



MASTER MONOGRAPH

ROSICRUCIAN ORDER
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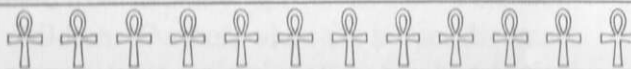


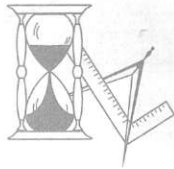
NEOPHYTE SECTION

Atrium 3 Nos. 4 - 7

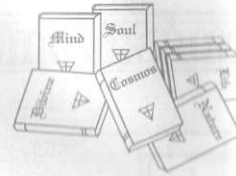
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Third Atrium No. 4



CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion

Baruch Spinoza, a 17th century Jewish philosopher, wrote that materialism is incompatible with happiness. According to him, any individual who denies the existence of the soul and of God cannot find joy in living. Since this monograph deals with the materialistic and spiritualistic conceptions of life, the following comments are quite appropriate.

I have thus completed all I wished to set forth touching the mind's power over the emotions and the mind's freedom. Whence it appears, how potent is the wise man, and how much he surpasses the ignorant man, who is driven only by his lusts. For the ignorant man is not only distracted in various ways by external causes without ever gaining the true acquiescence of his spirit, but moreover lives, as it were unwitting of himself, and of God, and of things, and as soon as he ceases to suffer, ceases also to be.

Whereas the wise man, in so far as he is regarded as such, is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit, but, being conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit.

If the way which I have pointed out as leading to this result seems exceedingly hard, it may nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard, since it is so seldom found. How would it be possible, if salvation were ready to our hand, and could without great labor be found, that it should be by almost all men neglected? But all things excellent are all difficult as they are rare.

—BARUCH SPINOZA, 1632-1677
Ethics

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In examining the religions which came into being as we humans pondered our own nature and that of God over a period of many centuries, we realize that most religions were born at the same time as belief in the soul developed. In other words, history indicates that our earliest ancestors began to institute religious cults when they became aware of their spiritual nature. Why? Perhaps because they believed that such cults would bring them the clemency or the protection of God both during their earthly life and—perhaps most importantly—after death, in the beyond they strove to imagine. All current religions, in one form or other, pursue the same goal, for a great part of religious teaching is intended to prepare the faithful to step through the gates of the afterlife.

EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL: Many ethnologists and pantheologists have wondered how our remote ancestors became aware of their duality, i.e., how early humans came to the conclusion that they possessed a soul. Scientists have theorized that this consciousness of duality came about when these early peoples compared their objective experiences to their dream experiences. Such a supposition seems reasonably valid. We can easily imagine what early humans must have felt when, for one reason or another, they were suddenly awakened in the very midst of a dream. At that moment they probably realized that the events they had just been experiencing did not correspond to their waking moment.

For example, a hunter might be dreaming that he was out looking for prey, but then he would be snapped out of his dream state by some violent sound such as a roar or thunder. At this waking moment he may have realized that it was not actually he who was hunting in the forest with his companions. Yet, in his dream state he had the sensation of actually being there. In the face of such a mystery, the hunter may have reasoned that when he slept at night a part of himself, the “spirit” self, left his body and traveled abroad wherever it pleased. Since the dreamer also met other “spirits” while asleep, it also seemed reasonable for him to assume that there were as many “spirits” as there were men, women, and children. Further, when the hunter dreamed, he also saw stones, trees, animals, etc. So, in a logical manner, he may have felt that everything in existence must have a corresponding “spirit.” This type of deductive



reasoning may have greatly reinforced the animistic beliefs of our earliest ancestors.

Although we will never have any actual proof, it is indeed probable that humans became consciously aware of the existence of the soul by the means of dreams. This dawn of awareness was only the revelation of a natural belief—or, more accurately, of an innate knowledge—for human beings have always possessed a spiritual essence whose existence they experience intuitively. During the day, when busily hunting, preparing food, and protecting themselves against wild beasts, their attention needed to be focused on the outer world. Therefore, the impulses of their soul merged with their instinct for self-preservation and may not have seemed obvious to them. But at night, when everything became calm again and when these people could enjoy a relative tranquillity, such subconscious impulses may then have dominated their thoughts, bringing them inner experiences which prompted a dialogue with the voice heard in their innermost self. From this standpoint, the discovery of fire and the ability to produce it at will are among those events which contributed most to the coming of awareness of human duality for, as we have already explained, fire enabled people to prolong their hours of wakefulness and to indulge in their first meditations.

Both on the physical or spiritual plane, the modern human being is in no way an entity distinct from the earliest humans. We must rather regard the individual as the result of the evolution of consciousness through millennia. In physical science the premise of evolution is now on shaky ground. According to Hermetic philosophy what “evolves” is *consciousness*. That is why humanity, on the whole, is in search not only of its origins but also of the goal it must attain. In that regard, the human quest has not changed since prehistory, for it was cosmically preestablished and consists in manifesting the attributes of the Great Universal Soul on this earth plane.

To achieve this goal, all people must necessarily be convinced that they possess a soul and that they become aware that their life mission is to express its virtues in daily life. In fact, there probably exists no individuals who have not wondered at some point in their life whether or not they possess a spiritual dimension. The name ascribed to that spiritual dimension matters little for, whether designated by the words *soul, spirit, ether, or*



by the expressions *divine consciousness*, *divine principle*, *inner being*, etc., it always refers to the immaterial and immortal part of us and it is precisely that immaterial and immortal part which constitutes one of the greatest mysteries of the human existence.

MATERIALISTS: It is true that some individuals deny the existence of the soul with conviction. Such is the case, especially, of materialists who, as their name indicates, are adherents of materialism, a doctrine stating that the sole universal reality is that of the material world and of the sensations it produces in the brain. According to the supporters of this doctrine, humans are limited to a physical body maintained in life by physico-chemical processes. Moreover, advocates of materialism feel that human consciousness is only the product of the brain's activities. Starting from this principle, they state that intelligence is no more than the intellect, i.e., the capacity to reason logically on concrete and tangible facts. This explains why most materialists have difficulty imagining, visualizing, concentrating on abstract ideas, etc., in that the entirety of their mental processes is the prisoner of a tendency to rationalize everything. It is interesting to note that many materialists claim adherence to Cartesianism. Obviously, they do not understand at all the philosophy of Descartes who, you may recall, was a Rosicrucian and consequently, a mystic. As for death, the materialist often envisions this to be merely the final cessation of all physiological, psychological, and mental processes which made the human a living and conscious being.

