



# **Brosicrucian** BEACON ONLINE

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BPOCICPYCІA

MYSTICISM - SCIENCE - THE ARTS

VOLUME 1 - NO. 1



**W**HEREAS LIFE IS NOT ALWAYS A PERFUMED ROSE GARDEN, one can't help but notice how for some, it almost could be. For them, everything seems to flow so harmoniously, and whilst not necessarily materially wealthy, they radiate an inner wealth of happiness and peace which is the envy of all. So how do they do it?

Well, one thing they all seem to have in common is that they long ago dared to take charge of their destiny! Examining *needs* rather than *wants*, and true *values* rather than *passing fads*, such people realised that more than anything else, what they needed to learn was to rely upon their *own insights* rather than those of others, come to their *own conclusions* rather than accept the conclusions of others, and above all, to take their *own decisions* in life and for better or worse, *live with the consequences of their own actions*.

The *Rosicrucian Order* assists people to find within themselves their own, personal "*higher wisdom*," something which exists as a potential in all human beings. Developing this inner understanding can lead to what sages and avatars of all ages have referred to simply as "*Illumination*," a pure state of joy, perfection and achievement beyond our fondest hopes.

Gaining this knowledge and experience is not merely an academic exercise, it is a *series of practical steps* needed in order to gain first proficiency and eventually mastery over our daily thoughts and actions. Instruction in the steps necessary to reach these goals is what the *Rosicrucian Order* has to offer. Its approach to inner development has brought happiness, peace and success into the affairs of thousands of people in the past and you too can benefit from it if you wish.

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# Theory and Practice of Rosicrucian Living

*by Grand Master  
Sven Johansson*

**W**E ALL HAVE OUR personal ways of viewing life, its laws, and how we interact with them, and looking at the personal philosophies of many over the years there is indeed a multitude of ways of living that seem to generate peace and happiness. But whilst these “ways” are often linked directly to the cultural diversity of our planet, what I have noticed is that there are, despite outward differences, a few specific things that are virtually guaranteed to bring into our lives all those qualities that we seek as mystics: peace, harmony, health, happiness, tranquillity, compassion and suchlike.

In this article I will outline some of the theoretical and practical aspects of the Rosicrucian teachings that I have found particularly helpful in my life. I want to stress from the outset that I am not presenting any new dogma or radical theory, and certainly nothing new as far as Rosicrucians are concerned. I am merely outlining what I have personally found useful over the years through emphasis on certain well-known Rosicrucian principles of living, and you are free to accept or reject any part of it.

Rosicrucians pride themselves in being “walking question marks” and when better ways of viewing and understanding the mystery of their existence appear on their inner horizon, they avidly seek to unravel that new and potentially greater vision they have acquired, in fact eagerly incorporate their new insights into their deepest thoughts and beliefs.

To one extent or another, whether consciously or subconsciously, we all seek to better understand ourselves and the principles we should be using in guiding our daily living, and one could even go so far as to say that this curiosity, this constant desire for “improvement” and understanding is an innate biological mandate over which we have little control..., and perhaps thankfully so!

Yet, although we may have developed ways of doing things that work for us more or less by rote or habit, would it not be so much more satisfying if we could do these things always with a clear and fully satisfying conscious understanding of the rationale or theory upon which our thoughts and actions are based? Of

course it would, and I will now outline this theory and practice as applied to my personal life.

## THEORY

Before mentioning some of the practical things I deliberately do in life as a personal strategy of evolvment, let me briefly outline the theory upon which I base my thoughts and actions. I will mention six basic principles of existence.

### The Law of Singularity or the Monad

The first principle is what I call the *Law of Singularity* or simply the *Monad* (see diagram on following page). In most philosophies and religions of the world, it is postulated that there is an ultimate actuality beyond which nothing else can exist, and that within this singularity or monad lies, if not the whole of creation, then at least the whole of creation that we could ever aspire to perceive.

This singularity is infinite in every way. It is the One, and outside it, nothing else can exist. It is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega of everything that exists, has existed and ever can exist. No thought or concept can ever span it in its entirety; and certainly nothing can go beyond it. A thousand years ago, the great Muslim theologian Avicenna called it *Nous*, the "Active Intellect," and in Rosicrucian terminology, it is still referred to simply as "Nous."

### The Law of Duality

The second principle is what I call the *Law of Duality*. Whatever we can conceive must have an equal though opposite mirror image of itself somewhere in the universe, either now, in the past or in the future. In the case of our existence, we are a duality, being composed of two infinite though seemingly opposed qualities of Nous, namely *Spirit energy* infused with *Vital Life Force*. We are matter animated by Soul. We speak of both as though they were energies, and whilst this may assist us in intellectually dealing with them

as concepts, they are perhaps better described as *principles* which transcend all understanding.

### The Law of the Triangle

The third principle is the well-known Rosicrucian *Law of the Triangle*. Every single thing that can clearly be identified, either physically or conceptually, is the result of the union of two other apparently separate and clearly identifiable things or properties. Every manifestation is the result of two simultaneous causes. In our case, Spirit and Vital Life Force, namely, matter infused with Soul, gives rise to a third condition, called *Consciousness*. And this consciousness manifests in its highest form as the *soul personality* with its infinite qualities and tremendous refinement, filtering through like shaded moonlight to the outer personality, the character by which we are known.

### The Law of Compensation

The fourth principle is the equally well-known *Law of Compensation*. Everything we think, say or do has consequences which intimately involve us every step of the way. Simply put, if we do good, we can expect to receive good in return; and if we do bad, then we can expect to receive the same in return. That is the law, very crudely and bluntly stated; the old "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" principle, though on a far more sophisticated level.

On the material plane, the law manifests as Isaac Newton's famous third law of motion: "*For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.*" On the mental, psychic and spiritual planes, it manifests as the famous injunction attributed to the master Jesus: "*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*" In other words, whatever you do, be fully prepared to have that same thing happen to you; otherwise do not do it.

In the realm of inner development, we refer to the law of compensation as the *Law of Karma*, the word "karma" originating with the Sanskrit root "krm" which roughly translates as

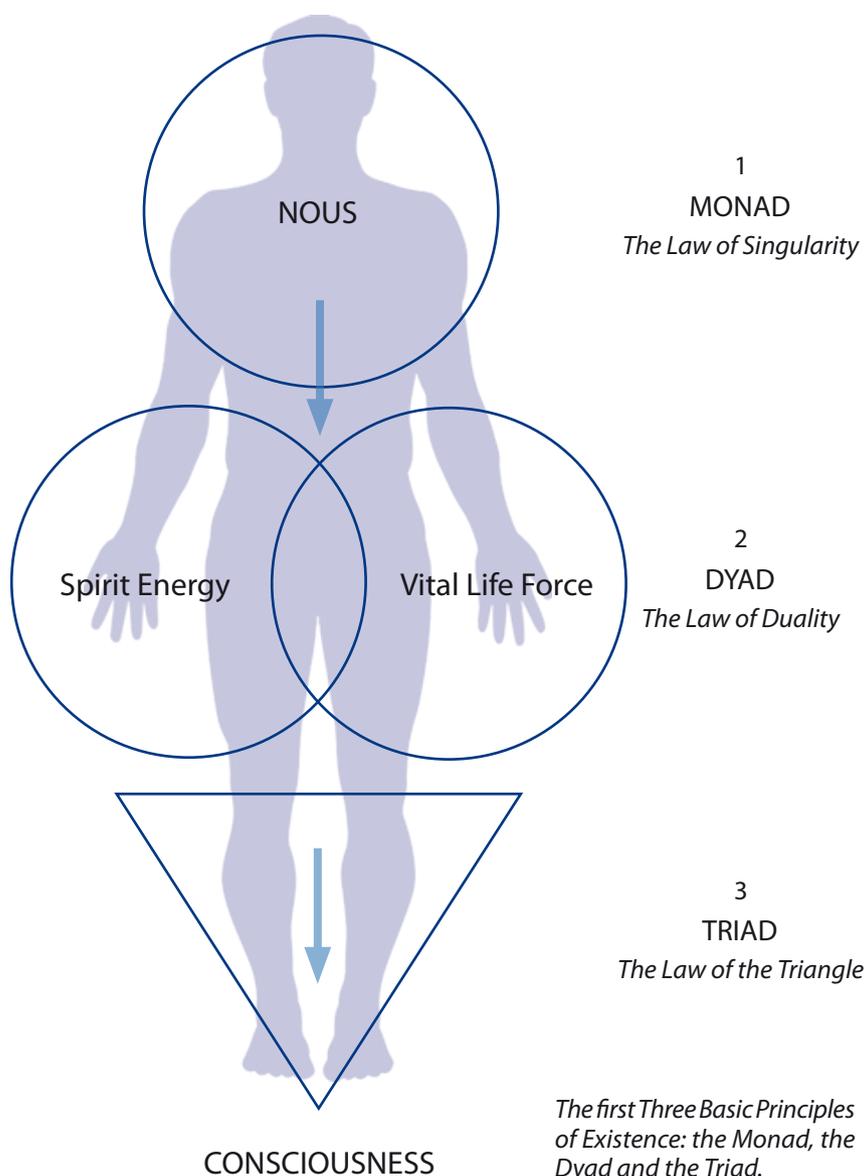
“action.” For every act or thought we have, there are consequences, and those consequences we call “karma in action” or simply compensation. The consequences are like ripples on a pond; they last through time, sometimes only briefly, sometimes much longer. The law says nothing about punishment, nor anything about reward for it is a totally impartial law, delivering like for like, just rewards for just actions. Our thoughts and actions, so to speak, “press” against the awareness or consciousness of other living beings in the universe, and the pressure of those thoughts and actions have undeniable consequences because the collective consciousness of other living beings “presses back” and thereby ensures that karma manifests in our lives.

