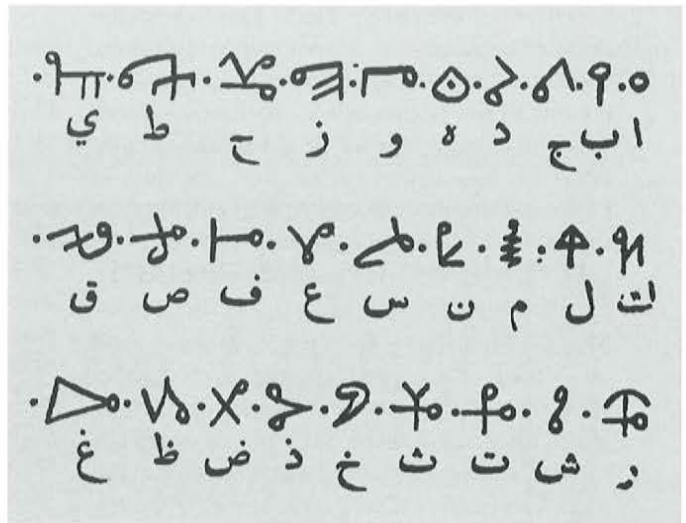
genealogy of Hermes. This text, which had immense influence in the Islamic world, distinguished three successive Hermes. The first, Hermes Major, lived before the Flood. Identified with Thoth, he is described as the civilizer of humanity, as he had the pyramids constructed and engraved the sacred hieroglyphs for future generations. The second Hermes lived in Babylonia after the Flood; he was a master of medicine, philosophy, and mathematics. He was also the initiator of Pythagoras. Finally, the third Hermes is described as having continued his predecessors' work of civilizing. As a master of occult knowledge, he transmitted alchemy to humanity.

## The Emerald Tablet

In the same era there appeared the Emerald Tablet, a text which gained considerable importance in the Tradition. This work is attributed to Apollonius of Tyana, a philosopher and thaumaturgist of the 1st century. The oldest known version, in Arabic, dates from the 6th century, and the text comes to us through the translation composed by Sagiyus, a Christian priest of Nablus. It appears in *The Secret Book of Creation* by Balinus (the Arabic translation of the name *Apollonius*). In this book, Apollonius relates how he discovered the tomb of Hermes. He claims to have found in this sepulcher an old man, seated on a throne, holding an emerald-colored tablet upon which appeared the text of the famed Emerald Tablet. Before him was a book explaining the secrets of the creation of beings and the knowledge of the causes for all things. This narrative would recur much later in the *Fama Fratemitatis*.

## Arab Alchemy

The role of the Arabs as transmitters of alchemy to the West in the Middle Ages is largely known. They also left us with a vocabulary distinctive to this art (*al kemia*, chemistry; *al tanur*, athanor, etc.) Yet Islam's role is not simply limited to that of transmission. As Pierre Lory emphasized in *Alchimie et Mystique en Terre d'Islam (Alchemy and Mysticism in the Islamic World)*, the Arabs conceptualized it in a form which, according to them, asserted itself everywhere. Their alchemy was not only an art of the laboratory, it was also meant to unveil the hidden laws of creation, and it comprised a mystic and philosophical dimension. Although Arab alchemy claimed to be of Egyptian



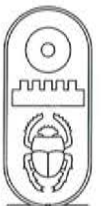
The alphabet of Hermes abu Thoth. Taken from *Knowledge of the Occult Alphabets Unveiled* by Ibn Wahshiya, in *La Magie arabe traditionnelle (Traditional Arabic Magic)*. Arabic alphabet seen below Hermetic alphabet.

origin, its practice occurred after the Arab conquest of Egypt in 639. They received Greek alchemy through the Syrians, but their first masters in this art were the Persians, who had inherited the Mesopotamian esoteric traditions.

The first known Arab alchemist, the Umayyad prince Khalid ibn Yazid (?-704), was initiated by Morienus, a Christian of Alexandria. Within a short time alchemy spread throughout the Islamic world and the Greek treatises were quickly translated. The most illustrious figure of Arab alchemy was Jabir ibn Hayyan (died c. 815), known in the Western world as Geber. He pushed forward the fundamental concepts of the Great Work. His reflections revealed spiritual alchemy on a grand scale. To him we owe numerous discoveries in alchemy. The Jabirian Corpus is said to contain more than 3,000 treatises, most of which are apocryphal. They were probably the work of a school which formed around his teachings. Arab alchemy had many masters, of whom we will mention only a few: abu-Bakr Muhammad ibn-Zakariya', called al-Razi or Rhazes (850-923); Muhammad ibn-Umail al-Tamimi (Zadith the Elder); ibn Umayl (10th century); abd Allah al-Jaldaki (14th century). Before long their texts penetrated Europe through Spain and profoundly affected the Latin West.

## Magic and Astrology

Magic also occupied a central aspect in Arab spirituality. Islam made use of magical letters, much like the Hebrew Qabalah, for piercing the Koran's secrets. Moreover, Arab magic, which Christian



Rosenkreuz informed us much later was rather impure, encompassed a wide range: astrology, medicine, talismans, etc. Astrology was ever-present in the Islamic world. Although suspect due to its pagan origins, it developed strongly from the 8th century, when the *Tetrabiblos* of Ptolemy was translated into Arabic. Astrology, in the era of al-Mansur, the second Abbassid caliph (754-775), was not only indebted to the Greeks, but also came under the influence of the Hindus, Syrian Christians, Judeo-Arameans, and undoubtedly the Essenes. In general, the various esoteric teachings played a fundamental role in Islam, particularly in the Shi'ite environment, as shown by Henri Corbin. It is easy to understand why Christian Rosenkreuz came to the Arab lands to gather together the essential elements from which he was to construct the Rosicrucian Order.

### Eastern Theosophy


Around the 9th century ibn-Wahshiya, in a treatise entitled *The Knowledge of the Occult Alphabets Unveiled*, presented many occult alphabets attributed to Hermes. He also made reference to the four classes of Egyptian priests descended from Hermes. Those who belonged to the third class—that is, the children of Hermes Trismegistus' sister—he called *Ishraqiyun* ("of the East"). Some years later, Sohrawardi (?-1191), one of the greatest Islamic mystics of Persia, revived the expression *Ishraqiyun* in the term "Eastern Theosophists," to describe the masters

who had experienced Illumination, and in his *Book of Oriental Wisdom* he described the chain of past initiates, the Eastern Theosophists. Philosophy and the mystical experience were inseparable in his mind, and for him this experience was tied to Hermes, whom he made the ancestor, the father of the Sages. These ecstatic philosophers, whom he called the "Pillars of Wisdom" were Plato, Empedocles, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Mohammed. What makes Sohrawardi particularly interesting is that, in contrast to the authors we have discussed until now, he did not seek to establish a historical human filiation between Hermes and the sages of the different traditions, but a celestial initiatic filiation based on inner experiences.

The heritage left by Hermes Trismegistus is manifold. Its treasures (alchemy, magic, and astrology) constitute essential elements of traditional esotericism and have traversed many civilizations. Nonetheless, the latter have always considered Egypt to be the Mother of all traditions. In the Middle Ages, this ancient heritage penetrated the West, and by the Renaissance it took on a new aspect by constituting what is generally called "Eastern Esotericism." It then developed in a special way so as to reach a critical threshold on the wake of the publication of the Rosicrucian manifestos. We will touch upon these themes in "Philosophia Perennis," our next article in this series discussing the history of the Rosicrucian Order. Δ

—Reprinted from *Rose+Croix magazine*

A M O R G



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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.



