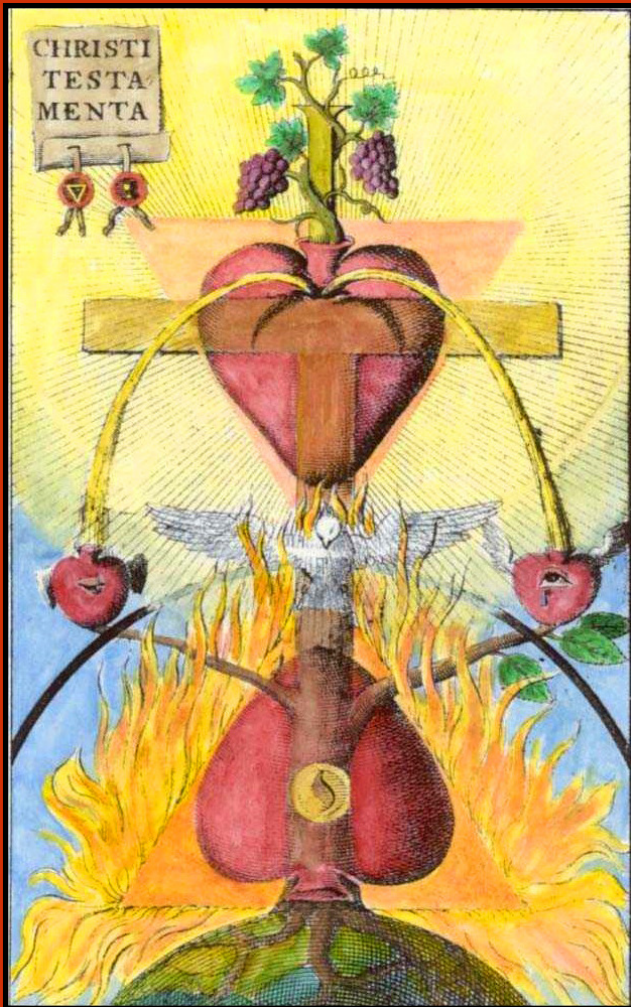


Pantacle





Traditional Martinist Order

San Jose CA USA
www.martinists.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the Light of Martinism!

Welcome to this edition of the *Pantacle*, the official magazine of the Traditional Martinist Order. In this issue, we begin with Brother Steven Armstrong's explanation of the Way of the Heart, a foundational idea in countless spiritualities, especially Martinism. Brother Armstrong, an enthusiastic and longtime Martinist, recently went through transition, leaving behind a tremendous body of scholarly and spiritual writings, from which we have drawn here.

This is followed by an article about the life of Teresa of Ávila, the famed nun, author, reformer, and theologian from the sixteenth century. Then we offer a selection from Papus's *What Becomes of Our Dead*, a book which was written to offer solace to families suffering at the outset of World War I. The Grand Heptad recently published a new English translation of this book.

The final article of this magazine, written by Brother Michael H. Bland, discusses the "Dark Night of the Soul," a crucial mystical experience that many initiates go through on their way to Cosmic Illumination. The author explores everything from how various cultures address it to what initiates can expect when experiencing it.

We hope you enjoy these writings.

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom!

Julie Scott 卍

Julie Scott
Grand Master

Martinism: The Way of the Heart

by Steven Armstrong, SI
Brother, Colleague, Friend

♥♥1954 - 2019♥♥



Central and foundational to Martinism and the Traditional Martinist Order is *La Voie Cardiaque*, The Way of the Heart. Far from being emotional or sentimental, this is one of the most widespread spiritual paths on the planet, embraced by countless spiritualities. And it is effective.

The Way of the Heart is part of what some scholars call the Sophia Tradition. *Sophia*, or Wisdom, has many meanings. One of these is the Gnostic Myth of Sophia, in which she is an *Aeon*, emanated from the One, who falls from grace and is one of the ways that the material world is created. But that is not the Sophia that we will be dealing with in this study, although there are connections to our Sophia.¹

Sophia

The Sophia of the Way of the Heart is a feminine image of the Divine. One of her earliest appearances is in Plato's *Protagoras*, where Wisdom is one of the four cardinal virtues. Of course, her name is part of the whole field of philosophy, which means love of Wisdom.

Even more strikingly, Wisdom is widely present in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Hebrew word for Wisdom is *Chokhmah*, familiar to students of Kabbalah

as the second of the Sephirot. When the Jewish community of Alexandria translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek in the late second century BCE by order of Ptolemy II, Chokhmah was translated as Sophia. This translation is known as the Septuagint.

Perhaps her most famous appearance is in Proverbs 8:22-36; 9:1-6:

Adonai [the Lord] made me as the beginning of his way,
the first of his ancient works.

I was appointed before the world,
before the start, before the earth's beginnings.

When I was brought forth, there were no ocean depths,
no springs brimming with water.

I was brought forth before the hills,
before the mountains had settled in place;
he had not yet made the earth, the fields,
or even the earth's first grains of dust.

When he established the heavens, I was there.

When he drew the horizon's circle on the deep,
when he set the skies above in place,

when the fountains of the deep poured forth,
when he prescribed boundaries for the sea,
so that its water would not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,

I was with him as someone he could trust.

For me, every day was pure delight,
as I played in his presence all the time,
playing everywhere on his earth,
and delighting to be with humankind.

Therefore, children, listen to me:

happy are those who keep my ways.

Hear instruction, and grow wise; do not refuse it.

How happy the person who listens to me,
who watches daily at my gates
and waits outside my doors.

For he who finds me finds life
and obtains the favor of *Adonai*.

But he who misses me harms himself;
all who hate me love death.

Wisdom has built herself a house;
she has carved her seven pillars.
She has prepared her food, spiced her wine,
and she has set her table.
She has sent out her young girls [with invitations]:
she calls from the heights of the city,
“Whoever is unsure of himself, turn in here!”
To someone weak-willed she says,
“Come and eat my food!
Drink the wine I have mixed!
Don’t stay unsure of yourself, but live!
Walk in the way of understanding!”

