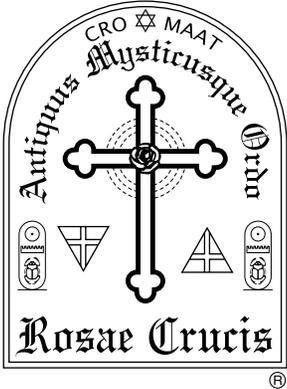




MASTER MONOGRAPH

ROSICRUCIAN ORDER
AMORC



NEOPHYTE SECTION

Atrium 1 Nos. 4-7

*“Know thyself, and thou shalt
know the universe and the gods.”*

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First Atrium No. 4



CONCURRENCE

Among the scientific postulates that marked the Renaissance, the most celebrated is indisputably that of Nicolaus Copernicus who, in his work entitled *De Revolutinibus Orbium Coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres), established the heliocentric conception of our planetary system and revolutionized the science of astronomy. The excerpt below is taken from this work. It reflects the sagacity of the scientists of this era and the importance they accorded to the study of natural phenomena. It also shows how difficult it is to fight against false beliefs and to let new truths be admitted.

Earth is the place from which we observe the revolution of the heavens and where it is displayed to our eyes. This motion seems to embrace the whole world, in fact, everything that is outside of Earth, with the single exception of Earth itself. And yet if one admits that the heavens possess none of this motion, and that Earth rotates from west to east; and if one should consider this seriously with respect to the seeming rising and setting of the Sun, of the Moon and the stars; then one would find that it is actually true. Since the heavens, which contain and retain all things, are the common home of all things, it is not at once comprehensible why a motion is ascribed to the thing containing rather than to the contained; to the located rather than to the locating.

Why are we not willing to acknowledge that the appearance of a daily revolution belonging to the heavens, is in actuality Earth? The relation is similar to that of which Virgil's Aeneas says: "We sail out of the harbor, and the countries and cities recede." For when a ship is sailing along quietly, everything which is outside of it will appear to those on board to have a motion corresponding to the movement of the ship, and the voyagers are of the erroneous opinion that they, with all that they have with them, are at rest. This can without doubt also apply to the motion of Earth, and it may appear as if the whole universe were revolving.

If one admits the motionlessness of the Sun, and transfers the annual revolution from the Sun to Earth, there would result, in the same manner as actually observed, the rising and setting of the constellations and the fixed stars, by means of which they become morning and evening stars; and it will thus become apparent that also the haltings and backward and forward motion of the planets are not motions of these but of Earth, which lends them the appearance of being actual planetary motions.

—NICOLAUS COPERNICUS (1473-1543)

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In previous monographs we explained to you that our perception and interpretation of things do not affect what they are outside ourselves, because the concept we have of them cannot change their vibratory nature. In this regard, it is important to understand that everything we know in the material world depends upon the way in which we perceive and interpret the vibrations of Spirit. Our conception of the world also depends on our culture, education, and beliefs. Following is an example of grave errors that can be committed when we remain imprisoned by our false beliefs and place our faith in what we perceive through our objective faculties.

THE THEORIES OF COPERNICUS: For centuries people believed that Earth was flat and that it was the center of the universe. That erroneous belief was based on what they saw and on a poor interpretation of what Scripture revealed on this subject. This point of view was unanimous, even among scientists, until the day when Copernicus, a Polish scientist, expressed doubts about this and about the theories concerning the rising and setting of the Sun, day and night, the seasons, the origin of winds, the effect of tides, the apparent motions of celestial bodies, etc. As Ptolemy had done in Greece, Copernicus claimed that Earth is round like a ball and that human beings lived on its surface. Moreover, he established the heliocentric conception of our solar system. He asserted that the Sun—and not Earth—is the center of our planetary system, adding that the seasons are due to the continual motion of Earth while revolving around the Sun, and that the alternation of day and night results from Earth's rotation on its axis. He did err in thinking that the trajectory of the planets around the Sun was circular, whereas Kepler, a major supporter of Copernicus, demonstrated nearly half a century later that planetary orbits are elliptical, even stating that the Sun does not constitute the center of our planetary system, but rather one of its foci. Popular thought promptly rejected Copernicus's theories. However, science gradually accepted them, as they clarified phenomena that had remained misunderstood and unknown until then.

Copernicus was more than a mere scientist. He was a great mystic and sage, a sage being able to give valid explanations for previously misunderstood facts, without trying to impose them on others. He was not absolutely certain about his theories and did not attempt to convince anyone else about their validity. In the preface to one of his treatises, Copernicus stated that if anyone doubted the accuracy of his propositions and asked him for objective proof, he could supply



none, as most of his ideas had been inspired during his numerous meditations. Moreover, he was very aware of the influence exerted by religion on popular beliefs and on the study of cosmogony, and thus he waited years before publishing his heliocentric theory of the universe.

Copernicus knew that he would be persecuted as a heretic. He wrote, "If Earth is truly the center of the universe and the whole center of God's Creation, then humanity on Earth might well be one of the greatest objects of God's care. However, if my theory is correct and Earth is only one of many planets revolving in space, and not even the largest of them, and if these others are also inhabited by humans, then this Earth upon which we live and the human beings upon this Earth may not be so important in God's Scheme." It is quite obvious that such an idea could only displease the leaders of the Christian Church, because it challenged the religious dogmas of the era and gave a universal dimension to Creation.

In 1540 Copernicus officially announced his theories. On May 24, 1543, just as they were being published in the form of a book, he died after having incurred criticisms, attacks, and moral ordeals inflicted by Catholic authorities and by a minority of scholars blinded by the old doctrines. Fortunately, Copernicus did not experience the fate later reserved for Galileo or Giordano Bruno, two of his greatest defenders, the latter being burned at the stake as a heretic in 1600. Publication of Copernicus's work was prohibited in 1616 and this interdiction lasted almost two centuries. A great number of his postulates are now taught as established facts in schools and universities whereas, during his lifetime, he was denigrated and compelled to admit that he could not provide any scientific proof, and his postulates were rejected due to their incompatibility with religious doctrines. This example demonstrates to what extent cosmically inspired theories can be denied and opposed because they do not correspond to the accepted ideas of an era and because they find no satisfactory proof in the objective faculties of human beings. However, time is the Master of evolution, and light always triumphs over darkness. Human ignorance, due to intolerance and a tendency to believe only what we see, cannot oppose forever the coming of knowledge.

Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo were not the only ones who were victims of their wisdom and intelligence. History is replete with mystics and scholars who were condemned during their lifetimes and ridiculed by the religious and scientific opinion of their day.



On a more personal level, it is obvious that you can gain access to the knowledge of the Mysteries only if you are able to question yourself regularly and to recognize that your conception of things may be erroneous. You must understand that human truths are relative as they necessarily evolve with time and with the discoveries of science. To deny this implies that human beings know everything and have nothing more to learn. We would be saying that everyone has attained Perfection and that our earthly evolution has been completed. Yet the reality is quite different in that humanity is still far from having accomplished its cosmic mission. As long as we have not received Illumination and the Supreme Wisdom that it confers, we must question our understanding of things and not believe that human knowledge is at a standstill. This also applies to our teachings, because each monograph is primarily a basis for reflection and meditation.

Since the Renaissance, science has evolved greatly, and the discoveries it has made in numerous areas have considerably improved living conditions in modern societies. However, we must not infer that science has penetrated all mysteries of the universe and that its explanations in various fields of research are always correct. Experience proves that science still has much to learn and that a large number of its postulates are false. It cannot be otherwise, because scientific research is a reflection of those who conduct it: It is necessarily limited and imperfect. The merit of science lies precisely in its striving toward perfection and in its desire to extend the boundaries of the unknown. We do hope that science will begin to give a more spiritual direction to its work, so as to contribute to the raising of consciousness toward the Divine Cause of all that exists. If the science of the 21st century does not free itself from its overly materialistic conceptions, it runs the risk of overstepping its bounds and causing the destruction of the human species. That is why we truly hope that tomorrow's scientists will take into account the mystical knowledge available to them.