As a general rule, materialists base their entire existence on the gratifications which the material world can give them. The pursuit of temporal power and the acquisition of material goods are part of their basic motivations. Being convinced that Divine Justice does not exist and that it is only the fruit of the imagination of weak people, many of them do not hesitate to transgress moral laws which guarantee the proper functioning of any human society. In other words, the most earnest supporters of materialism consider that the end justifies the means. Quite obviously this philosophy is short sighted, and such mental limitations are responsible for most of the conflicts involving nations and individuals.

The doctrine of materialism is in opposition to the course of the human quest in that it does not elevate men



and women. Instead it degrades them. It is impossible to pursue the ideals of self-interest and to follow a sincere spiritual course at the same time. Such observations may seem severe, but unfortunately they correspond to a certain reality. Consequently, materialists are more to be pitied than censured, for their actions are often only due to their ignorance. Our role is, therefore, to help them open their eyes through good examples when we have the opportunity and, with compassion and tolerance, to inspire them toward nobler ideals.

The preceding remarks lead us to establish a difference between two terms which are often erroneously regarded as being synonymous. These are *materialist*, to which we just referred, and *atheist*. It is true that a materialist is an atheist, but an atheist may very well not be a materialist. It is true that supporters of atheism do not believe in the existence of God, *per se*, and consequently, they may not bother to know whether they possess a soul. Thus, their psychological existence is not systematically based on materialistic values. In fact, many atheists are quite virtuous and, despite a lack of belief in a Deity, they believe in humanity.

History is marked by illustrious personages who declared themselves atheists—ones who were not followers of the God of their culture but were truly mystics in their behavior. Some even contributed considerably to the elevation of the mind and, by their faith in life, served most noble ideals. Many atheists have been believers at a certain period of their life but have rejected their religious beliefs following various adversities. Others are atheists because they have not found a definition of God which satisfies them in the existing religions. As is true for materialism, we do not condemn atheism, for it likewise corresponds to a stage in the growing awareness of spiritual laws to which every human being is subject.

SPIRITUALISTS: In contrast to materialism, we naturally find spiritualism. Although this term is generally applied to a specific current of thought, we can say that people who follow a religious credo are spiritualists, for they admit the existence of a divine principle within themselves. Of course, the way of conceiving this principle varies from one individual to the other but, regardless of conceptions contemplated, all those who believe in its existence admit that it is of divine origin and, consequently, immortal.



Thus, the opinions of spiritualists diverge not on the nature of the soul, as philosophers, clergy, and mystics share in general very germane ideas. Clear disagreements only appear when the discussion involves the reason for the soul and the role it plays during life and after death. Such divergence of opinion is the basis for the various modern-day spiritualist philosophies and religions. As for our Order, it possesses a traditional knowledge concerning the subject of the soul's functions and attributes. In forthcoming monographs, we will convey this knowledge to you.

In contrast to materialists, spiritualists who live in accordance with their beliefs or convictions strive to have as noble a behavior as possible. The ideals they pursue are generally altruistic and selfless. In other words, they do not limit themselves to consider only their well-being and that of their family. Their preoccupations cover a much vaster field, as they are aware that the primary mission of each person is to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the happiness of one's fellow humans, independently of race, religious beliefs, and political ideas. We can say that all those who place their lives at the service of spirituality, without losing interest in the material aspects of existence, are truly citizens of the world. In their daily life they behave above all as members of the human race and contribute effectively to the universal evolution of conscience. To a large extent, it is thanks to such people that humanity has experienced the most flourishing periods of its history.

In the next monograph, we will continue today's study, for before coming to the examination of laws governing the activities of the soul, several important points still need to be considered.

With all best wishes of Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

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

As you noticed while studying this monograph and the previous ones, we have used the word *spirit* to designate the supernatural forces in which prehistoric humans believed. We do wish to point out, however, that this word has no connection with *spirit energy* which, in Rosicrucian terminology, designates the cosmic energy permeating all material substances and without which the mundane world could not exist. If we choose the term *spirit* when referring to prehistoric beliefs, it is because this term most adequately evokes the primitive way in which our distant ancestors conceived what is preferably called *soul*.

When consulting a dictionary, you will notice that the word *spirit* has many definitions. Depending on the context, it may designate God or any aspect of God such as human or animal souls, or consciousness of soul, thought, character, a psychological or mental state, the essence of a product or of some work, etc. Its use is therefore quite ambiguous and can often lead to serious misinterpretation if no specific meaning is given in the text.

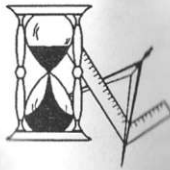
This ambiguity is particularly evident when this word is translated into another language. For example, the French word *esprit* is translated literally into English as *spirit*. But if this word refers to God, it must be translated by the word *God*. If it designates the Universal Soul, it is preferable to use *Mind*. When it is linked to soul consciousness, the word *consciousness* is the most explicit. Thus, you can see that the word *spirit*, no matter what language is used, is quite general and can take on any number of meanings. That is why, in Rosicrucian teachings, so much importance is attached to the proper choice of terms and to the mystical significance given to them.

To be fully consistent with Rosicrucian terminology, we will from now on use only the phrase *soul personality* to designate the spiritual essence which animates every human being. We will thus avoid any confusion with the specific meaning Rosicrucians give to the term *spirit*, and any ambiguity with the multitude of meanings which the word *spirit* has assumed in everyday language.