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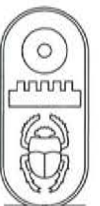
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*The Rosicrucian World Convention in Copenhagen 1984 is still a cherished memory for those who attended (left). Now the Nordic Grand Lodge (middle) once again hosts a World convention in Göteborg August 2nd – 5th 2001 (right).*





Since thousands of our readers have not read many of the earlier articles of Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, first Emperor (1915-1939) of the present Rosicrucian cycle, we occasionally reprint one of his outstanding articles so that his thoughts will continue to be represented within the pages of this publication.

# ROSICRUCIAN HEALING

by Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, F.R.C.

THE EARLY ROSICRUCIANS who took it upon themselves to do healing work in a humanitarian spirit, and as one of the necessary reformations to take place in the world, came to the conclusion, through earlier experiments, that there was some secret involved in connection with the vital force of life in the human body, and all animal and plant bodies, that was still unknown.

The earliest Rosicrucians did not interest themselves particularly in the rapidly evolving school of "medicine" then holding the world's attention, since such school was merely a step beyond that of biology with which they had long been familiar. By correctly understanding the first principle of Rosicrucian ontology which says, "God formed man out of the dust of the earth and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul," you will understand that the Rosicrucians viewed the physical body as merely a secondary part of a human being, created from the primary elements of the earth, and not so essential to our existence as the "breath of life."

The argument is and has been that the scriptural statement, as well as all mystical statements of other periods of time before the so-called Christian Bible was written, refers to the fact that after the breath of life entered the physical form made out of the elements of earth, the human being became a *living soul* instead of a living body, and that the emphasis is given to the divine or ethereal or psychical part of the human being and not to the material.

So the Rosicrucians argued that whatever might become wrong in the normal functioning and condition of the human body should not be

surveyed from the material angle alone, but from both viewpoints. And if any emphasis were to be given, it should be to the so-called *breath of life*, or the Vital Life Force. For this reason, botany and all biological principles were studied carefully in their relationship to the chemical, physical, and material composition of human life, and all of the early Rosicrucians were quite expert in the preparation and administration of so-called herbal extracts which later evolved into forms of "medicine" and "drugs."

It is strange but true that the more primitive or fundamental a person's thinking, the more that person gives emphasis to the biological side of his or her nature, assigning a secondary place to the spiritual part of his or her being. For that reason, we find that even the earliest American Indians—who most certainly did not have either the Christian Bible or other textbooks of science or religion—became very expert in the cultivation of herbs and in the study of botany, not for the preparation of "medicines" but for the preparation of such extracts as would give them the necessary or missing mineral and earthly elements and fluids to make their physical bodies normal, so that their physical bodies could then hold and maintain the spiritual part of their bodies.

Medicine men among the American Indian tribes—as was the case with shamans, high priests, and priest-magicians among most indigenous peoples throughout the world—practiced an art of therapeutics that involved or applied more of mystical principles and intangible ethereal powers than it did herbal extracts. They knew that the real secret key to health, and therefore to disease also, lay in this power that was so intangible that it could not be administered through

minerals or extracted juices or anything of an earthly nature.

The presumption among all of these early thinkers was that if humans would eat and drink properly, their physical bodies would meet all the regular merits of the physical and divine laws. They argued, as we Rosicrucians argue today, that disease and ill health do not start in the physical body unless the individual has neglected the proper diet or has deliberately taken into his or her system such material elements as are poisonous or inharmonious.

Everyone who has made a careful study of the matter knows that the body in its physical composition, or let us say in its chemical, biological, and physiological composition, has to be neglected and badly treated for a considerable length of time before any real disease begins to manifest. But the greater and more frequent cause of ill health and disease is the neglect or mistreatment of the essential spiritual or *vital forces* in the body, which represent the other part of human beings—the intangible, esoteric, ethereal part that is so little understood. Such neglect need exist only for a few hours or a day to produce long-standing chronic conditions or illnesses and diseases that may take years to correct and may eventually lead to an early and unnecessary transition.

## The Cosmic Key

But what is this secret power or energy that so vitalizes the entire body and is more important than the material part of the human body? It is the *vibratory energy* that is referred to in our earliest monographs by various names and which constitutes the real key to the healing processes in the Rosicrucian system.

While scientists have sought to discover serums and have recommended one form of serum or another for this or that condition and while others have tried to find salts and herbal extracts that would counteract or create various conditions in the body that would be of a healing nature, the Rosicrucians soon found that instead of these medicines or drugs acting upon the physical body, the physical body acted upon them inasmuch as the physical body had to expel these things immediately because they were abnormal, foreign matter taken into the body and not required by nature's healing processes. Therefore, whatever action and reaction took place from the use of medicines or drugs was the reverse of what these scientists thought it would be, for instead of the drugs acting upon the body, the body had to act upon the drugs and expel them. In the meantime,

a warfare or battle was set up in which the natural healing forces of the body attempted, and very often succeeded, in making the necessary cure.

## White Cell, the Purifier

The fact is that when the vital powers or divine cosmic powers within our bodies and within normal range are functioning to the proper extent, there is no necessity for herbal extracts, medicines, drugs, or any of the remedial things that are limited strictly to the material composition of our bodies.

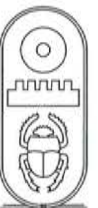
While we speak of the white corpuscles or cells in the blood stream that fight and destroy bacilli or germs of various kinds, the truth is that it is not chemistry or the earthly matter that we eat or drink that creates and builds up the so-called white cells to carry on their work of purging, expurging, extirpating, or cleansing the body of undesirable and abnormal conditions. It is the vital force in the human body, taken in through the breath and otherwise, that creates these white cells and *maintains their integrity*.

These white cells have to do more than the ordinary red blood cells which merely nourish and take a certain amount of energy through the capillaries to all parts of the body. They have to maintain their own integrity and existence, as well as a consciousness and condition typical of an individual living body, inasmuch as they must be able to function as independent living bodies. In addition to this, they must be able to analyze definitely all that they come in contact with, and decide what is destructive, dangerous or unnecessary, and should be destroyed. These white cells then get rid of the remaining refuse. All of this requires a Divine Intelligence not possessed by all of the cells of the body.

## Applying the Current

But, nevertheless, the energy that is functioning in these white cells and in the red blood cells and in every other cell of bone and tissue of the body is a divine cosmic energy that the Rosicrucians know how to apply and how to introduce into the body.

In the first place, in the *normal healthy body* such additional vibratory vital cosmic and divine energy is not needed. It is there in abundance, in reserve, and in constant use and application. When you realize that each hour of the day, whether we are awake or asleep, laboring, exercising, working or resting, thousands of cells throughout our body are breaking down, disintegrating, and being cast into the refuse, and that



an equivalent number must be rebuilt to take their place, you will see that the human body is a vast chemical machine creating and recreating new matter from what we eat and drink, and that there is an intelligence directing this chemistry that is not very well understood by the average person.

Scientists may talk about metabolism and the testing of your metabolism to see whether what you eat and drink and the manner in which you breathe are assisting in the chemistry of your body. They may speak of blood counts, respiration, pulse beats, and so on. But that is nothing more than testing a piece of machinery to see that it is operating correctly without testing to find out about the electrical current that is coursing through the machine to make it operate.