Spirit, the energy to which we have devoted the first monographs of this Atrium, constitutes a good example of what we have just said. This energy has been part of the research undertaken by science—notably by physicists—because science has been striving for years to understand the origin of the forces of adhesion, cohesion, attraction, and repulsion acting in matter. Only recently has science admitted that all energy—manifested as adhesion, cohesion, attraction, or repulsion—has a vibratory nature. In physics, science has mastered most of the effects produced by these forces, and yet it has not succeeded in establishing a unity



among them. Placing that unity in evidence will allow science to determine the boundaries beyond which it should not cross in the application of its discoveries. Such truths were taught long ago in the ancient Mystery Schools.

Finally, we must recognize that many scientists pay no attention to the philosophical principles that result from a mystical approach to material creation. It is not because they are incapable of doing so; it is because they refuse to admit that everything tangible arises from a world that is intangible. Contemporary science is still rejecting the concept of God, such as a Rosicrucian may conceive it. However, a time will come when science will recognize the existence of a Cosmic Intelligence, of a Great Architect of the Universe, of a Primordial Energy to explain the unexplainable. We will then witness a fusion of the best of what science and mysticism have to offer humanity.

THE CONCEPT OF PROPERTY: Before summarizing the important laws you should remember in connection with our study of Spirit, we will now consider a philosophical problem that is connected with the mystical application of this study. This involves the concept of property. If you accept that the whole of the material world owes its origin to Spirit and that this energy is of cosmic origin, it then follows that everything that is part of our surroundings is the work of God—or, if you prefer, of Universal Intelligence. Therefore, in an absolute sense, human beings have no right of possession over things of this world. From a mystical point of view, this means we can possess nothing as our own and that we cannot exert a coercive power over any being or any thing, because everything that was, is, and will be on the material plane is the property of all. This constitutes a heritage which humanity, in its collectivity, received from the Cosmic.

For example, from the standpoint of human laws, we can obtain certain rights to various material goods which make us their proprietors. Thus, a person may have a house constructed and take possession of it legally by paying the price set for its construction. However, if we consider this principle from its philosophical aspect, is it really possible to claim ownership? Indeed, what is a house? It is an assemblage of various materials which all have their origin in Nature. Whether this involves stones, bricks, sand, wood, or tiles, all these



elements were taken from our Earth. Who originally paid nature to obtain them? No one, because it is impossible to buy anything from the energy which is the source of all matter. We can only seize the object and decide arbitrarily that it belongs to us. Consequently, we

cannot deny that human beings created the concept of property and made that concept the basis of commerce and of those laws growing out of it. Yet, nature never sold anything to humanity, because it gives without counting. The debt we owe it is impossible to repay.

If we pursue this philosophical reasoning, we shall say that although it is true that nothing can be bought from nature, it is normal to give a compensation to those who work for us. Returning to our example, the construction of a house requires a certain amount of work and, consequently, the employment of competent persons—architects, bricklayers, plasterers, electricians, roofers, etc. On the human level, and by implementing laws that govern modern societies, we compensate their work by means of money. However, everything they do is possible only because they received from the Cosmic the ability to do it. Architects, for instance, owe their skill to their intelligence, and that intelligence is a gift of God. Likewise, bricklayers may demonstrate great physical strength and stamina. However, once again, they owe such strength to the fact that they received good health from the Cosmic. Yet none of them purchased their respective qualities from God.

Humanity is indebted to the Cosmic, because everything we possess on the material plane has its origin in the various manifestations of Spirit. Thus, the goods at our disposal during our existence on Earth belong to us only from the standpoint of human laws because, from a mystical point of view, they are given to us so that we may best utilize them for our own spiritual evolution and for that of others. To illustrate this point, let us quote what Pythagoras, who played a great role in our heritage, said on this subject: “These great ideas came to me as an inspiration from God. God gave me these ideas; they rightfully belong to God. God granted to me an understanding of Cosmic laws and ideas; therefore, they do not belong to me, so I will pass them along to others for their use and benefit as a gift from God.”

THE LAWS OF SPIRIT: To close this monograph, we will summarize the fundamental laws governing nature and the manifestations of Spirit. We shall return to this study in the First Temple Degree; however, what we have already explained in this lesson and preceding lessons constitutes a sufficient foundation for understanding what this energy consists of and how it manifests on the earthly level.

1. The entire universe is permeated by a vibratory energy which Rosicrucians call “Spirit.”



2. Spirit is the basis of the material world, for all forms of matter owe their existence to it.
3. All material substances vibrate inwardly and outwardly through the action of the vibrations of Spirit.
4. After having affected our five objective senses, the vibrations emitted by our earthly environment are transmitted to our brain where they are interpreted.
5. Our understanding of the material world depends upon the interpretation that our objective consciousness gives to the vibrations emanating from the material world. That interpretation is influenced by our culture, education, and beliefs.
6. From a mystical point of view, no material thing can belong to us, because all our earthly possessions owe their existence to Spirit which, by nature, is the work of the Cosmic.

In the next monograph we shall approach another subject of study—the mind and its faculties. We truly hope that this subject will satisfy the interest that you have in our teachings and will allow you to catch a glimpse of the infinite possibilities of human consciousness.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.—Unto Thee I Grant

What we have said in this monograph regarding the concept of property must not be misunderstood, as the explanations we have given take place exclusively on the philosophical level. We are not advocating any particular political or economic concept and we do not seek in any way to preach an equal distribution of earthly goods. It is important to make a distinction between what things should be in the absolute sense, and what they can be at a given moment of human history. We cannot deny that the possessions of each individual are not the same, and this is true no matter what country we live in. However, such a difference is not systematically connected with the economic, social, or political direction given to the various states composing our world. The lives of individuals and nations are also governed by cosmic decrees which, as we will explain to you later, have their origin in karmic law. It is this law which justifies to a great extent the apparent inequality that may be observed among people.

In bringing up the matter of the distribution of worldly goods and the right to own them, we may presume that not all individuals possess the same degree of intelligence and that some are more zealous than others. Experience proves that if we divided a certain amount of wealth equally between all members of a society, at the end of a few months some of them would possess nothing, whereas others would still have in their possession nearly all the goods distributed to them at the beginning. Some would even have more wealth at their disposal. All of this occurs because some individuals are unable to manage what is entrusted to them. Because of this, generosity remains one of our finest virtues.

In the coming days, we suggest that you meditate on this immense problem by considering its philosophical and mystical aspects. Thus, you will understand that the concept of property arose in human consciousness and that it does not have its origin in Cosmic Intelligence. When humanity has evolved sufficiently, this concept will give way to more universal, and hence less individualistic, values.

Summary of This Monograph

After carefully reading this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major principles on which you are to reflect and meditate in coming days. If any of the points are difficult to understand, refer to the explanations given in this monograph. Moreover, we advise you to read this summary again immediately before your next sanctum period.

- ¶ For centuries people believed that Earth was flat and that it was the center of the universe. This belief was based on what they saw and on a poor interpretation of what Scripture revealed on this subject.
- ¶ In his work *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, Nicolaus Copernicus presented in detail his heliocentric theory of the universe. It was rejected because of its incompatibility with religious dogmas of the time.
- ¶ Human truths are relative and evolve with time and with the discoveries of science. Human beings should not believe that human knowledge is at a standstill.
- ¶ If the science of the 21st century does not free itself from its overly materialistic conceptions, it runs the risk of overstepping its bounds and causing the destruction of the human species.
- ¶ Scientists will someday find themselves compelled to recognize the existence of a Cosmic Intelligence, of a Great Architect of the Universe, of a Primordial Energy to explain the unexplainable. We will then witness a fusion of the best of what science and mysticism have to offer humanity.
- ¶ In an absolute sense, human beings have no right of possession over things of this world, because everything in the material world owes its origin to Spirit.
- ¶ The possessions at our disposal during our earthly existence belong to us only from the standpoint of human laws, because, from a mystical point of view, they are given to us so that we may best utilize them for our own evolution and that of others.
- ¶ The debt humanity owes nature is impossible to repay.

