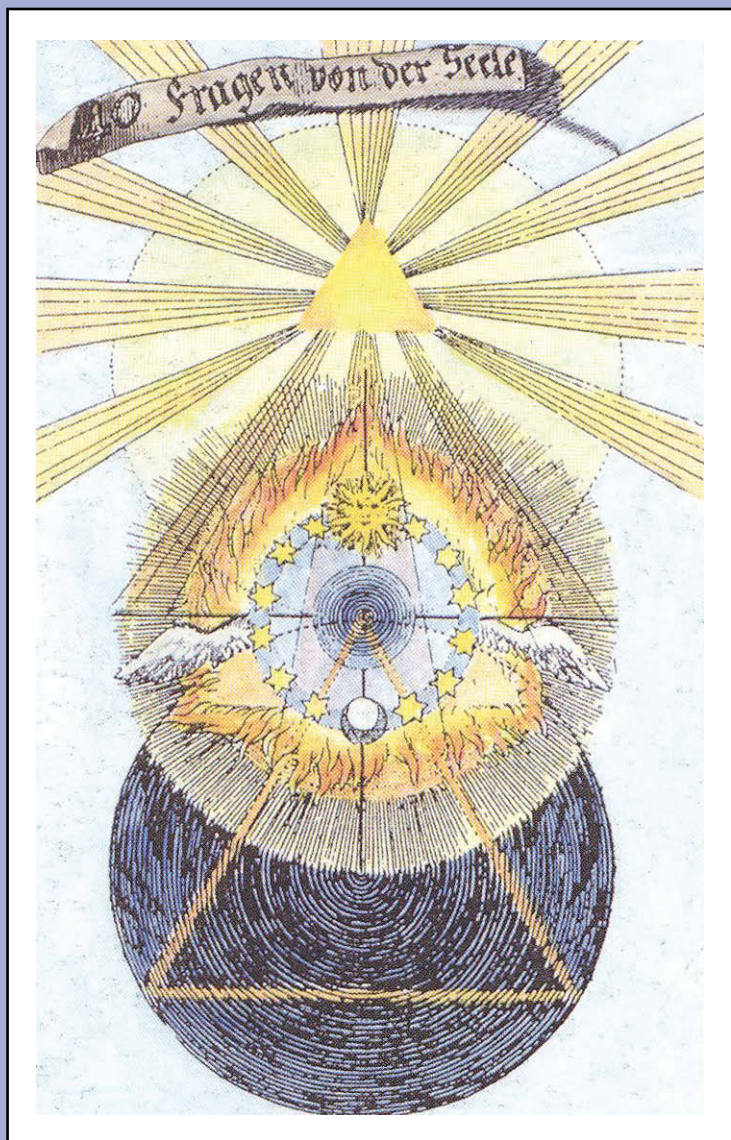


# Pantacle





# TRADITIONAL MARTINIST ORDER

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
*Greetings in the Light of Martinism!*

Welcome to this issue of the *Pantacle*, the official magazine of the Traditional Martinist Order.

In our first article, Brother Conciliator introduces us to the profound symbolism of “The Heptad and the Number Seven.”

Next we learn about “The Spiritual and Mystical Value of Forgiveness” in an article by Jean Massengo, with valuable guidance for any Man or Woman of Desire.

Then Frater Jean-Claude Mondet explores “Our Triple Nature: Body, Soul, and Spirit.”

May these writings inspire you on all levels.

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

Julie Scott  
Grand Master  
Traditional Martinist Order

# The Heptad and the Number Seven

*By Brother Conciliator*

## Introduction

The word “Heptad” comes from the Greek *hepta* meaning seven. And in fact, the work in a Heptad is carried out by seven ritualistic officers. From the discourses in the Initiate Degree I discovered that the number seven is important and sacred. I was definitely convinced there had to be more connection between this number and the Heptad than just the fact that there are seven officers. Besides, if we look at numbers, as did Pythagoras and the many mystics after him, they do not simply present a quantity but rather a function or a principle. And in this, I found an unexpected key because, as we consider one number after another, we realize that each number is not only related to its specific function, definition, or symbol (four is matter, five is creation, etc.) but to all the embodied combinations of functions that have contributed to this number.