Understanding just what the consequences of our actions are, and exactly how the collective consciousness of the universe presses back at us when we apply pressure to it, this is the heart of the matter, and what we are seeking to learn; for once we have mastered our understanding of the consequences of our actions, we will have begun the process of merging our outer self with the soul personality, and will be well on our way to mastering our lives.

Knowing in advance what our thoughts and actions will yield, are a great incentive to doing the “right thing.” Unlike a physical law, which acts immediately, the law of karma is a law with immense patience and intelligence which metes out the consequences of our actions piecemeal, as and when we are best able to absorb the lessons waiting for us.

## The Law of the Reincarnation

The fifth principle is the *Law of Reincarnation*. Whereas all living entities eventually die, are we to believe that their entire awareness simply disappears, completely and utterly, never ever



again to reappear? Surely not, for what possible purpose could be served by consciousness being terminated permanently with every death? Whereas the species as a whole may continue, and through its genes even progress and evolve, this would not be the case for the individual member of that species.

No one can seriously claim to have scientific proof of the existence of reincarnation and, if we were perfectly honest with ourselves, we would freely admit that reincarnation can only be a belief, even though it is a belief based upon deep-seated inner certainties. Many Rosicrucians will agree from their personal experiences that although reincarnation may in fact only be a belief, it is one which is powerfully vouched for by the deepest recesses of our being; vouched for not only by the sheer logic and justice that the whole

concept of reincarnation brings with it, but most importantly by far, vouched for by a few personal memories and experiences which simply cannot be explained in any other way than that they are distant memories from past lives.

Regrettably, even amongst the millions of people who claim to believe that they have lived before and will live again, very few actually believe this; and their actions prove it! Not only does the law of compensation dictate that they have to pay for their actions, the law of reincarnation ensures that whatever is not paid for in this life, will be paid for in another. If such people fully understood and accepted deep down that these are not mere hypotheses, but actual laws of nature as inviolate as the law of gravity, they could not possibly engage in the thoughtless acts of brutality and selfishness that we see taking place in so many places throughout the world today.

If everyone fully understood that karma is a fact of life, and that reincarnation is a fact of their existence from which they cannot escape, they would be a whole lot more careful about how they governed their thoughts and actions.

## The Law of Light

The sixth and final principle is what I call the *Law of Light*. We allude to our spirituality as a flame of Divinity burning within the deepest recesses of our consciousness; something which constantly eggs us on to seek the Light of spiritual awareness. The Law of Light dictates that all sentient beings, no matter what their form, have no option but to seek out the highest form of spiritual awareness they are capable of perceiving.

As an innate urge, this law ensures that all living creatures, and especially those with some form of self-awareness, will seek in their particular and peculiar ways, to dwell in the Light of spiritual awareness to the greatest extent of their understanding. Dwelling in Light is the ultimate

goal of humanity, and to the extent that all human beings have within them a spark of Divinity, they are all to one extent or another, already dwelling in the Light of spiritual awareness.

Truly dwelling in this Light, and being fully aware of its presence in our lives every moment of every day, is our final destination and marks the culmination of our journey; the achievement

of perfection on earth and full mastery of life. Our every thought and action is inherently geared to reach this exalted state of being and, fortunately, the Light of spirituality is no stranger to us. With perseverance we

know we will one day in this life or another, reach an awareness of the goodness and sanctity of Divinity to such an extent that we will from then on truly be dwelling in Light.

## PRACTICE

That then summarises the theory. But how do I use these theoretical principles in my daily life? What are the practical consequences of the principles I attempt to apply each day?

First of all, let me reiterate that I find it absolutely essential to have some theory of existence clearly available to me at all times. Without a purpose or reason, there is little point in following any system of thought and action. Even if personal theories are not accurate in all details, in fact, even if they are completely wrong, the only thing that ultimately matters is that they are theories which give us satisfaction and happiness, and are logical and just to our inner sensibilities.

It gives me great fulfilment in life to believe that I understand at least some of the inner workings of my being and that from this understanding have generated several practical guideposts that I can use to ensure that my thoughts and actions lead me along my chosen path. I will mention four practical things that I do quite deliberately and as a personal strategy to keep myself upon my chosen path.

*“The Law of Light dictates that all sentient beings seek out the highest form of spiritual awareness they are capable of perceiving.”*

## Reverence for the God of my Heart

The first practical thing I do is to revere above all else, the God of my Heart. If you are of a religious bent, in plain simple words this means: *“love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your understanding.”* If you are of a non-religious bent it means: *“love the principle governing your life and everything in the universe, and do so with all your heart, all your mind, and all your understanding.”*

In my case, I had a strict religious upbringing and can unashamedly say that I take a religious approach to this and love the God I have come to know with an intensity that surpasses all else. Having this love first and foremost means that the very principle behind my existence is way and above the most important thing there is. Loving the God of our Understanding unreservedly, means that we are constantly maintaining an attraction between our mundane outer self and the most sublime we can ever hope to know.

This is the most important of all principles by which I live, and gives me the very real sensation that through every happy and unhappy moment, in success and in failure, I have beside me the constant presence of the God of my Heart. Because of this I can truly say that I experience God as a being of immense refinement walking with me wherever I go, constantly at my side and ready to help if I will but allow it to do so.

## Gratitude for the Privilege of Life.

The second practical thing I do is to adopt a deliberate inner attitude of gratitude for life; and by that I mean gratitude for everything that befalls me, be it good, bad, pleasant or unpleasant; for every experience I have is meant specifically for me, and has specific lessons to impart. It is such an honour to have life and to be allowed to experience it on such a beautiful planet. The more we good-naturedly accept our lessons as given factors from which we cannot escape, no matter how painful they may be, the faster and more thoroughly we progress in our inner evolution.

Although I may cringe and complain about the most painful experiences I have, and sometimes in despair may be heard to mumble “why me?” I do so only tongue-in-cheek and still feel great pride and happiness when I manage to overcome hardships, or learn to live with hardship with dignity and full acceptance that this lesson was meant for me and I must do all I can to glean the greatest amount of instruction from it.

Reverence for life and for the privilege I have to be able to experience life in material form here and now, in this solid world, this is a fundamental tenet of my personal philosophy. I understand full well that it is very easy to be this grateful for I have no great aches and pains, and no great physical disabilities or financial hardships to torment me. But it is also my ardent hope and secret prayer that I will, even in suffering, be able to maintain an inner attitude of equanimity, gratitude and reverence for the life I have been given, the only life I know.

## Never to Take Offence.

The third practical thing I do is to deliberately avoid taking offence for anything, no matter what the circumstances. We have all been offended or felt hurt by what others or even general events in life have done to us. If we would be perfectly honest with ourselves we would soon realise that the root cause of almost every worrying and unhappy thought we ever have, lies precisely in the conscious or unconscious act of feeling hurt or offended for one thing or another. We have all heard ourselves say many times over things like: “How dare she say that?” or “I think I deserve better treatment than this.” or “Who do you think you are to speak to me like that?” To be sure, I have said it many times, and regretted it every time, even though this regret may not have fully taken hold until well after the adrenaline flow had subsided and my better self had taken control.

We should do our best to analyse the motives for everything we think, say and do, and in this way we will soon see that those motives are not always as pure as the driven snow. Personally



*The root cause of almost every worrying and unhappy thought we ever have, lies precisely in the conscious or unconscious act of feeling hurt or offended for one thing or another.*

I fully realise that without this alertness, this constant self-examination, I could never be fully aware of just when it is that I have taken offence, and it would therefore be impossible to undo the damage that this distorted inner attitude has caused. Once we have taken offence, there is only one "right action" available to us, namely to back out of the situation as quietly and humbly as we can and fully make amends for whatever damage our offence may have caused, even if that damage was only to our pride.

This is not to say that I accept any and every insult sitting down, nor that I allow myself to be bullied and pushed around. It is simply that the inner attitude I adopt dictates that no matter how I behave outwardly for the moment, I remain at peace as far as possible, and never ever hold a grudge against anyone for what they have done. This at least, is the ideal, and is akin to forgiving always, forgiving without ever being asked to do so, and forgiving for all time. Forgiveness must be instantaneous and leave no residue of bad

feeling. It must be done automatically and with good cheer. It must truly come from the heart.

### **Every act must, at least partially, be for others...**

The last practical thing that I wish to mention is that to the best of my ability, I let every significant act be at least partially for the benefit of others and not purely for myself. This may seem a bit idealistic, but do we not live in a society where cooperation and interaction with others is essential to our well-being? Yes, I believe we do. No person is an island, and no-one can indefinitely live only for him or her self. Eventually life will overtake that person and deliver the lesson that sharing with others of the abundance of blessings that we daily receive, is a condition for continuing to receive those blessings.

