

**Om-Shanti: - Studie en Academie Materiaal**

**SOUL & CONSCIOUSNESS - Deel 2 - 43**



---

# Rosicrucian Digest Article

The Self and its realization-Vol 80 No. 4

Jean Massengo, FRC

# The Self and its realization

By Jean Massengo, FRC – Conclave in the Congo - RC Digest Volume 4-2002

COUNTLESS WORDS have been used to describe the duality of humans both as physical beings and as spiritual beings. Many schools of thought claim that, in addition to the visible physical body, each person possesses one or more invisible bodies bearing specific names. Likewise, human consciousness is subject to a division into two fields or modes of expression called the outer self and the inner self. Thus, in addition to the objective consciousness or outer self, each person has a more profound awareness of the divine and immortal nature to which many names are attributed: Christ Consciousness, Spiritual Self, Divine Self, or more generally Inner Master. This spiritual or subliminal consciousness is distinct in its essential nature and is separate from but associated with another form of consciousness called the outer self, which is profane or mortal. In such a dualistic conception, fraught with so many antagonistic relationships in the method of expressing consciousness in each of us, the underlying concept is that spiritual study and practice can awaken the inner self so that it may direct the outer self through its divine power.

If the primary reason for our affiliation with the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is to attain the eventual Illumination of our consciousness and being and to witness the Divine Light for our happiness and that of humanity, then understanding the subject of self-realization is of the highest importance for us, because it is the focus of the spiritual quest of all students of mysticism, even though methodological approaches may differ from one school of thought to another.

Let us now begin our discussion by taking up the following points one by one: the definition of self, the fundamentals of self-realization, the obstacles to self-realization, and some aspects of the technique which are connected with them.

## Definition of Self

In general, when we speak of the absolute self, we refer primarily to Absolute Being or to God. That is how God is designated in the Holy Scriptures of various religions. Thus, absolute being is "That which is"; it is **the** Self, the Universal God or the Cosmic.

However, mystics on their part say that they not only experience contact with the Absolute or the Cosmic, but also with their inner being or self; In other words,

## The Self and its realization

with the Divine Spark existing within each of us. It appears as a duality of the existence of self: as the Universal Self or Soul which is the Atman of the Hindus, the God of the Universe ruling in the macrocosm; and as the individual self, an emanation of the Universal Soul, which governs all the functions of the human, the microcosm. Thus, this individual self is encased in the body "as an oyster in its shell." It receives a constant flow of messages and experiences from its source, partly from the cosmic world, partly from our sensory and mental organs.

Psychologists also mention the concept of duality when discussing the subject of the human soul. According to Carl Gustav Jung, a prominent 20th century psychoanalyst, there exists within the human soul a rational part or anima rationalis, which is its subtle point and which engages in dialogue with the unconscious anima. The rational part relates to the outer self and the unconscious anima to the divine self or inner self. For this author, who investigated the manifestations of the human soul from the psychological viewpoint, the soul is the totality of the psyche which belongs as much to the unconscious as the conscious.

The unconscious is, for Jung, the very basis of the soul from which consciousness arises. According to him, all souls have a similar fundamental structure in common. He referred to the nature of these profound universal structures of the soul by the generic term of archetype. The archetype, as the principle of the formation of symbols or the appearance of images, constitutes the contents of consciousness. Because of this, it is an important spiritual factor. This is why dreams are an important means for self-transformation, beginning with analysis and the study of symbols revealed through dreams.

Furthermore, the Rosicrucian teachings emphasize that the self, or spiritual being, resides in a pure state in the depths of each human being. This pure energy, or soul, comes from the Vital Life Force permeating it. But the Vital Life Force is not the unique privilege of humans. Indeed, it applies as well for all living beings. Therefore, from the Rosicrucian viewpoint, there exists only one living essence or Vital Life Force, from which have developed a myriad of living beings. This is in accordance with the concept of Jung's "one world" applied on the physical level. Therefore, due to the sensitivity of their nervous systems and psychic centers, humans are the only beings living on earth capable of being conscious of their being and of the cosmic force permeating it.

