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BEING A THINKING, ACTIVE, AND RESPONSIBLE MYSTIC

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Imperator, 1990 to present

You are reading this because you are either a member of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, or because you are interested in Rosicrucianism. You are present-day mystics, with your differences, your own values, your hopes, and your dreams. I offer this article for you to reflect on, which is taken from a message that I delivered at a Rosicrucian Convention; it has been adapted for this publication.

What does being a mystic mean? What is the place of the mystic, as the millenium begins? Can the mystic of the twenty-first century exist and resist the ever-growing pressure of materialism? Who is she or he? What role can they play in society? Can a mystic still peacefully experience spirituality in these crazy times? Some will say that the constant and rapid progress of science is making such an abstract quest unnecessary: others that our society and its dictates are destroying our deeper values, and stifling our mystical inclinations.

In the face of the breakdown in conditions, the unmitigated corrupting of our moral standards, the deterioration of our environment and our way of living, is there still a reason for us to be mystics, and to conduct ourselves properly? I know that you have your answer, just as I do, even if at some point in your life doubt – or a flicker of it – may have crossed your mind when you asked yourself this question.

Admittedly, what I am saying is perhaps not going to tell you anything you do not know already, especially since all human archetypes and behaviors are inscribed inside every one of us, in our memory chromosomes. At any moment in our lives, we can locate all the information that we have registered in this current life and even in our previous incarnations, once we put ourselves into a deep meditative state. If we concentrate, tune into all our cells, and listen to our Master Within, then it is possible for us to get in touch with the “primordial truths,” as they are called. These are buried within us – body, mind, and soul – and remain forever engraved inside the human “computer.”

In all periods, in all cultures, men and women have lived at the margins of their “world,” and have chosen to push back the frontiers of the com-
monplace, and break through into the mysterious. These individuals have asked themselves fundamental questions, the same ones that still occupy our minds. Where does Humanity come from? What is the reason for our existence? In what direction, and towards what goal, are we heading? Those who have asked themselves these questions have had what may be called a “mystical awakening.” Such questioning has often been experienced, but is only rarely spoken of, for fear of being judged, misunderstood, or even ill-treated; but on occasion it has managed to make real sense for those I shall call “free souls,” among them Rosicrucians, now, just as in the past.

But what is a mystic? Let us look, first of all, at an official definition. “Mystic: Person subject to mystical ideas, with an intense religious faith and interested in the mysteries of religion. Person of fanatical character, whose ideas know no bounds.” On reading this last sentence, there is certainly good reason not to want to be regarded as mystics. Fortunately, as members of the Rosicrucian Fraternity, we have another concept of mysticism. We know that a mystic is neither a narrow sectarian visionary, nor a fanatic. Those who have crossed our portals with such a mindset, through ignorance of our ideas and the teaching that our Order is a vehicle for, will have had their real motivation discovered in time, and will have since left us. I have known a number of people like this, unfortunately, and do not envy what has become of them.

A true mystic is not a sheep in a bleating flock, quite the opposite. She or he is first and foremost a thinking, active, responsible individual, whose thought processes are free from all bias. Within AMORC, we like to define ourselves as constant living question marks. That is all well and good, but only as long as we obtain answers, and in my view the best way to get them, as I said before, is to be thinking, active, and responsible.

Think, indeed, but think well. Question ourselves about the soundness of what we do, what we say, and what we feel. Thought is the foundation of the life we are constructing, now and in the future. We must know how to master our thoughts, so as not to be on the receiving end of the destructive impact that inevitably results from negative reasoning and thinking.

While the mystic is therefore a thinking individual, she or he must also be an active one. Fully aware of what the purpose of their life is, their behavior comprises service, tolerance, generosity, understanding, compassion, and love, so as to set an example within Humanity. To be this good example, and therefore a positive testimony to the principles referred to as
“mystical,” the mystic must throughout their life seek within themselves that which needs to be strengthened and improved. We are all a long way from perfection; but we can be radiant, and show the way, providing we do not try to reform others’ conduct at any price, tempting though this may be when we see others losing their way, and embarking on a dangerous route. Being an active mystic can be straightforward. All that is required is, first of all, to be genuine with oneself and with others, to be true in all circumstances. To be true does not mean speaking brusquely or rudely, or showing a lack of politeness or tact; it means being the true reflection of what we are, and not playing on the feelings of others, or saying one thing and doing another.

As well as being a thinking, active individual, the mystic must in addition be a responsible one. When we have understanding, when we know something, we have an obligation to be responsible. This concept of responsibility is absolutely vital. A mystic is aware of the consequences of their behavior. She or he understands how deep is the import of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and knows the outcomes they will produce. The more you advance on the path, the more you will be participating, and the more you will be responsible. But you have no choice other than to continue with your journey, for stopping would only defer your arrival, and in no way exempt you from the path to be traveled.

The mystic, or aspiring mystic, therefore has no alternative but to work harder, and to become more aware. The person who has not consciously embarked upon the path of life and its laws may, if they stray, hope for a certain leniency, particularly if they learn the lesson; but the person who knows, and who acts deliberately, is exposing themselves to more serious karmic consequences. While this does not exclude either of them from being forgiven, the responsibility is evaluated in a different manner, along with the outcomes that result.

Where responsibility and understanding are concerned, we can take the well-known example of the automobile, which is a useful and even enjoyable means of transport, but can become a thing of death and misery. It all depends on the way we drive, and this is what a sense of responsibility is.

In closing this most important concept of personal responsibility, I would like to tell you how much it shocks and saddens me when I notice in conversations or in correspondence that, when misfortune comes their way, some members of AMORC – who have sometimes been on the
Rosicrucian path for many years – are continuing to blame some person or other, neighbors, members of their family, colleagues, and so on; as if simply claiming that an imaginary enemy is practicing witchcraft can take away all responsibility from ourselves. Even young children, including babies, are being accused of being evil. Some are claiming that their wife or their husband is casting spells. And when it comes to mothers-in-law, is there any crime that they are innocent of?