In addition to this passage, Wisdom is a major theme in the Psalms, the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, the Book of Wisdom, the Wisdom of Sirach, and Baruch in the Septuagint. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Balev Tahor* (The Blessings of the Wise), published in an original translation in the *Rosicrucian Digest* in 2007,² praise Wisdom and her followers. As an Essene document, this would have been well known to John the Baptist and the Master Yeshua.

Judaism has enshrined this concept of the feminine Divine manifestation as *Shekhinah*, both in Eternity and here below. That is why each Rosicrucian Temple has a Shekhinah at its center, the Divine presence within the Temple.

Christianity continued this Wisdom Tradition. Eastern Orthodox, Byzantine and Roman Catholics, and the Reformed Churches (Anglicans and Protestants) all consider Sophia as a feminine manifestation of the Divine. In Orthodoxy, Icons of Holy Sophia have all of the earmarks of the Icons of Christ. Indeed, as in Neoplatonism, especially in Philo, Sophia and the Logos are linked, perhaps even the same. Holy Wisdom is Sophia/Logos incarnate in the Christ. She is seen as Divine. In the nineteenth century, some Russian mystical theologians (Sophiologists) even attempted to find a way of integrating Sophia as one of the Persons of the Trinity. Of course, the central Church of the Roman Empire was *Hagia Sophia* in Constantinople.

The Spiritual Marriage

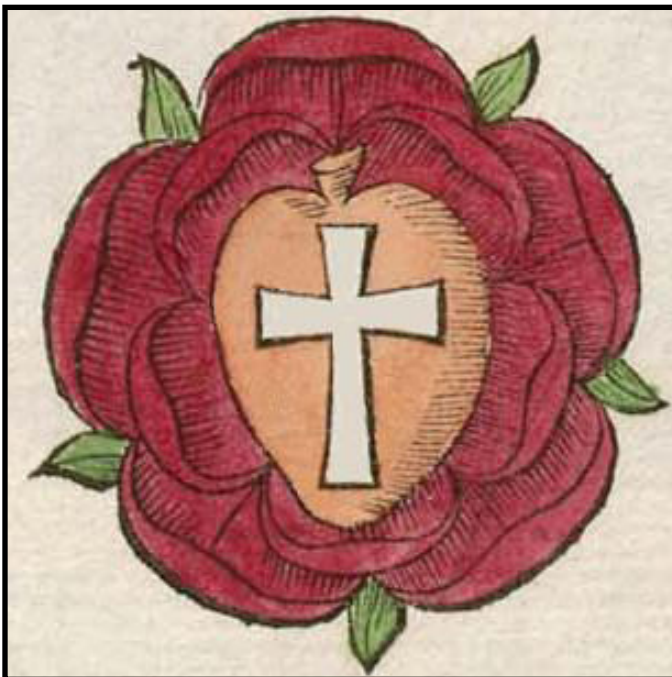
Among mystics of all these Christian groups, the ultimate goal is the spiritual marriage of the soul with Sophia. Christian Mystics as diverse as

Jacob Boehme (Lutheran), Hildegard von Bingen (Catholic), and Vladimir Solovyev and Sergius Bulgakov (Orthodox) all worked toward this goal.

Nor is this Wisdom tradition confined to Judaism and Christianity. Through Neoplatonism, Sophia has a central role in Islam, especially Sufism. The *Bezels of Wisdom*, often attributed to Ibn Arabi, speaks of the “transcendent divine wisdom.”³

Broadly speaking, the Sophia Tradition in the West is known as *Theosophy* (Divine Wisdom).⁴ (This is not to be confused with the Theosophical Society, which is a spiritual organization which began in the late nineteenth century in India.) It has parallels in practically all world spiritual traditions as we will soon see.

Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, whose teachings and approaches are transmitted in the Traditional Martinist Order, was a major theosophist in eighteenth century France. He held Jacob Boehme as his “second teacher,” and learned German so that he could translate his works into French. One of the treasures carried on in the Martinist Order is the primary practice of the Divine Wisdom Tradition: The Prayer of the Heart.



The Prayer of the Heart

The Prayer of the Heart is as old as humanity itself. Students visiting the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose often ask why the ancient Egyptians disposed of the brain but kept the heart and replaced it during the mummification process.

Certainly the Egyptians understood the vital role of the brain during life. We know they practiced trepanning, a surgical procedure to drill through the skull to relieve pressure on the brain. We have ancient remains where the hole had grown shut, evidence of the success of this procedure. Furthermore, they knew that certain kinds of head injuries could cause loss of speech and other disorders.

They also knew, however, that the brain was only needed on this plane of existence as a kind of interface between the soul and the body. Both here and in the afterlife, it is the Heart that is the true center of Wisdom, of the human person. The Heart (or more properly, the Heart Center, one of the seven major psychic centers), is the true seat of consciousness, and is the Center which can most directly commune with the Divine rhythm of all that is, manifest and unmanifest.⁵

The tool used to awaken the Heart to this rhythm, and to attune the whole person with it, is known in Martinism, and in the West in general, as The Prayer of the Heart. Its most basic manifestation is deep rhythmic breathing, while mentally repeating a name or a mantra which represents the deepest mysticism of the practitioner, breathing in and breathing out.

At the beginning, an aspirant will do this for periods of time, consciously. For those who practice this ancient art assiduously, it becomes second nature, and becomes part of the fabric of their lives, following the injunction to “pray ceaselessly.” Let us take a moment to review the manifestation of The Prayer of the Heart in several world traditions.

Heart-Centered Prayer in the Abrahamic Traditions

In Judaism, this heart-centered prayer consists of using these methods while mentally reciting the Divine Names while meditating. In Kabbalah, this is usually the meditative recitation of the 72 Names of God from the *Sepher Yezirah*.