## **The Self and its realization**

In short, no matter what approach we take to the subject, the human, by the nature of the soul, is a composite being. We participate both in the unknown and the known, in the unconscious and the conscious, in what transcends us and what is immanent in us. That is why the words self or being can have many meanings. On the microcosmic scale, it may refer to the individual's mental or personal identity that is, personality. Or it may refer to the quality called "psychic" in the human; that is, the psychological aspect. And, it may relate to the person's soul. On the macrocosmic scale, the word may signify quite simply God.

In dividing our being into various parts or forms of consciousness, we wrongly emphasize the characteristics of self, which are only its attributes or forms of manifestation on different levels, as being entirely distinct from one another and having only certain functional relationships. This is a source of confusion for understanding what self is. Fundamentally, it involves only a single underlying essence, because the self is one, much like an iceberg floating on the surface of the ocean, whose visible part corresponds to the "ordinary self," and the immersed part to the "transcendental or spiritual self." That is why the Upanishads, the sacred writings of India, state, "That which is in the sun is also in the human."

### **Fundamentals of Self-Realization**

As we have just emphasized, the self or spiritual being, as the Divine Essence, resides in a pure state in the very depths of our being. Since the self is always in a pure state within humans and since matter and life cannot exist without the self. But why must we realize the self, and what does this realization consist of?

The answer to the first question may be summarized as follows: all things are in God in the latent state or in essence, and not in a distinct form. By its attribute, which is the Universal Soul, this Divine Intelligence breathes life and awareness into the universe, into nature, and into humans. Through the act of creation, God has, so to speak, need for matter and for life, using them as a mirror to become aware of the extent of infinite nature. It is through the progressive emergence of the spiritual virtues of the soul within the human personality that God, achieves such awareness.

As to the question of knowing what self-realization consists of, all the Masters of Wisdom, by stressing the precise point we have developed, are unanimous in

## The Self and its realization

saying quite definitely that the self is always realized; there is no new knowledge to be acquired. However, something stands in the way of our being aware of it. This obstacle to self-realization is called quite simply ignorance. That is why a Rosicrucian adage states: "It is from ignorance and ignorance alone that humanity must free itself so that the light of the inner self may shine in its greatest glory."

In essence, humans are divine in their consciousness and their whole being. The vital earthly elements contained in their body, whether organic or mineral, contain the divine energy that Rosicrucians call spirit energy. Likewise, the air we breathe brings into our body the spiritual essence of the Vital Life Force.

Therefore, self-realization is not something outside of us: it is the full realization of self, in other words, the full realization of the spiritual dimension of our being.

However, from a relative point of view, for the common person, a situation applying to most of us, things are not so simple. Achieving self-realization is only possible through a long and exacting effort of the individual upon him or her self. There are at least two reasons for this. The first stems from the fact that the seeds of the Divine Essence which must serve to give rise to the spiritual faculties within humans are only found in a latent or dormant state. In other words, they are not yet well expressed in the soul personality. The second reason is due to the fact that the awakening of complete self-awareness is not instantaneous, but gradual.

By its very nature it is a slow process. It generally unfolds in a progressive and hierarchical way—in other words, by going from the individual self toward the Absolute Self; and thus being affiliated with a Traditional Order aids in accelerating this process, through a proven system and the mutual support of the members.

To conquer ignorance, all our efforts must be geared to becoming aware of the relatively low vibrations on the Cosmic Keyboard upon which the sensations of the outer self depend, and of the much higher octaves of Cosmic Energy upon which the psychic and spiritual faculties depend. As these two parts of self begin to establish increasingly harmonious ties, the veil separating them will gradually be torn away, the eyes of the soul will be opened, and we will become increasingly happy in rediscovering the ever realized self, which will appear to us as a new discovery.

## **The Self and its realization**

*(What are some methods of becoming aware of our Self?)*

*Self analysis: Who am I?*

*Removing false concepts rather than adding new ones.*

*Mindfulness*

*Meditation and communication with the Master within.*

# The Self and its realization

## Some Obstacles to Self Realization

Many obstacles may oppose or hinder self-realization. We will mention most particularly various obstacles connected with the fundamental characteristics of our mind and its mode of functioning, and other obstacles connected with the choice of spiritual life.