Rosicrucians know the law of AMRA whereby they pass on at least part of every blessing they receive, unconditionally, with good cheer and without any expectation of reward. This law operates in our lives as surely as the law of gravity. Watch it work; watch it unfold and manifest in your life the minute you begin co-operating with it; and do so consciously with all the goodness of your heart. Give of your blessings and you will be assured of more. Keep them to yourself and they will assuredly one day end.

Those are the theoretical and practical principles upon which I base my life. I have gleaned them from the principles of living I have been taught through the *Rosicrucian Order* over half my life. And whereas they are undoubtedly not the only principles there are, and for some, not even the best principles they can conceive, I have found happiness and fulfilment through following these principles alone, and now count them as the most sacred laws of my existence. If you have not already done so, use the Order's teaching to find your own governing theoretical principles of life, and then allow your deeper self to show you precise, practical ways of putting those principles into action every moment of the remainder of your days.

*When we allow ourselves to be come immersed in the mystical life we experience many inner changes on the ascending path of our spiritual journey...*

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of the

# Influence Mystical Life

*by Robert Daniels*

**W**E ARE ALL influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Our environment, which we ourselves have helped to create, has had much effect upon us all, but the greatest influence is through our own thoughts and conduct. What we think and what we do makes us what we are. Our character is always being moulded, for better or worse, by our thoughts and the predominant feelings we experience each day. Therefore, we must come to realise that our success in life and the state of happiness or well-being we experience, can be and is determined by ourselves each moment of the day.

If we do not actively decide upon our own future and exercise proper control in directing the affairs of our lives, then we are permitting other people, friends, relatives and others, to determine what our future should be. We must, therefore, make our own judgements and decisions that will affect our daily lives for the better. Even though we may make mistakes, we come to realise that every experience is important in moulding our character and helping us to grow a little wiser each day. We will also come to realise that the decisions we make from moment to moment will enable us to truly become the master of our circumstances.

## Changes

When we enter into the arena of mystical thought and philosophy; when we allow ourselves to become immersed in the mystical life; when we look at life with all its manifold meaning, we experience definite changes in our inner lives. To enter into the mystical life constitutes a great change. It is like living in a pleasant valley for many years, then one day climbing a nearby mountain, and for the first time seeing and experiencing the tremendous panorama that lies all about us. As we consciously step into the mystical life, we begin to see the greatest possibilities that lie before us. It is like pulling aside a veil that has obscured our view for many years.

This expansion of consciousness does not happen by chance, our long history of past lives has decreed the moment of our entrance. It comes after years of aspiration, and not a little confusion about the meaning and value of life. It is to be expected that our first inquiry would be a cautious one but once we have placed ourselves firmly on the esoteric path, in search of the truth of life, there can be no turning back. Our former lives have not always served us best, so we are looking to the newly realised possibilities and potentials of which we have been afforded a glimpse. We have

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decided to embark on life's greatest adventure to seek the light that only mysticism can reveal.

Once we are well into our studies, the influence of the mystical life makes its mark upon us, refining, purifying, enhancing, beautifying and spiritualising our character. The changes are slow to take effect, but over the years the impress of the spiritual life begins to grow within and radiate from us.

## A Guiding Influence

There is a guiding influence in our lives, often unseen and unknown that leads us through the turmoil of life into a new way of thinking. The deeper issues of life confront us more often as we enter the mystical life, but we see them with greater clarity. Only when we truly understand life and all it means to us do we come to know its mystical side and its great importance to our consciousness.

The light of the soul within radiates with a new and greater brilliance as the mystical life leaves its mark upon us. The qualities of character we develop distinguish us from those who show no thought for the higher and finer things of life. Yet we have a duty to use our influence for good in the lives of other people.



We can often be surprised at the good we can achieve when we endeavour to render some useful service to others. The mystical life compels us to express ourselves and to give of ourselves that others may benefit. As the influence of the mystical life falls upon us we develop an attitude of quiet introspection and calmness that pervades our personality. Through the practice of meditation a deep sense of love grows within and is reflected in our everyday thoughts.

As we raise our thoughts, our consciousness experiences an attunement and harmony with

the inner self. The God consciousness within is then expressed in sublime feelings of love and compassion for others. Love is a key to this attunement, for when we truly express feelings of love all thought of self is put aside so that the greater self within can be experienced and understood.

This is the mystical life; the search for an understanding of all that life truly means on the physical, mental and spiritual planes. When we enter into this life with feeling insight, we will come to realise the significance and beauty of all things.

## TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE

*by Ella Wheeler-Wilcox*

*There are two kinds of people on earth today;  
Just two kinds of people, no more, I say.*

*Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood,  
The good are half bad, and the bad are half good.*

*Not the rich and the poor, for to rate a man's wealth,  
You must first know the state of his conscience and health.*

*Not the humble and proud, for in life's little span,  
Who puts on vain airs, is not counted a man.*

*Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years  
Bring each man his laughter and each man his tears.*

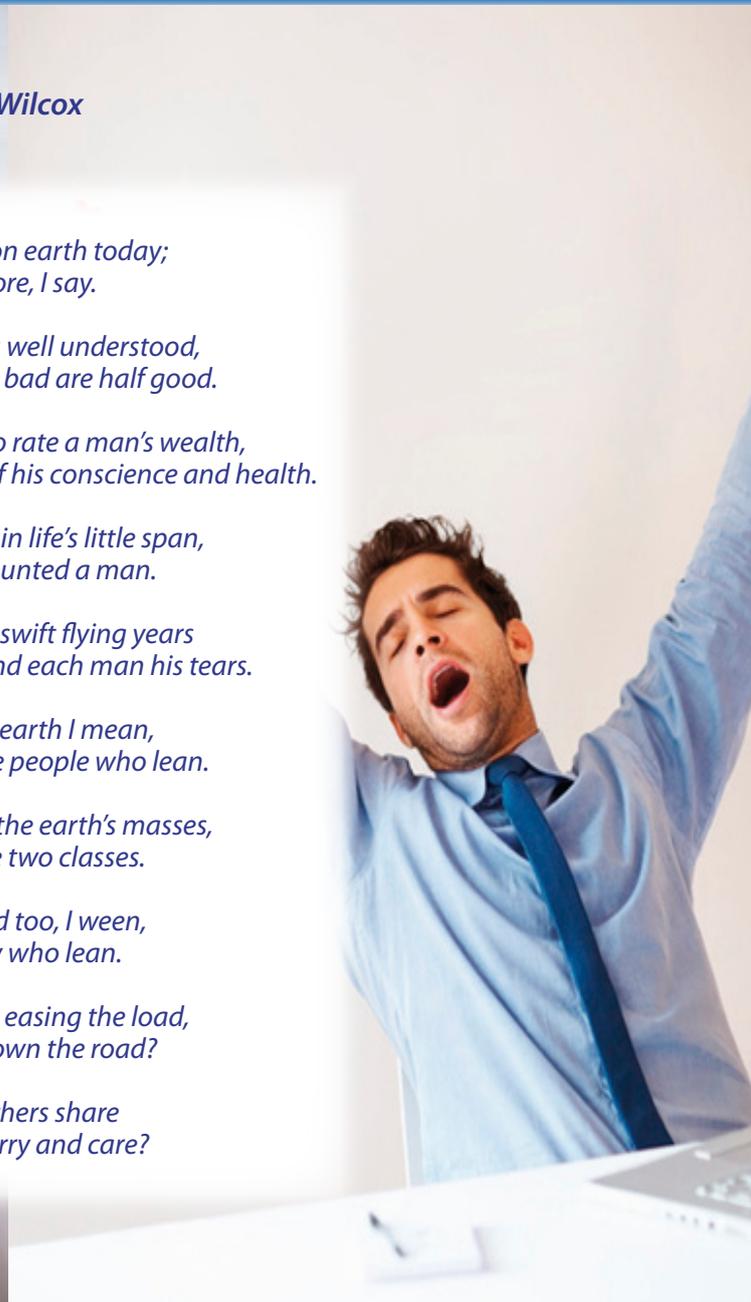
*No; the two kinds of people on earth I mean,  
Are the people who lift, and the people who lean.*

*Wherever you go, you will find the earth's masses,  
Are always divided in just these two classes.*

*And oddly enough, you will find too, I ween,  
There's only one lifter to twenty who lean.*

*In which class are you? Are you easing the load,  
Of overtaxed lifters, who toil down the road?*

*Or are you a leaner, who lets others share  
Your portion of labour, and worry and care?*



# Cosmic Law Fulfils

## Astrology and the Future



*by Arthur Piepenbrink*

**T**HE AVERAGE PERSON'S interest in astrology is limited to foretelling the future. Millions follow astrological forecasts of one sort or another, whether in newspaper, on television or even online, quite apart from those who go regularly to astrologers or fortune-tellers. There is no question that the subject is extremely popular. The daily horoscopes, so avidly read, cater to the natural desire of people to eliminate as much chance from their lives as possible.

Astrology as a fortune-telling medium has never convinced the majority of people of its validity. Very few astrologers will go so far out on a limb as to name names, dates or other specific data about future events, and those who do usually contradict others in their field. They find that their predictions rarely reflect the actual turn of events. Daily forecasts are published principally for entertainment, and they are carefully worded to promote optimism and hope.

Descriptions of personality traits for an astrological sign must necessarily apply to one-twelfth of the world's population, and yet it is difficult to catalogue or categorise people by this method. There are as many different combinations of personality traits as there are people in the world. If astrology did provide a truer analysis of people and more valid forecasts of events, it would certainly have invited the attention of serious investigators over the years. However, its inability to establish consistent evidence of these things has kept it a practice unto itself.