Summary of This Monograph

Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ History indicates that our earliest ancestors began to institute religious cults when they became aware of their spiritual nature.
- ¶ Most ethnologists and pantheologists theorize that our remote ancestors became aware of their duality when individuals compared their objective experiences to their dream experiences.
- ¶ The modern human being is in no way an entity distinct from the earliest humans. We must rather regard the individual as the result of the evolution of consciousness through millennia.
- ¶ Materialism is the doctrine stating that the sole universal reality is that of the material world and of the sensations it produces in the brain. According to the supporters of this doctrine, humans are limited to a physical body maintained in life by physico-chemical processes.
- ¶ Most supporters of atheism do not believe in the existence of God, but many of them, through their faith in humanity and in life, have contributed to the elevation of universal consciousness.
- ¶ People who follow a religious credo are spiritualists, for they admit the existence of a divine principle within themselves. Supporters of spiritualism sometimes disagree not on the nature for the soul, but rather on the reason for it and on the role it plays during life and after death.



Third Atrium No. 5



CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion

Over the centuries many philosophers, scientists, and artists have been convinced of the existence of the soul and have not hesitated to express that conviction openly. They have thus given proof that spirituality is not the monopoly of utopians, dreamers, or uneducated persons. Emmanuel Kant, the great 18th century German philosopher, is one of the prominent personalities who never hesitated to mention the reality of the soul. The following quotation excerpted from one of his works expresses his thoughts well.

I confess that I am very much inclined to assert the existence of immaterial natures in the world, and to put my soul itself into that class of beings. These immaterial beings . . . are immediately united with each other, they might form, perhaps, a great whole which might be called the immaterial world. . . . Every man is a being of two worlds: of the incorporeal world and of the material world . . . and it will be proved, I don't know where or when, that the human soul also in this life forms an indissoluble communion with all immaterial natures of the spirit-world, that, alternately, it acts upon and receives impressions from that world of which nevertheless it is not conscious while it is still man and as long as everything is in proper condition . . .

Birth, life, death are the states of the soul only Consequently, our body only is perishable, the essence of us is not perishable, and must have been existent during that time when our body had no existence. The life of the man is dual. It consists of two lives—one animal and one spiritual. The first life is the life of man, and man needs a body to live this life. The second life is the life of the spirit; his soul lives in that life separately from the body, and must live on in it after the separation from the body.

—EMMANUEL KANT, 1724-1804

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

For most people, the existence of the soul is not a matter of absolute certainty but rather a belief usually based on what they learned from their religion's teachings. However, even if they do not admit it openly, most of them want to have tangible proof of the existence of the soul. In other words, many persons, despite any religious convictions, yearn to "see," "meet," or "listen to" their soul, and thus experience its reality. Such an desire is legitimate, for no person, unless he or she has absolute faith, is truly satisfied with a truth in which he is forced to believe and yet is unable to experience intimately. This explains why we often reject abstract ideas which, at that moment, do not correspond to any objective reality for us. Endowed with analytical reasoning, we can say that we have a natural tendency to doubt and that we often need to "see" so as to believe.

Is it possible to prove the existence of the soul within? You have undoubtedly asked yourself this question at one time or another in your life. In our previous lesson we explained that our earliest ancestors probably became aware of their basic duality by comparing their waking experiences to their dream experiences. If you agree that dream activity is indeed a function dependent on soul consciousness, then the recall of a dream is proof that a consciousness other than the waking, objective consciousness does indeed exist. This concept is further reinforced by scientifically controlled experiments using an electroencephalograph which measures the brain waves of sleeping subjects. The results provide evidence that humans do dream and suffer considerably if deprived of sleep for any length of time.

However, should you express the mystical idea of a separate consciousness called *soul* to many persons in scholarly circles, they often reply that dreaming is not a function of the soul, but merely a subconscious activity directly dependent on the functioning of the brain. Mystics must recognize that it is difficult to counter this materialistic philosophy with a valid argument proving otherwise, and thus they should be less categorical in their reply, especially when these individuals may not have had as yet an experiential encounter with their own spiritual dimension!

EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL: Scientists may succeed some day in providing evidence of certain functions of the



soul, but the most difficult task for them will be to admit that such functions depend in fact on the presence of soul in the body. They will probably persist in contending that any spiritual manifestations they may record or measure are only be effects of human physio-psychological activity. Whatever the case may be, the best way for you to prove the existence of the soul is to experience it for yourself, either by being initiated into its reality during a particularly vivid cosmic contact, or by *dissociation*—i.e., an out-of-body experience, which is a conscious awareness of a temporary separation between one's physical body and psychic body, the latter being an intermediate emanation of the soul. Of these two methods, the second is the most revealing, for when you experience such a separation and are fully conscious of it, it is impossible to deny that we are indeed a dual being, consisting of both a material substance and a spiritual essence in the form of the psychic body.

As stated in the Neophyte Section initiations, the Egyptian mysteries included an ultimate phase in which candidates experienced dissociation. The candidates experienced a conscious duality with finality and solemnly committed themselves to becoming devotees in the study of mysticism so as to prepare for work in the service of Cosmic Intelligence. For traditional reasons, initiations transmitted in the ancient temples can no longer take place today. However, in one of the degrees of our Order, we will discuss in detail the method used by initiates of ancient Egypt to dissociate themselves or, as Rosicrucians say, to have psychic distance from or to project their psychic body outside of the physical body.

By following this method yourself, you will be able to experience your own duality. By succeeding in such a projection of soul consciousness, you will totally transcend the limits of time and space while remaining conscious of your own identity. In other words, you will live outside your physical body but will remain in direct contact with it. At this stage of your affiliation, such an experiment may seem difficult to imagine, but by persevering in your Rosicrucian studies, the possibility of effecting it will be given to you at a specific point in your progress.



Mystics do not doubt the existence of the human soul. Whether or not they succeed in experiencing it by means of a cosmic contact or a psychic projection, they know that their whole being is animated by an intangible,

but actual, spiritual energy. In fact, this inner conviction prompts them to seek knowledge of the mysteries and to make this quest the goal of life. As a member of our Order, you are necessarily an adept of mysticism and have therefore acquired the inner certainty that the soul evolves in all people and that this evolution justifies their presence on earth.