Christian heart-centered prayer is most commonly practiced by Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholics, who use the phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have or simply the Name “Jesus.” This ancient practice, part of the mystical discipline known as *Hesychasm* (Being Quiet), was made popular in the West with the publication of a translation of *The Way of a Pilgrim*⁶ in 1931 from the Russian original dating from at least 1884. The simple narrative is the story of a Russian pilgrim and his use of the Prayer of the Heart (known in Christianity more commonly as “The Jesus Prayer”). It is often practiced using a knotted bead rope known as *Chotkis* or *Komboskini*. The Roman Catholic Rosary is a slightly different variation of this.

In Western literature, J.D. Salinger used *The Way of a Pilgrim* and this prayer as the central theme in his 1961 short story collection, *Franny and Zooey*, further popularizing this form of meditation. He compares it to usages in Hinduism and Buddhism. Today, not only Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholics, but also all Catholics, Anglicans, and many mainstream Protestants use this ancient heart-centered prayer.

In addition to this, the Western Mediaeval practice of *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading) is still widely practiced today. In this approach, the practitioner rhythmically breathes in and out while very slowly mentally reading a prayer, or a passage from Scripture, sometimes repeating one word or phrase for many iterations. Originally a Monastic practice, Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, refers to something very similar in “The Three Methods of Praying” in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Through the work of the Society of Jesus, this has become better known today.

Islam’s heart practice is known as *Dhikr* or *Zikr*, meaning invocation. It is the repeated and rhythmic recitation, usually mentally, of phrases with which one “Remembers Allah.” Many sections of the Qur’an recommend this practice highly.

Most typically citations from the Qur’an or exclamations such as “God is Greatest!” or “There is no God but God!”⁷ are used.

Practices in the East and Beyond

Japa is the form that the heart prayer takes in Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism. Usually accompanied by the use of a 108-bead chain, the practitioner repeats a mantra or Divine name mentally. Common mantras

are Aum, Hare Krishna, and Om Mani Padme Hum. Japa means “to utter with a low voice, repeat internally.”

In Pure Land Buddhism, *Nianfo* or *Nembutsu* is the repetitive prayer for “mindfulness of the Buddha.” It consists most commonly of the rhythmic repetition of the name of *Amitabha Buddha: Namo Amitabhaya*, “Homage to Infinite Light.” The practice dates from at least the first century BCE. It is also translated into the languages of the culture of the practitioner.

Sikhs also practice repetition of the Divine Name with 108-bead chains, and members of the Baha'i tradition follow a similar practice. Shamanism often uses repetitive formulas in its many meditative practices as well.

Esoteric Traditions

While Rosicrucians do not have a direct analogue with the Prayer of the Heart, the use of Vowel Sounds and the Lost Word are quite similar.⁸ In addition, the Mystics of the Essene/Carmelite/Rosicrucian Vizcaino expedition to Carmel/Monterey in 1602 were well initiated into this form of deep mental meditation. The first Rosicrucian Expedition to North America certainly had heart-centered Mystical prayer as its center.

The second round of Rosicrucian work in North America also had strong ties to this type of Meditation. The Ephrata Cloister and Johannes Kelpius were steeped in the traditions of Pietism, which is allied to deep mystical heart prayer. Shakers and modern-day Quakers often practice this kind of mental prayer.

Martinists practice the Prayer of the Heart in its direct and most basic form, using the name of the Grand Architect of the Universe in the mental repetition. This is commemorated each year near the Winter Solstice.

In fact, this practice is one of the most powerful ways to bring about the goal devoutly sought by Louis-Claude de SaintMartin and all Martinists:

... the only initiation I advocate and search for with all the ardor of my soul is the one through which we can enter into the heart of God and make God's heart enter our own, there to make an indissoluble marriage which makes us friend, brother, and spouse of our Divine Repairer.

There is no other mystery to arrive at this holy initiation than to go more and more down into the depths of our being, and not let go till we

can bring forth the living vivifying root, because then all the fruit which we ought to bear, according to our kind, will be produced within and without us naturally, as we see occurs with our earthly trees, because they are attached to their particular root, and do not cease to draw up its sap.⁹

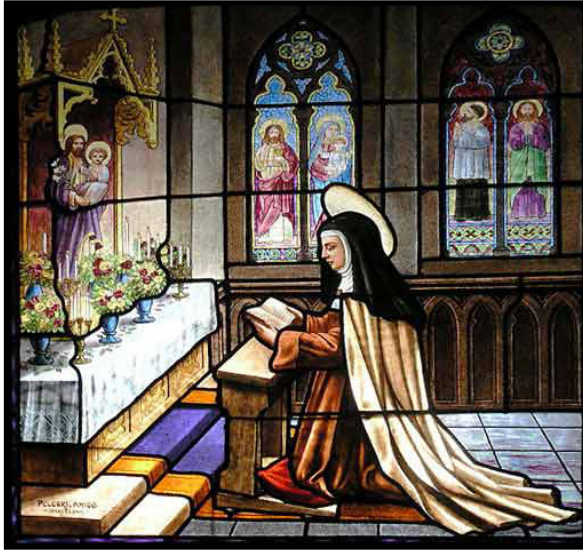
It should be no surprise that with the central place that the concepts of “Wisdom” and “Word” have in the Primordial Tradition, and as many traditions consider that the universe was created by the utterance of a word or sound, that the Prayer of the Heart would hold the central place in Martinism, and indeed, in so many mystical paths.