Many serious students of life feel that astrological forecasts or readings, however valid, are not conducive to true attainment. To them, it is a waste of time to attempt to see the future, a future that we are destined to make. Our future is not yet written, except as it is a result of our present state, and this we can change. In addition, are we to be chained to a personality pattern set by the stars? Do we possess weaknesses and failings imposed upon us by astrological influences, or are we our own master, free to shape our personality according to our higher aspirations? These are serious questions on which the Rosicrucian Order takes its stand.

## Cosmic Law

The Rosicrucian *does not ignore the part that cosmic influences play in his or her life*. We live in a sea of physical and mental forces that affect our moods, actions and decisions. These forces are subtle and in a constant state of flux. Mystics have found that generally we have a great deal of choice in the way these forces affect us. They have found that our well-being and personal progress in life are determined largely by our *application* of certain physical and mental laws. These are the same laws outlined in the Rosicrucian teaching monographs. Thus whoever who applies these laws can maintain physical and mental balance and enjoy the fullness of life, regardless of the astrological sign under which they are born.

It is not unreasonable to assume that some cosmic influences are reflected in the movements and positions of the stars and planets, for the order of the universe certainly suggests an interaction and interdependence of all cosmic manifestations. This is the larger view of astrology, and it warrants serious study and would provide a fascinating field of research.

The influences that may be indicated by the stars are only secondary in importance; *they are only one of many influences that constitute our environment*. We can be taught to discern the nature and magnitude of the forces about us through the development of our intuitive faculty, and we can shape our destiny through the

*“Do we possess weaknesses and failings imposed upon us by astrological influences, or can we shape our personality according to our higher aspirations?”*

intelligent application of our mental and physical faculties to these forces.

An unbiased investigation of astrological claims and present-day practices is important to anyone and everyone who is interested in the subject. There are no final conclusions to be reached just yet. There is much to be studied, much to be learned and much evidence to be accumulated. This is, of course, apart from the popular vein of astrological interest today, where astrologers and clients alike look for fixed answers to some of life's most pressing problems.

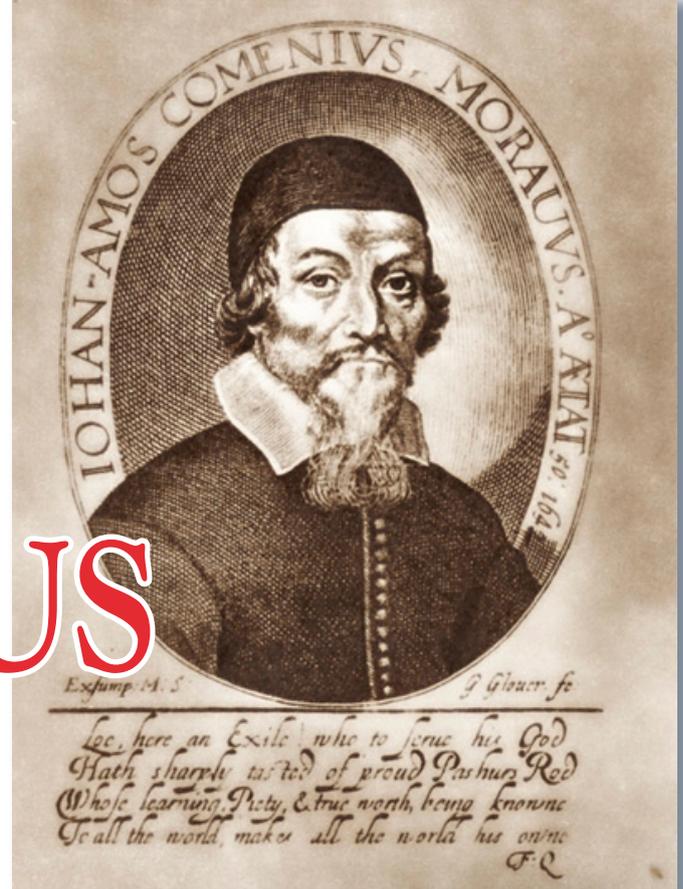
## In Conclusion

To approach astrology as a proved science that simply has to be learned, as we would take a course in college, is wrong. There is no fixed astrological science accepted by general academic science and no objective standards that can be subjected to tests or measurement. Until these are available, or until our intimate experience with astrology proves otherwise, we would be ill-advised to place undue reliance on the conclusions reached exclusively through astrology.



# COMENIUS

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# LABYRINTH

of the World

by John Agbor

**S**MOKE ROSE ABOVE the green mountains of Bohemia and Moravia. Below, amidst the burning ruins of the towns and hamlets of these once peaceful Czech lands could be heard the roar of cannon and the screams of dying men, women, children and animals. Feared Spanish mercenaries slew in the name of Emperor Ferdinand II; Protestants who would not convert to Catholicism were either killed or fled the country; a war that was to last thirty years had begun. By its end in 1648, Central Europe was devastated; Bohemia most of all. Its population was cruelly reduced from an estimated three million to 800,000, its people had become slaves.

Such a dreadful tragedy: thus thought the young Moravian pastor and educator Jan Amos Komenský (1592-1671), a member of the Protestant sect the Unity of Brethren and who we know as Comenius. While in hiding he took stock of his world and found it wanting. He too had suffered bitterly; his church and manuscripts were destroyed, his congregation dispersed. Most tragically, his wife and two children had died of the plague shortly after fleeing the



A depiction of the labyrinthine city in Comenius' allegory "Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart." <http://www.labyrinth.cz/en/>

carnage. Yet Comenius found solace in these years of fury and despair. His intensified inner strength and belief was reflected in the book he wrote at this time, 1623, a work that has become a classic in mystical and especially Czech literature, known in English as "The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart."

The Labyrinth is an *allegory* which uses the centuries-old theme of the material world as a city ruled by evil or vanity. Comenius incorporated themes from his favourite books, works such as Sir Thomas Moore's *Utopia* (1516), Tommaso Campanella's *Civitas Solis* (1604), and the Rosicrucian work, *Fama Fraternitatis* (1612). The hero of the story, the Pilgrim, describes his mission in the Labyrinth's opening passage:

*"When I had attained that age at which the difference between good and bad begins to appear to the human understanding, I saw how different are the ranks, conditions, occupations of men, the works and endeavours at which they toil; and it seemed most necessary to me to consider what group of men I should join, and with what matters I should occupy my life."*

The "Queen of the World" (Wisdom) sends forth two guides, *Searchall* and *Delusion*, to lead the Pilgrim through the confusing maze of the world, helping him find his place in it.

The world in the allegory is a City whose people live, according to occupation, on six major thoroughfares: the betrothed, the labourers, the learned, the priests, the magistrates and the soldiers. In visiting each street, the Pilgrim is told by *Searchall* and *Delusion* how marvellous and comforting life is for the inhabitants; but our hero sees only squalor, violence and foolishness. The wedded are bound to each other by chains; the labourers suffer hardship and pain; the learned fill their minds with delusions; priests squabble over trifles; magistrates are misled by their advisors; and soldiers engage in brutish, bloody acts. The Pilgrim seeks the Rosicrucians, but being deluded himself, cannot find them.

The Pilgrim despairs of finding happiness in the City of ordinary folk. But then the Queen

of the World grants him the privilege of entering the Castle of Fortune where the wealthy and great live. He observes how Fortune chooses her favourites arbitrarily, and how lust and gluttony abound. He is then taken to the Palace of Wisdom where the Queen of the world resides. The Pilgrim is overwhelmed by Wisdom's benevolence and rejoices when the most glorious ruler Solomon comes to take Wisdom as his bride. The truth about the evils of the world comes forth, and even worldly Wisdom herself cannot solve the multitudes of problems. Enraged, Solomon then unmasks her, and she is revealed in her true

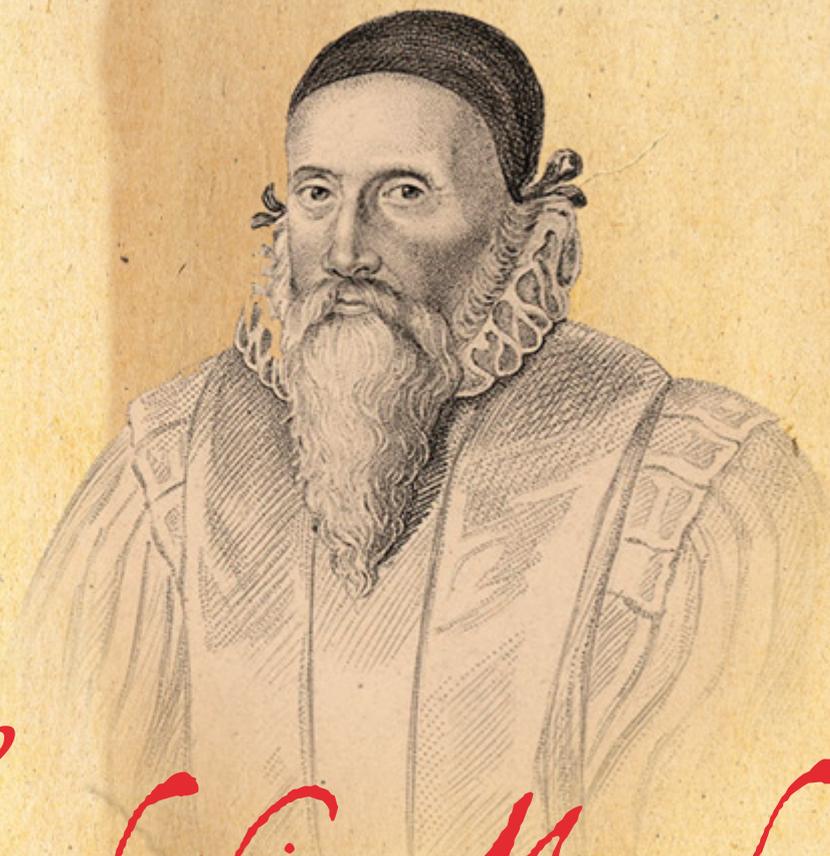
*"The Labyrinth is an allegory using the theme of the material world as a city."*

form, Vanity. But even Solomon, the wisest of men, is pulled down by the temptations of the earthly life.