For example: Two, polarity, the tension between two opposites, is simple and direct in nature. On the other hand, five represents not only the act of creation but the number also embodies both the numbers Two and Three, the feminine and masculine, and therefore the human being too, as well as two pairs of opposites joined through an invisible intersection. But Five is also the One or Unity which acts upon Four or the *prima materia* from which creation arises. When we get to Seven, the matter becomes even more complicated because each aspect of every combination of aspects manifests in a different manner. Seven is Four and Three—the combination of matter and spirit. It is also Five and Two—the fundamental opposite united through action and love. And Seven is also Six and One—the fundamental note or “C” which is sounded through the number Six, formed in time and space, so to speak, to allow its octave to be heard that is again a new Oneness.

If we want to reflect on the Heptad in the light of the number Seven, we must realize that Heptad means seven, which then involves considering each number from One to Seven as a whole. I shall therefore begin to take you through the significance of each of these numbers.

## ONE

One, the monad, the Absolute Unity, the All. I have nothing to say about this. If the Absolute becomes conscious of itself, then we have the Primal Division, Plurality, or Polarity. One becomes Two.

## TWO

Two is not “One plus One.” Metaphysically, Two can never be the sum of One plus One, given that there can ever only be One which is the All. Two expresses the fundamental antithesis, the fundamental nature of opposition: polarity. And polarity is inherent in every manifestation, without exception. In itself, Two represents an everlasting, unrelenting opposition. In nature, there is no condition like it: “Something or someone will have to add water to the wine.” A photo is never black and white but full of grey tints. Two is static, passive. In a world that is governed by the number Two, nothing can ever happen.

## THREE

Between two opposing forces, a relationship is established. In itself, the establishing bond is a third force. One, through Two, “becomes” at the same time Three. This “becoming” is the third force which automatically gives rise to this necessary, inbuilt, and mysterious principle of conciliation. And here we are faced with both a logical and linguistic problem with no solution. Our logical mind is by nature grounded in contradictions and cannot grasp or accept this connecting principle. Male-female is not a connection because for a relationship, there must first be “love” or at least “desire.” A sculptor and a block of marble in themselves do not create a statue. “Inspiration” is required first. Sodium and chlorine by themselves are not enough to produce a chemical reaction. An “affinity” is first required. Logic and reason are faculties to make clear distinctions and differentiations. But logic and reason cannot explain daily experiences: even logical thinkers fall in love. We cannot directly measure or understand Three but in a general manner we can experience its existence. In the material world, it represents the three kingdoms: the mineral, vegetable, and animal. In the metaphysical domain, Three is the “Word,” the “Holy Spirit,” the Absolute which is conscious of itself.

## FOUR

Matter, Substance, Things: the physical world is the matrix of all the experiences of the senses. But matter cannot be explained in terms of Two or Three. Two is an abstract or “mental” tension. Three is an abstract or “mental” relation. Two and Three are inadequate to explain the idea of substance. Lover/the beloved/desire do not together form a “home” or a “love affair.” Sculptor/block of marble/inspiration do not together make a statue. Sodium/chlorine/affinity together do not yet make salt. To explain matter, there are four terms required, in principle: sculptor/block of marble/inspiration/sculpture; lover/ beloved/desire/affair; sodium/chlorine/affinity/salt. Seen in this way, matter is a principle that arises out of polarity and relationship. Of necessity this principle includes Two as well as Three but, in spite of that, is more than just the sum of contrasting parts as each lover and sculptor knows well enough. Matter or substance is a composition as well as a new Oneness; it is an analogy of the Absolute Oneness with a threefold characteristic. Four terms are needed to explain matter: fire, earth, air, and water. But we have not yet come to the physical material fact against which we might stub our toe. Fire is the active, obstructive principle; earth is the receptive, form-giving principle; air is the subtle, mediating principle; water is the principle combined product of fire, earth, and air even though still a substance that descends from the three. For Fire, Earth, Air, Water, we might well say: the active principle, the receptive passive principle, the mediating principle, and the material principle but the old terms sound better and provide the principles more clearly.