This electrical current, to use a simile, is a divine current that the Rosicrucians alone have discovered, and to them it is just as vital and important as was Faraday's discovery of the magnetic field or Galileo's discovery of a larger world of which the Earth was not the sole center.

And so in the Rosicrucian healing methods, even if applied cosmically from a distance, this vital energy that is lacking becomes strengthened and increased, and applied most directly to where it is needed. Just as the early Frates and the Knights Templars established places in the mountains for lost travelers and called these *hospices*—from which our word *hospital* comes—so the early Rosicrucians and mystics established laboratories and clinics or sanitariums, where those suffering from chronic or long-standing or complicated conditions could be examined, diagnosed, and given treatment.

The principal form of treatment in such cases is the *raising of the vibratory rate of the entire*

*body*. This means to instill into the human body an additional amount of this divine cosmic vibratory energy so that all of the cells become functioning units in a normal harmonious manner in the direction of *creation* rather than in the creation of *destruction*, and this is not done by the use of electric or "electronic machines."

It is a known fact, and easily discernible under the microscope, that after a living cell taken from any part of the body becomes lowered in its vitality or *rate of vibration*, it begins to die. It seems to destroy itself by reducing itself to the most fundamental, elementary elements of the earth's dust. In the absence of the right vibratory rate or the proper divine energy, it ceases to carry on its constructive mission and therefore, ceases to continue upbuilding and retrogresses. So, the Rosicrucians apply directly to the sick body not only chemical elements that may be absent in the diet and which are readily corrected, but that vital energy and rate of vibrations that cannot be applied with medicines. This represents the "cosmic key" of the Rosicrucian secret healing methods.

This vibratory energy can also be directed toward a patient by absent treatment. This is done regularly throughout the year by the members and workers of our Council of Solace.

The cause of all disease in the vibratory nature of the psychic body must be remedied before any permanent cure can be established. The "golden key" to Rosicrucian therapeutic treatment is to change the rate of *vibratory energy functioning through the physical body*. It then becomes what was first decreed by God when He breathed into man's nostrils "the breath of life and man became a living soul." Δ



Rosicrucian  
Digest  
No. 1  
2000

This booklet of 12 essays presents the Rosicrucian view of mastering health without the use of drugs, including holistic concepts, acquiring a positive outlook, dealing with depression, the value of moderation and common sense, overcoming fear and anxiety, metaphysical principles in psychotherapy, and more. Prepared under the auspices of AMORC's International Research Council, the authors of this booklet are doctors, psychiatrists, biologists, chemists, etc. Being Rosicrucians, their approach is fundamentally spiritual and thus contributes to the evolution of all categories of consciousness. Vital reading for the healthy Rosicrucian!

Item #501370

Price \$4.75

Farnese Astral Globe, circa 150 A.D., shows bowless, crescent-shaped Argo constellation which was likely called "MAGUR" in ancient Mesopotamia.

# New Research on Noah's Ark

by Bruce D. Hutchison, M.A., F.R.C.  
and Melissa Farncomb, A.B.D., M.A.



## *Were devastating Mesopotamian floods the origin of the Noah's Ark story?*

**I**T WAS SPRINGTIME in ancient Mesopotamia. Rains fell as farmers planted grain seeds in the rich soils along the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. As the farmers worked the soil, the rivers began to rise, slowly at first, fed by the rain and melting snow in the mountains to the north. Suddenly, torrents of water spilled over the riverbanks, washing away the carefully prepared croplands of the ancient Sumerian civilization.

For ancient Mesopotamia, in what is today the nation of Iraq, timing was everything. Unlike the predictable annual flooding of the Nile that brought renewal each fall following the Egyptian harvest, the intermittent springtime flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates could, and often did bring disaster to Mesopotamia's freshly planted breadbasket regions.

The disastrous floods that periodically inundated the ancient Mesopotamian world are the

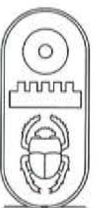
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*Bruce Hutchison and Melissa Farncomb are anthropologists. They produce and co-host the new nationally syndicated public radio program "The Big Picture with Bruce & Melissa." Bruce and Melissa announced the new research into Noah's Ark on their program in January, and were featured on ABC's "Good Morning America" program.*

focus of new research suggesting that the ancient biblical flood story of Noah's Ark actually originated from even more ancient stories of devastating regional floods along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

The evidence for this claim is striking. Anthropologist John McHugh of Utah says that to find Noah's Ark, all you have to do is look skyward. The evidence, McHugh says, is in the constellations, as seen by the ancient Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian peoples. The Sumerians of Mesopotamia did not have a written language. Instead, they passed down their stories orally and linked them to constellations in a manner similar to that of later civilizations in Greece and Rome. McHugh says the Sumerians' stories of devastating springtime floods were associated with the constellations we now call Aquarius, Orion, and Argo.

The classical constellation Argo, McHugh adds, fits the description of the Mesopotamian constellation MAGUR, which in ancient Mesopotamia depicted a type of crescent-shaped cargo boat used on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The crescent-shaped MAGUR boat is depicted on an ancient Sumerian tablet discovered by archaeologists that shows the vessel above what appears to be waves.





MAGUR boat image from an ancient Mesopotamian tablet. This is the original flood boat dating to 2000 B.C.

The earliest artistic depictions are of an ark of the MAGUR type: crescent shaped and without a bow. Around 700 B.C., however, ancient ark depictions changed from crescent shaped to square shaped. This is particularly interesting for two reasons: 1) Dr. Paul Johnston, Curator of Maritime History at the Smithsonian Institution, says actual descriptions of large barge-like vessels did not exist until the fourth century B.C., at the beginning of the Hellenistic Period; and, 2) the constellation Argo began to dip below the horizon around 700 B.C. as a result of Earth wobbling as it spins.

McHugh says as Earth wobbled and Argo began dipping below the horizon, the Babylonians, who adopted the flood story from the Sumerians, needed to pick a substitute constellation in order to continue telling the story of the deluge. The constellation of choice, according to McHugh, was Pegasus—a square-shaped constellation, shaped like the ark in artistic renditions from that period.

McHugh and other researchers believe the Babylonian version of the flood story was eventually adopted and adapted by the ancient Hebrews, who had significant cultural contact with Mesopotamian culture. The final result, according to McHugh, is the familiar story of Noah's Ark found in the Old Testament—written an estimated 500 years before the birth of Christ.

### No Flood Myth in Egypt

McHugh says it has been assumed in the past that the Hebrew name for Noah's Ark, *t-b-t* originated in Egypt. However, Egypt did not produce a flood story, and McHugh says the ancient Egyptian language did not use *t-b-t* as a word for boat. The Hebrew *t-b-t*, McHugh says, can be directly traced to the ancient Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations that celebrated the festival

of MA.AN.NA—which translates as “The Boat of the Skies.” This festival was celebrated in the tenth month of the year, known as Tebetu. Ancient Hebrew did not use vowels, so Tebetu becomes *t-b-t*.