The Pilgrim flees the world and falls into a bottomless abyss where a sweet, gentle voice calls out to him: *"Return! Return from where you came to the house of the heart, and close the doors behind you."* The Pilgrim abandons all contact with external things, and enters the innermost sanctuary of his heart, where he finds true peace and love.

Comenius was much like the Pilgrim; he was a high-minded individual who sought peace and enlightenment in a troubled and fearful world. He brought much light to the world, writing over 150 works and several educational treatises which made him famous throughout Europe. Yet he was the ever-wandering exile, forced to flee persecution and forbidden to return to his homeland. He suffered many losses, but endured such miseries by constantly seeking communion with the Master Within, his deeper self.

To many a mystic in these anxious years of the new millennium, Comenius' life is an inspiration, and to those who are troubled and would read it, his Labyrinth offers solace in an all too apparent imperfect world.



# The Hieroglyphic Monad of John Dee

by Paul Goodall

**T**HE HIEROGLYPHIC MONAD, an enduring example of John Dee's intellect and mystical disposition, was realised during a period of history when there were great upheavals in religious and political thought. The established church with its soteriological dogma or concept of salvation from sin was under threat from the rising influence of thinkers grounded in Neo-Platonic and Hermetic thought. Whilst many avoided challenging church doctrine or politics by the use of rhetoric and literary style, others such as John Dee and the later Robert Fludd and Michael Maier were expounding their philosophies on the

dignity of man and the transforming power of Nature through the Hermetic disciplines of *magia*, *alchymia* and *cabala*.<sup>1</sup>

While an earlier text of Dee's, *Aphorisms* (1558), was based on the observation of nature and empirical experimentation, the *Monas Hieroglyphica* of 1564 reflected Dee's more mystical approach to the nature of reality as his objective faculties gave way to an increasing reliance on intuitive conceptions based on imagery and number. Form in symbols came to embody the heavenly mysteries and offer avenues to explore these through contemplation and meditation.



The title page to *Monas Hieroglyphica*, 1564. The diligent viewer will see the numbers 1 - 4 on one side of the right hand scroll and 1 and 4 on the other, placed at irregular intervals against certain letters; this is likely to be some kind of unexplained cipher.

In keeping with the manner of the period Dee employs elusive exposition so that only initiates and those of sufficient intellect were capable of understanding its complexity and could profit from it. Indeed, the frontispiece to *Monas Hieroglyphica* displayed the inscription “Qui non intelligit, aut taceat, aut discat” (He who does not understand should either be silent or learn).

There was also, of course, a very real need to avoid charges of heresy, a danger that was the bane of such thinkers at this time. It was, in fact, this use of veiled language that brought accusations of heresy against the work, but Dee had already expounded its wisdom to Queen Elizabeth who, while keeping a certain distance from him, sympathetically encouraged him to pursue his studies.<sup>2</sup>

The Hieroglyphic Monad was, in fact, conceived some seven years earlier in 1557; after seven years of mental preparation and twelve days of writing, records Dee in his preface, the *Monas Hieroglyphica* was finally printed in 1564 at Antwerp, and contained a prefatory dedication to Emperor Maximilian II, the Habsburg Holy Roman

## Translation of the inscriptions on the title page

*He who does not understand should either be silent or learn.*

*The Hieroglyphic Monad  
of John Dee, of London  
to  
Maximilian, by the grace of God  
the most wise King of the Romans,  
of Bohemia and of Hungary.*

*[On the left and right scrolls flanking the egg shape:]*

*Mercury becomes the parent and the King of all planets  
when made perfect by a stable pointed hook.*

*May God give thee of the dew of heaven and of the fat of the earth. Gen. 27.*

*Printed by Willem Silvius, Royal Typographer, Antwerp, 1564.<sup>3</sup>*

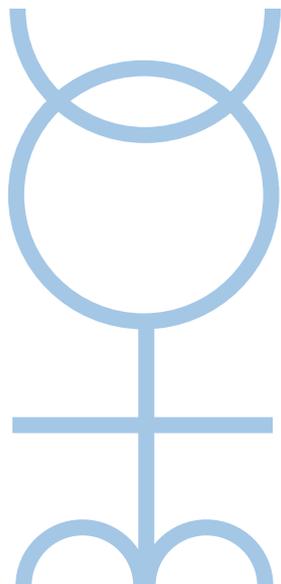
**Message to  
the reader**

**Dedication**

**Nature of the  
hieroglyph**

**Blessing**

The hieroglyph, while deceptively simple in appearance consisting of an arrangement of lines, curves and a circle, required John Dee to write of its complexities so that the observer might engage with it on a particular level. As one reads through his 24 Theorums his enthusiasm for his subject is clearly felt.



Dee makes it plain that the Hieroglyphic Monad can be used to illuminate the writings of the ancient philosophers. The text itself is presented as 24 Theorems which are embodied in one composite symbol. He approaches his subject from two positions: firstly by acquainting the reader with the geometry of the symbol and its mystical, mathematical and cabalistic meanings and secondly from the perspective of the privileged capability of man to unite his duality into a unified whole.<sup>5</sup>

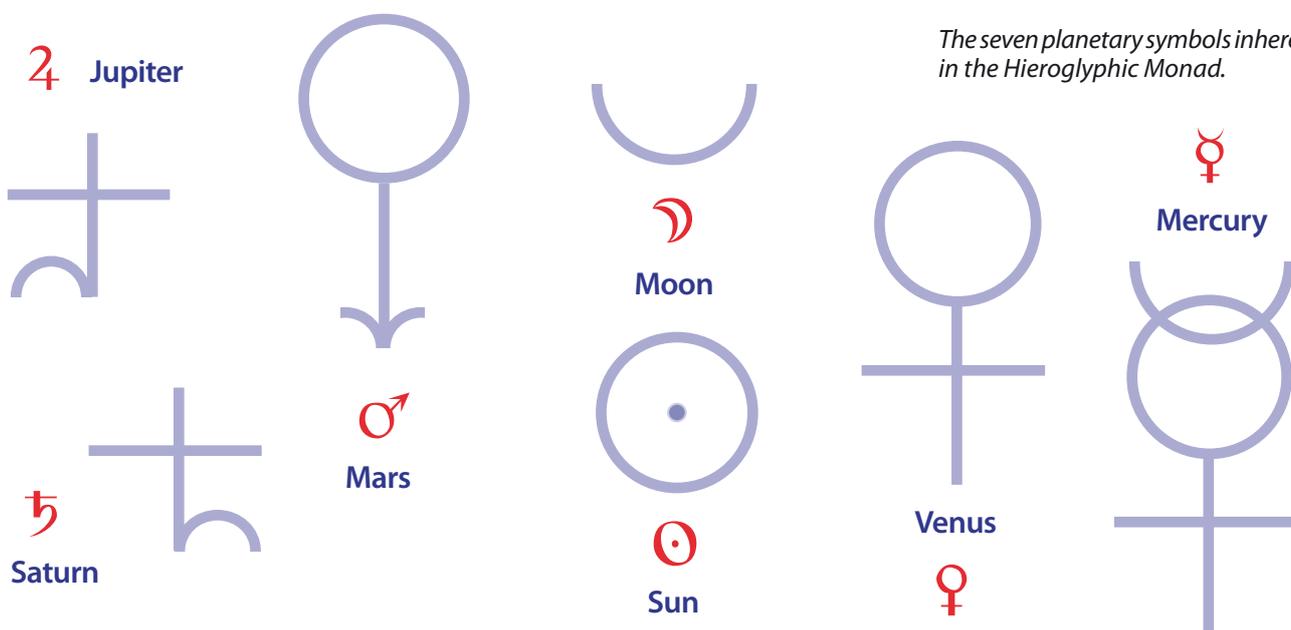
## The Hieroglyph

An examination of the hieroglyph shows it to be essentially made up of the astrological and astronomical symbol of Mercury.<sup>6</sup> The primacy of Mercury is demonstrated on the title page (see page opposite) where Dee calls it the “parent and King of all planets.” The use of Mercury is consistent with Hermetic thought as Dee later states that Mercury embraces all mysteries in its form.

As you study the figure more closely other planetary symbols become evident, such as the Sun, Moon, Venus, and the astrological sign of Aries at the base. Taurus is situated in the upper half. Less obvious are the symbols of Jupiter, and Saturn. A combination of the Sun and Aries produces Mars. Other features include the cross and the circle. On the title page the whole glyph

Emperor, to explain the purpose of the book. Dee was keen to show no debt to human authority, only to God and Reason.