In conclusion, Four is material perfection. Unity which became conscious of itself, created Polarity. Polarity is the bisexual expression of the Unity but also of the earthly duality. And in this way each aspect of the spiritual division is bisexual. The division creates a twofold antagonism that is conciliated through Consciousness. Symbols express these processes more clearly than words. The square within the circle of potential passive matter represents its arrangement within Unity. The same is demonstrated, as it were, in action through the Cross. By conciliating the opposites through His Consciousness, the Christ attained Oneness on the Cross on which the Cosmic Person is crucified.

## FIVE

Five is the number of “Love” because it represents the unity of the first masculine number Three with the first feminine number Two. Five could also be called the first “universal” number. The number One, Unity that encompasses everyone and everything, is strictly speaking incomprehensible. The number Three, which encompasses the principles of polarity and conciliation, is the key to fathom the universe because all its manifestations are by nature polar and triune in principle. Two, Polarity, represents a condition of tension. Three, Relation, represents an act of conciliation.

Feminine numbers or even numbers represent conditions or circumstances in which action is established. Masculine numbers, or uneven numbers, are the active and provide the action. And so for Pythagoras, the number Five represented “Love.” Given the countless meanings of this word, it might be better to call this number Life. Five also stands for the human being and his or her exile. To explain matter, or substance, four terms are necessary. But these four terms are not sufficient to explain the creation of matter. It is Five—the uniting of the masculine and the feminine—which makes this creation possible. And it is this understanding of the number Five’s meaning that is responsible for the respect it has been given in many cultures and why in many esoteric organizations pentagrams and pentagons are sacred. If we apply the functional role of this number to the familiar circumstances of daily life, we can gain an insight into the way in which it is active. Roles are changeable and become complicated within functions. Man/ Woman is a polarity. But the same man and the same woman who are united in a relationship through desire are no longer the same. And when the three termed relationship changes within the square of an affair or home, the parties again change in function—as lovers and family men and women know very well. The persons involved play both active, masculine, initiating and passive, feminine, receptive roles and all at the same time. The lover is active in regard to his beloved and receptive through desire, she is receptive to his advances but draws out desire... Five is the key to the vitality of the universe, of its creative nature. Four explains the fact of the sculptor’s statue but not how it came into being. Five terms are required to explain the principle of the act of creation and consequently five is also the number of “potential.” Potential exists outside of time. Five is therefore the number of Eternity—the uniting of the masculine and the feminine—of Eternal Creation.

## SIX

Four terms are necessary to explain the principle or idea of matter, substance. Five terms are required to explain “creation,” the principle of the act of creation and becoming. But five terms are not sufficient to describe the framework within which the act is carried out; the realization of potential. The framework is restricted by time and space. In this sense we can call Six the number of the World. And to become Six, Five brings forth Time and Space or creates these. We can call the processes and principles related to One, Two, Three, Four and Five spiritual or metaphysical. They are invisible in any case. In fact, we cannot perceive polarity, relationship, principle substance, or act of creation, or even imagine them. In contrast, the sixth term makes an overwhelming impression upon us. The framework in which creation takes place is time and space so that six terms are necessary to define them further. Creation does not take place in time although time is a product of creation. Things do not exist in space but things are space. In this sense, Six is the number of the material world. In the mechanics of a heavenly body, movement is determined within a six dimensional space: three dimensions for place and three for speed. To define volume, six directions in space are required: upwards/ downwards, backwards/ forwards, and left/right. Six is symbolized by the cube but also by the two interlacing triangles (the uniting of the higher and lower worlds). The cube is the result of Six while the interlacing triangles are the number Six in the making.

## SEVEN

Five terms are required to explain the principle of life, the act of creation, the “event in itself.” Six terms describe the framework within which these phenomena take place. But six terms are not sufficient to explain the process of becoming, the becoming in itself. In the material world, we experience this process simply as growth. But if we get to make a connection between the functional meaning of Seven and everyday experience, our analogous spring will dry up. With the number Five, the correspondence between sculptor and the Cosmic “Act” was perfected. With Six, we were already balancing on the edge of metaphor. With Six, our sculptor was not the creator of time and space, he did not create. He found himself in time and space already and was in the process of giving form to his sculpture. The “volume” of

his statue already existed in the block of marble. Even though, from the point of view of the sculpture, we could say that the sculptor played the role of the Divine in time and space, given that it did not yet exist as a statue. With Seven, our analogy becomes a complete metaphor. The sculpture's work does not grow in a material sense nor a biological one even though we do see it gain a form. We grow, as do apples, but the growth of a sculpture is purely metaphorical.