According to McHugh, the adaptation of the flood story and the use of the Hebrew *t-b-t* likely occurred during the period when the Israelites were under Assyrian and Babylonian subjugation—from the second half of the 8th century B.C. to about 539 B.C. Most of us know the biblical story of the great flood: God instructs Noah to prepare for a world-cleansing deluge by constructing an ark 30 cubits high by 50 cubits wide and 300 cubits long. Noah is instructed to fill the ark with seven pairs of all beasts that are ritually clean, and one pair that is not clean. The rain begins and continues for forty days and forty nights, covering the earth and destroying all life, save Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark.

Since the latter half of the 19th century, researchers have discovered three Mesopotamian versions of a flood story that predate the biblical story. The stories were written in *cuneiform*—wedge-shaped characters on ancient clay tablets. These versions share similarities with the biblical account: all have animals placed onto an ark or boat, followed by a global flood, the sending forth of birds to determine if the flood waters have receded, and finally, the landing of the ark on a mountain.

### Worldwide Flood Myths Common to Many Cultures

There also are differences between the Old Testament flood story and the three earlier Mesopotamian versions. One story, written no later than 1700 B.C., deals with a pantheon of gods who are divided into two categories: ruling gods and working gods. The working gods were made to dig the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Eventually, the working gods rebel and create human beings to do the work for them. The humans work out well for a while, but as they begin to multiply they become noisier and noisier, keeping the gods awake at night. In frustration, the gods attempt to destroy humanity, first with plague, then with draught and famine, and finally with a flood. In the end, one god regrets the decision and warns a particular human being to build a boat and place his family into it, so they might be saved from the rising waters.

Anthropologists have discovered that worldwide flood myths are actually very common in many modern American, European, and Asian

cultures. The traditional flood epic can be found in India, the Middle East, Australia, Mesoamerica, among Native American groups, among some populations in Africa, in China, and in Thailand—where the story begins with a hungry boy hunting for a bamboo rat. As he digs down into the rat's burrow, the rat tells the boy to go home and build a drum, like a barrel, and hide inside it until the water from an oncoming flood subsides. The boy builds the drum, and takes refuge in it along with his sister, a pig, and a dog.

After a time, the deluge comes, the world floods, and the drum floats for days and days. Eventually, the waters recede, the drum settles on dry ground, and a bird advises the boy and his sister to marry each other. After three years, the girl gives birth to a bottle gourd, which contains representatives of all the peoples of the known world, including Indians, Chinese, and people of all races.

Not all cultures, past or present, have produced epic flood stories. The fact that flooding along the Nile was seen as beneficial in ancient times might explain why ancient Egypt, for example, never produced its own global deluge story.

A recent Gallup poll found that news about Noah's Ark ranks third among issues that Americans want to hear more about. For many Americans, Noah's Ark is the story of an individual working for a higher cause and surviving all tests.

For Rosicrucians, flood stories also offer significant mystical symbolism. In the Noah's Ark story, the rain pours down forty days and forty

nights. We find the number 40 mentioned in other significant writings, such as the forty days Jesus fasted in the wilderness, and the forty year periods tradition says Moses lived in the Egyptian court and wandered in the wilderness. Another mystical symbol found in flood stories across time and cultures is the use of water as a purifying agent, sweeping away all that is impure.

As individuals, we might assert that the Noah's Ark story is based either on fact or on metaphor. Whatever the case, the images embedded in flood stories across many different cultures can provide us with meaningful mystical symbols as well as inspiring examples of human behavior. Δ

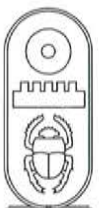
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## In Memoriam

James R. Whitcomb, F.R.C.

On Saturday, March 18, 2000, Frater James R. Whitcomb, former AMORC Grand Secretary, passed through transition and experienced the Great Initiation. He was 92 years of age. A Rosicrucian since 1933, Frater Whitcomb began his employment with the Rosicrucian Order in the 1930s. Among his various duties, he served in the Department of Instruction and also assisted Dr. H. Spencer Lewis in construction of scientific equipment used in AMORC mystical/alchemical demonstrations. In 1939 Frater Whitcomb was appointed AMORC Grand Treasurer. He was later appointed Grand Secretary in 1966, from which position he retired in 1972. Following retirement he served as T.M.O. Administrator for several years. Throughout the years Frater Whitcomb accompanied Ralph M. Lewis on worldwide journeys to produce AMORC films. Through his work for the Order, Frater Whitcomb was known to Rosicrucians throughout the world.





*At her 100th birthday celebration, Dr. Caspary is presented with the Montessori Pink Tower Lesson in lucite blocks.*

# MONTESSORI PIONEER DR. ELISABETH CASPARY TURNS 100

*Born in the 19th century, Dr. Caspary still looks ahead in the 21st century!*

by Uri Dowbenko

**“YOU WERE A** Montessorian before we met,” Dr. Caspary recalls Maria Montessori telling her in 1939. It’s a compliment which underscores her longstanding commitment to childhood education.

Born Elisabeth Getaz on September 5, 1899, in Château d’Oex (pronounced “day”), a mountain village in Switzerland, Dr. Elisabeth Caspary now resides in Emigrant, Montana. She is the oldest Montessori teacher in the world and one of the last living students of Maria Montessori herself.

Having earned a Doctorate in Music and Pedagogy, Dr. Caspary established her own flourishing school of music in Switzerland. Married to Charles Caspary, an engineer, in 1930, she continued her spiritual pursuits through their mutual interest in comparative religion.

## Adventures in Tibet in the 1930s

At the invitation of Mrs. Clarence Gasque, the Casparis left Switzerland for a tour of the Himalayas in December 1938—just before the start of World War II. They planned a trip to Tibet with stops in India and Kashmir, proposing to study Buddhism and make a pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, the most sacred Tibetan mountain.

Their adventure continued as they traveled through the Himalayas by a caravan which included twelve servants, 112 ponies, plus guides and drivers. After their stop in Leh, which, at 11,500 feet, is one of the highest cities in the world, they continued traveling through a desert plateau on the way to Himis.

Later at a Tibetan monastery reception, a librarian and two monks approached their party. They were carrying Buddhist books made of sheets of parchment sandwiched between two pieces of wood and wrapped in brocade. The Europeans were astonished when the monk unwrapped one of the books and presented it to Mrs. Gasque saying, “These books say your Jesus was here.”

This reference to the so-called “Lost Years of Jesus”—when Jesus had evidently traveled to the Far East, including India and Tibet—stunned Madame Caspary. She recalled a childhood bible verse which indicated that if all that Jesus ever did was written down, there would not be enough books in the world to contain it.

The women examined the parchment—even holding the rare manuscripts in their own hands.

Could it be true? Dr. Caspary wonders to this day about the meaning of that encounter. Christ in Tibet two thousand years ago? Dr. Caspary believes that the lama had no ulterior motive in presenting them with the manuscripts—only a sense of spiritual kinship with souls who had come so far to study the path of the Buddha.

After their tour leader, Mrs. Gasque, took the last plane to Europe, the Casparis found themselves stranded in India. War had come, but they were not imprisoned in internment camps. They had found a home and jobs in a mission school nearby.

During that time, Dr. Caspary met Maria Montessori, the famous child education expert,



and worked closely with her for four years. It was a life-changing experience. Dr. Caspari had rededicated her life to what she calls the Montessori message.

## Remembering Montessori

Still in awe of her legendary teacher, Dr. Caspari recalls in a recent interview that "Montessori herself had a degree in medicine. Then she got a degree in psychology, so she understood the mind. Then she got a degree in philosophy. And then she got a degree in anthropology, so she had a very scientific background."