As you have undoubtedly noticed, it is impossible to convince anyone of this truth, for it is up to each person to gain such inner awareness. Yet daily life demonstrates that the happiest people are those who think, speak, and act in accordance with the noblest virtues with which they credit the human soul. Therefore, by being yourself an example of such virtues and by radiating happiness, you can show the way of mysticism to all those who are ready to follow it, thus giving them the possibility of initiating themselves into their inner reality. The growth of our Order rests to a large extent on this notion of example, in that the best way of sensitizing those around us to Rosicrucian mysticism is to show them that those persons interested in it live in peace with themselves and with their fellow humans.

Independent of our personal convictions, we should never forget two points which, in the final analysis, should suffice to convince those who refuse to recognize the validity of spirituality. As we explained in preceding monographs, belief in the soul dates back to the origins of humans as self-conscious entities. Such a belief never would have traversed so many millennia if it did not correspond to an innate certainty in the human consciousness. Moreover, there is no religion whose beliefs are not based on the existence of the soul. This is so because most religious movements are based on the teachings transmitted on this subject by the greatest initiates. Each of them preached spirituality and the necessity for every human being to perfect himself or herself while experiencing the mundane world and the trials it entails.

It is quite evident that if all those who shaped the religious history of humanity have held identical views—although in various eras and in lands quite distant from one another—it is because they all had an experience of the soul and gained access to the same wisdom: that of an archetypal tradition. Thus, any person, before deriding spirituality, should ask himself the following questions: “Who am I to state that such individuals have taught false truths? Who am I to dare say that they were in



error? Who am I to denigrate the knowledge which greater beings than I have brought to humanity?"

Without going so far as to consider in detail the unusual personalities we have just mentioned, there exists a multitude of philosophers, scientists, and artists who, in their respective areas, have expressed themselves on the subject of the soul with deep conviction. You will note that the finest literary, scientific, and artistic works were created by people who admitted its existence or placed their gifts at the service of their mystical or religious convictions. To cite but a few examples, such was true of Leonardo da Vinci, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Isaac Newton, Claude Debussy, etc.

Once again, how can one consider that these exceptional beings based their entire lives on false values? In this regard, perhaps more than in any other, we must demonstrate humility and learn how to recognize evidence that the soul exists and the mere fact that we live is daily proof of its existence. Thus, as was written by an unknown Master of our tradition, "Whoever refuses to admit such evidence is dead to the Self or is not yet born." Individuals such as these cannot give to their lives a direction compatible with what is expected of them by the Cosmic. Therefore, they cannot find happiness, for they remain in ignorance of what they actually are.

EXPERIMENT NO. 22: To close the study of this monograph, we propose that you try the following exercise which will enable you to give supremacy to your very soul and, for a certain time, to let its impulses dominate your consciousness. To carry out this experience, proceed as follows:

Burn a small amount of incense in your Sanctum.

Sit comfortably, with your back straight, your hands placed on your knees with palms down, and your feet placed flat on the ground, slightly apart from each other.



Close your eyes, and then do Experiment No. 14, the Over-all Body Relaxation Exercise (found in Atrium 2, No. 7), which consists in gradually awakening psychic consciousness in the cells of your whole body.

After having engaged in that psychic awakening, intone the sound OM (pronounced "ohm") several times

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while concentrating on the region corresponding to the center of your head—the location of the pineal gland.

As soon as you experience a sensation of tingling, warmth, or coolness in that area, resume normal breathing and remain silent as long as you feel the need. While in this state of receptivity, allow yourself to be permeated by all the impressions which come to your consciousness.

When you feel that the time has come to end your meditation, reopen your eyes and slowly return to objective consciousness.

This experiment is most effective in raising the vibratory frequency of your being and thus placing you at the same pitch as the consciousness of your soul. If you carry it out in accordance with these instructions, there will come a time when you will perceive, if not its impulses, at least its existence. Most of the time this is manifested by a general sensation of well-being, of great inner peace, which may extend to a genuine feeling of lightness. Along with this impression or sensation, it frequently happens that the student experiences such positive emotions that he or she is filled with lofty thoughts. Also, it is not rare to experience beautiful visions and cosmic plenitude during this state of inner communion. Therefore, do not neglect this experiment, for it will help you in taking your first steps in your inner sanctuary.

With our next sanctum period we will begin with the study of the Order's teachings concerning the soul. We will examine more particularly its nature and the dimension it occupies in our being. Until then, please give your full attention to the Practical Application of this monograph.

With all best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

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

As a complement to the experiment presented in this monograph, we propose that during the coming week you meditate once a day on the subject of the soul. Follow the instructions given in the monograph devoted to meditation (Atrium 1, No. 10). Certainly, it is difficult to concentrate on such a subject, for we cannot visualize it. We suggest, therefore, that you concentrate on the word *soul* in the course of the active phase of your meditation. In other words, throughout your concentration, make this word the basis of your visualization. If you feel the need, you may even utter it in a low voice as many times as you wish, until you have the sensation of being one with it.

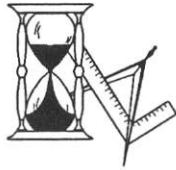
As soon as you experience a feeling of fusion, say mentally or in a low voice the following invocation: *God of my Heart, God of my Realization, grant me the privilege of having a conscious experience of soul and instruct me in its regard. So Mote It Be!* Then remain absolutely passive and be receptive to all the impressions you may receive.

After completing the meditation, take time to note in your study notebook the impressions you received while in a state of receptivity. Some of these impressions may seem strange in that they have no connection with this period of inner communion. Write them down nevertheless, for they may have a symbolic meaning which deserves to be probed further. Also be sure to take note of any dreams you have, for many meditations find their answer in our slumbers. We can even add that this is especially true for those concerning the realm of the soul.