Behavior such as this always alarms me, but you are aware of how much I endeavor to show a sense of humanism in all situations. Such instances often concern Africa and the West Indies, the traditions and ways of whose inhabitants I understand, and have respect for: do not think that I have any wish to stigmatize them. What goes for people in Africa and the West Indies also goes for far too many people throughout the world, including in the West. India, South America, certain parts of Russia and China, and many other regions of our planet are affected as well.

People who have many children cannot complain that they are unable to feed them or to give them an education. Children are not livestock that we breed so that they are useful to us later on. Every single soul with whom we are associated through the little body of a baby should receive our most careful attention. As in all things, it is quality, and not quantity, that must take precedence.

Some churches have advocated liberal reproduction; this has ensured a plentiful reservoir of the faithful and, until the recent past, a good supply of chattel, this today being a lucrative godsend for those who sell armaments and medicines, the pharmaceutical laboratories, and so on.

If you engage in extra-marital relationships, do not be amazed if your husband or wife is angry or leaves you, or if you contract an illness that might be fatal.

Why be surprised at being robbed or deceived financially, if you are not vigilant and careful? Is a road accident so surprising if you are driving badly, or if the condition of your vehicles and roads is substandard? No, you will surely agree.

I am not being hard on you; these are the facts. Road accidents are not caused either by voodoo witches or by some wrong or evil thought. Why, for instance, would this be more the case in Africa than elsewhere in the world? Certain situations in life are difficult, and will be for a long time to come, if we refuse to change. Many people have a vested interest in popula-
tions vegetating away, caught between superstition and ignorance: I am not one of them!

The years are going by, and I am getting older. The time will soon come when I will be leaving my post as an Officer within AMORC, and then – as long as possible afterwards, I hope – will come the time of my transition. As I do not want to increase my karmic load, nor be reproached for not having made the most of the opportunity given to me throughout my term of office, in order to do good. As Imperator and as your brother, I implore you to evolve, and to take your destiny in your hands; not by means of wars that bring delight to those who sell armaments, but by a revolution of consciousness, by bringing your thought processes under control, by refusing to be dragged downwards, in the name of customs and traditions that are at times degrading. Let us be modern, groundbreaking, innovative. How do we expect to benefit from progress, if we simply think, speak, and live exactly as our ancestors did? If we make a different choice, though, let us accept the consequences of it; but let us not be full of contradictions. I advise you to take on your responsibilities, and to stop transferring your mistakes to other people. Think clearly about yourself, your capabilities, and your surroundings.

Some of you are no doubt finding me very harsh, and are perhaps having negative thoughts about me, or at least not understanding me. As I was saying before, however, I am getting to an age where I cannot only speak to you as a brother, but also as a loving father. I would not be worthy of my office if I did otherwise.

Were I dishonest and of evil intent, it would be easy for me to take advantage of all of this, and manipulate people’s minds. Over the course of Humanity’s history, so many people have exploited the weak and distressed, that I feel ashamed for them; yet I feel the same for their victims, who have indeed been deceived, it is true, but who have also frequently displayed stupidity, and irresponsibility. The famous poet Jean de la Fontaine concluded his fable “The Crow and the Fox” by saying that “Every flatterer lives at the expense of those who listen to him.” The meaning of this is that we must master our ego, for when it finds itself being flattered, we lose all notion of reality, and can then easily be tricked. Unfortunately this is what happens far too often, and while we should certainly retain within us that quality known as “trust,” we must not be gullible. In absolute terms, we can understand and even forgive all those who are in a state of ignorance, and who deceive others or are deceived themselves. Whether you are mem-
bers of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis or simply reading this article, you will most likely have learned about this and already know of it.

To sum up the three concepts in this message up to this point: be an individual who is thinking, active, and responsible. A true mystic acquires understanding, but does not wallow around in superstition – not to be confused with history, myth, or tradition. A mystic has their feet on the ground, looks directly ahead of themselves, and has their eyes wide open to reality. A mystic is a free individual, who has very often been through confrontations in order to fully experience the freedom of conscience and faith that they carry deep within themselves. History is, unfortunately, filled with many examples of this.

In contrast to a mystic, a religious person is part of a group with a defined belief. This belief is in the tight grip of a dogma that is often very limiting and constraining, and has its laws, prohibitions, and taboos. And this is where we may ask ourselves questions about what is normal. Who is normal, and who is not? Where do humans stand in relation to what is normal? The so-called normal individual is, apparently, she or he who fits into a plan set out by the society they live in. The moment a person comes out of this system and leaves the established path to go in another direction, the moment they ask themselves questions and become interested in things other than the ones being presented to them, then they become abnormal, outside the norm.

When we look at Humanity’s evolution, it is clear that these so-called abnormal or non-conformist individuals are the ones who have moved things forward. Inventors, researchers, scientists, philosophers, and artists do not conform with the classic model of their time. Mystics may also be said to be outside the norm. I am not referring here to religious people. The mystic’s path is less of a straight line, but so much more interesting and stimulating.

As this article is primarily about mysticism, I am now going to differentiate two categories of mystics to you, even though there are almost as many categories as there are mystics, since everyone is on their own quest. There is the one who is fully conscious of the esoteric search that they are undertaking. It is a considered choice. We might call this person a conscious mystic. And then there is the unconscious mystic, who does not even know that they have the attitude of a mystic. How they act is natural, innate. Whether they define themselves as atheists or mystics, dur-
ing their life every man and woman feels within themselves a passion, an
inner feeling, a sort of latent energy that only seeks to express itself at cer-
tain times, which may be very short-lived, or may last several days or weeks.
Deep within ourselves we feel a sort of passion that could be defined as an
illumination, a call to the heights, a sort of ecstasy or energy that is only
seeking to express itself. I am sure that during your life each one of you has
felt this sort of emotion, this inspiration. This state of mind brings with it
a fulfillment, a physical and mental well-being, the longing for a change, or
the desire to give a new sense of direction to how we are living and what we
are doing.

Throughout Humanity’s history, men and women have felt this inner
passion, which has led to their achieving great work. They have become
guides for those of their times, and like lighthouses for succeeding genera-
tions. There is a profound significance in each achievement, feat, or con-
cept that these men and women have left us, because these are the work
of their subconscious, of what we may call the inner being, the real and
innermost self; this particular expression of the world comes alive and finds
its outlet through their talents in the arts and other fields.