NOTES



First Atrium No. 5



CONCURRENCE

As this monograph deals with the mind and brain waves, we suggest that you read this excerpt taken from the work entitled *The Brain Revolution*, written by Marilyn Ferguson. As you will note, the study of the brain is relatively recent, and science recognizes that it still has much to learn in this field regarding the complexity of mental processes.

The electrical activity of the brain is measured in microvolts or millionths of a volt. The activity was first observed via a crude galvanometer devised by an English doctor, Richard Caton, in 1875. The first true EEGs were recorded by Hans Berger, a German psychiatrist, probably in 1924. Berger kept a diary but did not report his findings until almost five years later.

Berger called the regular rhythm, the most prominent of the patterns, alpha. The shorter, smaller waves he called beta. Berger's report, published in 1929, was virtually ignored for five years. Finally two eminent English scientists, Edgar Adrian and B.C.H. Matthews, undertook an investigation because, as they admitted, "We found it difficult to accept the view that such uniform activity could occur throughout the brain in a conscious subject." When they found to their surprise that Berger had been right, they proposed renaming the alpha waves the Berger rhythm, which he opposed.

The alpha pattern is markedly regular; the most prominent of the brainwaves in a typical waking EEG. Alpha usually appears only in brief bursts rather than for a sustained period. Alpha conditioning or training refers to the deliberate increase in the percentage of alpha activity in a given period.

Alpha ranges from eight to twelve or thirteen cycles per second and usually is associated with an alert but relaxed state of mind. Most people produce alpha when they close their eyes, but the typical waking, eyes-open EEG shows alpha mixed with the other patterns. Steady alpha is uncommon in one whose eyes are open. It may happen just as one is falling asleep and typically is blocked by a sudden stimulus or by turning one's attention to a specific problem, especially a mathematical problem.

The fast, tight beta pattern ranges from fourteen to thirty cycles per second. It appears in intense concentration and mental agitation.

(continued on page 21)

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In previous monographs we devoted ourselves to the study of matter and we saw that it owes its existence to the vibrations of Spirit. We hope that you have a good understanding of the explanations given to you on the subject of the perception and interpretation of these vibrations, because they constitute the foundation of what Rosicrucian philosophy has taught for centuries on the subject of the material world. We will return to this study in one of the other degrees of our Order and will consider it from a new angle and in greater depth. Thus, you will find that our teachings are transmitted according to a method that takes into account the mental and spiritual alchemy gradually operating within you between your sanctum periods. This method may be symbolized by a spiral that progressively raises your consciousness toward heights from which it can contemplate the same truths from an increasingly greater distance. If you demonstrate patience and perseverance in your studies, there will come a time when you will attain a panoramic view of those Mysteries still eluding your comprehension.

MIND: You now know that matter, as it manifests on the material plane, is a collection of vibrations that have their origin in Spirit. The human body is itself a vibratory manifestation of this energy. However, each human being is also a conscious individual—a thinking entity. Yet what is thought? From a scientific point of view, it is the result of brain activity. This definition is accurate, yet incomplete, as it does not explain how the brain, which is material in nature, can produce so subtle a phenomenon as mind. In this respect, science has too great a tendency to limit its research to the study of mental processes. Such study is of obvious interest, yet it does not take into sufficient account the spiritual dimension of laws and principles underlying those processes. For Rosicrucians, thought is a special expression of Cosmic Consciousness incarnate in humans. To be more precise, we say that it results from the interaction taking place within the brain between the vibrations of Spirit and those of Soul.

The preceding remarks deserve fuller explanation, for they have a direct bearing upon the mystical definition of mind. We have just stated that thought is the result of the interaction occurring in the brain between the vibrations of Spirit and those of Soul. Yet in earlier lessons we have seen that Spirit is an energy that underlies our earthly environment and our sensory perceptions. Soul is a spiritual energy which, while it is incarnate in us, radiates from the very depth of our beings. Thought



originates from the encounter of these two energies, one of which has its source outside of us and the other inside of us. As these two energies are vibrations in motion, it follows that our mental activity is itself of a vibratory nature.

This point now seems obvious, because scientists have perfected various devices—electroencephalographs, to be specific—which allow reproduction upon a graph of those waves produced by the brain, notably by the various neurons forming it. Although the rhythm of these brain waves varies from one individual to another, there exist certain norms which make it possible to define, in both children and adults, the rhythm corresponding to a perfectly balanced physical and mental state. Moreover, current experiments prove that an electroencephalogram (EEG) can vary considerably when the subject is tired, ill, or depressed. Thus, the EEG is a valid means of determining the origin and nature of many physical or mental complaints.

The rhythm of brain waves differs according to whether the individual is awake, in a coma, or asleep. There again, the information obtained by an EEG is very useful, because it allows us to measure and define the levels of consciousness where a person's mental activity is situated at a given moment. Clinical death is reflected by a flat EEG, with the graph taking the form of a straight line, whereas the graph for a living individual consists of a series of curved or broken lines. For physicians, a flat graph indicates that the brain no longer functions. If the brain does not function any longer, it is because the Soul has left the body and because the vibratory interaction it produced with the Spirit no longer exists. As we shall see later, this detail deserves your attention, because it will enable you to understand that death corresponds only to the disappearance of one form of consciousness, the objective consciousness, not to the total and definitive annihilation of the human personality. Thus, you should not confuse the words *thought* and *consciousness*, because the former concerns primarily the activity of the brain, whereas the latter is associated with the totality of the Soul's faculties.

Scientists currently distinguish four major categories of brain waves: delta (δ) waves, theta (θ) waves, alpha (α) waves, and beta (β) waves. The frequency of delta waves varies between 0.5 and 4 hertz; theta waves between 4 and 8 hertz; alpha waves between 8 and 13 hertz; and beta waves between 13 and 50 hertz, if not more. These figures are slightly different from those indicated in the concurrence



of this monograph, as scientific research is evolving every day in this area. Thus, the currently accepted frequencies are not absolute, and new discoveries might bring further modifications to them. Moreover, it is very difficult to define precisely what cerebral activity is associated with each of these waves, because there exist numerous interactions between them. Depending upon the state of consciousness we happen to be in, they do not always have the same significance. For example, the delta rhythm is the one characterizing normal sleep. However, in a state of wakefulness, it indicates a pathological state. Nonetheless, it is possible to bring out certain generalities and to get an idea of the relationship between the rhythm of our brain waves and the profile of our mental activity.

According to research undertaken in our Order's laboratories, delta waves express very weak mental activity, usually corresponding to a state of dreamless sleep. They are especially apparent upon the approach of death or in the case of very great physical weakness. Theta waves are characteristic of an intermediate state, of a state of consciousness that is situated between the subjective consciousness and the subconscious. It is in that state that we generally find ourselves just before going to sleep or upon awakening. It is also recorded in certain periods of meditation or when we are in deep sleep interspersed by striking dreams. As for alpha waves, they occur in a state of wakefulness, when we are perfectly calm and relaxed. Experience proves that this cerebral rhythm is generated by merely closing the eyes and relaxing. It is interesting to note that measurements taken on Rosicrucians show that in the first phases of meditation they emit mental waves alternating between the theta and alpha rhythms, generally between 6 and 9 hertz. Finally, beta waves reflect sustained brain activity. They characterize the purely objective phase of our consciousness and are apparent when our attention is concentrated on the outside world.