The activity of our brain, principally the mind in its relations with our objective and subjective consciousness, is by far the primary obstacle to self-realization due to the false ideas and doubts which it allows us to entertain regarding our deepest nature, the meaning of our life and mission on earth. Also, it is what makes us hesitate and doubt and turns us into skeptics. The brain has also inculcated in us the false notion that only what we see, feel, and hear through our cerebral consciousness is worthy of being trusted. In fact, it is generally the mind (or rather, our ego) more than our heart which dictates the reasons for our choices in the exercise of our free will. The universe perceived by the sense organs is thus only a projection of the mind. This point of view is in accord with the Rosicrucian teachings which stipulate: "The physical universe takes on the forms it has due to our objective faculties, which constitute the molds into which certain universal energies enter as they assume the qualities they have to our senses."

Another fundamental characteristic of the conscious mind is its tendency to wander. By nature it is unstable, impermanent, and transitory. As we mentioned previously, it is through the appropriate techniques and through perseverance that it can be stabilized and introverted, in other words, turned toward "the interior" to make it an effective tool for mystical work.

Concerning the kinds of relationships which must be established between the two parts of self, we generally commit an error by thinking that spiritual practice will awaken our inner self to such a degree that the latter will create a balance of power in its favor, thus stifling or annihilating the outer self or ego. Although we notice quite often considerable resistance or apathy on the part of the outer self not to follow our spiritual impulses, the outer self may be gradually led to recognize the existence of the inner self and to cooperate with it before submitting voluntarily to its complete direction. If we take the outer self by force or try to rush it, it will rear up like a horse and become uncontrollable and capricious.

As Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, Imperator of AMORC from 1915 to 1939, wrote in one of his many articles on the subject: "The outer self must never be enslaved by any

## **The Self and its realization**

power, internal or external. It must be led to assume its proper place in light of the duality of human consciousness and being."

As for the choice of a spiritual path, a traditional and initiatory path will guarantee that the seekers will have at their disposal tried and tested teachings based on a true "Science of Being" or "Ontology," which they can depend upon with confidence. Many people jump from one subject to another without finding a system to follow. It is best to try various spiritual paths until you find one that speaks to your soul and then follow it.

Sogyal Rinpoche, a contemporary initiate of Tibetan Buddhism, wrote the following on this subject, in a work entitled *The Tibetan Book of Life and Death*: "In all Traditions, most spiritual Grand Masters agree upon the fact that it is essential to know a particular way or path of wisdom thoroughly, and to follow, with all one's heart and soul, only one tradition until the end of one's spiritual journey, while remaining open toward the truths of all others. . . . We are in the habit of saying in Tibet: 'To know one path is to accomplish them all . . . .' To undertake the spiritual path is one thing; to find patience, endurance, wisdom, courage, and humility to travel it to the end is quite another." This quotation now leads us to touch upon some aspects of the technique of self-realization.

### **Some Aspects Relating to the Technique of Self-Realization**

As we have emphasized, it is important to be affiliated with a wisdom school or, better yet, with a traditional and initiatory order so as to follow the necessary preparation before achieving a certain degree of self-realization. By entering such an order, the knowledge which the seeker must acquire and apply is dispensed in a gradual, effective, and thorough manner. As a philosophical, initiatory, and traditional order, AMORC possesses a unique ontology, as it incorporates the secret knowledge or gnosis, both cultural and spiritual, which initiates of the past have transmitted through the ages. Today this constitutes the foundations of the Rosicrucian teachings, a few significant aspects of which we will now discuss.

Upon affiliating with the Order, our first efforts attempt, among other things, to stabilize and gradually calm the mind. This is largely provided by the teachings of the early degrees through the answers provided to fundamental questions relating, for example, to our inner nature, to the mysteries of life and death, etc., but also through the concentration exercises given in the lessons. However, we are soon warned that stabilizing and introverting the mental faculties only result



## The Self and its realization

from long-term effort. Concerning the reasons for this state of affairs, this is what Ramana Maharshi said in the form of an analogy:

"One succeeds in stabilizing the mind by means of practice and the absence of passion. Success comes only gradually. The mind is like a zebu that is so long accustomed to grazing on the fields of others that it can only remain in its own stable with difficulty. In vain does one offer the zebu more tasty grass and finer fodder; at first it will obstinately refuse them. In time it will begin to eat a little. But the tendency to wander about will come again, and the zebu will slip away. But by being tempted by its owner, the zebu will become accustomed to its stable. And finally, even if it is not tied up, the zebu will escape no longer. It is the same for the mind: when it discovers its own happiness, it will no longer wander."