But it is not necessary to be an artist, poet, musician, or painter in order
to undergo this spiritual transformation; neither do we need to be a philos-
opher, scientist, or inventor to feel this fire within. Every human being can
experience this realization, this positive change. Maybe this transmutation,
or alchemy, to which I am referring acted as a trigger for you, a key which
gave you access to the Rosicrucian faith or, at any rate, to a desire for some-
thing else.

Once we have grasped this mystical concept and assimilated it through
our own experience, we at times experience the strange and elusive feeling
that the physical, material world is unreal, is merely an illusion. We may
even experience a loss of contact with the things of everyday life, this for-
tunately being short-lived. It is as though there were coming to the surface,
from deep within our soul, principles and feelings not connected to the
material world that we are living in.

In this mystical surge, doubts can creep in, leading to a questioning
of certain established things: our sense of values changes, and we put their
importance and their benefit into perspective. We learn to ease off, to let
go, to see life from another, more interesting, angle. An experience such as
this can be a great step towards acquiring wisdom, and is not as rare as we
may imagine. There is no doubt that everyone experiences this type of deep feeling at least once, hears this inner call, and is sure to be disconcerted by how peculiar it is.

Once again, though, we must accept it, and be honest enough to acknowledge that we have received this blessing, and had this remarkable experience. This is what so-called atheists, who subscribe to absolute materialism, refuse to do; they believe that everything which cannot be worked out or measured by the sense faculties is only illusion; whereas the person who is open to spirituality accepts every mystical experience and inner sensation as a reality. Faced with all the richness of a mystical experience, the atheist will conceal what they are feeling, and decline to open the door that is before them, for fear of discovering beyond it a truth that goes against their principles, the ones which have been inculcated in them since they were born, or which they have fashioned for themselves over time; for an atheist, this truth would constitute a calling into question, an insurmountable inner upheaval which they could not bear. It is as if the light hidden away behind this door would blind them forever.

Those who have been bold enough to push on the door and cross over its threshold have experienced what may be called “illumination”; this light will ever be in their mind and heart in this present life and, beyond time and space, will be in their soul forever. This mystical experience is both the most fundamental and the most wonderful, at the same time. The door to open and the threshold to cross are, of course, simply a state of perception that leads to a greater state, whose development comes about through a continuous expanding of consciousness.

This can be depicted by the idea that we as human beings are able to be in contact with God. This type of experience happens often during our childhood, but the feelings brought about by it remain asleep a long time in the secrecy of our heart, and either do not wake up again, or emerge only later on. Every person is a mystic without their knowing it, yet who is likely at any moment to find before them a door which leads to a field of consciousness that is infinite.

This quest – often unconscious and not admitted to – can be difficult to complete on one’s own, even if each individual is by definition single-handedly responsible for their decisions, their thoughts, words, and actions. This is something members of AMORC recognize, for they have chosen to join with others journeying towards the same goal, under the protection of the same “egregore.”
In the illustrious Rosicrucian school, there is no master and pupil. There are just men and women who share the same ideal, and who have made the decision to open the door and move forward. Do we not say that there is strength in unity? By virtue of your own journey, you can describe yourself as a mystic, because a mystical person is someone who lives in harmony with their objective consciousness, intuition, and feelings. Being a mystic does not mean being perfect: in the first instance, it simply means being aware of what would need to be done, in order to become so.

As well as using our objective senses such as sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch, being a mystic is listening to our inner senses, and knowing how to use other forces and access other potentialities.

How may someone become a mystic? Well – what interest has the person had in spirituality? Why, and through what sort of questioning, have they been led to a dialogue with God? This may have come about by means of specific circumstances that were pleasant and happy, but most often it is as a result of difficult or even tragic ordeals, which have brought about a change in state of mind and attitude within them.

Fear, suffering, pain, distress, and illness are – just like love – catalysts which mold human beings, and temporarily close our objective consciousness. It is then that the miracle can occur and a fire, the sacred fire, can rise up from the deepest part of ourselves and release our fervor, our creative power, our desire for more and for better. It is a bit like giving birth, for after the period of gestation there comes the life, the fulfillment.

This is the reason it is said that “The Word became flesh…” Our mind will have become creator, and our thoughts will have materialized in a work that reflects our deepest aspirations: our true self connected to the universal consciousness. The putting into effect of these natural, universal laws results from the combining of straightforward actions and processes, as in the construction of a building which is erected stone by stone. All we need is to know the laws and how to put them into practice.

This understanding and methodology is what constitutes the difference between a consciously mystical person and one who is not, or who is occasionally so but not all the time, not being completely convinced. The conscious mystic experiences every thought and act to the fullest extent, whereas the other puts up with things, and does not understand what is happening to them. Yet the cosmic laws are the same for everyone, whether they believe in them or not. The potentialities presented by the subcon-
scious are so immeasurable, extraordinary, and unlimited, that it is difficult or even impossible for our objective consciousness to have an appreciation of what they are.

If you are reading this article as Rosicrucians, you know that when you encounter a problem, you just need to put all the information or data concerning it into what I referred to, at the beginning of this message, as your personal “computer” – in other words, into your consciousness – and ask your Master Within to come back to you with the best solution. “Ask, and it will be given to you.” But we must be sure that we ask with conviction, and that we are ready to attentively listen for the reply. And to hear the reply, you also know that you must let go, for if you hold on to your thought, it will not be able to rise up and be “received.”

If you follow this procedure properly, you will get a reply very quickly, in various and unexpected forms. For some, this might be coming across someone or other, apparently by luck. For others, it might be reading something, hearing a song, a vision of something, a dream... When things “click” like this, the mind often thinks “Why didn’t I think of this before?”

Yes indeed! Everything seems easier when we know that the accomplishing of something, even if it is complex, can be split up like a jigsaw puzzle and then put back together again; for while life may be considered as one single whole, it is essentially a succession of simple acts. It is our mind, often convoluted and seeking over-perfection, that complicates what we experience at every moment of our existence.