*“And although we have not in any way relied here on any human authority, we shall in a friendly way disclose [our findings] to our followers whenever it was possible and convenient to elucidate by our light some notable saying or writing of a very ancient philosopher; ... so, for instance, with regard to certain mysteries of Hermes, Ostones, Pythagoras, Democritus and Anaxagoras, into which we descend into our hieroglyphic demonstrations, though not for the purpose of seeking in them confirmation of our own tenets.”<sup>4</sup>*



The seven planetary symbols inherent in the Hieroglyphic Monad.

is enclosed within an egg shaped boundary which suggests the idea of creation through birth and rebirth. Supporting this are two flanking pillars with the symbols of the sun and moon (male and female) set against them.

Dee manages to synthesize these forms into a coherent whole producing a composite symbol expressing cosmic and metaphysical laws, its prime function being as a revelatory mandala leading to an intuitive understanding of divine reality.

The 24 Theorems that accompany the *Monas Hieroglyphica* provide a supporting exposition in which Dee opens by justifying its component parts in Theorem 1. This sets the key as it states that the simple representation of things is achieved by the *line* and *circle*, but a circle cannot manifest without a line and a line cannot come into existence without a point, a *monad* (Theorem 2).

This is an important concept that must be kept in mind when considering the Hieroglyphic Monad as a whole. Those familiar with the Cabala will notice this creative process at work in the Supernal triangle of *Kether*, *Chokmah* and *Binah* on the Cabalistic Tree of Life diagram. The monad represents the initial point of creation out of which the universe manifests itself, followed by its projection into a line (that is rectilinear movement

- *Chokmah*), followed by the formation of the circle (circular movement - *Binah*).

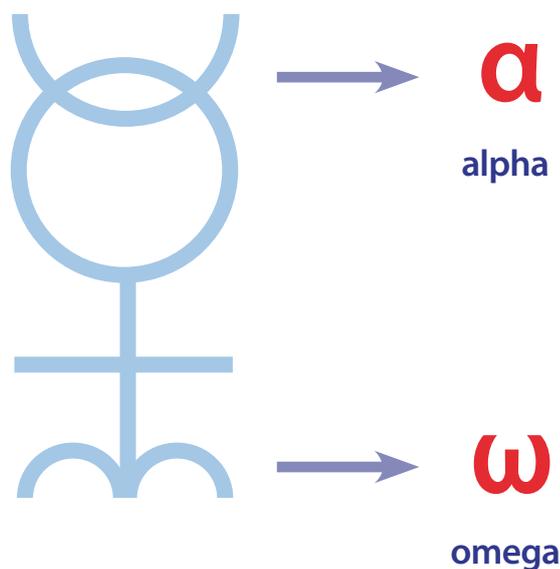
From this can be seen the manifestation of the Law of Duality expressed in the line and the circle. We also see this concept conveyed in the figures of the Sun (circle) and Moon (half-circle) which are intertwined. The Sun and Moon are often used in alchemical emblems to represent the sexual polarities, male and female. This duality may also be found in the symbolism of the Masonic square and compass.

Looking at the cross supporting the circle, this is firstly of a ternary or threefold nature consisting as it does of two lines crossing at a central point. Dee relates these three parts to *Body*, *Spirit* and *Soul*. There is also a quaternary or fourfold concept here; having four lines, and if one adds the monadic point, the quinary Principle is produced symbolising Spirit over the four elements. Again, the septenary principle is obtained from the sum of the threefold and fourfold principles just outlined (3+4=7), while the product of the three and four (3x4=12) generates the twelfold principle.

Dee elaborates comprehensively on the quaternary, which he feels is one of the more important aspects of the glyph. For example, he says that if the cross is turned 45 degrees it represents the Roman numeral "X" (10) with the upper part displaying a "V" (5). Multiplying these together (5x10) gives "L" (50). In this way the Latin word "LVX" (light) is obtained. Within this word the mystery of the Risen Christ (Osiris) is revealed.

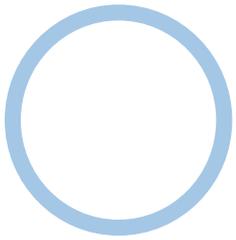
Allied to this last point is another feature of the hieroglyph. Referring to the diagram to the left the Greek letter alpha (α) is seen in the upper half on its side, and the sign of Aries in the lower half can be seen as an inverted omega (ω).<sup>7</sup> Positioned between them is the cross, presenting an interesting relationship.

The sign of Aries subtended at the lowest point of the hieroglyph is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, it is representative of cardinal Fire, which is necessary to separate the natures of the Sun and Moon (Theorem 10). Secondly, it will be

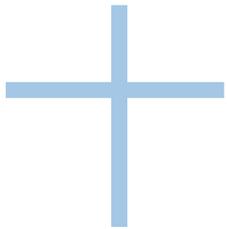




**Moon**



**Sun**



**Elements**



**Aries**

seen that its form embodies the development of Duality from the monad situated as it is at the extreme lower tip of the glyph. This process continues to project to the sign of Taurus in the upper half and ultimately on to the other signs.

The importance of placing this Fire sign within the Hieroglyphic Monad reflects the alchemical nature of this Element but it is also important from a Rosicrucian viewpoint, as Fire is an initiating and transforming agent. It purifies and transmutes the Soul.

Taking this all into account the evolving process of creation can be seen in its four main components as set out in Theorem 10 (see diagram opposite): *Fire* (Aries - initialising), *Elements* (cross - earth), *Sun* (circle - male, positive), and *Moon* (half-circle - female, negative).

The whole of the Hieroglyphic Monad is given further emphasis on its manifesting quality by the presence of the surrounding egg shape, the form of which was used in ancient cosmology.

## A Spiritual Alchemy

Why did John Dee produce this symbol and what did he intend its function to be? C H Josten

has speculated that Dee "had reached a level of introspection from which it was possible for him to develop the thoughts of his spiritual ancestors, the ancient sages, precisely as they would have wished."<sup>8</sup>

Renaissance thought generally regarded the teachings of the classical scholars and philosophers to be superior to their own and thereby closer to the universal truth. Dee had no faith that spiritual advancement was possible in his own time for he believed that knowledge had become debased. He saw man and not metal as being the subject of alchemical transmutation. Those seeking the philosopher's stone through the traditional practices of alchemy were in his eyes fraudsters. His was a spiritual alchemy in which the *Monas Hieroglyphica* was to pave the way for future aspirants. However, as Josten points out, Dee recognises that once the aspirant has been transmuted he is then ready to produce the philosopher's stone in the external world.<sup>9</sup>

Dee's preoccupation with numbers can be seen throughout his analysis of the hieroglyph reflecting his knowledge of Pythagorean principles. He was a mathematician as well as a Hermetic philosopher and as such had studied Billingsly's translation of Euclid's *Elements*, making some corrections and annotations. He drew up a *Mathematicall Praeface* for the 1570 edition in which he postulated mathematics as a philosophical science. Dee believed that through the study of mathematics and in particular geometry one would be brought closer to the nature of the manifested universe and thereby closer to God.

He was able to produce by virtue of his intellect and intuition a symbolic figure that embodied these principles, that by meditation and contemplation upon would transform consciousness and have the power to effect the spiritual transmutation of the individual.

## The Hieroglyph after Dee

The earliest record of reference to it following the printing of *Monas Hieroglyphica* in 1564 was by Bongus in his *Numerorum Mysteriae*, 1585,

which was reprinted in 1591. Bruno's *de Triplici Minimi* published in the same year and Zetzner's *Theatrum Chemicum*, 1613 (reprinted 1659) also made reference to it. Jacob Boehme made use of it too in "The Clavis" or "Key," 1647, analysing it in a similar way to Dee. Steeb, in his *Coelum sephiroticum*, 1679, amalgamates the hieroglyph with Cabalistic geometry to represent a scheme of the universe.<sup>10</sup> There were several more publications that adopted the hieroglyph for their own use including George Welling's *Opus Cabbalisticum*, 1719, where there appears a large adaptation of the Monad in his illustration of the universe.

The best-known association, however, is with the second and third Rosicrucian Manifestos (*Confessio Fraternitatis*, 1615, and *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz*, 1616, later translated as "The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz"). Frances Yates in her *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 1972, was the first academic to propose John Dee's relationship to the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. The *Confessio* is prefaced by a discourse entitled *Consideratio Brevis* (Brief Consideration) by one Philip a Gabella. It is not clear whom this writer is and the name could be a pseudonym referring to "Cabala."<sup>11</sup> Yates goes on to review the influence that the *Monas Hieroglyphica* has on this text quoting as it does from the first thirteen Theorems while interspersing with other material. The discourse ends with a prayer in the same expressive style as Dee followed by a preface to the *Confessio* that begins immediately after it.