The preceding information concerns brain waves registered by an electroencephalograph when we are in an objective, subjective, or subconscious state of consciousness. In light of what you have learned in the Postulant Section, you may wonder to what rhythm a state of Cosmic Consciousness corresponds. We may think that the EEG obtained during this time would reveal waves having vibratory frequencies far exceeding those of beta waves, because they



are associated with extremely high vibrations. However, the opposite is true, because an EEG reflects the intensity of our brain activity and not the nature of our state of consciousness. An EEG primarily allows us to record and amplify “material” waves.

From a mystical point of view, it is easy to understand that the closer our state of consciousness is to Cosmic Consciousness—as when we are engaged in deep meditation—the weaker our purely cerebral activity is. That is why the EEG is flat at the moment of death. Although we have no definitive proof of this, we can surmise that a state of Cosmic Consciousness—though corresponding to very elevated “spiritual” waves—would be characterized on the electroencephalogram by a rhythm ranging between 0 and 0.5 hertz. It has been impossible to record such a rhythm up till now, precisely because of the very weak frequency of the vibrations emitted by our brain at that moment.

THE BRAIN: The brain is not the seat of human consciousness, but rather the center where the vibrations of Spirit interact with those of the Soul to give rise to thought. Its role is essential, because mental activity cannot take place without it. When studying the way in which we interpret the vibrations emitted by the material world, we pointed out that this interpretation was made by an area specializing in the analysis of our sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste sensations. However, our mental processes are obviously not limited to such analysis, because, independently of the outside world, we are capable of speaking, thinking, remembering, imagining, etc. Yet there also exist areas of the brain specializing in such activities as speech, thought, recall, and imagination, etc. Science has localized most of those areas which had been known to the ancient Egyptians. As you will see when beginning the study of the Sixth Temple Degree, the members of Mystery Schools possessed considerable knowledge about the human body and the way to heal a great many diseases. We will transmit that knowledge to you at the appropriate time.

When you have the opportunity, we recommend that you consult a reference work to obtain a precise idea of the various areas of the brain. While doing this, you will note that some of them, aside from those we have just mentioned, concern psychomotricity, the control exerted by thought upon the voluntary motions of the head, trunk, arms, legs, and, in general, on all parts of our body. We are aware that an injury to the skull or a shock to the head may cause partial or total paralysis. Thus, after



an accident we may lose the use of the right arm or the left leg, or of a hand or a foot, or of a portion of the spinal column—or sometimes, unfortunately, even the whole body. Some brain lesions produce memory losses that may cause a total oblivion of our past. Others may produce a diminution, for some period of time, in the ability to speak our native tongue and any other foreign languages we may have learned later. All of these functional anomalies are due to a suspension of activity of one of the cerebral areas. Today physicians can remedy some of them; however, in many cases, they cannot act without running the risk of causing even more severe damage. That is why brain surgery is an art that is very difficult to master.

A point we want to stress is that the inactivity of certain areas of the brain is not always due to accidents. Many laboratory experiments prove that such areas must be constantly activated and stimulated so as to maintain their activity potential. Many people complain of losing their memory, of having limited imagination, of being unable to think effectively about certain problems, of lacking inspiration to speak or write, etc. Quite often such deficiencies originate because we do not make sufficient use of our mental processes. Perhaps we are not in the habit of engaging in enough intellectual exercises, which may result in a notable weakening of our subjective faculties. As an analogy, when a fractured or broken limb is immobilized in plaster for several months, its muscles atrophy to the extent that a rehabilitation of several weeks is often necessary. Likewise, individuals who adopt a passive mental attitude gradually lose their intellectual abilities. Finally, all cerebral effort becomes painful and is reflected in increasingly mediocre results. In such extreme cases, we eventually become incapable of exercising our own potential for reflection.

We advise you to always maintain your intellectual faculties by devoting yourself to reading, thinking, and meditating. You must absolutely avoid spending too much time “escaping” while seated before a movie or television screen, for the condition of spectator paralyzes our mental processes and impairs our power of concentration. To make another analogy, it is easier to watch someone work than to do it ourselves. Yet, the satisfaction derived from activity, whether physical or mental, is far greater than what we experience in passivity or slothfulness. Naturally, it is essential that we set aside periods for rest and recreation, since they offer an opportunity for us to change our ideas and to regenerate ourselves



on all levels. However, such periods must not become constant, thus leading to indolence, which constitutes in itself a form of pathology.

In our next monograph we will continue the study of mind and begin our examination of several mental faculties important to a mystic. Through this study, you will gradually gain awareness of the creative powers of the human consciousness.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

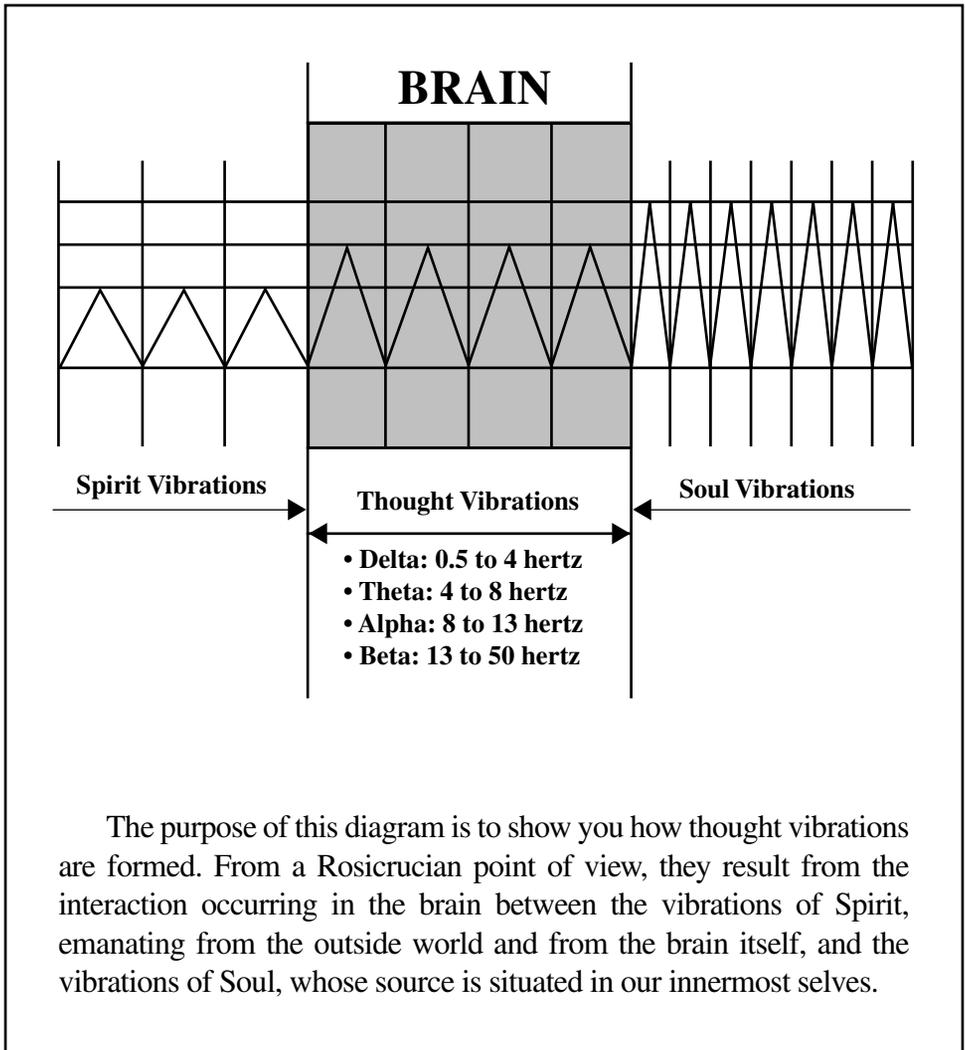
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Practical Application

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Summary of This Monograph

After carefully reading this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major principles on which you are to reflect and meditate in coming days. If any of the points are difficult to understand, refer to the explanations given in this monograph. Moreover, we advise you to read this summary again immediately before your next sanctum period.