Summary of This Monograph

Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ For most people, the existence of the soul is not a matter of absolute certainty, but rather a belief usually based on what they learned from their religion's teachings.
- ¶ Unlike mystics, most scientists contend that dreaming is not a function of the soul, but merely a subconscious activity directly dependent on the functioning of the brain.
- ¶ The best way of proving the existence of the soul is to experience it for oneself, either by being initiated into its reality during a particularly vivid cosmic contact, or by *dissociation*—i.e., an out-of-body experience, which is a conscious awareness of a temporary separation between one's physical body and psychic body.
- ¶ It is possible, by means of a method used by initiates of ancient Egypt, to project the psychic body outside of the physical body, and thus experience the duality of one's being.
- ¶ Mystics do not doubt the existence of the human soul. They have acquired the inner certainty that it evolves in each person and that this evolution justifies their presence on earth.
- ¶ All those who shaped the religious history of humanity preached spirituality and the necessity for every human being to perfect himself or herself while experiencing the mundane world and the trials it entails.
- ¶ The finest literary, scientific, and artistic works were created by people who admitted the existence of the soul and placed their gifts at the service of their mystical or religious convictions.
- ¶ As stated by an unknown Master of our tradition, "Whoever refuses to admit the existence of soul is dead to the Self or is not yet born."



Third Atrium No. 6

CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion



William Penn devoted himself extensively to the political life of his newly founded colony, Pennsylvania; however, in the exercise of his office, he was reproached with having too great a tendency to view human problems from a philosophical, if not to say mystical, angle. Since this monograph deals with the soul, we present an excerpt from one of his speeches. As you read it, you will find that we can only agree with him and deplore that such lofty ideas do not receive a greater consideration on the part of those who direct our world.

Here is man in his ignorance of himself: he knows not how to estimate his Creator, because he knows not how to value his creation. If we consider his make, and lovely compositure, the several stories of his wonderful structure, his divers members, their order, function and dependency; the instruments of food, the vessels of digestion, the several transmutations it passes, and how nourishment is carried and diffused throughout the whole body, by most intricate and imperceptible passages; how the animal spirit is thereby refreshed, and, with an unspeakable dexterity and motion, sets all parts at work to feed themselves; and, last of all, how the rational soul is seated in the animal, as its proper house, as is the animal in the body; I say, if this rare fabric alone were but considered by us, with all the rest by which it is fed and comforted, surely man would have a more reverent sense of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, and of that duty he owes to him for it. But if he would be acquainted with his own soul, its noble faculties, its union with the body, its nature and end, and the providences by which the whole frame of humanity is preserved, he would admire and adore his good and great God. But man is become a strange contradiction to himself; but it is of himself; not being by constitution, but corruption, such.

—WILLIAM PENN, 1644-1718

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

Today we shall continue our study of the soul by considering what the Rosicrucian tradition teaches on the subject. The teachings which will now be transmitted to you come from our Order's archives and correspond to the knowledge the Rosicrucian Masters have perpetuated through the ages. Certain aspects of this knowledge may clash with your personal convictions or may strike you as being opposed to what you have been previously taught. In other words, these revelations regarding the soul may differ from some of your religious and philosophical beliefs. Yet you should not feel obligated to accept the mystical laws and principles we propound for, in accordance with its motto, our Order imposes no dogma but proposes themes of reflection. However, you are encouraged to study the current monographs in as open-minded an attitude as possible, approaching them without prejudice. You will then be able to form a valid opinion concerning the concepts which we teach regarding this subject.

NATURE OF THE SOUL: What is the nature of the soul and where is it located in the body? We have already discussed the first part of this question to some extent, for the monographs have stressed on several occasions that the soul, as is true of Spirit and Vital Life Force, is a cosmic energy. Consequently, the soul is vibratory in nature. Of course, the vibrations composing its essence have an extremely high frequency. As mystics know, these are included in octaves whose essence is purely spiritual and which completely transcend those of material manifestations. For this reason, it is impossible to measure or even detect them using the most sensitive and precise scientific instruments presently available. However, as was suggested in our previous lesson, more sophisticated technology may some day succeed in placing certain manifestations of the soul in evidence and, from then on, scientists may begin to admit its existence. However, it seems unlikely that technology will succeed in *isolating* soul as a vibratory energy.

The essential characteristic of soul vibrations is that they are absolutely impossible to alter. In other words, their nature is such that no outside agent can affect them, and thus raise or lower their vibratory frequency. This is not true of vibrations inherent to matter, for these are constantly being modified by transformations within their internal



structure and by the action of vibratory influences exerted by the environment. A tree, for instance, has a vibratory frequency which is constantly being modified by inner and outer forces. It grows as a result of the Vital Life Force which prompts its development, and it is modified by such outside agents as rain, cold, wind, sunshine, etc. Thus, all material substances, whether animate or inanimate, can be altered on the vibratory plane. This is true because change, as was explained in the Postulant Section, is the fundamental law governing matter, while the motions of its components are the principle which allow us to perceive change through our sensory faculties.

Soul energy, on the other hand, always remains the same in that, being purely spiritual, it is not subject to the changes constantly operating in the material world. Therefore, its nature cannot be altered and, as a vibratory energy, it is immutable and eternal. We wish to emphasize this point because some religious dogmas teach that anything corrupting the body also corrupts the soul. By virtue of this principle, some persons do not hesitate to state that smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol, or eating meat soils the soul and destroys it sooner or later. Such beliefs are erroneous, for only the physical body can suffer damages caused by a life style based on various excesses. However, our spiritual nature, as such, is not subject to those damages for, we repeat, no physical agent can act on the immaterial essence composing it. In fact, as we shall see before long, it is not the soul itself but its *consciousness* that evolves by learning from those experiences resulting from errors in our behavior.

SEAT OF THE SOUL: Having examined the nature of the soul, let us now consider what the Rosicrucian tradition teaches about its focal point in the body. But first, let us briefly consider the various interpretations given on this subject. Some theologians claim that the soul is located in the head. According to them, this explains why, in the iconography of some religions, the head of a saint is surrounded by a nimbus or aura. In this case, contrary to what we have explained in the Second Atrium, the halo is not a symbolic representation of the aura but is meant to show that the soul itself is localized in the head.



Other religions claim that the soul is located in the heart. Supporters of this belief base their viewpoint on the fact that this organ is the seat of life and, consequently, that

it is necessarily the seat of our spiritual life. This notion is illustrated on some statues or icons of saints showing the heart represented by a sun, thus conveying the idea that the soul radiates throughout the body and outside of it from this organ.