Yates sums this up when she says "*The Dee-inspired Consideratio Brevis, and its prayer, seems absolutely assimilated to the Rosicrucian manifesto, as an integral part of it, as though explaining that the 'more secret philosophy' behind the Rosicrucian movement was the philosophy of John Dee, as expounded in his Monas Hieroglyphica*".<sup>12</sup>

Other authorities do not agree entirely with Yates' theory here. Rafal T Prinke sees the Dee connection as subordinate to that of the Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius. Prinke states that the other material in *Consideratio Brevis* is

based on Sendivogius' *De Lapide Philosophorum Tractatus duodecim*, 1604, (Twelve Treatises on the Philosopher's Stone).<sup>13</sup>

Just as significant is the appearance of the hieroglyph in the "Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz." The invitation to the "Royal Wedding" that Christian Rosenkreutz receives bears the Hieroglyphic Monad in the margin. As there are seven component parts to the symbol (crescent, circle, point, vertical bar, horizontal bar, left crescent and right crescent) this reinforces the sevenfold structure of this allegory.<sup>14</sup>

## Afterword

John Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad can truly be called a mystical symbol, for it captures the essence of the Hermetic philosophy that, while for centuries had lain dormant except to the initiated until the advent of Marcilio Ficino's translation of the *Hermetica* in 1463, was now being presented to those outside of the initiatic tradition. This was only possible because of the continuing advances of the printing press and the number of books being produced. Some today outside of esoteric circles may frown on his use of astrological and astronomical correspondences but he was a man of his time. He could only convey truth and knowledge as he realised it in the language of the Renaissance. His presentation of the *Monas Hieroglyphica* was in keeping with the manner of the age.



"Here the vulgar eye will see nothing but Obscurity and will despair considerably!"<sup>15</sup>

There are many aspects of this subject that have not been covered in this article. It was not the intention that it should be an in-depth analysis of this subject or of Dee's thought processes. Many writers, academic and otherwise, have dealt with this enduring symbol comprehensively, some in a rather cynical fashion and many sympathetic to what John Dee was trying to achieve. It has hopefully served as an introduction to a topic that the reader and modern Rosicrucians particularly will find immensely interesting and thought provoking.

## Endnotes

1. There are many spellings applied to this word. I have adopted the period spelling, i.e. the Christianised version, for this article.
2. <http://galileo.rice.edu/Catalog/NewFiles/dee.htm> (Since writing this article this source is now defunct).
3. From C H Josten, "A Translation of John Dee's Monas Hieroglyphica with an Introduction and Annotations," in *Ambix* XII 1964
4. Ibid. p.201
5. György E Szőnyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, SUNY, 2004, p.162
6. Gareth Knight, "Dr. John Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad," in *The Hermetic Journal* 1979, Vol. 3, pp.25-28
7. Calder Thesis, "Numbers: Logistical, Formal and Applied," Chapter VI Part 6. (<http://www.johndee.org/calder/pdf/Calder6.pdf>).
8. Josten, op.cit. p.100
9. ibid.
10. Calder Thesis, Note 39
11. Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, Routledge 1998 edition, p.46
12. ibid. p.47.
13. Rafal T. Prinke, "Michael Sendivogius and Christian Rosenkreutz," in *The Hermetic Journal* 1990, pp.72-98
14. Adam McLean, *A Commentary on the Chymical Wedding*, Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks 1984, p. 80
15. English translation by Benjamin Rowe, 4th July, 2000; the illustration is an adaption of the original from the penultimate page of the 1564 edition. Copyright forbids us from reproducing the original. However, the first 1564 edition can be viewed at <http://www.billheidrick.com/Orpd/Dee/Deemh.htm>



**Jacob Boehme 1574-1625**  
From his *Signaturum Rerum*  
("The Signature of all Things")

# True Knowledge

“ The best treasure that a man can attain unto in this world is true knowledge; even the knowledge of himself: For man is the great mystery of God, the microcosm, or complete abridgement of the whole universe: he is the *mirandum Dei opus*, God's masterpiece, a living emblem and hieroglyph of eternity and time; and therefore to know whence he is, and what his temporal and eternal being and well-being are, must needs be that one necessary thing, to which all our chief study should aim, and in comparison of which all the wealth of the world is but dross, and a loss to us. ”

# The Cloud People





The countries now known as Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador, comprise the region known as Mesoamerica. This was once a great centre of world civilisation, on a par with Egypt, Mesopotamia and China.

by Bill Anderson

**I**N THE SOUTH OF present-day Mexico lies the state of Oaxaca. It is a rugged landscape featuring the mountains of the Sierra Madre with its forests and deep valleys, long stretches of beach bordering the Pacific Ocean and great expanses of savannah covered with scrub and cacti. It was home to some fifteen native peoples and to two of the great pre-Columbian cultures: the Mixtecs and the Zapotecs.

The Zapotecs were a people who considered themselves to be autochthonous or indigenous to this land, as did the people of ancient Athens to the site of their city. As far as we can tell from their ancient language they may well be right, unlike the Aztecs and Incas who were relative newcomers. Their histories related the story of their migration to where the Spaniards found them. However, as far as archaeological evidence is concerned, the Zapotecs have always lived where they do today.

## The Shape of the Cosmos

The Zapotec language has been divided into the Sierra, Isthmus and Valley dialects. When the Spaniards arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Valley Zapotecs called themselves *peni-zaa* while the Isthmus Zapotecs referred to themselves as *binni-za*: the Cloud People, *zaa* or *za* referring to the ancestral clouds.

When the Spaniards encountered and then conquered these people, they discovered an aspect of Zapotec religious belief that they found difficult to understand or translate into their own world view. This was the belief in an all-pervading essence. This "vital life force" was called *pèe* (pronounced *peh-eh*) or *bi*: the sacred wind, air, breath or spirit that filled living things and made them live and move.

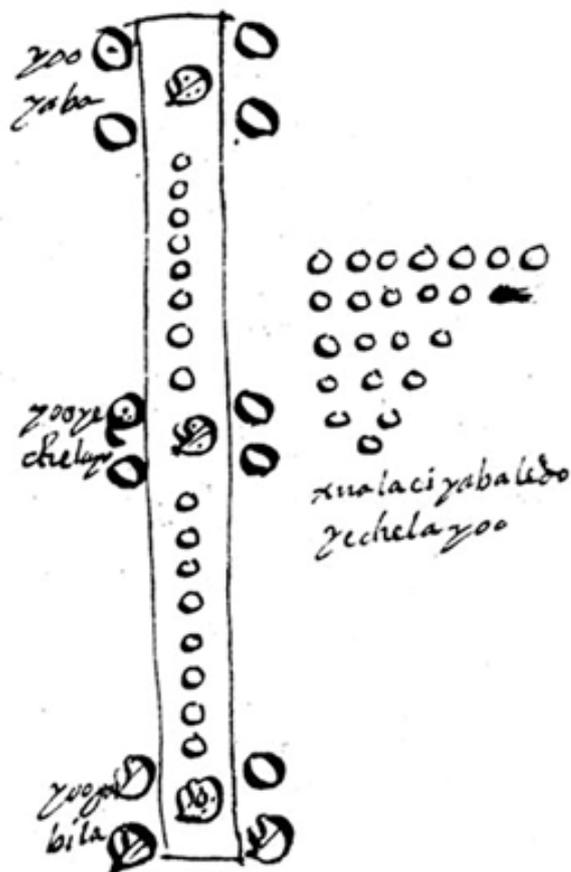
The great natural forces of wind, clouds, lightning, fire and earthquakes commanded respect because they too had *pèe*. The clouds were regarded as beings from which the Zapotecs had descended, and to which their deified ancestors the *penigolazaa* or *binnigolaza* (old people of the clouds) would return after death.

Although the Spaniards believed the Zapotecs worshipped a multitude of gods, this was not true. The modern view of Zapotec religion is that all of what were referred to as deities are only manifestations or emanations of one great wholeness, one god manifesting in different forms. An analogy to this would be the teachings of the temple of Ra at Heliopolis in ancient Egypt where it was taught that all "gods" were emanations of Ra. What the Spaniards thought were Zapotec gods were either natural forces or deified ancestors.

The deified royal ancestors lived in the clouds and acted as intermediaries to the lightning, other supernaturals and the supreme god. They believed in a supreme being without beginning or end, who was so infinite and incorporeal that no images were ever made of "him." An important aspect of Zapotec religion was ancestor worship, and images of venerated deceased rulers or *coqui* were assumed by the Spaniards to be Zapotec gods.

There was another word that the Spaniards came across: *pitào*, the great and sacred life force within each living thing. When the Zapotecs addressed the Great Spirit, of which lightning was a visible manifestation, they called it *pitào cocijo*, the Great Spirit or inner life within the lightning.

Their temples were called *yohopèe* or *yoobi*, houses of *pèe*, the life force. Each was a two-



A late 17th century depiction of the Zapotec cosmos. (Calendar 11, AGI México 882: FAMSÍ © 2005, David Tavárez)<sup>1</sup>

roomed structure built on a pyramidal platform and manned by full-time priests. There was an outer pronaos with columns and an inner naos or sacred room where no layperson ever went. The high priest or *ujja-tào* meaning "great seer" (the same title incidentally as the high priest of Ra) went to meditate and to commune with the Great Spirit in this innermost room of the temple. He was treated with great respect by the hereditary Zapotec lords as he was closely connected with the supernatural. Ordinary priests were called *copa pitào* or guardians of the Great Spirit. Direct contact with the laity was through the *bigaña* or *pixana*, trainee priests.