Unfortunately, we are too frequently outside of the reality of the present moment. We either remain in the past, sunk in our memories and regret, or we project into an imaginary future that is completely out of reach. This is why it is always best to make the most of the present moment I just mentioned, even though we recall the past and contemplate the future.

Let us not miss that which is all-important in our life. That is what being alive is. That is what being true is. That is also what being a mystic is. But why is it, and how is it, that have we moved away from this crucial principle? Quite simply, it is that we have allowed ourselves to be taken over – externally and internally – by what in a general sense is called the “consumer society”; we are enslaved to this and, in order to appease it, we put a gag on our conscience, ordering the most positive side of our deeper self, of our very nature, to be silent.
Denying the importance of the material aspect of life is, of course, out of the question. It is necessary and is a reality that faces us at every moment. But alongside this constant and unavoidable preoccupation, we must also allow ourselves to be lulled not by the Sirens’ song, but by the music of those virtues and emotions which bring about a love of others – kindness, courage, fairness, loyalty, and a sense of sharing.

Let us again show that we can allow ourselves to be taken over by silence, Peace Profound, and inner joy. Let us be able to be in communion with God, with others, and with ourself. Let us use our intuition more, rather than blindly believing the sugarcoated words of advertising spiels that exaggerate and deceive in every sphere, whether it be commerce, politics, or spirituality.

A mystic applies the understanding that she or he has acquired, and knows that intuition is an internal expression of themselves. A mystic stays on their guard, and takes care not to get lost in an illusory world that will sweep them away into a frantic and pointless race, and lead them nowhere. To go where? To look for and find what? As perceived by a mystic, Utopia is not an illusion. It is a goal to attain, a search for the absolute, a hope, and a wish expressed.

The text “Rosicrucian Utopia” serves as a perfect example of this. But we can do better than just hope. This may perhaps not come about in our current incarnation but, without waiting for better times, we can put into motion the forces which are within us, while living – like I was saying before – in the present moment. Let us be thinking, active, and responsible, and not the puppets of decadent forces and the playthings of a society that is overly materialistic.

Being a mystic also means cultivating intelligence and energy, even if this is done clumsily and imperfectly. As an expression that I like and often use says, we should be able to “push onward.”

Never forget that every time we move onward, the whole of Humanity does so with us. Let us walk on into the life that is real, the one that is not limited to our own, nor to the time that we have in this incarnation; let us walk on into that infinite space where everything becomes possible. In the life that is “real,” we have unlimited access to a great universal power, an everlasting and more reliable “package” than what the phone companies are selling us. Once we become aware of what this “real” life is, we are holding the key that gives access to all the answers we are looking for, as well as to happiness.
But here again, this concept relates to each individual, and is therefore a very personal one. While in a general sense we can say that happiness is a state of perfect inner contentment, joy is a feeling of fulfillment, a strong and delightful emotion which bursts forth like a spark from within the deepest part of our being.

Joy and happiness are not outside of us. They are the reflection of a facet of the Divinity that we carry within us, and there are several ways of feeling, experiencing, and manifesting them. Some people may be extremely happy to find themselves in good health after a long and difficult illness; others will experience immense joy on receiving an undreamt-of sum of money, enabling them to get themselves out of a difficult situation. The instances are many and varied. We must understand, accept, and take on board the joy and the happiness that come our way; for they are nothing other than the outflowing of life's essence within us, which we become conscious of by living the moment.

Picture yourself in the desert, totally parched with thirst: would not the greatest treasure in the world for you be a glass of cool water? Would you not then give all your material goods in order to avoid a certain death? At such a time, nothing except this glass of water would be in your thoughts, but in our daily life, do we think of this when we quench our thirst? And yet this act is a source of a well-being, and leads to one kind of happiness.

The same applies to the air that we have been breathing since we were born. Are we aware that it is an ultrafine, subtle emanation of the Cosmic Consciousness? The air is a link that connects us all – men, women, animal, vegetable, mineral. The air and its vital energy take their sustenance from the earth, the oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams. Everything that goes into creating its substance is returned to us, which is why we should show respect for our environment. That too is being a mystic!

By becoming aware of the importance of water and air, we are paying tribute to our Mother the Earth, to the whole of Nature, to Life, to God. There is a complete harmony between the natural elements and human beings. To not separate oneself from the great All is to be wise, and to have a responsible mystical attitude. To be a mystic is to live in harmony with one's three bodies – the physical body, the psychic body, and the spiritual body; and it is therefore to remain in harmonious intercommunication with the animal world and the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, with the awareness that we are one, and cannot be separated.
How should a mystic conduct themselves in her or his everyday life? This is both very simple and very complex. Being a mystic is to be aware of and shoulder one’s responsibilities in one’s family life, working life, and spiritual life. A thinking, active, responsible mystic does not feed on what is negative and unhealthy; she or he chooses their relationships, television programs, websites, books, and so on. But she or he does not make hasty judgments, and does not condemn without having tried to understand the why and the how of things and events. The mystic’s attitude is an open one, respecting everyone’s right to be different and to exercise freedom of expression. She or he is able to give assistance, bring calm, and speak in a fraternal manner to whoever is in need of it. She or he will accept philosophically – but without becoming disenchanted – the tests that they experience during their life: for a mystic is not exempt from lessons, they just find it a little bit easier to learn them.

The mystic knows that they are the architect of their own happiness and of what they become, and also of many of their troubles. In her or his “active” part, the mystic is helpful, and they cultivate this quality throughout their life, in accordance with their age and capacities, for of course no one is expected to do the impossible. The mystic does not live outside the world, but in it, through it, and for it. There is not much in everyday life that distinguishes a mystic from others, other than their humble, thoughtful, and kindly attitude. A mystic prays, meditates, and thanks the God of their heart for their blessings and lessons alike. A mystic has no fear, which does not stop them from being prudent and sensible; they know that a day of troubles can finish with a blazing sunset; they know that change is the only thing that goes on forever, and that this can lead to something better and, if not, at least to something else, a new adventure.