Dr. Maria Montessori herself was the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree from the University of Rome. Initially she taught brain-injured or handicapped children. She did so well in fact, that they were able to score as well as so-called "normal" children in exams.

Then Dr. Montessori's techniques evolved into an entire educational system to help children learn how to learn by themselves. Specially designed teaching materials are now used to develop a child's practical living skills, language and math skills, motor skills, as well as increasing self-awareness and confidence.

"The little babies in the cribs will become the men and women of tomorrow who will change the world," Montessori told me," says Dr. Caspari. Then she asks rhetorically, "What can we do to help? Montessori said what I am bringing is help to Life."

She also recalls that Montessori "didn't like the word *method*" as in "Montessori method." "It works because it is a principle of education, not a method," she often explained.

"Why does it work? It will work tomorrow because it is based on a principle not a theory. And principles are eternal," Dr. Caspari continues. "She [Montessori] didn't bring theories. She brought principles. They always work—with the poorest children of India and the richest children in New York."

Still the ardent promoter, Dr. Caspari says "our children read before they go to first grade. Montessori said the right age [for optimal teaching] is from four to six. Because when they try to teach reading later, they [the children] don't have the enthusiasm."

Always thinking of the future, Dr. Caspari says "Our time is come. It's wanted everywhere. I have three cities in Australia that want me to

teach them how to give courses, and two in India which train doctors in healing that want to teach child education."

## Celebrating Her 100th Year

Dr. Caspari's birthday party, held in Bozeman, Montana's Baxter Hotel ballroom, was a celebration of her life. Many notable educators from around the country came to honor Dr. Caspari with reminiscences of her far-reaching work. These included Bill and Beverly McGee, Alexander Montessori School, Miami, Florida; Dr. Feland Meadows, President, Pan-American Montessori Society; Patty Tepper-Rasmussen, President of the Montessori Society; Mary Ellen Maunz, Montessori International; and Anita Wolberd, Montessori Garden School, Emigrant, Montana, and co-founder, Caspari Montessori Institute.

Janet Nielsen of Minneapolis recalled how her mother and Dr. Caspari had started the Wee Wisdom Montessori School in Unity Village, Missouri. Ms. Nielsen remembers it as "a small, but wonderful place, alive with peace and understanding. Her [Dr. Caspari's] classroom was always a place of joy."

"We see how she leaves her signature on our lives," she says. "Dr. Caspari is a jewel without price."

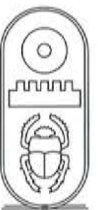
Montessori educator Jim McGee recalled how he and his wife had asked Dr. Caspari to conduct a teacher training course at the Alexander School in Florida. The first time he heard her lecture, he says, "I was really awed and impressed."

"The crowd was very educated and sophisticated," McGee continued. "When Elisabeth delivered a lecture, she produced true believers."

He called the Casparis "Montessori apostles"—not Montessori gypsies—they were known for their constant travel, conducting Montessori teacher training courses throughout North America.

Dr. Meadows himself started a Montessori school in Mexico for his own children in 1970. Then in 1972, he traveled to Palo Alto, California, for a conference called "Cosmic Education," where he met Dr. Caspari and invited her to Mexico to train more teachers. Persistent in his pursuit, he asked the Casparis if they could come in February, then June, then at Christmas.

Dr. Caspari was working in Florida at the time. She rebuffed him saying, "I'm not a bird on a branch." Finally relenting, the Casparis arrived in Mexico City in 1973—their car trunk full of Montessori materials.



"I see you do the real thing here," Meadows recalls her saying after she walked in to his Montessori classroom.

Both Casparis worked as a team, training Montessori teachers wherever they went. Charles was a qualified engineer and linguist, yet he would say, "My profession was getting in the way of my vocation."

Caspari-Montessori Institute co-founder Anita Wolberd also speaks of the future. She is promoting a Montessori teacher training program as a job training alternative for young mothers. By teaching their own children in a Montessori school setting, the women can become professional Montessori teachers, staying with their children while they work.

### The Caspari Legacy

Today Dr. Caspari is still thinking ahead. She says, "We want to build a center here [in Montana] the Montessori Center of Paradise Valley. And the world will come. It's going to bring a lot of people."

In her life so far, Dr. Caspari has trained hundreds of Montessori teachers in California, Kansas, Missouri, Florida, South Carolina, Montana, and Mexico.

"Montessori said we have to go higher to the Spirit. That's the whole secret of her work," says Dr. Caspari, who radiates peace, but is still reluctant to rest on her laurels.

Mentally sharp and still acutely aware of current world events, she says, "That was her secret. She was very humble, in spite of her degrees. She gave credit to the highest, in other words, to God."

A deeply spiritual person, herself, Dr. Caspari is a real-life visionary whose grasp has not exceeded her life. As an inspiration to many generations, she is still teaching French and music at age 100. Δ

(Dr. Caspari can be reached at P.O. Box 933, Emigrant, MT 59027 or by e-mail at [ecaspari@prodigy.net](mailto:ecaspari@prodigy.net))

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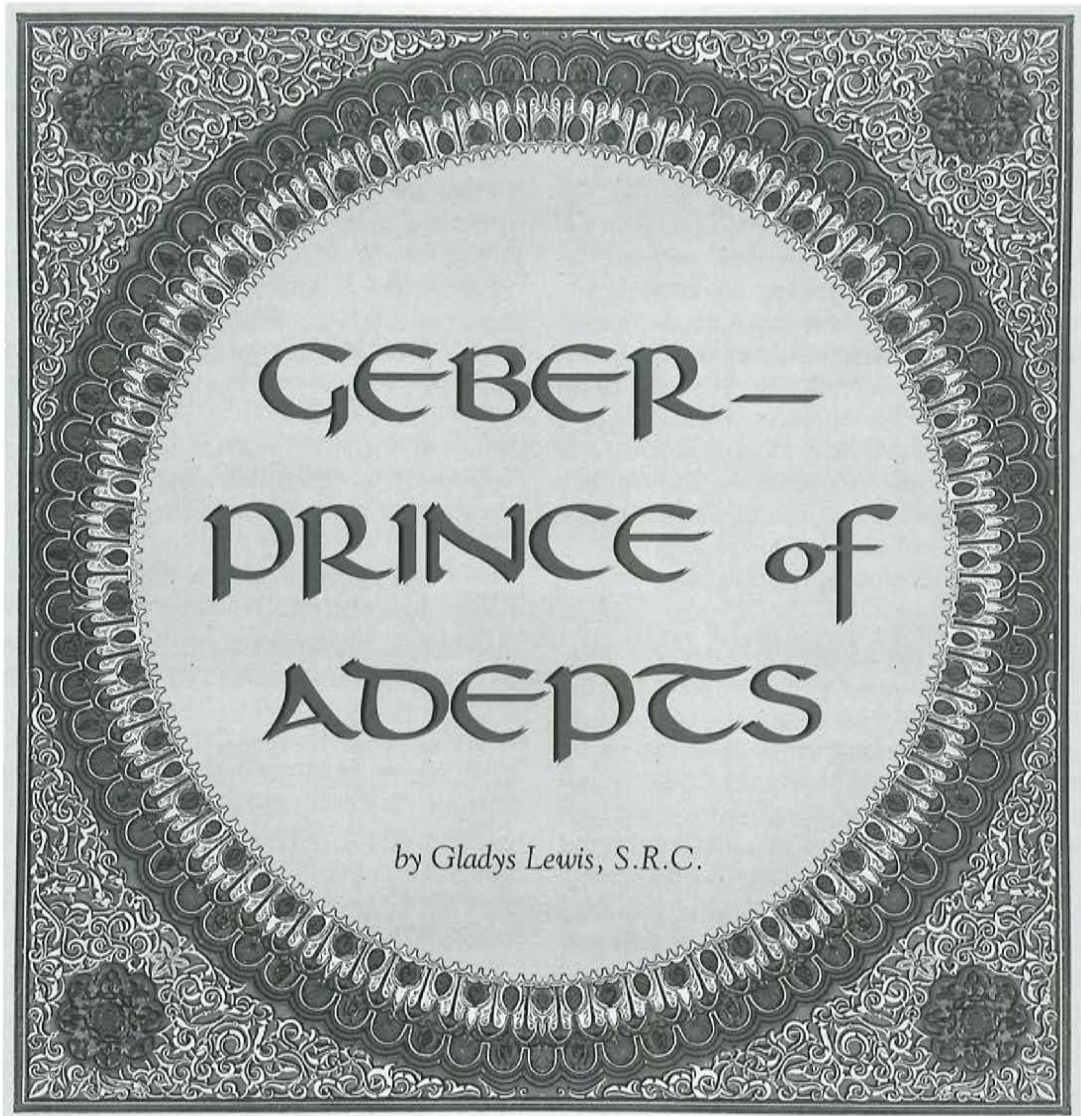