They believed that the universe was divided into four great world quarters, each associated with a particular colour, and a fifth for the centre; a world axis also featured in their belief. They had a fourfold division of the 260-day ritual calendar called the *piye*, its sound suggesting that it too had *pèe*, since its ritual or sacred time was alive and moved. Each quarter of the sacred year was termed a *cocijo* (lightning) or *pitào* (great breath or spirit) consisting of 65 days each and divided



An example of the carvings found at Monte Albán.

into 5 units of 13 days called *cocii*. The day (*chij*) had its own number or name as well as its own fortune, benevolent or malevolent.

## The White Mountain

The Zapotecs also had sacred mountains, caves and certain sacred cities such as Mitla, although the great ceremonial centre at Monte Albán seems to have been their most holy city.

The city of Oaxaca lies almost exactly in the centre of the state, in a valley luxuriant with subtropical vegetation. Four miles or six kilometres west of the state capital, at the confluence of three valleys, a small 1,300 foot (400 metre) mountain rises above the floor of the Oaxaca valley. Here was built a city and ceremonial centre now known by its Spanish name of Monte Albán: the White Mountain. At its greatest extent, it covered some 15 square miles or 40 square kilometres. The top of the mountain was levelled

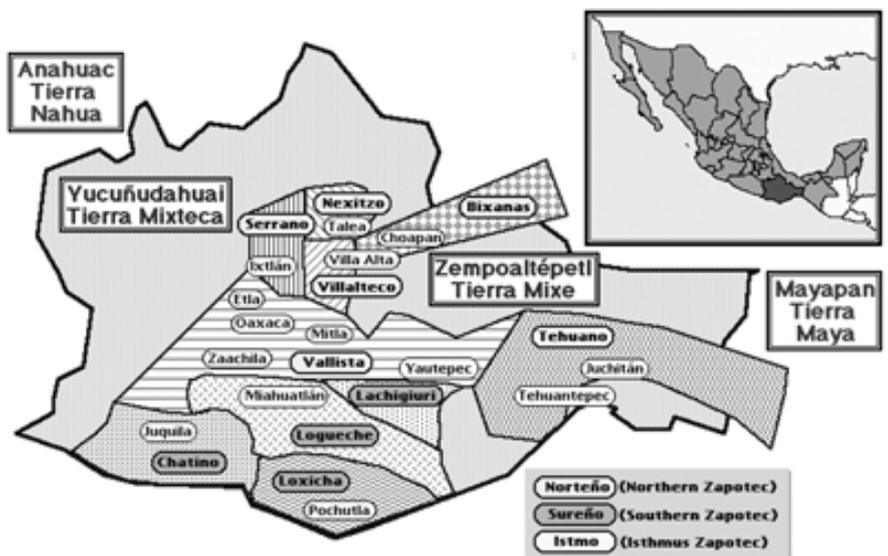
to create a platform for pyramids, temples and palaces. The ruins are incredibly impressive and majestic. The city was founded around 800 BCE, but the golden age of Zapotec civilisation was between 200 and 700 CE when it became involved with the great regional power of Teotihuacan, near Mexico City, the greatest city ever built in pre-Columbian Mexico. We think Monte Albán's original name was *ya to peche* or "Hill of one Jaguar" which was probably the name of the founder of the city. It is also believed that three rival cities joined together to create this new complex at the apex of the mountain which commanded sweeping views over all three arms of the valley, and guarded the whole of the central valley of Oaxaca.

The Zapotecs were a stone-age society who built beautiful cities. From the little we know of their religious beliefs, they had a highly sophisticated world-view demonstrating that their mental capacity, creativity and ingenuity was as great as our best today and, as we can see, they were able to postulate paradigms that we still use today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And this often makes me wonder if a revision of our concepts of so-called "primitive" peoples from ancient times is not long overdue.

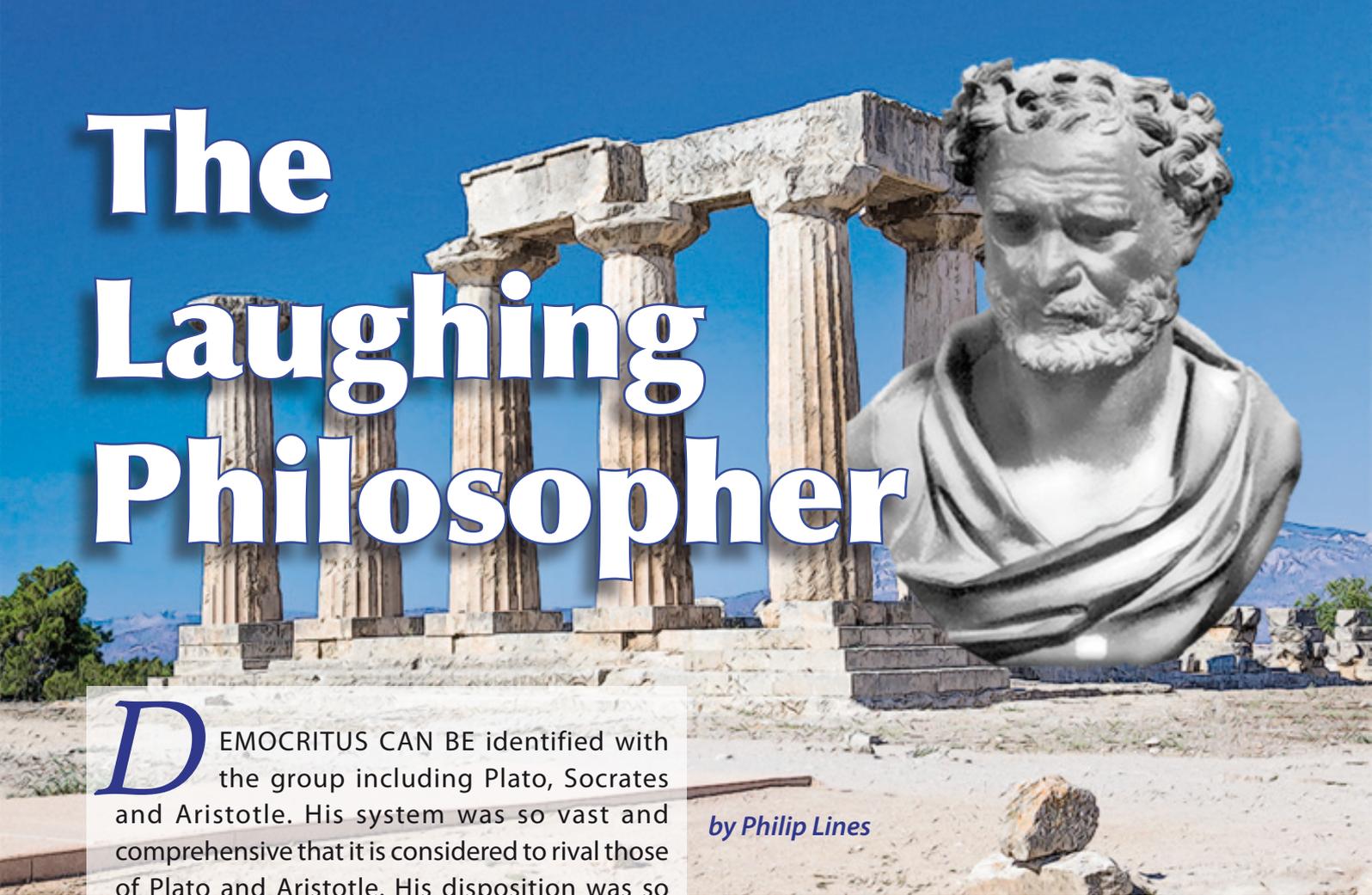
## Endnotes

1. See: <http://www.famsi.org/reports/02050/section07.htm>



Zapotec language groups

# The Laughing Philosopher



**D**EMOCRITUS CAN BE identified with the group including Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. His system was so vast and comprehensive that it is considered to rival those of Plato and Aristotle. His disposition was so cheerful that he became known as “the laughing philosopher.” His reputation was of high moral worth.

He was one of the earliest masters to expound the atomic or monistic conception of the universe. Leucippus probably gave the first clear statement of this philosophical materialism when he taught that atoms were already in movement. Democritus of the fourth century BCE was familiar with the works of Leucippus, but he went further by expanding this conception with great clarity and we are grateful to him for this addition to our common fund of knowledge. It is said that he received this information cosmically, with little or no demonstration or experimentation.

*“Nothing happens at random, but occurs according to law and is determined by necessity,”* said Democritus the physical philosopher, who has been called the most learned thinker of his age. His system of philosophy is referred to as Atomism and was the precursor of modern atomic theory.

Since Democritus had received his monistic conception of the universe cosmically, he

*by Philip Lines*

explained the soul as being a combination of atoms. One can identify it with the Heraclitean soul fire. The atoms making the energy of the soul by means of their high rate of vibrations generate intense heat in the soul movement. The particular atoms forming the soul go back at death or transition into a great reservoir, and not to destruction or loss. The soul essence returns to the Cosmic.

The Master Democritus’ monistic conception probably led him to explain the mind and the growth of knowledge on the same terms. Life, consciousness and thought too, were derived from the finest atoms. He boldly declared that gods themselves were aggregates of atoms, expressing more powerfully than men.

According to Diogenes Laertius, although Democritus had written 72 works on subjects such as physics, mathematics, ethics and grammar, only a few fragments remain. Democritus’ system of ethics was aimed at happiness, reflecting serenity of mind, undisturbed by fear or passions. Temperance, uprightness, and noble actions are to be cultivated.