Finally, in many liturgical texts it is written that the soul is located in the blood itself, which, naturally, is connected with the importance attached to the blood of Christ and the quest for the Holy Grail in the Christian religion.

In many philosophical and mystical schools the seat of the soul is focalized in a psychic center of the human body. Thus, certain writings indicate that the pineal gland is the focal point where our spiritual essence is concentrated. Others suggest that it is rather in the pituitary gland or, sometimes, in the thymus. Others still, far more numerous, place the soul in the solar plexus. It is interesting to note that this plexus has received privileged consideration in certain courses of psychology and in the teachings of some philosophical schools where it is claimed that its dimensions can be increased, thus increasing its spirituality. However, while it does correspond to one of the seven major psychic centers of our body, it is definitely not of primary importance, nor does it constitute the seat of the soul. Such a belief originates in the fact that, on the physiological plane, the solar plexus is connected to a large number of organs and constitutes a zone from which important nervous activity radiates. Thus the term *solar* is used, reinforcing this idea of radiance. Be that as it may, it is absolutely impossible to develop this plexus by means of physical or mental exercises. As we shall see later on, only the activity of the psychic counterpart of an organ, gland, or plexus can be awakened.

For centuries Rosicrucian tradition has taught that the soul is not limited to some part of the body, such as an organ, gland, or plexus. As explained previously, it is a vibratory energy. As such, it is present in the entirety of our being and vibrates with the same intensity in all our cells no matter their nature may be. For analogy, the air permeating a room is not condensed in a single corner. Likewise, soul energy permeates all parts of our body. It is true that our psychic centers have a direct link to this energy, but none of them is the seat where it is condensed or even generated.



Their activity concerns more especially our psychic being and the form of consciousness which is its own.

We can say therefore that the human being consists of three bodies—the physical, psychic, and spiritual (soul)—with the psychic body acting as an intermediary between the other two. The ancient Egyptians, who possessed considerable knowledge in funerary art, found a significant way of symbolizing these three bodies. Immediately after death the pharaoh's body was embalmed and placed into a mummy-shaped coffin, which in turn was placed in a sarcophagus.

In current Rosicrucian terminology we seldom use the expression *spiritual body*, in that other philosophical and mystical movements have retained this expression but given it a different significance than the one attributed to it by initiates of the past. To be more precise, they use it too often to express the idea that our soul is shaped like the physical body, taking the form of a spiritual figure composed of several distinct parts (head, trunk, and limbs). But that is not accurate. The soul is, we repeat, a cosmic essence, a subtle energy permeating our entire being which, in itself, is absolutely shapeless. Most of all, when considering the mystical definition of the human, we must keep in mind the all-important concept of duality. In other words, the fact that we are body and soul, substance and essence, must hold our full attention. As we pointed out in the last monograph, the psychic part of our being, although important, is only an emanation from the spiritual entity animating us and it evolves in contact with the mundane world from the moment it incarnates within us.

How does the soul evolve and what is the duration of that evolution? This question will be discussed in our next monograph. In the meanwhile, do not hesitate to return to today's lesson and to perform regularly one of the experiments given you in the Second Atrium.

With all best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,
YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

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

In the coming days, we invite you to reflect on the way in which you envisioned the existence of the soul before becoming a member of our Order. Try to set aside temporarily what has been taught in the monographs before answering, as simply and briefly as possible, the following questions:

Before becoming affiliated with AMORC, what were your beliefs or convictions on:

- The nature of the soul?
- Its site in the body?
- Its reason for being?
- Its evolution?
- Its state before birth?
- Its state after death?

Were those beliefs or convictions based on:

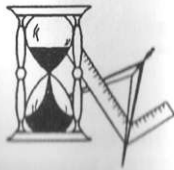
- The dogmas of your religious education?
- The conclusions of your own meditations?
- The exchanges you have had with other persons on these questions?
- The ideas aroused in you by certain readings?
- An intuitive cognition?

Such a balance sheet will enable you to consider fully the opinions you may have held in the past on a subject as interesting and crucial as that of the soul. You will thus be able to notice any changes which have occurred in these opinions since you started studying Rosicrucian philosophy. Moreover, it will prepare you for the study of forthcoming monographs.

Summary of This Monograph

Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ The soul, as is true of Spirit and Vital Life Force, is a cosmic energy. Consequently, the soul is vibratory in nature.
- ¶ The essential characteristic of soul vibrations is that they are absolutely impossible to alter. In other words, their nature is such that no outside agent can affect them, and thus raise or lower their vibratory frequency.
- ¶ It is false to believe that anything corrupting the body also corrupts the soul, for no physical agent can act on the immaterial essence composing it.
- ¶ For most theologians, the soul is situated in a part, organ, or precise compound of the body. For some, it has its seat in the head or in the heart. For others it is located in the blood.
- ¶ In many philosophical and mystical schools the seat of the soul is focalized in a psychic center of the body—with the pineal gland, pituitary gland, thymus, and solar plexus being those most cited.
- ¶ For centuries Rosicrucian tradition has taught that the soul is not limited to some part of the body, such as an organ, gland, or plexus. As a vibratory energy it is present in the entirety of our being and vibrates with the same intensity in all our cells no matter what their nature may be.
- ¶ In current Rosicrucian terminology we seldom use the expression *spiritual body* to designate the soul, in that other philosophical and mystical movements have retained this expression but given it a different significance than the one attributed to it by initiates of the past.



Third Atrium No. 7

CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion



As this monograph deals basically with the evolution operating in the physical and psychological life of each human, we present a quotation by Giordano Bruno, an Italian Rosicrucian who greatly enhanced the history of our tradition and that of the Renaissance. We remind you that he was burnt alive because of his ardor in defending Copernican theories. In the following lines, he clearly shows that our body is subject to a constant transformation but that our soul remains constant in essence.

