

DELVING INTO THE FOLDS

Michael Shaluly, FRC

We often hear that we have to keep our body moving to stay physically healthy and we have to keep our mind active to stay mentally sharp. Rarely, if ever, do we hear recommendations that we should strive to explore the boundaries of consciousness to expand our awareness. Even if we were encouraged to do so, what method would we use? We are born into families, traditions, and ways of thinking that tend to define us. Our awareness is inclined to linger within this limited realm, fitted into a small box and seldom peeking outward towards other possibilities. But there is a deeper root within us. We should cherish our traditions and heritage, and yet we can recognize an ever-greater perception of ourselves with the mental will to redirect thought. Expanding our awareness requires an open but questioning mind so that you find your truth and guidance from your heart.

Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, a great mystic of the past well known to Martinists and Rosicrucians alike, spoke of the practice of delving into the heart. He states this work is laborious, in that we have to recognize thought that is beyond our thought, a guidance that is always with us but masked or in the folds of the illusions we create for ourselves. If we can get past the physical hardships we create for ourselves, we can unfold the guidance of the heart that will lead us more calmly and lovingly through life. These mystics of the past knew of

the real work required to find our higher self. An expanded awareness is not an end that we achieve, it is dynamic and always becoming ever more expansive. We have to stretch our thinking on all planes in which we think – objective, subjective, spiritual, subconscious, and beyond.

We, as mystics, do probe our conscious boundaries for a direct communion with the Divine. In return, we receive inspirations that are difficult to define. We analyze all forms of relatable human experiences, a compilation of the awareness of our world that we have developed. Science has given us empirical knowledge, religion has given us a reverential view, the arts inspire us and so forth, all pointing to a great power behind all creation. From centuries of human effort to now, mysticism within humankind has ceaselessly searched for origins and clues to the perplexity of human awareness.

Our consciousness is aware, therefore, that we are unaware of something deeper, and it is that deeper something that we desire to become aware of. We can see the heavens move, we can marvel at how our body functions, and ponder just how or why “all” exists as it does.



La meditation, Alphonse Legros.

The schools of mysticism guide their students that it is within that we can realize Cosmic Consciousness, a state where we can experience a consciousness of all that is. That state must be experienced to understand it. At a recent Rosicrucian



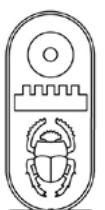
gathering, we discussed an app that allows one to take a picture of a plant and learn the name of that plant and other information about it. In a state of all-knowing Cosmic Consciousness, would we be able to name that plant in our language and all other languages? Is that the type of all-knowing knowledge we are speaking of? Or would it be beyond this objective world, a deeper awareness and understanding of the essence of all of nature? Notice how we tend to place our objective thinking upon even an unknown state such as Cosmic Consciousness.

We look outside ourselves to answer an inner desire; thus, when we explore the outer world, we are still exploring ourselves. Let your mind dwell on that for a second: We look outside ourselves to answer an inner desire; thus, when we explore the outer world, we are still exploring ourselves. Allow your thought patterns to pay homage to that intimate desire that drives us to ponder and seek. All of your explorations are within you.

We can only marvel at how our consciousness grows in various directions from the moment we begin life on Earth. As infants our awareness is for a time focused inward and the folds that

eventually cover our intimate connection to the Divine have yet to develop. Eventually, awareness must look outward and begin to confront this wondrous outer-world that we are born into. Our attention is drawn away from that inner observance into the various activities that require our attention, time, and efforts to learn and survive in society. This is as it must be as we make our way into and through our experience in the human kingdom. Perhaps, however, humanity as a whole is more prepared to begin to maintain a greater awareness of that internal world from where we came.

Finding our inner nature is a laborious process. It is laborious because it requires our will to overcome our illusions. We live in this world, and it is oftentimes hard to recognize anything beyond the physical, even when we know that an invisible, guiding consciousness allows us to be. In this physical world, we experience difficulty and tragedy, beauty and love, the ups and downs of life. Who has time to “refocus” our awareness to a higher level when there is so much to struggle with here and now? The laborious task before us is to change our thought patterns even in the midst of chaos. When we look across the various sources that vie for our attention, it is



important to find a way to steady ourselves with that great guiding power that creates everything. Indeed, stop for a moment and ask yourself, in the quiet of your mind - is it truly possible to access a power that created everything?

This piece will now focus on the word “living.” Where do you live? The first thing that comes to mind is usually our street or city. Take a moment and contemplate the question a little more deeply than you are used to, and let it settle...where do you live? There are a number of answers, all of which are correct. Besides our physical surroundings, we could also say that we live in a certain mental state familiar to ourselves. More deeply, we can understand that we reside within ourselves, in a state of being that is within the folds of consciousness, an eternal home, a state our soul personality abides in, ensconced in the arms of that which created us.