Through this analogy, we will understand that we can thus "seduce" the mind by good thoughts, the thoughts of love. Likewise, it will become increasingly accustomed to taking the good path, notably in thinking of God. The old patterns of thought must disappear or die. Therefore, we are urged to free ourselves by using a true form of mental alchemy.

An essential characteristic of mind is also its ability to be stabilized by breathing rhythms. There exists a close relationship between the state of mind and the breathing rhythm. This fact is even exploited by the Eastern adepts in the practice of pranayama or "breath control." Concerning this subject, a most revealing analogy states that "the mind is the knight and the breath is the horse." The conscious observance of diligently practiced breathing rhythms allows a person to control the mind by pacifying or calming it. That is why pranayama is considered to be the "breaking in of the horse." Through this breaking in, the knight, or mind, is in turn broken in. From this we can understand why breathing exercises, as well as vowel sounds, play an important part in Rosicrucian rituals. Although we have considered the ordinary mind to be an obstacle to self-realization until now, when it is tamed and at peace, it becomes an increasingly effective and outstanding tool for concentration, visualization, mental creation, psychic projection, meditation, etc. It also becomes the ultimate means for establishing contact with the Divine within us.

Therefore, the Rosicrucian teachings propose to develop not just one facet, but many facets, of our personality. In the Hindu world several more or less distinctive ways by which self-realization may be attained are generally mentioned. These involve in particular the following: jnana-yoga (the way of knowledge and wisdom), bhakti-yoga (the way of devotion and the adoration of

## The Self and its realization

God), karma-yoga (the way of disinterested action), raja-yoga (the eight limbed path including physical exercises, concentration, and meditation), and hatha-yoga (the way of internalizing attention and control of mind). In the Order's teachings most of the techniques advocated by these ways that are essential to seekers of a Western background are found to one degree or another. Furthermore, these teachings are not compartmentalized but seek a harmonious and progressive overall development of the member on all the levels of his or her being: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Along with the exercises, many other tools and opportunities are offered, such as prayer, meditation, participation in group work (convocation rituals and Rosicrucian conventions), cosmic harmonization, service, and initiations. Initiation, in particular, is the means that Divine Providence has placed at the disposal of humanity and by which we may experience our inner self intimately.

The very first mystical initiation, to which we should most justifiably aspire by our current preparation within AMORC, and which we can even hope to attain during this incarnation, is precisely the one which will enable the self to reveal itself to us. In keeping with the ancient Rosicrucian adage "When the disciple is ready, the Master will appear," if we are prepared, we will then have the conscious experience of our dual identity: body and soul, substance and essence, conscious and unconscious. This will be already an important stage in the awakening of our Being, in other words, our Inner Master.

Thus, this experience, no matter how outstanding it may be, will not be an end in itself, but rather the point of departure for a long mystical journey that is characterized primarily by hard trials punctuated nonetheless by periods of inner exaltation. Indeed, as we have emphasized previously, though the self is unique and not multiple, its realization is nonetheless gradual, and it is a law of the inner life which requires that the initiatory journey toward self-realization be a "Way of the Cross." No student on the Path of Light can avoid it, because, in keeping with the first law of spiritual alchemy, "the Green Lion must be tamed before he is given wings." The Green Lion is the average individual not having developed his or her latent faculties, whereas the wings constitute the means of flying eventually toward God; but this is an arduous task since it involves genuine transmutation.

Thus, it is only after some years and many incarnations dedicated to the study and application of spirituality under the direction of our Inner Master that we can hope to pass through victoriously the ever more demanding and exalting final stages of the Purification of Self, of the Illumination of Self, of the Dark Night of

## **The Self and its realization**

the Soul, and of the Unitive Life, as revealed by Evelyn Underhill in her masterpiece entitled *Mysticism*. To the faculties transmuted by cerebral intelligence are added the vitalizing faculties of the intelligence of the heart. We will thus develop all the virtues of the soul, among which we can mention compassion, humility, nonviolence, tolerance, patience, courage, detachment, altruism, benevolence, and wisdom. At that moment we will deserve the title of "Realized" or of "Cosmic Master" to which all students of mysticism aspire in due time.