### More Evidence that Jesus Lived in India . . .

In the East the idea that Jesus traveled throughout—and even lived in—India and adjacent areas of Asia has been around for centuries. In his book, *Glimpses of World History*, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian statesman and the first Prime Minister of India, wrote: "All over Central Asia, in Kashmir, Ladakh, and even Tibet and even farther north, is still a strong belief that Jesus or Isa traveled there. There is nothing improbable in his having done so."

In the *Illustrated Weekly of India* (July 7, 1974) the following caption underscored a photograph of an ancient temple at Srinagar: "THE TOMB OF JESUS."

Many years ago Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani—the Punjabi "prophet"—declared that Christ was not crucified and resurrected as most Christians believe, nor did he ascend to the heavens where he is still alive, as believed by the Muslims. Qadiani supported his claim with research into old texts and his own interpretation of the Koran. He tried to prove that Christ escaped crucifixion and came to Kashmir, where he died at the age of 120.



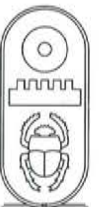
**A** GAINST a splendorous and magnificent backdrop of the *Thousand and One Nights* and the court of 8th-century Abbassid Caliph Harun al Raschid, moves the figure of an Arabian alchemist—Geber. The very sound of his name was to become as magic to students for centuries to come.

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*For over fifty years Soror Gladys Lewis (1903-1978) was married to Ralph M. Lewis and worked beside the Imperator to further the Great Work of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC. One of Soror Lewis' deep and abiding interests was the subject of alchemy. She wrote this article about the Arab Alchemist, Geber, many years ago for the Rosicrucian Digest. We are republishing this article because of renewed interest in the Arabs and their contributions to today's civilization.*

Up to modern times, fantastic tales have clouded the true identity and background of Geber, but time has sifted the true from the false, and it has been established recently through much research that Geber actually lived and practiced through the greater part of the 8th century, and that he rode in on the crest of the wave of culture that Harun al Raschid encouraged. At this period, perhaps the last half of the 8th century, wise men, students, philosophers, poets, and musicians all were welcome at the seat of the caliphate at Baghdad.

Geber, known as *Jabir* in the Arabian, was the son of the druggist Hayyan, and though Hayyan did not live long enough to guide his brilliant young son, he left the boy in very capable hands. The young Geber was educated in the finest style of the period: that is, he studied all branches of learning. Alchemy he learned from



Ja 'far al-Sadiq, a great religious leader of the Shiites. With Ja 'far al-Sadiq he studied mysticism and other occult subjects relating to alchemy so that when he came to the court at Baghdad he was a master of the art he was to follow during his entire lifetime.

Under the patronage of the Caliph's powerful ministers, the Barmicides, Geber was given the *carte blanche* for his experiments. Laboratories, equipment, helpers, and anything else he needed was his for the asking and Geber made the most of this opulent period in his life. It is well that he did because the Barmicides and others fell into disfavor with Harun in later years and only a few escaped with their lives, among whom was Geber. He found protection in the town of Kufa from whence his father came, and he lived there in seclusion continuing his alchemical experiments until his death.

Geber was worshiped by his successors. They called him "the greatest chemist of Islam," "the Prince of Adepts." "He is the oracle of mediaeval chemists" says Hoefer. "Geber for the history of chemistry is what Hippocrates is for the history of medicine." But to the student of alchemy he is more than that: he is a symbol of the passage of Hermetic knowledge to the Western World. The path of this knowledge took a long and circuitous route by way of the great cities of Baghdad, Damascus, Toledo, Cordoba, and finally Northern Europe, but the true beginning took place with Geber at Baghdad.

There was a lively exchange of knowledge and ideas, as well as material gifts, between East and West at that time because of Charlemagne's great conquests and his wary and diplomatic dealings with the Islamic leaders. Hermetic knowledge and the art of alchemy had started its journey to the West.

### "The First Chemist of Islam"

Now why was Geber called "the Prince of Adepts" and the "first chemist of Islam"? He became the first chemist of Islam because in his pursuit of the art of alchemy he insisted upon experiment and more experiment. In his works he gave detailed instructions on how to build equipment and the amount of chemicals to be used. Also, the method was clearly set forth, together with the results to be expected. Geber, in his writings, reveals himself to be a man of an open mind and a generous heart. "This is a figure of the Athanor," writes Geber in his instructions on how to build an Athanor. "Yet if anyone can more ingeniously invent the like, let not our

invention retard him from so doing." This is a true mark of a master, to encourage his pupils to excel the teacher.

The student finds many controversial remarks concerning the authenticity of Geber's writings. His opinion is swayed from one side to another until clear thought often is hopeless when it comes to fine points of distinction. However, an encouraging ray of light comes from E.J. Holmyard of the new Science School, Clifton College, Bristol, England, and we quote directly his simple and telling words: "The authenticity of the books under consideration [the writer is referring mainly to the books comprising the *Sum of Perfection*] is therefore still uncertain. It is possible that they are genuine translations from Arabic books of Jabir; or that they are genuine translations from Arabic books of other chemists; or that they are summaries made in Mediaeval Europe of Jabir's Arabic books; or that they are Mediaeval European forgeries made by an unknown author and merely fathered upon Jabir in order to ensure favourable reception. Whatever the future may disclose concerning them, we may safely say that they are not unworthy of Jabir and that he is worthy of them; and that we know of no other chemist, Muslim or Christian, who could for one moment be imagined to have written them."

### The Four Qualities

First it will be necessary to review what is generally known as Aristotle's theory of the four elements or simple bodies. The idea goes back to antiquity—to India and Egypt, but it is evident that Aristotle gave more life and meaning to the theory. Simply, the Aristotelian theory is this: There exists four qualities, and they are hot and moist with their opposites cold and dry. These four qualities combine in a very logical manner to form earth, air, fire, and water.