ENDNOTES

1. For other conceptions of Sophia, see Caitlin Matthews, *Sophia: Goddess of Wisdom, Bride of God*. (Wheaton: Quest, 2001).
2. Dead Sea Scrolls. “*Balev Tabor: The Blessings of the Wise*” (4Q525:1.1-2, 2.1-12). Translated by Sean Eyer. *Rosicrucian Digest* 86:2 (2007): 32. https://b1e36bcd2b2f667c32cd-4fb9b5302a048ee02dcf5b2b1a8e57f9.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/05_balev_tahor.pdf
3. Ibn Arabi, *The Pearls of Wisdom*. Translated by Mukhtar Hussain Ali. <http://www.universaltheosophy.com/sacred-texts/the-pearls-of-wisdom/>
4. The best introduction to Western Theosophy (Divine Wisdom Tradition) is three books by Arthur Versluis: *Theosophia: Hidden Dimensions of Christianity* (Hudson: Lindisfarne, 1994); *Wisdom's Children: A Christian Esoteric Tradition*. Suny Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany NY: State University of New York Press: 1999); *Wisdom's Book: The Sophia Anthology* (St Paul: Paragon House, 2000). With the references in these works, the student will also be able to connect with Islamic and Jewish theosophy.
5. See the excellent discussion of this in Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Wisdom Way of Knowing: Reclaiming An Ancient Tradition to Awaken the Heart* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2003).
6. *The Way of a Pilgrim and A Pilgrim Continues His Way* (1991) Olga Savin (translator), Thomas Hopko (foreword) (Boston: Shambhala 2001).
7. Perhaps the greatest Western scholar of Islamic Mysticism was Henry Corbin (1903-1978). A fine introduction to his work may be found in Tom Cheetham, *The World Turned Inside Out: Henry Corbin and Islamic Mysticism* (New Orleans: Spring Journal, 2003).
8. Two fine Rosicrucian studies on the Way of the Heart and related topics are by the Quebecois Rose+Croix University International instructor Aline Charest: *La Priere du coeur* (Paris: Diffusion Rosicrucienne, 2008); *Les grandes voies de l'amour* (Paris: Diffusion Rosicrucienne, 2003).
9. Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, “The Way of the Heart,” letter of June 19, 1797 to Kirchberger, Baron of Liebigstorf. Published in *Pantacle 2* (2002): 24-25 (San Jose, English Grand Lodge for the Americas, 2002).

Teresa of Ávila

From a Martinist Manuscript



Teresa of Ávila, born Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada in the Castilian city of Ávila on March 28, 1515, grew up at a time when Spain, rich from exploiting the New World, reached the zenith of its terrestrial and maritime powers. Her father, Don Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda, was the son of a wealthy Jewish merchant in Toledo, who had been forced to convert to Christianity. Her mother, Beatriz Ahumada y Cuevas, a traditional Christian from the finest of Castilian nobility, had married her father three years after he became a widower. Teresa grew up in a very pious family: her father, an honest and well-mannered man, who was a devout humanist, kept many religious works in his library; her mother Beatriz inculcated in her from the earliest age a love of the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the age of eight, she was already playing Mother Prioress with her many cousins and had established rules for them to follow. The girls hid behind bushes to recite their prayers, thus avoiding being disturbed.

At the age of sixteen, Teresa was led by her father to the Augustinian convent of Our Lady of Grace, although she was no longer inclined to become a nun at that time. If in her prayers she asked the Divine to show her clearly how she could serve It better, it was not by becoming a nun and much less by getting married. Teresa wasn't seeking human love, because

for her the life of a married woman was reduced to total submission to the husband, in accordance with the habits and customs of her time, which was far from elevating the mind above material contingencies. In other words, she considered marriage to be slavery and that the woman, whose pregnancies succeeded each other until she died of exhaustion (such was the fate of her mother, the frail Beatriz, who died in the prime of life, at the age of thirty-three and, to a lesser extent, that of Catalina del Peso y Henao, the first wife of her father, who died after her third birth), had no rights before her husband – her lord and master.

Teresa, despite her tenderness for her father, was most influenced in her spiritual life by her paternal uncle, Pedro Sánchez, who shared his time between his library full of excellent books, prayer, and meditation. She recognized that he had given her the key to heaven by revealing to her good works, such as the Letters of Jerome and the *Third Spiritual Alphabet* by the Franciscan monk Francisco de Osuna, an excellent treatise on the technique of prayer. The young nun had been so fascinated by what she had discovered in reading this treatise that Don Pedro gave it to her as a gift. Thus, Teresa was able to initiate herself in contemplation and prayer, by carefully studying the teaching of this Franciscan monk.

Teresa, after a brief return to her family following an illness, entered the Convent of the Incarnation where she professed religious vows on November 3, 1537. For her, determination or decision is the key word of the Carmelite's spiritual life. In her autobiography, *The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus*, she wrote: "It is very important to start freely with great decision [...] The soul that begins with decision has gone a long way [...] The Divine helps those who decide to serve for Its glory [...] The Divine has created people free to choose perfection and It is only waiting for our decision or determination."

This reminds us of the ternary Thought, Will, and Action, so dear to Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin. She explains in this book that our feelings, desires, tastes, and attitudes are subject to the control of the all-powerful will. For Teresa, the astonishing change that occurred in her after her admission into the convent was the effect of discipline or constraint imposed, and then understood and accepted. A few years before, in the year 1534, King Charles V, on his way to Ávila, paid tribute to that proud city with a past filled with heroic deeds, which all the cities of his kingdom were to follow as a model, Teresa, who had taken part in the festivities in honor of the young king, transposed his message to the spiritual plane: to constrain herself to follow and model her Inner Master, the Sovereign Principle; to renounce herself by

resisting the efforts of her large extended family to marry. In a way this was a feat – a worthy, heroic act.

Now more fervent after taking the veil, animated by the flame of divine love, she began to demand more of herself, strongly disciplining her will. Advancement on the spiritual path seemed to her already a meticulous work, a slow awakening of a sleepy soul who, little by little, rises up to don the arms of light. She confides in her autobiography:

The Divine began to be so gracious to me on this way of prayer that It granted me the favor of leading me to the Prayer of Quiet, and occasionally even to Union, though I did not understand what either of these was, or how highly they were to be valued. Had I understood this I think it would have been a great blessing. It is true that my experience of Union lasted only a short time; I am not sure that it can have been for as long as an Ave Maria; but the results of it were so considerable, and lasted for so long that, although at this time I was not twenty years old, I seemed to have trampled the world beneath my feet...