But the greatest change – an inevitable one that is frequently dreaded – is often that of transition. It is in total peace of mind that the mystic prepares themselves for this final initiation, which remains a painful mystery for those who do not know where this change – which seems like an end, but is not – is leading them to. It is from ignorance and ignorance alone that human beings must free themselves, and push back the shadows, the boundary of the unknown, and fear. Being a mystic is therefore to have no fear of one’s own death, and to prepare oneself for this state of consciousness which is to come.

Having just referred to the fear and alarm which too often dwell within us, I would like to turn to an expression that will have escaped no one in the last few years: the “crisis!”
Ever since the world began, this concept has always existed and it will continue to exist, because everything is change, nothing goes on forever, everything passes. This famous current “crisis” does not exist, as such. We have put it in our minds ourselves, greatly helped by our politicians and the media. To speak of the crisis is to create it, to move into it. Why say to ourselves that catastrophe is irreversible and inevitable and is leading us to disaster, when what is going on is our continuous and natural transformation as Humanity. Were things really easier for our forebears? Will they be more difficult for our descendants? Nothing is certain, nothing is “written!” The destiny of Humanity and of Earth that shelters us is going to continue its cyclic evolution. It is difficult at the moment to predict whether things will be better or worse, but what we can state with certainty is that they will be different. The mystical person is aware of this, and therefore does not wallow in self-pity: she or he observes, analyzes, and adapts; agrees to question themselves, tackles things, creates, and moves forward; uses their knowledge and energy to develop within society, without agreeing to put up with things.

We are brought back to the concept of responsibility which I went into earlier on. This responsibility is what we require, for we alone make our choices, and it is a mistake to count on the help of others or society to get us out of our difficulties. It is vital to take charge of our own affairs, yet without neglecting the fact that it is our duty to abide by the concepts of solidarity, fraternity, and sharing.

The mystic also uses their intuition a great deal, and endeavors to see into the future and to look beyond appearances. She or he reads others’ souls and hearts. A mystic does everything they can to rise up above suffering and despair; they go past the clouds and so glimpse the Sun; being both on their own and connected to the great All, they never forget that to accomplish great things we must be able to do small ones perfectly. The mystic knows that duty well carried out is an act of love and of service; and that for the service to have its full meaning, it must be selfless. It must be a gift of oneself to others, joyously agreed to, and not undergone as a great sacrifice. Love and giving should not be likened to suffering and renunciation, quite the reverse: were this the case, it would no longer be a question of love, but of masochistic behavior. True service only gives rise to good feelings, and expects nothing in return.

The mystic does everything they can to cultivate and maintain four primary virtues, and thus warrant being called a mystic: understanding,
service, compassion, and love. These virtues all flow into one another, and end up merging into a perfect unity and forming one entity, thus moving us closer to the “Rose-Croix” state. But the road is long, and the ascent an arduous one, with its tests like so many stones on the path. Willpower, perseverance, and trust are three further virtues that need to be manifested, if we wish to achieve our spiritual elevation. We can do this together under the aegis of the sacred symbol of the Rose-Cross, and thanks to all the experiences – pleasant and unpleasant – that we have already lived through, and will continue to live through. This choice is ours, for we have our free will. In summary and in conclusion, here are brief answers to three questions concerning what I have said.

Is it possible to be a mystic and to live in the twenty-first century? Yes, and not only is it possible – we have to. It is the only alternative that presents itself to Humanity.

What is it that the mystic is seeking? To merge her or his soul into the absolute, to live in permanent communion with God, not by running away from the world and what is happening, but by mastering their life in the things of every day, even the most ordinary ones. The mystic allows the great light of their consciousness to illuminate their life and actions. The mystic’s mind is not in a muddle: quite the reverse, it is lucid and clear. The mystic has confidence in themselves, and responds to problems by displaying courage.

How is a mystical person recognizable? If you meet a man or woman who is energetic, industrious in their work, compassionate, generous, respected by their friends, tolerant in religious and many other matters, able – through their approach and with a few simple words – to have you glimpse the cosmic splendor and power in all things, then you will have come in contact with a mystic (loosely quoted from Ralph Maxwell Lewis’s writing).

Being a mystic is all of this, and more! Let us be thinking, active, and responsible! Let us also be enlightened and fraternal towards each other. And let us live in collaboration and in harmony with other people, with Nature, the Cosmos, and with God. With our feet on the ground and our head in the stars, let us be mystics!
Can we ever be content?

Defining what contentment really is comes down to how satisfied we are with our present status. But does the sustaining of a particular satisfaction equal prolonged contentment? Continuous stimuli, invariable sensations, no matter how enjoyable at first, eventually result in boredom. However, we should observe that consciousness is an active state, its activity being maintained only by varying stimuli.

Psychological tests have proven for example that when we are exposed to a continual sound of unvarying pitch and volume, we eventually become “deaf” to it. Our consciousness appears to no longer respond to the auditory impression. In fact, for us to hear a habitual sound requires us to concentrate upon that sound; we need to consciously isolate it from other sounds of which we are aware. Contentment therefore does not arise from a particular thing or condition; it can only come from a general state of freedom from any kind of aggravation.

Let’s suppose for instance, that someone enjoys listening to music. When listening to it, anxiousness or aggravated disturbance of the emotions are dispelled or are, at least, more easily suppressed. But if the music that contributes to their sense of well-being was played repeatedly, hour after hour, day after day, its agreeable and pleasing sensations would diminish. The listener would finally come to experience the same piece of music as being unsatisfactory and inducing dissatisfaction. It is a common experience that a play or a film that once brought pleasure is less and less satisfactory in doing so every time it is seen thereafter.

There are people who will tell you that all through their lives they have found happiness in the reading of a particular book or in reciting the words of a poem without experiencing any diminishing gratification. But actually, if we think about it, that book or poem wasn’t being read or recited constantly. There may have been hours or even days between the reading, so the stimulus wasn’t constant enough to cause monotony to set in.
Monotony follows where there is no change, and if our consciousness isn’t varied enough, a state of lethargy and irritation occurs. Those of us who are exposed to constant intense excitement, as great mental and physical activity, or those who are engaged in strenuous work, will often need to wind down, expressing a desire for quiet and relative inactivity. When they achieve this, a sense of contentment arises.