The various forms of all matter were composed of certain proportions of these four elements, and one form could be changed into another by altering the proportions of the elements. Furthermore, Aristotle extended his theory and stated that fire and earth combined to make an earthy smoke which condensed and gave form to refractory stones and minerals; and air and water combined to make a watery vapor which condensed and gave form to fusible metals.

At this point, Geber comes forth with his addition to the theories of Aristotle. Through his practical experience, he knew that Aristotle's theory was a little too indefinite to be of use to

the chemist or alchemist, so he made additions and alterations, and this modified theory was accepted up to the time of modern chemistry—that is, the 18th century.

## The Perfect Metal

The theory is this: The watery vapor (a combination of air and water) was converted into mercury, and the smoky vapor (a combination of fire and earth) was converted into sulphur. These two elements, sulphur and mercury, then combined in varying proportions to form the metals and minerals. Geber said that if the mercury and sulphur were of absolute purity and if they combined in perfect proportion, the result would be the perfect metal—gold. If the mercury and sulphur were not pure and the proportions varying from the perfect, the combination would result in silver, lead, or any other metal.

Logically thinking, Geber states that if the impurities and defects were removed from these other metals, gold would result because, basically, all metals are composed alike. However, through his experiments Geber discovered that the ordinary mercury and sulphur as we know them were not the same as the basic or alchemical mercury and sulphur present in all metals and minerals; but that these two minerals resembled the basic elements more closely than any other minerals.

With Geber's theory clearly fixed in our minds, we must examine his wonderful instruction on chemical processes and equipment, and lastly and most importantly we shall examine Geber, the alchemist and the keeper of the secrets of Hermes.

Geber places great importance upon the cleansing and preparation of metals and minerals, and gives explicit instructions for these processes. This must be completely understood and accomplished perfectly before any further work is done. Then, before going on with the description of the various metallic bodies and their properties, he lists in great detail the impediments that hinder the artist and the reasons why he meets with failure instead of the longed-for success. "The impediments incident to this work are generally two, viz: Natural Impotency and defect of necessary expense, or occupations and labours."

Natural impotency embraces both the physical and spiritual qualities of man. Physical defects hinder very seriously and also included are defects in our character, our mental make-up, educational training, and general personality. To quote: "There are also, besides these, others who have a soul moveable, from opinion to opinions,

and from will to wills; as those, who suddenly believe a thing, and will the same, without any ground at all of reason; but a little after that, another thing: and do likewise believe another, and will another. And these are so changeable that they can scarcely accomplish the least of that they intend; but rather leave it defective."

The second impediment embraces "a defect of necessary expense, or occupation and labours." Many brilliant and ingenious men have failed because of poverty or the material cares of this world. These are the unfortunate creatures "from whom this our precious science withdraws herself" to quote the beautiful lines from the *Sum of Perfection*. Geber's discourse and warnings concerning impediments refer to transcendental alchemy. In other words, the artist in some measure must try to reflect the perfection he hopes to find.

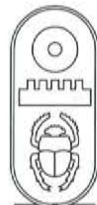
## The Alchemical Artist

The artist now is ready to go on with his study and experiments concerning metals. He is taught calcination, sublimation, descension, distillation, etc., and the reasons for so doing are given. He is taught how to make his own furnaces, and the instructions and illustrations are so complete and clear that anyone of average intelligence could follow them with success. The following instructions have been copied from Geber's *Book of Furnaces, Of the Calcinary Furnace*.

"Let the calcinary furnace be made square, in length four foot, and three foot in breadth, and let the thickness of the walls be half a foot; after this manner: Luna, Venus, Mars, or other things to be calcined, must be put into dishes or pans of most strong clay, such as of which crucibles are made, that they may persist in the asperity of fire, even to the total combustion of the thing to be calcined. Calcination is the treasure of a thing; be not you weary of calcination; but study what we have said in our volumes. For imperfect bodies are cleansed by calcination, and by reduction of the calcinate into a solid body, or mass. Then is our medicine projected upon them, and cause given to you of joy."

## The Alchemist—A Channel for Nature

We now advance to the truly alchemical aspects. As always, the treasure is hidden and the seeker is not always successful, but in reading and meditating upon the following lines from the *Sum of Perfection*, one of the profound secrets of the Art is revealed to us. "Likewise also, we



alter not metals, but *Nature*; for whom according to Art, we prepare that matter; for she by herself acts—not *we*; yet we are her administrators.” Geber knew and understood that the alchemist was merely the channel for nature and her divine laws.

On the preparation of the solar medicine of the third order, which seems to be almost the same as the philosopher’s stone or the great Elixir, Geber writes: “. . . and in this order is completed the most precious arcanum, which is above every

secret of the sciences of this world, and is a treasure inestimable . . . . Now let the High GOD of Nature, blessed and glorious be praised, who hath revealed to us the series of all medicines . . . .”

And thus is transformed before us the first chemist of Islam into the Adept—the Prince of Adepts and the master of the inner secrets of Nature. With loving care he prepared the way for Nature, and she in gratitude smiled upon her servant and embraced him with her shining wisdom. Δ

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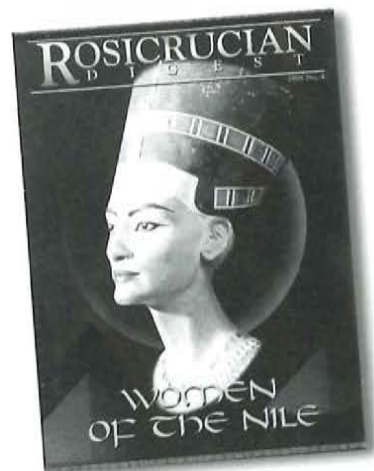
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# A PULSE *of* BIOLUMINESCENCE

by Vic Boynton



**W**E OFTEN FORGET the small things that enrich our lives, those times when serendipity appears and carries us off into reflection and daydreams. We can remove ourselves from life's repetitious boredom if we are receptive to these fortunate events that fall into our laps. To perk up your senses, don't let curiosity flit to the heights of a nearby mountain without the your net of awareness to swoosh it back.

Some might say we find something good accidentally, which is the definition of serendipity. But it seems to me that giving ourselves permission to be open to the unusual or novel—the non-typical occurrences—defines this term better. As an inventor and a writer, I find that creative people surprisingly share something with the common thief, to the extent that both are opportunists. A thief might snatch a valuable through an open car window because it is there for the taking, at an opportune time. So too with the creative person, who plucks the novel off life's plum tree as if he or she had been expecting an idea or an occurrence to reveal itself.

A seemingly simplistic experience, following a day seeking the delicious Dungeness crabs that dwell in nearby Puget Sound, was one type of experience that just happened to be my type of plum.

Crab nets are usually washed at day's end to remove the destructive effects of salt water. But

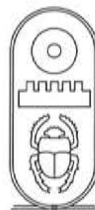
on that particular day I postponed the task until morning and set the two crab rings in my bathtub.

Late that night I stumbled forth into the darkness, seeking the bathroom. And there, while pondering my thoughts and trying to recall a dream half floating in memory, I saw a flash of light—a blink in the darkness—coming from the bathtub.