Teresa, in these short moments, knew how to rise to the plane where the Divine alone is perceived; she was striving to live constantly in the presence of the Repairer, her only Master and Savior whose love is “above all the enjoyments of Earth, above all the delights.” “We have a very good friend in Christ, we look at him as a person, we think of his moment of weakness and times of trial; and he becomes our companion. Once we have made a habit of thinking of him in this way, it becomes easy to find him at our side...” The sisters of the Incarnation heard her speak of the Divine with eloquence: “Let us listen to the Divine and listen to the best of friends... When we try to do Its will, we have nothing to fear [...] It takes everything in hand [...]” This young nun was admired for her solid judgment and open-mindedness. Her sweet and simple conversation seemed to emanate from her heart, so much was she burning with the love of the Divine.

The release in 1554 of an edition of *Confessions* by Augustine had a considerable impact on the spiritual life of Teresa. Her sisters often caught her in deep meditation, so absorbed in the Divine that she did not see anyone. On the subject of Augustine, she wrote: “When I came to his conversion, when he heard that voice in the orchard, what my heart felt was so violent that it seemed to me that the Lord was calling me. My tears were flowing for a long time.” One day, for the first time, she heard the voice of the Lord and was frightened by it: “Serve me, and do not worry about all this.” Describing

the rapture she experienced during her periods of union, she expressed the feeling of the presence of the Divine, who grasped her so strongly that she could not doubt that the Divine was in her, and she “engulfed” in It. The pleasures she experienced were “neither quite sensual nor quite spiritual,” “sweetness, delights to which nothing can be compared, agony whose joys exceed what can be said. [...] It is a hard and delicious martyrdom to die to all the amenities of the world, and to enjoy the Divine...”.

She found, in *Ascent of Mount Sion* from Bernardino de Laredo, the sentences that seemed to describe how she felt:

At the place where it is spoken of the union with the Divine, I found all the marks of what I felt, relative to this helplessness to reflect. [...] I pointed to one of the following passages: The person that hath ears, let them hear, and let them know that in this absence of thought there is to be comprehended a vast world, which includes perfect contemplation and contains all that is, so that in its presence, the rest is nothing. For truly in the presence of our Divinity and Lord, all created things are nothing. [...] Of the soul, therefore, which, by the union of love in contemplation, is occupied in the Divine, we can truly say that it must think of nothing, because in this absence of thought, it possesses the essence of all thought.



Ecstasy of Saint Teresa by Giancarlo Bernini.

To her confidant, Don Francisco de Salcedo, who was appalled, she confessed that she was “as dazed, intoxicated with this love, delicious anxieties, glorious wandering, heavenly madness...”

One day, while she was pronouncing the words of the “Veni Creator,” suddenly delighted in her first ecstasy, she clearly heard the voice of the Lord: “I will not have you converse with people, but with angels.” After this

experience, she lived two or three days in the absence of all her faculties, out of herself, lost in the Divine. Recounting this sublime experience, she confided to this same confidant: “This delight in ecstasy manifests itself as a sudden call from Its Majesty to the most intimate part of the soul, It plows into you at such a speed that It seems to raise the soul to the highest level of the self and that it will leave the body...” On the Feast of Peter and Paul, Teresa, in prayer, had the vision of the presence of Christ and informed her friend, who was very perplexed. He thought that she could be caught in the traps of the devil or that her imagination simply played tricks on her. She had a hard time making him understand the unintelligible, because there were no appropriate words in the vocabulary to describe her vision. She said that Christ had appeared to her as a smooth white light, brighter than the sun, which seemed dull in comparison, a light that illuminates the understanding and prompts the soul to enjoy such great good. Teresa, barely forty years old, was grateful to her Divinity for all the spiritual graces It lavished on her.

In addition to her autobiography, Teresa wrote several works of great mystical depth, some titles of which include “Concepts of Love”; *The Way of Perfection* which contains a commentary on the Lord’s Prayer; *The Book of Her Foundations*, an eventful story of the foundation of her various monasteries throughout Spain; and *The Interior Castle* or *The Mansions*, which could be compared to *The Celestial Sanctum*. Written towards the end of her life when she was sixty-two years old, this jewel testifies to the exceptional spiritual maturity of its author and reminds us of Martinès de Pasqually’s cosmogony. The primordial *Ain Sof* of the Kabbalists, according to Jacob Boehme, revealed itself through the septenary process of the seven spirit-sources. Teresa of Jesus envisions the soul as a diamond or a very clear crystal in the shape of a castle. In this castle, there are seven rooms or mansions. The inhabitants of this sublime building are our senses. Prayer or meditation is the gateway to this castle.

The soul that wanders in the “First Mansion” is touched by grace, but so many “venomous things” swarm around it that it does not distinguish the light emanating from the King’s chamber. It will have to persevere in prayer, knowledge of itself, and confidence in the goodness of its King. In the “Second Mansion,” the light is still weak, the temptations assail it, but the Divine invites the soul to go forward. In the “Third Mansion,” the soul is impatient when finding the door that leads to the King closed. It is in the “Fourth Mansion” that the great adventure of the soul begins, and it must prepare itself to receive the favors and graces of the King. In this mansion

of contemplation and tranquility, greater lights are perceived. The call of the King is a sweet sound of a rushing waterfall and singing birds, so penetrating that it forgets the external things and thinks only of penetrating further. Did not our revered master Saint-Martin regard the number four as the center of fixed truths, the source and correspondence of all that exists?

The spiritual engagement takes place in the “Fifth Mansion”: “The spiritual joys and consolations given by the Lord are a thousand leagues removed from those experienced in marriage. It is all a union of love with love, and its operations are entirely pure, and so delicate and gentle that there is no way of describing them.” The soul has not yet reached the stage of the spiritual wedding, “but just as in this world, when it comes to a marriage, we seek that the betrothed know and love each other, here the Spouse is such that it is enough for the soul of see It to be immediately more worthy to join hands.” In the “Sixth Mansion” the soul lives in the close intimacy of its Divinity, yet it never ceases to desire It. The Divine speaks to it, delights it in ecstasy, raises it by drawing it to It as amber attracts the straw, hurts it with such a delicious wound that it will never want to heal. The King gives his betrothed her jewels, knowledge of the greatness of the Divine, perfect self-knowledge and perfect humility.