*Is not thy body for ever transformed, and flows it not ever
Into the river of time? And in ceaseless alteration
Doth it not cast off the old for the new, ever losing and gaining?
Art so mad as to think that thy poor corporeal substance,
Whether in whole or in part, for ever shall be as it has been?
Art so mad as to dream that the bones and the flesh of thy boyhood
Still shall abide with thee now? that thou comest unchanged to thy
manhood?
Seest thou not how thy limbs, renewed in the process of change,
Take to themselves new form? . . . Yet ever one nature persisting
Ruling within thy heart is forming for ever a being,
Thou thyself, that one and the same abidest unchanging.*

—GIORDANO BRUNO, 1548-1600

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

If every human being has a soul, it is for a cosmic reason which fully justifies its presence in our body. For mystics that reason is none other than the accomplishment of the law of evolution. Mystics consider the goal of each person is to reach perfection by means of the spiritual essence animating him or her.

No one can deny that everything evolves. When you consider the mineral kingdom, for instance, you find that earth, sand, rocks, boulders, etc., are being transformed. This transformation, of course, takes place over a period of centuries, even millennia. Also, it concerns only the material aspect of minerals—that is to say, their structure and shape. However, mineral evolution does exist, as has been pointed out concerning carbon, which can ultimately produce diamonds after many thousands of years. Even a simple pebble changes its appearance as the years elapse. We have no consciousness of it on the human scale, but the fact is that it undergoes internal as well as external modifications.

The great law of evolution is still more evident when we consider the plant and animal kingdoms, as they are made up of living beings. To return to the example we considered in a previous monograph, a tree, before attaining its full maturity, was first of all a young seedling which was itself born of a seed. It then evolved in height and girth as the years went by. However, contrary to what occurs in the mineral kingdom, this evolution also operates on a level of consciousness which, however primitive it may be, records all the phases of its growth.

The same principle applies to all animals in that each of them, before becoming adults, go through important physical transformations. As for the evolution occurring in their consciousness, it is clearly more complex than in the plant kingdom. The simple fact that we can train or domesticate certain animals is obvious proof of this, as it demonstrates that they are capable of recalling what is asked of them and of acting according to that comprehension. Since everyone is in a position to verify their prowess in this area, it is unnecessary to dwell on this point.

PHYSICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CYCLES: Like any living being, humans evolve on the physical plane. To



convince oneself of this it is enough to consider all the changes which take place in a human's morphology from birth. But what is peculiar about this evolution is that it operates according to cycles based on the number 7. In other words, mystics understand that certain cells are entirely renewed every seven minutes; others every seven hours; others still every seven days or every seven months or every seven years.

This law has not yet been officially recognized by science, but it has always been acknowledged by Rosicrucians from most ancient times. However, scientists will undoubtedly succeed some day in demonstrating this innate rhythm and, consequently, in recognizing it. The consequences of such a law are important, in that the whole of our physical body is entirely renewed and regenerated every seven years. Moreover, this cyclic renewal and regeneration is accompanied by a gradual evolution of our psychological behavior. Therefore, before studying the cycles of the soul, a study we will reserve for the next monograph, we will discuss those cycles which mark the physical body and general psychology of each individual, beginning with the first months of birth.

Let us consider the first seven-year cycle. It corresponds to the most tender age—in other words, to the period during which the fundamental principles of education are established. During this cycle we begin to know the self through constant relationships we maintain with our family surroundings and objective environment. We learn to walk, speak, control the body, and adapt to our physical needs, which contribute considerably to the extension of our field of consciousness. At this time we are most sensitive to psychic impressions, for our inner sensitivity has not yet been subjected to the influence of school learning which is based primarily on the awakening of the brain's purely intellectual faculties.

In the second cycle (7th to 14th years) we react more strongly to our instincts and the impulses of our awakening ego, yet we do not truly have awareness of our physical, intellectual, and spiritual possibilities. During this cycle certain psychological and mental structures are established which we will develop later on. In many countries, this period introduces the basics of formal education.



In the third cycle (14th to 21st years) the most spectacular physical and psychological changes take place as this

period marks the passage from childhood to adolescence. The body becomes more what it will be in adulthood, and the characteristic personality of the adolescent tends to assert itself in more determined choices. During this crucial period conflicts may occur with members of the family—conflicts occurring because the adolescent is in search of his or her own identity.

The fourth cycle (21st to 28th years) exhibits an evolution strongly based on the emotional structure built during the preceding cycle. The foundations of character are virtually established and the adolescent enters the world of adults, with all the responsibilities entailed. We take on an orientation in our life which demands a total commitment on our part and a great aptitude to take charge of our destiny.

In the fifth seven-year cycle (28th to 35th years) the individual attains physical, mental, and emotional maturity. Our imagination and creativity are at their highest level. It is, therefore, a favorable period for the implementation of important projects. Also, it will be found that during this cycle most Great Masters of the past achieved Cosmic Illumination or began to accomplish their mission on earth.

With the sixth cycle (35th to 42nd years) there frequently occurs a reassessment of decisive choices made in preceding years. The mature individual ponders his or her past and gains consciousness of the relativity of earthly life. Projects concerning only our daily well-being no longer satisfy us, for we now aspire to the discovery of new values. Many persons who have not yet achieved such goals will then ponder the spiritual dimension of human existence in greater depth.

In the seventh cycle (42nd to 49th years) we witness a gradual slowing down of the physical body's regenerating processes. The desire and need for rest begin to make themselves felt. We aspire to more tranquillity and often develop interest in the study of some area previously unknown to us. This cycle is generally marked by an unexpected attraction to philosophical ideas and to consideration of societal problems.

During the eighth cycle (49th to 56th years) mental activity supplants our physical activity with finality. This decrease of organic life is compensated by an increase of inner life. It is generally during this cycle that we choose



the orientation we will give to our remaining years. In other words, we think extensively of what we will do with our old age.

In the ninth cycle (56th to 63rd years) the process initiated in the preceding cycle continues in more pronounced manner. The potential of regenerating forces of the body continues to weaken, but this physical weakening does not necessarily manifest itself as poor health. On the other hand, sensitivity to psychic impressions does not cease developing, thus encouraging us to devote ourselves more to spirituality.