Having said that, this doesn’t mean that a state of less stimulation is necessary for contentment. Rather, it shows that the conditions of the previous environment, taken collectively, were becoming all too monotonous. Moreover, the quiet and peace that follows is a different kind of experience, a consciousness of different stimuli which, by contrast, is a gratifying change.

**Personal Satisfaction**

The elements of contentment lie principally within ourselves. We won’t all experience “well-being” in the same environment. Our temperament, personality, and conditioning must be taken into consideration. For example, a dynamic person, one of considerable nervous energy, can find pleasure only in exceptional activity. Their energy must be dissipated or it causes a restlessness that is discomforting. Another type of person may be an introvert. Their contentment is had perhaps in contemplation, periods of abstraction, and creative thought.

Continuous restlessness is evidence that we have desires and urges that aren’t being satisfied. We may frequently change our interests, but to no avail. Consequently, our inability to achieve contentment isn’t always due to any monotony in our mental or physical activity. It must be realized that, although variations or changes are necessary factors of contentment, they alone aren’t sufficient. The change must be consistent. It must be a change within the group of things in which we find satisfaction.

**Individual Pursuits**

However, a continuous change of general interests by someone is an indication of emotional (not mental) instability. It demonstrates that they are not aware of that desire or desires which will bring them the personal satisfaction they crave. Their frequent changes from one kind of activity to another imply a blind search for a source of inner peace. Such plunging into life may of course eventually unearth or reveal to them the course they should pursue for satisfaction, but it is a trial and
error method which most often brings failure and discouragement or even mental and physical suffering. Having said that, we do need to have some exposure to life, to its multiplicity of appeals and demands, if we’re to learn what’s in harmony with our latent abilities and desires.

When we are young our minds are continually active and we need to find a channel for expression; if not, our inhibited energy may lead to emotional distress. Youthful mental energy sometimes makes it difficult to attach ourselves to, or engage with anything worthwhile for a length of time. For young people, education should allow exposure to different fields of human endeavor, an essential component so they may find a relationship to their inclinations. They should, as in all progressive, modern schools, have an opportunity to do manual work as well as academic subjects. In this way, a connection may result allowing them to concentrate on a particular sphere of activity where they’ll find contentment.

As far as the individual pursuit of contentment is concerned, an essential first step is to begin by asking yourself what you want in life. This shouldn’t be construed in terms of particular things. As we’ve said, no one thing alone, if constantly indulged in, provides a long-lasting feeling of satisfaction. The question should be related to your feelings, your urges. In general, what activity, what kind of life, physical or intellectual, appeals to you?

The Right Choice

A little thought will soon make clear to you that such answers as “wealth” or “fame,” for example, are inadequate as ends in themselves. Wealth per se is an award that’s achieved as the consequence of the accomplishment of something else. You cannot set out to be wealthy. Rather, we become wealthy because we’ve been a success in some business venture or other. We cannot be successful in an enterprise unless we can give ourselves fully to its demands. To do this without any mental reservation we must really enjoy it. What we do must make us content.

The same reasoning applies to fame, which is recognition for some achievement. We must first, by hard, personal work win that fame. Again, to win acclaim we must have some outstanding ability. This ability must be liked. It must provide personal contentment.
There are many people who find satisfaction in creating, for example. They firstly need to discover, by personal analysis and endeavor or just through a natural bent, what kind of creative talent they have. They should try writing, painting, music, and perhaps other pursuits such as woodwork or mechanics, always being aware however that it's the act of creating that provides the greatest satisfaction for them. Others may find that, when they're outdoors or close to nature, working on a farm or in the forests, they experience an ecstasy or sense of unusual well-being. Such pursuit will often lead to a career that is very satisfying.

In contrast, how unfortunate are those people who discover, only after they have incurred many obligations and commitments which prevent them from making changes in life, that they're in the wrong job? Life can be miserable in this kind of situation unless they resort to an effective substitute, such as a hobby or pastime. Once a particularly satisfying interest has been found, engaging in it will be a contributing factor to their contentment.

Sometimes it may be that the needs of daily life and family obligations don't permit the time for us to indulge in our talents and desires. Consequently, we will suppress our interests, hoping that eventually when we retire we will be able to find the time to pursue them. In the meantime we will be deprived of contentment which sometimes leads to unrest, casting an emotional gloom over our lives and creating what we might see as a drab existence. The only option for someone in these circumstances is to try and find at least an hour or two a week to do what satisfies their interests. This will at least provide a feeling of contentment that will bridge the interval until circumstances change and they can spend more time engaging with their pastime.

**Remote Ideals**

There is also a negative aspect to this subject and it concerns that state of mind by which we permanently obstruct the acquisition of contentment. The lives of others, great men and women, have always been the incentive for many to achieve success and happiness. However, not everyone can be a Beethoven, a Francis Bacon, or a Thomas Edison. Consequently, don’t make your ideal in life the activities of a famous film star, singer, or sportsperson unless you have within yourself similar ingredients.
Live for today! By that statement it is not implied that you shouldn’t plan or prepare for the future. Rather, don’t just make every day a building block for some future castle of dreams. Try and live a life so that some part of each day will satisfy a healthy and natural desire. Ideally, contentment should be cumulative daily, not a sudden prize at the end of life.

We must also realize that contentment isn’t a great exaltation, reaching to a peak of emotional pleasure and satisfaction. Such a state can be dangerous because it cannot be sustained and the let-down, the reaction, can be adverse. The realization of contentment is an adjustment to the affairs of life in order to have normal pleasures and satisfaction. It is a smooth highway rather than an acceleration to peaks and a plunging down the other side.
THE OVERSOUL

H. Spencer Lewis, FRC
Imperator, 1915 – 1939

It has been intimated in the preceding pages of this book [Mansions of the Soul, 1930] that there is but one soul existing throughout the entire universe and this soul is the consciousness and divine essence of God. It has also been intimated that the so-called individual souls of human beings are not separate and independent souls, but unseparated segments of the Universal Soul, never losing their association or contact with this consciousness of God and the divine essence which constitutes the vital life force. Because these facts may be new to a great many Western minds it seems appropriate at this moment to augment these statements with the use of schematic diagrams and symbols, and make plain the beautiful fundamental laws which are involved in the principles set forth in this book.