In the “Seventh Mansion” the soul is in the Divine and the Divine is in the soul like water falling into a river or fountain is one with the body of water. The soul and the Divine enjoy each other in the intimate fusion of their spiritual marriage. Saint-Martin said in *The Man [or Woman] of Desire*, as the distance between the soul and the Light is canceled, it gets closer to its Principle.

Teresa spoke of the “communion from essence to essence” which constitutes the essence of the mystical state leading to spiritual marriage. This is how she describes this state of love:

While this soul is going about in this manner, burning up within itself, a blow is felt from elsewhere. [...] I do not say that there is an arrow, but whatever the experience, the soul realizes clearly that the feeling couldn't come about naturally. Neither is the experience that of a blow, although I said “blow,” but it causes a sharp wound. And, in my opinion, it is not felt where earthly suffering is felt, but in the very deep and intimate part of the soul where this sudden flash of lightning reduces to dust everything it finds in this earthly nature of ours...



*The Convento de San José in Ávila,
one of the monasteries founded by Teresa of Ávila.*

Teresa of Jesus, who profoundly reformed the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, founded more than a dozen convents and monasteries in Spain. Vilified and calumniated, she faced, because of her Reforms, virulent persecutions coming not only from her Order, but also from the upper religious hierarchy: she was even denounced to the Inquisition. Despite the many persecutions she was subjected to, she was nevertheless considered a saint and venerated by all the social strata of her time. An ardent and energetic soul, inspired by innumerable visions, including that of the Holy Trinity, which was very familiar to her, she lived the actuality of the omnipresence of the Divine and knew, in distress, to draw largely on the infinite resources of her inner being. In other words, she lived in accordance with the mystical teaching that emerges from her works. The *Madre*, very ill and weakened during the last years of her life, died peacefully on October 4, 1582, in her cell of the Carmelite convent of the Annunciation in Alba de Tormes, at the age of sixty-seven. The day before, a nun had seen the window of her cell shine with a white light, more sparkling than crystal, which presumably foreshadowed her imminent death. It is said that an inspiring fragrance emanated from her inert body and that “her face remained in death so beautiful and resplendent that it looked like a burning sun.” Beatified in 1602, the Founding Mother twenty years later in 1622 became Saint Teresa of Jesus during a canonization ceremony.

What Becomes of Our Dead

by Papus
(Gérard Encausse, MD)



The following is a selection from the book What Becomes of Our Dead, by Papus (Gérard Encausse, MD). The book, which has a new English translation available through the Traditional Martinist Order at www.martinists.org/what-becomes-of-our-dead, was written in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I, and was intended to offer comfort to the many families struggling with the deadly upheaval of the era. This section breaks down what the author believes happens to body and soul at the moment of transition.

Constitution of the Human Being

In order to comprehend our assertions regarding the transformations undergone by the human being after death, it is necessary that we explain

at this time a person's constitution while they are still in incarnation. Since a great number of books have already been written on this subject by diverse schools of thought, we shall not be too explicit while we demonstrate those assertions.

For the sake of clarity, which is our objective, we wish to remind you that the human being was considered by the ancient initiates to possess three principles or elements while incarnated:

1. The Physical Body, lent by the earth for one lifetime, is linked to this planet by the food it provides for growth and substance.
2. Life, which is like a spark that emanates between the two poles that constitute human beings – the body below, the soul above. Life is linked to the terrestrial atmosphere by the breath and that atmosphere is, in turn, joined to the light of the Sun, which energizes it. Thus, the breath connects people to the forces emanated from the stars whose directing center is the Sun. Life has been given many names, which rather confuses the poor neophyte. Paul the Apostle calls it “soul” (Corpus, Anima et Spiritus); the schools of Spiritism call it “perisprit”; the occultists term it the “astral body.” We shall not enumerate the Hebrew, Egyptian, Chinese, and Sanskrit appellations given to this principle called Life that has always excited the interest of all researchers.
3. The Immortal Soul, linked to the forces of the invisible plane by intuition, feeling, and will.

During terrestrial life, those three principles are united intimately with one another. The soul liberates itself during sleep and permits life to clean the body and operate the organs that depend directly upon organic life.

Let us summarize: Incarnated people are constituted by three principles: The Physical Body – Life –The Soul.

- The Physical Body is linked to the earth.
- Life is connected to the stars, to Universal Life.
- The Soul is tied to higher forces and to the Divine Plane.

Let us disregard the different analyses of those principles that are said to comprise seven, nine, or twenty-one elements. Nothing is lost in the discussion by remaining oblivious to them. Rather, to consider them would complicate simple matters unnecessarily.

What happens to the three principles at the hour of death? The vital spark is extinguished and Life, the vital force, is separated into two poles:

- a) The more luminous part remains around the soul and becomes the astral vehicle, the vehicle of the soul, or according to Pythagoras, the subtle body which surrounds the soul on the astral plane.
- b) The second part, the denser one, remains in the physical body that has become a cadaver.



The cadaver returns to earth as a used garment returns to the used clothes dealer. Since the earth can take back at will anything that belongs to it, worms may destroy the garment that is joined to the soul by only a very tenuous link. It is not to the disintegrating body that devotion should be rendered, but rather to the love and the ideas that the departed one left.

The soul retains its complete personality. The impact of passing from one plane to the other dims faculties momentarily, but the soul finds itself surrounded by friends and relatives who had earlier departed. If the person died for the collective, they are, moreover, helped by spiritual beings who alleviate any suffering that they may be enduring. Thus, if one wishes to mourn, the tears should be shed undoubtedly on behalf of the poor blind human beings of Earth and not the liberated soul who, by the sacrifice of their terrestrial life, endeavored to save the collective of their country.

Such has been the teaching of the Sanctuaries for more than 7,000 years. All initiates have always been convinced about this personal existence that succeeds terrestrial life, for they have lived it experimentally. The initiation into the Isis Mysteries had no other aim in its elementary aspect and the initiations into all Mysteries in all countries have always had the same objective. In the Sanskrit language, the individual who knows these truths in a practical way is called *Dwidia*, which means “dweller on two planes.”