- ¶ According to scientists, thought is the result of brain activity. From a mystical point of view, mind results from the interaction taking place within the brain between the vibrations of Spirit and those of Soul.
- ¶ As Spirit and Soul are two vibratory energies, it follows that mind is a unification of these vibrations. This point can be made evident by the use of an electroencephalograph.
- ¶ Science currently distinguishes between four major kinds of brain waves: delta waves, theta waves, alpha waves, and beta waves.
- ¶ The study of brain waves provides valuable data on a person's physiological state. It also makes it possible to provide a profile of an individual's mental activity at a given moment.
- ¶ An EEG can only record and amplify "material" waves emitted by brain activity. The closer our state of consciousness is to Cosmic Consciousness, the weaker our purely cerebral activity is. That is why it is not possible to record "spiritual" vibrations corresponding to such a state of consciousness.
- ¶ The brain is not the seat of human consciousness, but rather the center where the vibrations of Spirit interact with those of the Soul to give birth to thought. Its role is essential, because mental activity cannot take place without it.
- ¶ The brain contains a great number of areas, each of which concerns certain specific activities. Some of them are involved with the interpretation of sensory impressions; others are associated with controlling the voluntary movements of our body; while others involve our mental processes (thought, memory, imagination, etc.).
- ¶ It is very important to constantly use and stimulate our mental faculties, so as to maintain their activity at full potential.

Concurrence *(continued)*

Delta waves—one-half to three and a half cycles per second—are associated with disease, death, and degeneration according to Walter, who observed that they are appropriately named. Large and slow, they are seen in sleep and may also indicate pathology, such as a brain tumor, when they are conspicuous in an awake subject.

Theta waves, four to seven cycles per second, seem to be involved in emotionality, creative imagery, and computation on a deep level. They are infrequent in the waking EEG.

—MARILYN FERGUSON (20th century)



First Atrium No. 6



CONCURRENCE

It is true, as we explain in this monograph, that the mind has a creative power. A human being, as a conscious individuality, is one of the highest manifestations of Cosmic Intelligence. From an allegorical point of view, humans are made in the image of God, for each individual is animated by the Divinity and possesses some of its attributes, the most important being consciousness itself. If we assume that the universe is the work of the creative power of Divine Thought, it is logical to recognize that humans are a reflection of this Thought and that they are likewise endowed with creative thought. Thus, we can reply in the affirmative to the question posed by Thomas Troward at the end of the following quotation.

One of the great axioms in the new order of ideas, of which I have spoken, is that our Thought possesses creative power, and since the whole superstructure depends on this foundation, it is well to examine it carefully. Now the starting point is to see that Thought, or purely mental action, is the only possible source from which the existing creation could ever have come into manifestation at all, and it is on this account that in the preceding addresses I have laid stress on the origin of the cosmos. It is therefore not necessary to go over this ground again, and we will start this morning's enquiry on the assumption that every manifestation is in essence the expression of a Divine Thought. This being so, our own mind is the expression of a Divine Thought. The Divine Thought has produced something which itself is capable of thinking; but the question is whether its thinking had the same creative quality as that of the Parent Mind.

—THOMAS TROWARD (1847-1916)

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

The Rosicrucian concept of thought allows us to make clear certain interesting ideas. Indeed, if we assume that thought results from the interplay taking place in the brain between the vibrations of Spirit and those of the Soul, you will understand that thought corresponds to a process situated between two worlds—the material world and the spiritual world. According to the state of consciousness in which we find ourselves, either the vibrations of Spirit or those of Soul predominate. The alternation of that predominance suffices to explain how our mental faculties, depending on circumstances, are more oriented toward the outer world or, on the contrary, toward the inner world. Thus, in a wakeful state, our attention is mostly concentrated on our surroundings. Our thought is under the domination of the vibrations of Spirit and corresponds to the objective activity of our consciousness. When we pray or meditate, the vibrations of the Soul predominate. We are under the direct influence of our subconscious, or even of the Cosmic Consciousness, which is within us.

When we consider the phenomenon of thought from a metaphysical angle, we can understand truths which a purely rational analysis cannot reveal. That is why, after having considered what science says on a specific subject, we often bring it back to a philosophical and mystical level in order to highlight laws you must remember so that the knowledge we are transmitting to you will be truly useful to your spiritual quest. As we emphasized in a previous monograph, human knowledge is relative. What scientists state today regarding thought and mental processes reflects their understanding of the moment. Thus, it is probable that their research will compel them to revise some of their postulates in the near future. Ten years from now, one hundred years from now, a thousand years from now, the definition Rosicrucians give to thought will still be valid. As long as human beings are incarnated on Earth, the human brain will be the seat of an interplay between the vibrations of Spirit and those of Soul. This knowledge comes to us from the teachings that were perpetuated in the Mystery Schools of ancient Egypt. Those who dispensed such teachings were Masters, most of whom had received Illumination. Therefore, the learning they transmitted to us cannot age, because it is not the result of their intellectual speculations; it is the result of a wisdom acquired through a perfect harmonization with the Universal Consciousness.



THE POWER OF THOUGHT: The time has come to begin the study of some of the mental faculties most useful to the human being. Before doing so, let us consider an important point. The power of thought itself is very broad. However, this power necessarily involves limits. We emphasize this point because this matter is subject to numerous exaggerations. For instance, some schools of philosophy teach that it is possible, by means of sustained concentration, to dematerialize oneself and thereby go through walls. To explain this possibility, they claim that human beings can act upon the subatomic particles of their body and make them separate from one another when in contact with another substance. According to these schools, the only obstacles to such a dematerialization are the fear, apprehension, or doubt it arouses within us.

The problem is not so simple. From a Rosicrucian point of view, it is impossible to go through a wall physically. Matter owes its structure and its solidity to the forces of cohesion, adhesion, attraction, and repulsion vibrating within it under the impulse of Spirit. If these forces were not exerted continuously in material substances, houses would sink into the ground, objects would pass through tables, our body would collapse in on itself, etc. For us to dematerialize, it would be necessary for the atomic structure of our entire being to disintegrate into its component particles. Supposing that such a disintegration were possible, we would become Spirit and Soul in the pure state. We would no longer be subject to the limitations of time and space, and there would be no reason for us to want to go through walls. Such a process would be irreversible, because we would no longer have the power to materialize our body.

Dematerialization is thus impossible and therefore it cannot be the way to conquer the limits imposed upon us by the material world. The only value in this kind of speculation is to awaken our imagination and to draw attention to the unity of our mental faculties.

In the Postulant Section, we stated that it was possible to go beyond the barriers of time and space. We will gradually prove to you that this is true. However, you will discover for yourself that such a possibility does not apply to our physical body, only to our psychic body, because it is that body and that body alone which can pass through walls, travel considerable distances, perceive manifestations of the invisible, etc. When the moment arrives, we will teach you how to proceed successfully.



Let us consider another exaggerated example of the power of thought. We frequently hear or read that the pyramids of Egypt

were built solely through the power of levitation. It is true that the placement of enormous blocks of stone was facilitated by the use of certain faculties and knowledge mastered by the Initiates of the period; however, their construction also required a considerable amount of labor and technical skill calling upon human physical strength. Countless legends have appeared to explain how such monuments were erected, because historians, until the present time, have been unable to describe the exact methods that were used. On the psychological level, the unknown opens the doors to the imagination, because human beings often seek to forget their weaknesses and limitations by envisioning the powers they would like to possess. Thus, heroic myth has the goal of objectifying the physical, mental, and spiritual qualities which each individual, in his or her innermost self, dreams of acquiring.