Our teachings state that we live in a sea of Cosmic Consciousness. Stated more simply, we live in consciousness. Consciousness is not separate from our physical presence or our physical world; we live in it. During our waking hours, we are unaware that we live in a guiding consciousness because we seem to be only an observer to it. Yet, we observe and contemplate the very consciousness that allows us to observe.

Psalm 23 perhaps is an attempt to guide us to a realization of living in conscious creation. This prayer ends with the words: “goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life for I dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Open your consciousness to a higher realization of sacred writings such as this, for they may be guiding you to a higher awareness of yourself. When you get consumed in what seems to be the outer movements of the world, might it help you to remember

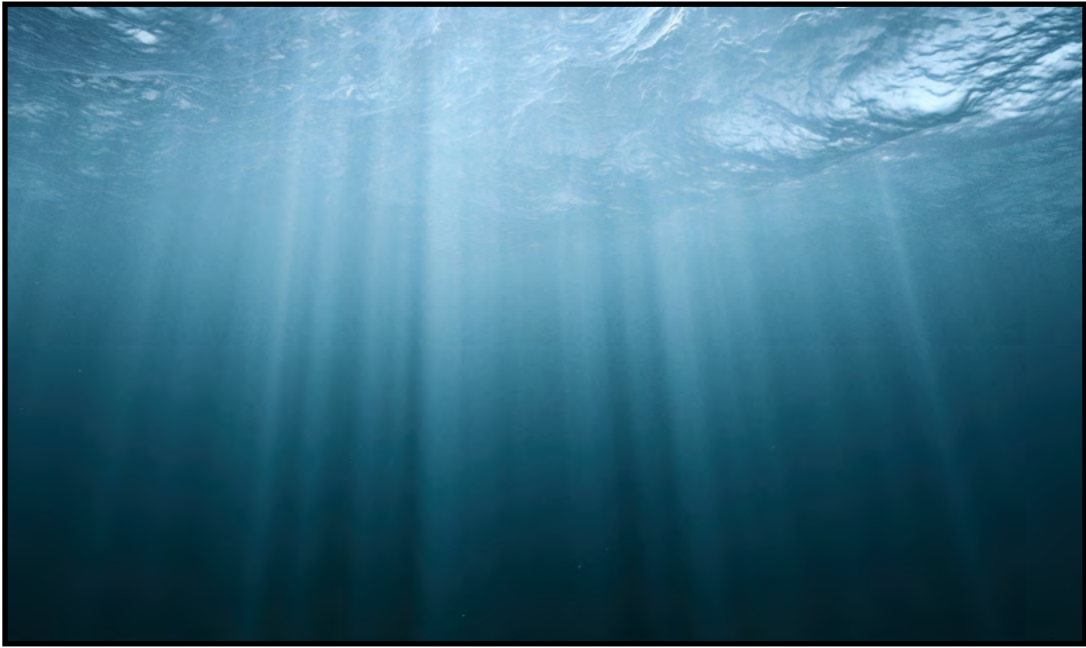
that you dwell in the house of the Lord... forever?

Now think of a person you know well. What is it that you know? Allow this question to settle a bit... what is it that you know? In our mind's eye, we see their physical features. We instinctively know that while their outer form is familiar to us, there is a deeper part of them. We have an impression of their personality and various traits such as their sense of humor, their temperament, and so forth. From our previous introspection of our deeper “home,” we can also know that they too share the ultimate home in the arms of our creator just as we do. We can therefore know that in some way, hidden in the folds of our hearts, we are connected.

Now think about the love that you have for someone. What is it that you love? Again, allow this question to settle. It may be fair to say that your love for someone is physical, emotional, and beyond. As human beings, we get to experience many kinds of love toward others, as well as love towards animals, nature, and so forth.



Meditation, John George Brown (1910).



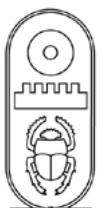
For now, examine the love you have for someone close to you, go inward and ask yourself, what is it that you love in this person? All answers are correct. As you wish, you can progress to other people and things. What is it that you love in your family pet, or your garden, and so forth? This analysis, if you allow it to grow, may reveal deeper levels of love within that you have for the world around you.

There is a calm within us. Like a turbulent ocean on the surface, we can find a quiet serenity within if we go deep enough. As human beings, we are unable to stay below the surface, for we must come back up for air after a short duration. This is symbolic in that we live in this world, and while we are below the surface, we can gain strength and courage from that serenity and bring it back to this world. Having the wisdom of serenity can indeed give us courage and direction to battle the bobbing waves of life. We can allow the world to settle around us through the expanded thought gained from the quiet. Our Order tells us that we can transcend the physical through thought. As you go about your day, allow words and situations to settle within you before you react to

them. We have all seen others who handle seemingly tough situations with ease. We all have the power to do this with an expanded awareness. Settle into yourself and the power that creates; in your mind, submerge below the waves, find the quiet, and bring that power to the surface.