That there is one soul in the universe, and that this soul is the consciousness and vital essence of God should not be surprising to any devoted student of sacred literature; nor will it be surprising to those who have made a careful study of the fundamental laws of biology and ontology.

If God is the creator of all things, and from his consciousness and divine essence emanates all consciousness and all vitality, then all consciousness throughout the universe and all vital energy of a living, creative nature must have one central, divine source, and must be continuous and uniform throughout the universe.

Even a moment’s reflection will reveal that it is far more difficult to think of God having created out of his consciousness and essence millions upon millions of individual souls, each retaining its distinct individuality and separateness, than it is to think of one universal essence and one universal soul. To conceive of any means of maintaining individual entities of the same soul essence and same divine consciousness, without a tendency on their part to unite and blend into one essence and one consciousness, is a difficult thing indeed.

God, the creator of all things, is the Father of all images created by him in his likeness. We cannot conceive of the human children of one earthly father as being of a vital essence or blood energy so separated that the same essence is not in each of them. With the soul essence, however, we are dealing with a subtle and transcendental energy that pervades all space
and which cannot be isolated or confined in any enclosure, and we cannot conceive of this essence as being in a human form without at the same time extending beyond that form and contacting the same essence resident in all other human forms.

When the sacred writings of the Orientals and even of the Christians speak of the soul in human beings, they do not necessarily imply an individually separated soul, but the soul essence and soul consciousness of God that is resident in human beings. Each of us has soul, but not a soul in the sense that it is a thing apart from every other soul in human beings.

To illustrate the principle, or law involved, I have resorted to the homely illustration of the electricity that is utilized in the lighting of modern electric lamps.

**THE COSMIC CONCESSION**

In Figure 1, I have shown the electric wires in the upper part of the drawing passing along from lamp to lamp without any break in their connections. The lamps A, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I are various types of electric bulbs common in use today. Some are very small and give only a small amount of light, others are large and very luminous; some are long, and some are short.

The electricity that flows into each one of these lamps, and causes the lamp bulb to be alive with light, is not broken in its continuity or in its flow through all of the lamps. The electricity that illuminates these bulbs and gives them life or light flows through each lamp and out again to enter into the next lamp, and so on. The electric current, therefore, in each lamp
may be likened to the soul essence of the lamp, and while we would say that each lamp has its own electricity which it is utilizing, we cannot look upon that electricity in each lamp as being separated from or distinct from the electricity that is in all of the other lamps. Merely a segment of the electric circuit is resident in each lamp, and all of these segments are united in one continuous circuit. Even if we separate one of the lamps from the circuit, as shown at B in the diagram, the electricity that was once resident in the bulb comes to the point or place of its former entrance into the lamp bulb, and then passes on into the next one. The lamp that no longer has the electric current passing through it is now lifeless and without light.

In the lower part of Figure 1, I have compared the universal soul essence and consciousness with the electric current. The dotted circles labeled A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H at the bottom of this diagram represent human physical bodies and the upper dark line represents the soul essence and consciousness of the universe, with segments of it coming down and passing through each of the physical bodies. You will see at once that this divine consciousness and essence, called soul, is not broken into individual and separate segments in each one of the physical bodies, but passes into each body and manifests there, giving the body life, yet manifests simultaneously in the other physical bodies. While the segment of soul is in one of these physical bodies it manifests consciousness, life, and intelligence in the physical body, and without this soul essence the physical body would be lifeless and without intelligence or consciousness. The dotted circle B represents a physical body after transition when the soul essence and consciousness have withdrawn from the body and left it lifeless and unconscious.

The electric lamp bulbs are not electric lights until electricity manifests in them and through them. When you buy an electric bulb at a store and carry it home with you, you have nothing more or less in your hands than some of the minerals of the earth, gathered together by a scientific process and formed into a body by the master creators of electrical devices. You cannot call it a light, since it manifests no light, and is therefore lifeless, useless, and without any value so long as it is unassociated with the electric current. The moment you place this bulb in a socket, or in a position where the electric current can flow into it, you immediately transform the lifeless, lightless, physical body of the bulb into a vibrating illuminating, living thing of light, and the moment the electric current or electric essence is withdrawn from the bulb it is again lifeless and useless and cannot fulfill the purpose for which it was made.
One’s physical body is precisely like the electric bulb. Every bit of its physical and material form and nature has been extracted from the earthly elements and drawn together by a marvelous process and formed by a Master Creator, but until the divine essence of life and consciousness enters that physical body it is lifeless and truly lightless.

This recalls to our minds the principle that is so well worded in the Christian Bible, in the book of Genesis, wherein we are told that God formed man out of the dust or elements of the earth, and then breathed into his nostrils, or into his physical body, the breath of life or the divine essence, and man became a living soul. Until such essence was breathed into his body man was lifeless and incapable of fulfilling the purpose for which he was created, and he was of no more use than an electric light bulb before the electric essence gives it light and life. The physical body of man is without divine intelligence or consciousness, and without vitality or purpose, until the soul enters it and makes it a living soul rather than a mere existing body.

We can see by these two illustrations that the soul essence and consciousness resident in each physical body is not separated from the essence and consciousness that is in every other living body. If we were to think of the soul in each individual body being a separate and distinct soul, independent of all the others, and not in actual contact with all others, we would have a condition similar to that shown by the letter J in the upper part of Figure 1. Here the electric lamp bulb has the electric wires within it but these are not connected with the electric circuit. We see at once that a lamp in this condition is no different from that shown by the letter B, for there is no contact between the electric wires in the bulb and those which contain the real energy. Such a lamp could not manifest light of any kind.