We could cite numerous other examples to show that the power of thought is the object of much speculation. Certainly, such a power exists, and it is often misunderstood. The power of thought is frequently applied to things or to situations having no direct connection with it. It is true that the human consciousness, in its entirety, possesses faculties enabling human beings to exert considerable control over matter. However, such faculties can operate only within the limits of natural and universal laws. If we were capable of using our mind to act on the material world as we saw fit, a permanent chaos would result in all realms of existence, because each of us, according to our whims and desires, could transform our material environment to suit ourselves. However, we cannot substitute ourselves for Cosmic Consciousness, which acts only within the limits of its own laws, contributing without exception to the maintenance of universal harmony. As stated by the Hermetic Emerald Tablet, "That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below." Thus, human consciousness, in the image of Cosmic Consciousness, has at its disposal a creative power that can be applied only with respect for certain natural and universal laws.

CONCENTRATION: We now come to the study of the first of the mental faculties we will examine in this Atrium: concentration. Many works have been devoted to this faculty, and yet it is often treated solely from a psychological standpoint. It is just as important to consider its mystical application because such an application forms the basis of most of the experiments you will perform within the framework of our Order. From a Rosicrucian point of view, concentration is the ability to channel our physical, mental, or psychic energy so as to attain



a specific objective. We distinguish three forms of concentration: physical, mental, and psychic.

Physical concentration consists of channeling all our muscular energy in that part of the body—shoulders, arms, back, legs, etc.—which is about to be used. Thus, when athletes are in a state of concentration before a race, a considerable amount of their energy potential is directed toward a specific area of their body, which results in enhancing the physiological performances of that area considerably. Mental concentration may be directed toward the outer world or may concern abstract ideas originating within ourselves. As for psychic concentration, it consists of channeling our psychic energy toward a given point. This is only possible when our psychic consciousness is sufficiently awakened. This awakening will be the subject of the work we shall undertake during this Neophyte Section.

When our mental concentration is directed toward the outer world, it concerns itself with things we perceive by means of our five objective senses. Its purpose is to give full attention to what we see, hear, touch, smell, or taste. What matters is that our thought is concentrated exclusively on the object of our attention. If it concerns a thing we are looking at, only our sense of sight should be called upon, to the exclusion of the others—and that thing alone must be the center of our visual and mental activity. If our concentration involves some sound or noise to which we listen, we must see to it that we are only sensitive to the sound impressions transmitted by our hearing. The principle is the same when we focus our mind on an odor, a flavor, or the form of an object. We can generally say that concentration consists of being fully one with the thing upon which we focus our attention. When this unity is fully realized, there comes a time when we completely lose consciousness of what we are, of the place where we are, and of all sensory impressions, with the exception of those impressions coming from that thing.

EXPERIMENTS: In the next few days we suggest that you carry out the experiments outlined below as regularly as possible. Their purpose, as you will note, is to develop your power of concentration, and, more particularly, that power as it relates to the outside world. Give them your undivided attention, because they constitute the basis of your future work.



- When walking along the street, look for a few moments at a store window of your choice. Concentrate and try to mentally

photograph the objects that are on display. After a few minutes, turn away and enumerate the objects one by one. Verify your success and resume this process until you are able to reassemble the entire window display.

- Choose a piece of music of your choice and listen to it carefully. While doing so, isolate each instrument that is used and name each one aloud as soon as you recognize it. What matters in this experiment is not your ability to distinguish these instruments; rather it is your ability to maintain your concentration throughout the musical composition.
- Go for a stroll in a public park, a forest, or any other place where you can smell the fragrances emanating from the flowers and vegetation. Sit down, close your eyes, and concentrate only on the odors that reach you. During the course of this concentration, think only about those odors to such a degree that you have the sensation of merging with them.
- During your walk, stop at a place where there are stones and, without looking at them, pick one up at random. With your eyes closed, concentrate on its shape by feeling it with your fingers. Define by touch its angles, curves, hollows, rough parts, smooth parts, etc. While doing this, try to see it mentally in its entirety. After a few minutes of concentration, open your eyes and verify whether the shape of this stone corresponds to what you imagined as you touched it.
- The next time you eat a piece of fruit, take the time to savor it—in other words, to concentrate on its taste. Most of the time we do not pay sufficient attention to the flavor of food. This is unfortunate, because the awakening of our sensitivity to taste can produce interesting psychological and psychic experiences. Therefore, perform this simple experiment whenever you have the opportunity. You may also use a more complex dish. In that case, concentrate on its taste and try to determine the various ingredients composing it.

It is with these few experiments that we will close today's study. In the next monograph we will continue our examination of concentration and we will pass to a new stage in its practical application.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,
YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.—Unto Thee I Grant

Let us emphasize once again the importance of the experiments that have been suggested to you today. Despite their apparent simplicity, they are very effective for developing your power of concentration. As you will note as you progress through the degrees of our Order, this power forms the basis for most of those mystical faculties that you will be taught as part of your Rosicrucian studies (telepathy, psychic projection, absent healing, vibroturgy, telekinesis, etc.). Thus, it is important that you learn right away how to concentrate your mental energy toward a specific goal.

You will note that each of these experiments requires the use of one of your five objective senses—namely, sight, hearing, touch, smell, or taste—and they are quite useful for increasing the clarity involving these senses, thus allowing you to acquire a sharper perception of the material world. We suggest that you now train yourself to memorize the sensory impressions coming to you from your environment, because such memorization is indispensable to visualization, a faculty that we will study soon.

Summary of This Monograph

After carefully reading this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major principles on which you are to reflect and meditate in coming days. If any of the points are difficult to understand, refer to the explanations given in this monograph. Moreover, we advise you to read this summary again immediately before your next sanctum period.

- ¶ Since thought results from the interplay occurring in the brain between the vibrations of Spirit and those of the Soul, it corresponds to a process situated between two worlds—the material world and the spiritual world.
- ¶ According to the state of consciousness in which we find ourselves, either the vibrations of Spirit or those of Soul predominate. In the first case, our mental activity is rather objective. In the second, it is under the direct influence of our subconscious, or even of the Cosmic Consciousness within us.
- ¶ Dematerialization is impossible and is not the way to conquer the limits imposed upon us by the material world.
- ¶ Human consciousness, as a whole, possesses faculties which enable humans to exert control over matter. However, such faculties can only be exercised within the limits of natural and universal laws.
- ¶ From a Rosicrucian point of view, concentration is the ability to channel our physical, mental, or psychic energy so as to attain a specific objective.
- ¶ Mental concentration may be directed toward the outer world or it may concern abstract ideas originating within ourselves.
- ¶ When our mental concentration is directed toward the outer world, it concerns things we perceive through our five objective senses. Its purpose is to give our complete attention to what we see, hear, touch, smell, or taste.



First Atrium No. 7



CONCURRENCE

In concurrence with this monograph, we suggest that you read an excerpt from *The Golden Bough*, written by James George Frazer. In this work, the author describes admirably the importance of fire among primitive tribes. What he said on the subject of the Damaras and Hereros allows us to understand how and why prehistoric people venerated fire and made it an object of worship. Fire radically transformed their life and symbolically marked the beginning of human civilization. Millennia have passed since then, and still fire exerts a great fascination over us. This is because the mystical experience resulting from its discovery is forever engraved in the consciousness of the human Soul.

The Damaras or Hereros (tribes), in southwestern Africa, maintain sacred fires in their villages, and their customs and beliefs in this respect present a close resemblance to the Roman worship of Vesta.

The sacred fire is regarded as the centre of the village; from it, at evening, the people fetch a light to kindle the fire on their own hearths, for every householder has his own private hearth in front of his hut. At the holy hearth are kept the most sacred possessions of the tribe, to wit, the bundle of sticks which represent their ancestors; here sacrifices are offered and enchantments performed; here the flesh of the victims is cooked; here is the proper place of the chief; here the elders assemble in council, and judgment is given; here strangers are received and ambassadors entertained So great is the veneration felt by the natives for the sacred hearth, with its hallowed bough, that they dare not approach it without testifying their deepest respect.