Because scientific studies have either reached a plateau or undergone a deformation, certain minds have come to believe in good faith that after death a person becomes either cabbage, carrots, or wild flowers.

Nature is the most meticulous of all misers. It would never spend centuries to evolve a human brain for the purpose of annihilating in one minute the slow and progressive effort of so many years. The human soul survives after physical death, and our knowledge concerning this fact compels us to verify this affirmation.

Mystical Attainment and the Dark Night of the Soul

By Michael H. Bland, SI



Govern all by Your wisdom, O Lord,
So that my soul may always be
serving as You will and
not as I may choose
Let me die to myself, so that
I may serve You;
Let me live to You,
Who in Yourself is the true Life.

Teresa of Ávila

Perhaps one of the most intriguing and misunderstood mystical experiences awaiting the initiate or mystic student on the path to enlightenment and Cosmic Illumination is “The Dark Night of the Soul.” What is it that brings this experience about or into our lives? How do we prepare ourselves for it? More importantly, how do we successfully navigate our way through it?

Typically, in mystical literature and stories told by philosophers, contemplatives, psychotherapists, etc., the experience of the Dark Night of the Soul is described as either a stage of great trial or despair. In Zen Buddhism,

this experience of the Dark Night is referred to as the Great Doubt, and among alchemists it is known as the nigredo state or the black state of matter. The Christian mystic Evelyn Underhill describes the Dark Night as a state of negation and deprivation where the initiate or mystic student finds herself after a long period of contemplation and meditation – psychic fatigue has set in and the mystic sensitivity or sensibility to the Divine Consciousness/Inner Self appears to be lost.

In the Rosicrucian Tradition, Master Alden (one of H. Spencer Lewis's pseudonyms) refers to the Dark Night as a state or condition where the eye of the mind is turned inward upon itself and has not yet perceived the greater light within. In effect, it's the soul personality turning away from the world of multiplicity to oneness or unity with the Divine or Cosmic Consciousness. It's an in-between or transitional state which is also symbolized as the "Mystic Death." Thus, the Dark Night experience is a gateway or new birth into the Greater Light – also known as the Golden Dawn.

The Dark Night is a phase of the initiate's training where the will has been made stronger and now requires a shift in its direction. The initiate must learn to surrender his will to a higher purpose and become a companion to the masters and a servant of the Divine. All those traits of character and personality which impede a clear recognition of the Inner Self or Absolute must be subdued or eliminated.

The Dark Night is also a phase where the initiate learns the lesson of self-sacrifice. It's that part of the path where the longing for the Divine or the Absolute becomes so intense that the fire of the soul is awakened, and the initiate seeks to reach the Divine by any means necessary. This includes being willing to plunge into the abyss of the unknown, and the unknowable. It is the path for the spiritually desperate. And it is a state over which the soul personality has absolutely no control.

To be sure, this longing for the Divine is fleeting at first and usually occurs when the outer self has a very strong feeling of dissatisfaction with some experience of the physical world and universe which raises serious questions about the meaning and purpose of life.

This intense longing for something higher might also be the result of a long mental or physical illness; the death of a loved one; being born into poverty and all its futility; experiencing the brutality and cruelty of war; being severely physically challenged such as being blind or paraplegic; or simply being heartbroken.

Although the Dark Night is a time when it appears that everything that can go wrong does, this period of great trial and tests is actually a reward

for the years of hard study and development through creating a mystical technique the initiate has learned by applying the teachings to her day to day life situations.

As such, an essential part of the Dark Night is the light of the Divine shining upon our objective mind or the objective Self. As noted previously, the fire of the soul has been awakened and its descending energy stimulates both sides of our psychic Self or soul personality. Hence, whatever positive or negative traits of character that we possess come to life before us through the vicissitudes of our daily life. And, as noted by our elder Brother, Raymund Andrea, former Grand Master of the English Grand Lodge in the U.K., the Rosicrucian or Martinist Initiate does not like what he sees.

The revelation of our negative traits is a clear look into the dark side of ourselves. In Jungian psychology it is referred to as the “shadow.” Further, coming to grips with the shadow side of our Self is usually quite shocking and unexpected. We come to learn and understand that none of us are totally good or fully negative in the expression of the Vital Life Force emanating through us. The deeper realization of who and what we are brings forth our greatest challenge in order to complete our journey to the One and the Mysteriously Hidden Unknown Divinity or Absolute Consciousness.

Thus, the Dark Night of the Soul is a time when our ideals and our determination are being tested. It’s a period of preparation, a purging of character, a sanctifying of the Inner Temple of the Soul to receive the Illumination that is to follow. Indeed, it is a time when the destructive



H. Spencer Lewis

forces of discouragement invade our minds, making us doubt and challenge everything. In fact, the mind becomes indifferent at times to all things mystical and spiritual. This period may be referred to as a malaise, as there appears to be a deadness or numbness within.

H. Spencer Lewis observed that it's during this period of the Dark Night that many disciples may stop their progress. They may contact others who have also stopped and are dwelling in the shadows of the Dark Night and, finding confirmation of their doubts and false beliefs in the experiences of others, come to the erroneous conclusion that their present attitude is correct, and they abandon their studies, and throw themselves into the deepest shadows of the Dark Night – its loneliness, isolation, and despondency.

This stress, tribulation, and loneliness can be an essential part of the way from the many to the One. It's important for the initiate to understand that this Darkness may be of a Cosmic Decree. It's an experience which the disciple must pass as a part of her initiation into the Cosmic level of reality and the realization of Self. Regardless of the circumstances, the mystic must endure. There is no way out until the Divine finishes purifying the soul personality in the way It desires to do; no remedy can heal the soul personality nor is there relief for its pain. Thus, the travail of the Dark Night of the Soul is all directed towards the essential mystic act of utter self-surrender – the death of selfhood in the interest of a new and deeper life.

The Dark Night of the Soul, then, is humanity's gradual discovery of our total dependence upon the Universal Consciousness which exists within and around us. The disciple's ignorance or lack of knowledge or awareness of unity with the Divine is the sense of separation which engenders feelings of isolation and abandonment.