The tenth cycle (63rd to 70th years) witnesses the determination of choices made in the two previous cycles. This cycle offers great similarities to the first cycle of earthly existence. In other words, spiritual activity predominates quite clearly. If we, as individuals, have given a mystical direction to our life, we may undergo inner experiences which will come to determine our aspirations in this cycle.

Beginning with the eleventh cycle (70th to 77th years), each new seven-year span witnesses the accentuation of corporeal decline on to its ultimate phase. Concurrently, the soul personality prepares for its transition and grasps all opportunities to sensitize the outer individual to its spiritual dimension. The problem of death and of the Beyond arises with acuity, for it becomes a reality one cannot avoid contemplating. Starting from that age, Pythagoras considered that "man is no longer part of the living." Of course, this notion is allegorical and simply means that the being then feels detached from the material world and its contingencies.

Quite obviously, the explanations just given for each cycle are general. In other words, they must not be taken literally but considered in a general way. Each seven-year period corresponds to an average, for some may be shorter or longer by a few months, even by one or two years. In this regard you must take into account such factors inherent to the individual as his or her heredity, state of health, temperament, etc., and also outside agencies, notably family surroundings, social setting, natural environment, etc. Yet

a simple observation will show you that the seven-year cycles are in operation for most people. You will also note that they follow one another on to the age of 77 years, which also denotes a symbolic dimension in the eleven 7-year periods we have just considered.



SYMBOLISM OF THE NUMBER 7: Quite obviously the cycle of 7 is not arbitrary. In fact, if it operates so precisely in the physical and psychological evolution of each individual, it is because it corresponds to cosmic laws which apply to various levels of creation. The most meaningful example of this application concerns the rhythm of days which, in a week, are seven in number. Each of the four lunar periods also includes seven days. If we consider our solar system, you note that all traditions speak of the esoteric influence that the “seven alchemical planets”—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, Moon, and Sun—exert on humans. The musical scale, as you know, contains seven principal notes. As for the colors of the solar spectrum, we have already seen that they are seven in number. We can, therefore, verify that this number often occurs in the material world.

The symbolism of the number 7 is again found in each of the major extant religions. Judaism, for instance, refers to the seven degrees of Perfection; to the seven branches of the sacred menorah; to the seven abodes of Jaweh; to the seven years during which the construction of the Temple of Solomon took place; to the seven priests who, bearing seven trumpets, went around Jericho seven times when the seventh day had come; etc.

In the Christian religion, the number 7 evokes, among other things, the seven days of Creation; the seven visions of the Apocalypse (with the seven churches, the seven stars, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven thunders, the seven heads, the seven scourges, and the seven cups); the seven miracles; the seven cardinal sins; and the seven “I am” of Christ; etc.

The symbolism of this number is also present in Hinduism and Buddhism, where mention is made of the seven rays of the sun of Buddha; the seven heavens; the seven directions of sacred space; the seven states of Nirvana; the seven faces of Mount Meru, each turned toward one of the seven *dvipa* (continents); etc.

Islam also refers to the number 7, for the Koran alludes to the seven heavens; the seven seas; the seven lands; the seven divisions of hell; the seven gates of paradise; the seven words of the profession of Moslem faith; etc.

In fact, there exists no tradition which does not mention, in one form or another, the number 7 and its creative



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potency. This is because, as we pointed out above, the number is linked to cosmic rhythms and cycles which apply both to the visible and invisible worlds.

It is, therefore, with the mystical importance of number 7 that we leave you with the task of closing this sanctum period according to the usual ritual. In the next monograph, we will continue our study of human evolution. Having examined the way in which it operates in the body and the psychology of each individual, we will focus more particularly on the cycles governing the incarnation of the soul.

With all best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

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

Since abundant reference has been made to the symbolism of the number 7 in this monograph, you may wish to meditate further on the following esoteric text taken from our Order's archives.

Meditate, O disciple, on the seven states of consciousness you must achieve to receive Cosmic Illumination and, thereby, be elevated to the rank of our Invisible Brotherhood:

- *Achieve consciousness of your body, so as to quench its appetites.*
- *Achieve consciousness of your emotions, so as to master your impulses.*
- *Achieve consciousness of your intelligence, so as to reason in Truth.*
- *Achieve consciousness of your will, so as to pass from knowledge to action.*
- *Achieve consciousness of your intuition, so as to perceive the light of Cosmic Consciousness.*
- *Achieve consciousness of your spirituality, so as to detach yourself with finality from the material world.*
- *Achieve the consciousness of your life, so as to direct your consciousness toward Eternal Life.*

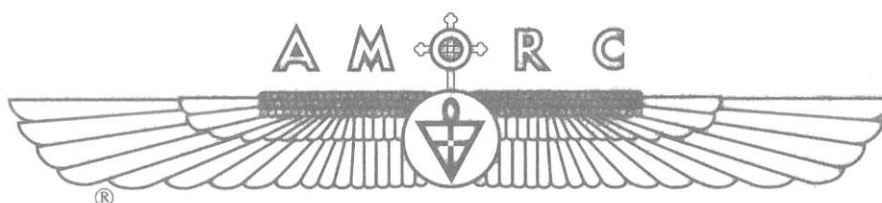
So Mote It Be!

Summary of This Monograph

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- ¶ According to the law of evolution, mystics consider the goal of each person is to reach perfection by means of the spiritual essence animating him or her.
- ¶ The material structure and form of all mineral substances undergo transformation in the course of centuries.
- ¶ The great law of evolution is quite evident in the plant and animal kingdoms. This evolution is observed in their physical growth as well as in the form of consciousness they possess.
- ¶ The evolution occurring in the physical and psychological life of humans operates according to cycles based on the number 7. It follows that one's body is entirely renewed and regenerated every seven years.
- ¶ If the cycle of 7 is involved so precisely in the physical and psychological evolution of each person, it is because it corresponds to cosmic laws which apply to various levels of creation.
- ¶ The symbolism of the number 7 is found in each of the major extant religions. Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam—to cite only the most important ones—feature many examples of this symbolism.

*Consecrated to truth
and dedicated to every Rosicrucian*



Grand Lodge of the English Language Jurisdiction, AMORC, Inc.
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