When a man goes forth from the village with his family and servants to herd the cattle on a distant pasture, or to found another village, he takes with him a burning brand from the sacred hearth wherewith to kindle the holy fire in his new home.

If the sacred fire should go out through the neglect of the priestess, a sudden shower of rain, or any other accident, the Herero deem it a very evil omen. The whole tribe is immediately summoned and large offerings of cattle are made as an expiation.

—JAMES GEORGE FRAZER (1854-1941)

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In the previous monograph we taught you the principles for concentrating your objective faculties on impressions linked to our material environment. We hope that you have paid due attention to the experiments that were suggested to you for this purpose as they are very effective for developing your power of concentration and increasing the potential of your sensory perception.

We will now enter into a new stage and ask you to concentrate on a medium having an intermediate nature between the material and immaterial worlds. To accomplish this, we will use a candle flame, because it truly constitutes an ideal focal point for developing a certain form of mental concentration. The candle flame has been associated for centuries with an important symbolism—that of fire. Although a candle flame is a very small manifestation, it possesses all of the physical and metaphysical virtues. Thus, we will begin by examining the reasons that have contributed to making fire the symbol of laws that are particularly important in the realm of esotericism. Of the four elements, fire is the one to which the mystics of the past have devoted the greatest veneration because, as we shall see, its properties apply to matter as well as to consciousness.

THE SYMBOLISM OF FIRE: Since the dawn of human civilization, fire has been regarded as a source of warmth and light. No one can say exactly at what moment or how early human beings discovered it. However, it is certain that their ability to produce fire of their own free will counts among those events which revolutionized their lives. On the physical level, it brought incalculable well-being. People could stay warm when it was cold, cook their food, and protect themselves more efficiently against predators. This feeling of protection exerted a positive influence on their emotional state, because the fear in which they lived—especially at night—yielded to a feeling of safety. Finally, fire was the source of their spiritual awakening. By allowing fire to burn in the cave they used as shelter, early human beings prolonged their hours of wakefulness and used it as a basis for their first meditations. Thus, the discovery of fire made it possible for them to conquer not only the outer darkness, but also the darkness which, for millennia, had prevented them from contemplating their own inner light.

Fire was the source of a profound mystical experience because, while it contributed to the physical well-being of populations, it also allowed them to reflect on their own condition and to gain awareness of the spiritual dimension of their being. It was natural



for this element to become an object of veneration and to serve as a basis for the first primitive religions. We shall soon see how religious cults were born and how they marked the gradual evolution of human consciousness.

According to classical literature, the mystical use of fire dates back to Zoroastrianism—to approximately the 10th century BCE. For Zoroaster, fire was the representation of Ahura Mazda, the angel of light and of good, which opposed Ahriman, the demon of darkness and of evil. Many Hermetic writings indicate that from the most remote antiquity, fire was an integral part of religious ceremonies. In the temples of ancient Egypt a sacred flame burned continuously in the Holy of Holies. Under no circumstances was this flame to be extinguished because, if such an event occurred, it was thought to be the sign of a curse and the temporary victory of forces of evil over those of good. Chosen persons, most often young girls, had the duty of watching over the flame. They had to keep watch day and night and were held responsible before God and the Kheri-Hebs for what would happen if the flame were extinguished.

The importance attached to the perpetual fire is also found in the temples of ancient Greece, where a special cult was devoted to Hestia who, among the Greeks, was the goddess of fire. Once again, tradition indicates that it was young girls who, under the protection of Hestia, watched over the sacred flame. In ancient Rome, the same principle was applied to the deity Vesta, the guardian of fire and the hearth. The cult of this deity was ensured by young priestesses who were called *Vestals*. Today we may still see, among the ruins of some Roman temples, the remains of small houses which served as the residences of the Vestals. Due to its profound symbolism, such a tradition has been perpetuated in our era. In certain rituals in the Lodges and Chapters of our Order, a young girl has the role of lighting the candles located on the Shekinah, the central altar of the Temple. For centuries, she has been designated by the traditional name of *Colombe*.

Today, in temples dedicated to various religions—including those of Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and other religious denominations—we find that fire is always present in one form or another. In certain instances, it is represented by candle-holders; in others, by tapers and candles; in yet others,



by oil lamps. No matter what implement is used, its symbolism remains the same—to represent the Cosmic Light on the earthly plane. The mystical use of fire dates back to the time when humans began to distinguish good from evil and associated the former with light and the latter with darkness. This idea is found in many

religious texts, and they have made fire the symbol of human virtue, or the expression of Divine Perfection.

In the Vedas, for example, the Deity is itself considered to be a fire that lights and warms bodies as well as souls. In the Old and New Testaments, the symbolism of fire and flame is used many times. Once again, it is related to good and to all the qualities people must demonstrate to reflect the Celestial Light. Many verses of the Koran compare the human soul to a flame ceaselessly consuming itself and containing within the attributes of Divine Fire. The sacred Scriptures refer to these attributes and associate them with the spiritual nature of human beings.

THE ALCHEMY OF FIRE: Let us consider another aspect of the symbolism associated with fire. Fire is not limited to the representation of good or to the presence of God on Earth. In all traditions and in most religions, a power of purification and regeneration is also attributed to it. That is because fire, in its earthly expression, is an agent that can consume a large number of material substances. In this respect, fire is the only element capable of totally transmuting one form of matter into another—and even reducing it completely to ashes or steam. Moreover, it is used to sanitize and purify objects or places, because no impurity, whether of mineral or organic origin, can resist its action.

All of these physical properties made fire the basic element of material alchemy, which became the basis of modern chemistry. In their laboratories, alchemists used fire to purify certain base metals—particularly lead—so as to transmute them into gold. This purification and transformation took place in several stages, which became increasingly difficult as the operation progressed. Yet this material alchemy was only the counterpart of a spiritual alchemy that was based on the gradual purification of the human soul. Alchemists knew that the purpose of existence is to evolve toward Perfection and that this evolution requires that human beings purify themselves of their faults and transmute them into their opposite qualities. Furthermore, alchemists understood that such a purification and transmutation could only be done by contact with the mundane world, because it alone furnishes us with the experiences necessary for our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual regeneration.

In the original version of the sacred Scriptures we find very specific references to the alchemical power of fire. All these references clearly establish that this power was primarily associated with the various transmutations that people must experience in the



course of their earthly evolution. Unfortunately, the statements were corrupted by literal interpretations, thus giving rise to dogmas that were no longer connected with the mystical principles involved. Most present-day religions refer to the fires of purgatory and of hell, suggesting that such are real places where the soul of the dead is purged of its faults and purified of its sins before being admitted to Heaven or Paradise. This involves an erroneous interpretation of the true symbolism of fire, for it is obvious that such places do not exist and are purely symbolic.

From a Rosicrucian point of view, Earth itself constitutes the purgatory and the hell of humanity. As alchemists have claimed and as mystics have taught for centuries, it is during our earthly existence that human beings face the trials necessary for the purification of our personality and the gaining of awareness of our Divine Self. The material world is thus the crucible in which the evolution of our spiritual nature is wrought. Moreover, it is in the here and now that each of us experiences the physical, moral, and spiritual sufferings that are the lot of all human beings incarnate on this plane.

For Rosicrucians, fire symbolizes the laws and principles that Rosicrucian Masters have associated with it since the earliest times. In its mundane appearance fire corresponds to the highest expression of the visible manifestations of Spirit. It is precisely because of its high vibratory frequency that it has the power to transmute material forms placed in contact with it. Furthermore, this frequency makes it an intermediate agent between the material world and the spiritual world, because its vibrations are such that it is both substance and essence while being neither one nor the other. Although we may see and observe the colors of fire, it is impossible to seize fire, to contain it, or to impose a form on it, unless, of course, we resort to special technical means.