It may be difficult to recognize the actuality of connecting to the force that creates us. We know that force exists, but our objective consciousness tends to separate itself from that force. It is an oxymoron; we are conscious of that energy that gives us life, we can and do observe it, but since we observe it, we feel we are separate from it. We even know that it is a part of us, but still feel we are observing from outside of it. But we are connected with that which we observe.

It is through our scientific observations that we discovered bioelectricity, or the regulation of cells through electrical signaling. Cells use ion fluxes, or electrically charged flows, to communicate. This touchless electric communication structure across tissues comprises an ancient and highly conserved communicating and signaling system. We receive different electrical signals. On one level, we receive



impulses that we are objectively conscious of; on another level, we receive impulses that obviously perform necessary functions, but we are consciously unaware of them. On a mental level, we receive thoughts that we are conscious of; and we also know there is a realm of thought that we are unconscious of, perhaps a realm where thoughts are generated and then translated through the sprinkling of light into the chambers of our objective consciousness. Tam Hunt, an evolutionary biologist, wrote about the scientific work that relates this bioelectricity to consciousness. Paraphrasing, he stated:



The Toilers of the Sea, Albert Pinkham Ryder (1880).

In nature, electric fields power processes essential to life, perhaps even consciousness itself. Scientists are learning how electric and magnetic fields reveal key aspects of consciousness. The prevailing view for some time was that the brain's electric fields are a side effect of the brain's activity. Now, there are active theories that these fields may drive the brain and help explain consciousness. It is likely that the body's electric fields are associated in some manner with some kind of consciousness at various levels.

Consider these words from the Book of Genesis: darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of the Divine was hovering over the waters. Roam with the meaning of these beautiful and profound words for a moment.

That spirit hovers over all of us, connecting us to everything, to the very

source of life. It is always there, sprinkling us with the light of vital life force to maintain us. You are a vessel receiving this guidance. It is animating your body and animating your awareness. Turn your thoughts toward this light sprinkling down upon you and let it settle into you. The energy of creation

hovers, holding galaxies together just as it holds us together as sentient beings. We are observing this divine flux even as we are a part of it. It is as if we can confirm that hermetic law that states the universe is mental, that there is a guiding thought in all things. With this knowledge, consider that the word "Lord" from Psalm 23 is not

something outside of us. It is that part of us that invisibly guides us in life, as the shepherd guides the sheep, just as we see the cells guided and transmitting knowledge within us. No matter the occurrences in the outside world, this beneficent power is with you.

Sit now, and simply relax into yourself. Take a few deep breaths, and as you exhale, relax into your chair. Think of anything that may be bothering you, a memory, a situation, a person. We will call it a visitor. Welcome this visitor into your inner home; as you exhale, let it settle with you. You are together in the house of the Lord! In this house, the forces that benevolently hold the fabric of the universe together converge around you physically, psychically, and spiritually. Visualize now the light that contains this power encompassing your visitor. Allow this brightness to grow in illumination until your visitor disappears

within it, absorbed into the goodness that this light is. Now, feel that goodness permeate your entire being.

That benevolent force is always with you, functioning completely selflessly for you. Whether you have been kind or unkind, whether you have helped or harmed, this force serves you. It is a noble love of autonomic consciousness operating behind your objective consciousness within the folds of your heart. All of these universal forces envelop you, creating the miracle of you! You are a holy being, privileged to witness overwhelming, selfless love in action. That pure love hovers with you now and remains with you for all of your



Magdalene with Two Flames, *Georges de La Tour* (1640).

terrestrial days. Look within where you reside. Say mentally to yourself, “I am.”

In conclusion, we are fortunate to witness consciousness open up to this world by our own experience and by watching others go through their various stages, recognizing the ongoing evolution of conscious awareness.

From our human perspective, we follow a pattern of light, life, and love. With that first breath, there is the light of consciousness, followed by our ability to live and grow into this world, followed by love for others and things and for life itself if we allow it. It also shows our desire to reach up to that pure essence of love.

Perhaps from the Creators point of view, it is the opposite – love, life, light. From that all-creating essence, a pure love existed that had a pure desire to share; from that love and desire, life developed to begin a journey through consciousness; and then light shown in the form of human consciousness that became aware of a pure love that is our origin. Our awareness is to develop an awareness of the Divine. It is up to you to develop the will and desire to find that which is most important to you.

While we cannot see the Divine, we know It is there because we live. Abide in Its grace with your thoughts! Close your eyes often and enter that quiet that selflessly awaits to guide you. Settle into your conscious being with simple pauses, looking into the surface of the deep within you, and allowing the Divine creator to move you. With this practice, you will delve into the folds of your heart so that it blossoms to release the aroma of pureness.