By looking at the body identified as letter I at the end of the lower diagram, we see that same point illustrated by breaking the connection between the soul in the body and the universal soul essence. We see at once that such a condition is an impossibility, for the soul essence and the consciousness in a physical body must remain in contact with the source of essence and the source of consciousness in order to maintain its manifestation of essence and consciousness. Matter itself is not intelligent, for it is composed of the gross elements of the earth, and these elements have neither mind nor consciousness until they are organized and prepared to receive some form of consciousness.
Long ago the ancient philosophers and mystics gave a name to the universal soul and consciousness that pervades all space. This name we have modernized into the term *Oversoul*. Some have called it the Cosmic Soul; some have called it the Divine Soul; and others the Soul of God. Such other terms, however, imply that there are various kinds of souls in the universe, and that one of these is divine, or the *Soul of God* or of the Cosmic, whereas the others are not. But, since there is *but one soul* in the universe, the term *Oversoul* is preferred, because it does not attempt to distinguish this soul from any other, except to intimate that it is the soul that exists everywhere without being separated from its various manifestations in physical bodies.

Therefore, we will use the term *Oversoul* to mean the Universal Soul or God, or, in other words, the divine consciousness and essence of God which pervades all space, and segments of which are manifested in each human body. This means that in the body of each human being there is the soul essence, the power, the energy, the consciousness of God, that *God is within us* rather than without. This brings us to a clearer understanding of many of the sacred writings of the past and especially those which are found in the Christian doctrines.

In thinking of the Oversoul extending a part of itself downward and into the body of each human being, we must give some thought to the relationship of the soul to the ego and the personality of each human being, as touched upon in preceding chapters. In order to impress these relationships upon the mind of my reader I have resorted to another schematic illustration which is given here as Figure 2.

Here we have two heavy dark lines descending from above and coming down into a circular enclosure. Let us consider the two dotted circular lines in the center of the diagram as representing the physical body of a human being. Inside of these two dotted lines we see the heavy black lines representing the soul essence and consciousness.
descending from the Cosmic into the physical body. In the center of this soul we find another body, often referred to as the *psychic body*, which is the ego or personality, and this ego is composed of the mind and memory that is associated with each segment of the Oversoul.

In other words, if we look upon the Oversoul in the universe as being divided into unbroken segments, and each segment representing a part of the Oversoul that resides in a human body, we will find that each one of these segments of the Oversoul possesses an ego or personality composed of mind or intelligence, and consciousness with memory. The soul itself is composed of the divine essence, or vital life force – creative energy which emanates from God, the source of all life. However, in addition to this creative and vitalizing energy of the soul, each segment possesses, as an attribute, an ego or personality, with its mind, memory, and consciousness. As I have stated above, this ego or personality, with its divine mind and divine consciousness, has often been referred to as the *psychic body* of a human being, resident within the physical body.

In Figure 2 you will also see the aura radiating from the physical body. This aura is like the radiations of light that come from an electric bulb when the wires within are connected with the source of electricity. The aura of the human body is the result of the soul essence and vitality resident within the physical body. I have illustrated this aura in the form of an egg or oval, inasmuch as the aura within a human body is often seen in this form, and in any ancient manuscripts the human aura is referred to as an egg, and therefore symbolical of the reproductive energy of the animal kingdom. When the soul with its essence and consciousness is withdrawn from the physical body, the aura follows the soul and no longer manifests around the physical body. As I have stated elsewhere in this book, thousands of observations have been made at the time of transition when the aura of the physical body has been seen to rise above the body and to remain in space as the soul withdrew and left the body lifeless.

It is very important that the elements of Figure 2 should be carefully studied. Keep in mind that the two black lines represent the divine essence of the Oversoul descending into the physical body. The physical body is represented by the two large dotted circular lines. But the soul in the body also has other attributes besides its divine essence and vitality. These attributes constitute the ego or personality, with mind and memory. This ego or personality *always remains with each segment* of the Oversoul, for the ego is immortal like the soul itself, and cannot be destroyed and never ceases to
exit. Whether the segment of the soul *is in the physical body* or *out of it*, the ego, with its mind, memory, and consciousness remains with it, and so we see that we can have an intelligent, conscious segment of the soul either *in a body* or *out of a body*. When it *is in a body* we have the union of the spiritual with the material, making a perfect manifestation of a living soul on earth. When it *is out of a body* we have a physical body that is lifeless, unintelligent, and unconscious, and a segment of soul still retaining its vitality and consciousness, ego, and intellect.

With these points well fixed in your mind we will now look at Figure 3. Here I have shown a number of physical bodies with the soul segment and personality, or ego, in them. A, B, C, and F represent living bodies with the soul essence and ego resident in them, and the aura of life extending around the physical body. At D, I have shown what occurs at the time of transition. Here the soul with its ego and aura is withdrawn from the physical body, leaving the body without any aura or life. At E, I have shown the complete separation, and you will notice that I have illustrated this by showing the segment of the soul still maintaining its aura and personality or ego, although having ascended into the Cosmic and no longer in contact with the physical body which is now lying into the dust of the earth, disintegrating and returning to its primary elements.

![Fig. 3](image_url)

You will notice by studying Figure 3 that all of the egos in each segment of the Oversoul are connected and associated through the contact with the divine soul essence, and that even in the case where the soul has completely withdrawn from the body, the ego of the segment is in contact with all of the other egos through its universal contact with the Oversoul.

So much for the illustration of the principle of the universal association and contact of all egos in all living things. This should impress us with the
principle that the personality which each of us possesses throughout life, or the ego which we manifest throughout life, is not a mortal thing but an immortal thing, and a part of the Oversoul existing eternally.

We should also be impressed with the fact that the ego, or personality, which each of us manifests during our lifetime, continues to exist and retain its identity even after transition. Therefore, there are egos, or personalities, existing in physical bodies on Earth, and existing outside of physical bodies in the Cosmic. And all of these egos, or personalities, incarnated in bodies or existing outside of bodies in the Cosmic, are in contact and constant communication with each other through having the same soul essence continuously passing through them.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that this ancient understanding of the association of all egos with each other, and the uniting of all souls into one soul, was the foundation for the belief in the universal brotherhood of humanity through the universal parenthood of all beings, and establishes the fact that all human beings are brothers and sisters under one creator and of the same essence, same vitality, and same consciousness, regardless of race, creed, color, or other distinctive elements of the ego.
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