On the alchemical level, fire represents the mystical process operating continuously in human beings and which, at the end of each individual's successive incarnations, allows that person to receive illumination, the influx of wisdom resulting from perfect harmonization with Cosmic Consciousness. Such illumination can be obtained only after we have completely purified ourselves of our imperfections through contact with the Divine Fire illuminating the altar of our inner Temple. It is this Divine Fire which constitutes the Philosopher's Stone alluded to by alchemists in their writings. Thus, contrary to what many believed and still believe, it does not designate and has never designated a stone of material nature, but rather the Divine Essence animating our being and whose radiance



and virtues we must learn to express in each of our thoughts, words, and actions. In that sense, it is the most precious of jewels we have to discover. On the spiritual level, Rosicrucians give to fire the symbolic meaning that has been always associated with it: the presence on Earth of Cosmic Light and the presence of Universal Good.

In addition to the alchemical and spiritual symbolism that the teachings of our Order attribute to fire, Rosicrucians also use the flame to represent life, such as that manifesting in the universe, including on our planet. In this regard, we note that all living beings draw their vitality from the air they breathe. Likewise, fire cannot burn when this element is absent. It is because of this special symbolism that Rosicrucians do not extinguish a candle flame by blowing upon it. We feel that the breath is the expression of Vital Life Force animating our beings and it should not be used to make the symbol of life itself disappear. Thus, when Rosicrucians extinguish the flame of one or more candles during the course of a ritual, we use a snuffer, because that flame represents for us the spark of life illuminating the body, heart, and soul.

To conclude our study of the symbolism of fire, we bring to your attention the following text that is taken from the archives of our Order and shows the interest that mystics attach to this symbol:

Think of the forms taken by fire when it flickers soundlessly, when it winds, twists, widens, lengthens, and then dips and contracts. Note its changes of color as it increases its ardor. See the imaginary forms shooting forth from its flames, propelled into space as lightning flashes toward Earth. Behold the sky lit by thousands of stars, like a sparkling sea reflecting a single flame. The latent heat of generative fires is found in the coldest flint, in the clearest and purest air, in oxygen, in ozone, in each thing and in all things, because fire is a truly royal principle, of supernatural splendor. It purifies all things and makes them become invisible. The sacred ceremony of fire prevails in all religious cults. It is a universal symbol, a visible representation of the invisible. For, just as fire is everywhere, God is also everywhere, around us and within us, and thus we are humans enlightened by God. That is why the unknown God was worshiped in the last form that humans could imagine, fire, which was known as their shadow. In all this it is not the natural fire we contemplate, but the mystical, celestial, divine fire.

EXPERIMENT: After these general considerations on the symbolism of fire, here is the experiment that you should carry out



as regularly as possible during the next few days. In doing this, we ask that you extinguish one of the two candles on your sanctum and place the other in the middle of the altar. After doing this, sit approximately 2 meters (6.5 feet) away from the lit candle and observe the following instructions:

Put your hands on your knees and place your feet flat on the ground, slightly apart from each other. Keep your back as straight as possible and relax for a few moments while taking three deep neutral breaths. In other words, inhale and exhale deeply through the nose without interruption between inhalations and exhalations.

As soon as you feel fully relaxed, concentrate your gaze on the candle flame and avoid blinking your eyes if possible. Maintain this concentration until you experience the feeling of being one with the candle flame. At that moment, you must no longer be conscious of who you are or the point where you are. Only have the feeling of being the flame itself—light and heat.

When your concentration is at its peak and when you have succeeded in creating a perfect unity between yourself and the candle flame, stop this experiment. If you wish, observe a brief pause and repeat the experiment entirely. Whatever the results obtained, definitely stop at the end of your second attempt, at least for this sanctum period.

When you have finished, put the lit candle back in place and light the other one again. This experiment is very effective in developing your power of mental concentration. Moreover, it will aid in the special work you will carry out during our next meeting. After reading the Practical Application and the summary, have a brief period of meditation, and then close your sanctum period with the simple ritual presented to you in the first monograph of this Atrium.

Before closing this ritual, you may wish to read this monograph a second time, because a single reading is not sufficient to assimilate its contents fully. This recommendation is also valid for all of the teachings that are transmitted to you within the framework of your affiliation with our Order.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.—Unto Thee I Grant

In connection with the study of the symbolism that mystics have attributed to fire and flame for centuries, we feel that it is important to make a few remarks regarding the importance you should give to the use of incense, especially when you prepare to study a monograph or retire to your sanctum to meditate. For obvious reasons, incense is associated with the alchemical power of fire, because it is impossible to burn incense without resorting to a source of heat. Moreover, as it is consumed, its transmutation gives rise to a scent which, on the vibratory plane, is in perfect harmony with the consciousness of the soul. This explains why smelling such an odor awakens within us a desire and need for introspection or contemplation.

Some people do not like the scent of incense or cannot even tolerate it. Often it is not the odor itself which causes their aversion; rather, incense is associated with a religious context they may dislike. You will note that many individuals who have a certain “allergy” to incense do not like the atmosphere of churches and generally do not feel attracted to mysticism. In some cases, it may involve a mental block or a form of superstition concerning everything connected with religion.

Among people interested in spirituality, it is very rare to find an individual who dislikes the odor of incense and who does not take pleasure in burning some regularly at home. To the odor is added the symbolism that may be seen in the motion of incense vapors as they rise in a room, materializing the elevation of consciousness, the spiritual ascent that allows the individual to receive Illumination. The use of incense is an extra element for creating in one’s home or sanctum an atmosphere favorable to the study and application of mysticism. Of course, it is not a matter of burning some in just any place or at all times, for it must be used respectfully and in a proper context.

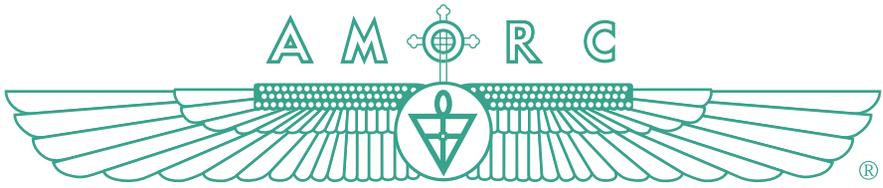
Summary of This Monograph

After carefully reading this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major principles on which you are to reflect and meditate in coming days. If any of the points are difficult to understand, refer to the explanations given in this monograph. Moreover, we advise you to read this summary again immediately before your next sanctum period.

- ¶ Of the four elements, fire is certainly the one to which the mystics of the past devoted the greatest veneration, as its properties apply to matter as well as to consciousness.
- ¶ The discovery of fire is one of the events that most revolutionized the life of early human beings on the physical, emotional, and spiritual levels.
- ¶ From remote antiquity, fire has been an integral part of religious ceremonies. In the temples of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, a sacred flame burned continuously under the protection of young priestesses.
- ¶ Today, in temples consecrated to various religions—including those of Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and any other religious creeds—we find that fire is always present in one form or another.
- ¶ The mystical use of fire dates back to the time when human beings began to distinguish good from evil and associated the former with light and the latter with darkness. This is expressed in religious texts, because all have made fire the symbol of human virtue or the expression of Divine Perfection.
- ¶ Fire has always been the basic element of material alchemy. However, the latter was only the counterpart of a spiritual alchemy that was based on the gradual purification of the human soul. That is why fire also symbolizes the gradual regeneration of humanity.
- ¶ For Rosicrucians, fire, in its mundane appearance, corresponds to the highest expression of the manifestations of Spirit. On the alchemical and spiritual planes, we attribute to fire the symbolism that past Masters have always associated with it.

NOTES

*Consecrated to truth
and dedicated to every Rosicrucian*



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