The tiny flash jolted me awake as surely as an earthquake. A sparkle of light, the size and intensity of a firefly blink, made me ask, "Did I see a flash of light, or am I still only half-awake, in a semi-dream state?"

For a moment I became a six-year-old—totally absorbed and curious. A person earning a seven-figure salary could not have purchased the feeling an unknown marine creature provided for me that night.

The pulse of bioluminescence was the same color I had seen years ago as a boy one summer night. The light-greenish radiance pulsed again; I pinched myself and stared into the darkness of the bathtub. Then another gleam—and just as quickly, another. I wasn't dreaming! An innocent chemical reaction from an unknown marine creature had awakened a desire to rush back to childhood. The pulses of light had awakened memories of the first time I saw fireflies—a recollection long since forgotten.



Neither the twinkle nor the creature that produced it could be seen after I flipped on the bathroom light. What fascination! I could not locate the living things that caused those strange illuminations.

The next time I went crabbing, I told a couple next to me about the mysterious creatures. I suggested to the husband how to repeat what I did in order to see this strange occurrence. He looked at his wife. She shook her head and said, "No." She wouldn't allow the nets in the house.

## Seek the Wonderment—and Seek It Now!

The serendipitous thrill I experienced because of a crabbing trip inevitably begs others to be open to unexpected events they will encounter at any waking hour. Don't let discovery of the novel flow through your fingers—like a child's "toy slime" that might slowly dribble through tiny hands. At one time the best of a child's world infused you with puzzlement. Now, amazement often disappears into treadmill work—in your haste to catch up to credit card payments that have been given a three-month's handicap. Where is the sense of wonderment that *once-upon-a-time* filled the sphere of the unsophisticated child within you?

Consider too the digital world that descended in the last twenty years from somewhere out of the cosmos. "To simplify your life," we were told. But instead, the digital revolution has created the sixty-hour work week—the antithesis of an easier, less stressed life. Every year is more like Charlie Chaplin's famous movie, *Modern Times*. Being current forces millions of our co-workers to work ever longer hours. You may wonder, "Just how many hours can a person work per week and still have the wherewithal to enjoy the minutia—let alone have the stamina to recognize it?"

There is a story—true or not is irrelevant—about a king who was asked on his death bed what he wanted the most. "Some more time," he answered.

When you were "thirty-something" and very much into acquiring stuff, you probably wondered why older people often had auto plaques that boasted, "Happiness Is Being A Grandparent." However, as you approach your seventh decade of life, *time conservation* will increase in an inverse proportion to time left on this planet. Perhaps older people have accepted that time is running short, and that in children they can

return to what is truly important in life—the unimportant left to those persons collecting zeros in their stock portfolios.

Albert Einstein once quipped, "It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity." You may ask, as a species, aren't we mind-set for the simple?

Now we have to redouble our efforts to guard our precious personal time for discoveries of the simple—now that our laptops, cellular phones, and other instant communication gadgets "force" us into working around the clock (which is no longer round, but instead, a square digital chronometer with digits clicking by instead of a sweeping second hand). Are we to lay aside our *humanness* just because of society's new tools?

Consider the little things in life that caused you, as a child, to stare in wonderment—things such as a worm struggling because it fell onto pavement and was drying out, or a moth that clung to a branch so as to blend and hide from a bird's curvy little beak. Remember the wonder of a fresh summer morning with nothing to do all day but explore?

You were that small boy that spun his bicycle's tire just to watch it. The spinning spokes mesmerized you, and you felt air flying off the rim when the treads dragged the molecules with its spin. Your mom probably pulled you away from this object of interest. After all, she was in a hurry—"What are you watching that thing for?", she annoyingly asked.

## Your Inner Child Is Waiting!

Some of the qualities of life that you may wish to seek—no, *rekindle*—in your life are qualities I recently rediscovered in doing a bit of daycare. Last summer I had the opportunity of caring for my six-year-old granddaughter, thus allowing my daughter to catch up on debts piled high instead of paying exorbitant child care bills.

On one typical day, Elizabeth caught a small frog. It's now fat, ensconced in a terrarium, and eating all the crickets and crane flies it desires. Blackberries growing in profusion along a nearby golf course had to be picked for pies. And while the two of us were doing that, we looked for golf balls—products of a wayward hook or slice.

Those summer hours provided me with immeasurable pleasure while watching my granddaughter absorb situations I cleverly placed her in. We lived life—every little bit of it—until it was time to go home.



## Were We Bored? Never!

Was my self-esteem threatened, or did I look silly on her behalf when I wiped off a slide at a playground or filled her bicycle tire with air? Who cares!

Life at its simplest held Elizabeth's attention and I learned from her; observing a water strider at the old fishing hole, watching jugglers at a children's summer art festival, or when I took off my sneakers to wade in a brook so I could help her build a rock dam. That was the world of the minutia and the seemingly unimportant world of a child—when compared to that of years spent engineering manufacturing processes necessary to make transducers for disc drives.

Balance your professional life in Silicon Valley, Silicon Forest, or any other dynamo area where you might work. Rediscover the other sphere of life—the world of serendipity and the bioluminescent. You'll never be bored if you do! Climb steadily upward to the heights of Mt. Rainier with your net of awareness in hand—ready—to be thrilled by a pulse of bioluminescence on the crab net of life. Δ

*“A firefly flashes when oxygen, breathed in through the abdominal tracheae, is allowed to combine with a substance called luciferin under the catalytic effect of the enzyme luciferase.”*

—Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia

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## PROGRESSION

*I thought: I will cross the seven circles which lie in space beyond the rim of the earth . . . .  
I will hear what the universe has to tell.*

*In the first circle I heard the resounding din of human pain and grief—the screams of the wounded and dying, the wails and imprecations of the downtrodden and the wronged, the weeping of many who sorrow for love.*

*In the second circle the four winds re-echoed earth's anguish together.*

*In the third circle I heard the surge of water, sighing and falling against an ever-beckoning shore.*

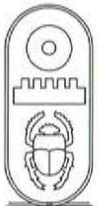
*In the fourth, innumerable voices chanted melodies of benediction, and there was the gentle stirring of wings . . . wings.*

*In the fifth circle birds sang as the birds of my homeland, but in a softer cadence.*

*In the sixth circle there was only the sound of the breathing of flowers, of petals opening and closing in fragrance never known elsewhere.*

*In the seventh circle there was silence, and in the heart of the silence, God.*

—Grace Ross, *Journey Out of Night*



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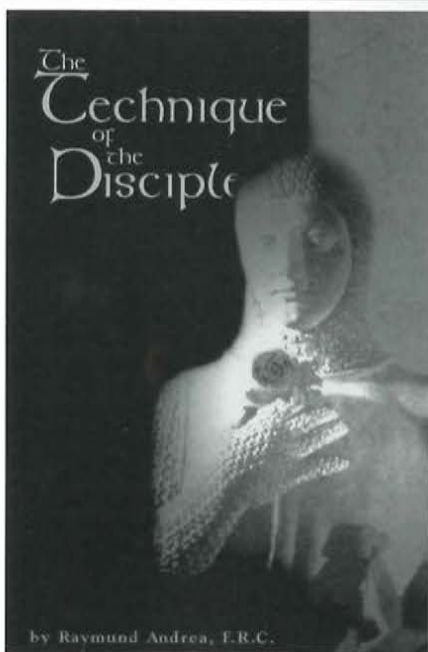
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