Thus, during the Dark Night of the Soul, the initiate's search for knowledge is his desperate effort to overcome ignorance and the separation from the Divine. Let there be no doubt: all mystical knowledge is a bridge seeking to unite the known and the unknown, the infinite and the finite worlds.

Thus, the Self in its necessary movement towards higher levels of consciousness, loses and leaves behind certain elements of the finite world, long loved but now outgrown, much like a child who must make the difficult transition from nursery school to grade school. Furthermore, the feeling of deprivation and inadequacy becomes an indirect stimulus to new growth.

There's only one path that leads humanity out of this misery of the Dark Night of the Soul, and that path is the practice of humility, patience, and faith. To be humble is to feel a tender acceptance of all reality just as it is,

which includes compassion for others and for ourselves – just as we are. It's also to become conscious of the sacredness of all life and the primordial unity of everything in the universe.

The experience of the Dark Night provides the disciple with the opportunity to become aware of and recognize that Light, Life, and Love are the foundations of our very being and every aspect of the Cosmic Order and Consciousness. To have patience is to remain steadfast in waiting and looking for cosmic law to fulfill itself in every aspect of our lives and beings. To have faith is to have trust in the guidance of the teachings and the masters who created them.

In closing, the length of time that it takes each initiate to experience the Dark Night of the Soul varies. It all depends upon the reaction of the disciple to it. If he reacts positively and remains steadfast in his ideals, the Dark Night will end sooner.

Thus, it's important to be hopeful and to allow the cycle of despair and mystical fatigue to complete itself. The end of separation from the Divine or the Absolute is close at hand and so is the Golden Dawn; the mystical experience of Cosmic Consciousness and Illumination. Let us all move forward with the knowledge that the light of the soul within us is about to burst through to illuminate our minds and fill our hearts with the love of the Divine and all beings.

Let us conclude with a prayer from the great Master, Jacob Boehme:

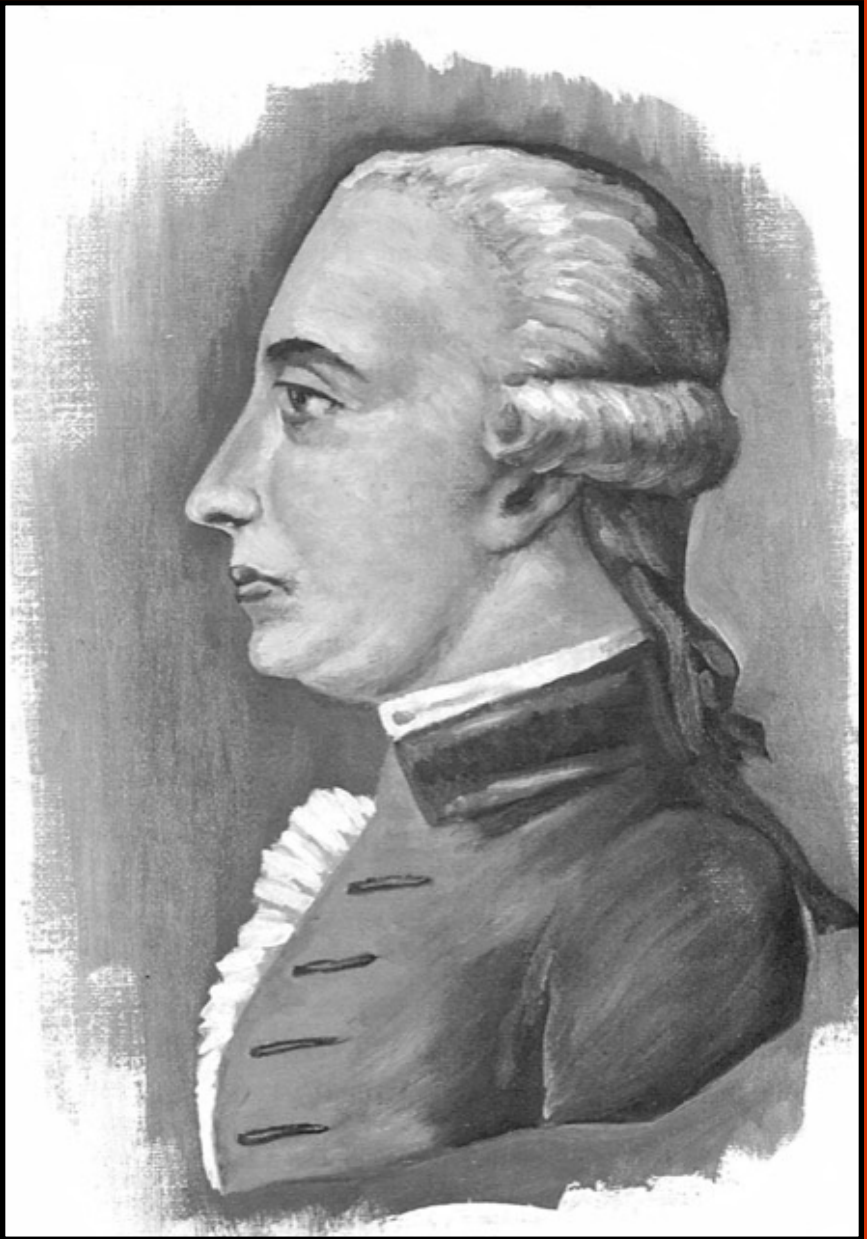
O great incomprehensible Divinity.
Who fills all, be You indeed my
Heaven.
Let my spirit be indeed the music and
The joy of Your spirit.
Make music in me and may I
Make harmony in the Divine Kingdom
Of Your joy,
In the great Love of the Divine,
In the wonders of Your glory and splendor,
In the company of Your holy angelic harmonies.

The more we advance in virtue the less we perceive the defects of others, as a person on the summit of a mountain, with a vast prospect about him, beholds not the deformities of those who may dwell on the plain below. His very elevation should give him a lively and tender interest in those who, although beneath him, are, he knows, of his own nature. What then must be the love of the Divine for humanity!

- Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin

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