It is interesting to note that up until now, in regard to the function of this number, we have been able to demonstrate why the numbers Two, Three, Four etc., and no other numbers, have any relation to polarity, relationship, substance etc. but that we cannot easily find concrete physical examples to demonstrate the correlations. And so we cannot, for example, put forward any physical proof of the fact that a lump of salt, as matter, is determined by the number four. A skeptic might call the universal relation of the number Six with time and space as completely arbitrary.

When we get to the number Seven, however, we cannot make any more connections with our direct experience. We cannot start a growth process outside of ourselves. But in the physical world we find many examples in which the number Seven manifests and has a clear relation to growing or active systems. All manifestations lean towards their completions in seven stages. There are seven days in the week, based on the number of days a phase of the moon lasts. The development of a human being from birth, a child, pubescent, adolescent, to an adult can be divided into stages of seven years each. There are seven notes in the harmonic progression. And of the forms which express a traditional meaning of the number Seven, there is the pyramid. The square base symbolizes the four elements and the triangular sides symbolize the three forms of the spirit.

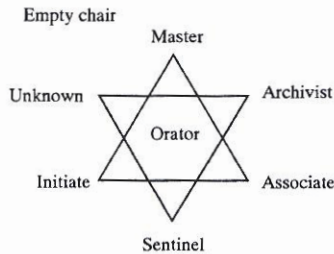
## SUMMARY

As we consider one number after another, we realize that each is not only related to a specific function, definition, or symbol (Four is substance, Five is creation) but to all the embodied combinations of functions that have contributed to this number. For example: polarity, the tension between two opposites, is simple and direct in nature. But Five does not only represent the act of creation; this number also



embodies Two and Three, the masculine and feminine principles, as well as two pairs of opposites—the principle of “double inversion” joined through an invisible intersection. But Five is also the One or Unity which acts upon Four or the *prima materia* from which creation arises. When we get to Seven, the matter becomes more complicated. Each aspect of every combination of aspects manifests in a different manner. Seven is Four and Three—the combination of matter and spirit. It is also Five and Two—the fundamental opposite united through action and love. And Seven is also Six and One—the fundamental note or “C” which is sounded through the number Six, formed in time and space, so to speak, to allow its octave to be heard that is again a new Unity. This new unity is not identical but analogous to the Primal Unity. It is a renewal of the self-replicating. It is the old, the familiar which is transformed into something new, something unexpected. In this way, Seven represents Divine Power.

## THE HEPTAD



With the tools that number symbolism presents to us, we can now try to understand the meaning of the living symbol of the Heptad. As I pointed out earlier, we shall have to examine all the numbers from One to Seven in order to find the real meaning of the number Seven or the Heptad.

**ONE** or Unity is to be found on the altar: “May this light, emanating from three different luminaries...” It is the Unity that comes out of Diversity, but we can also find Unity in those things of which there is only one: one altar, one pantacle, one luminary behind the Unknown Master’s chair.

The number **TWO** is obviously symbolized by the symbols of the universal opposites in the Initiate Degree. But you can also find them again in the opposite of the two letters and the two triangles made of dots on the S.I. insignia. You can see them on the collars of the members in the S.I. degree.

The **THREE**, which we cannot understand directly, we experience everywhere, including the Heptad. The three luminaries on the altar first form the clearest symbol of the Divine Trinity. The two series of the three dots of the S.I. insignia remind us of it. There is also a reason for there being three ritualistic officers, viz. the Unknown, the Orator, and the Sentinel. Three colors are used: red, white, and black. We know about the three degrees. In the Associate Degree, there is a three-branched candlestick on the Master's table and the altar cloth has three colors.

**FOUR**, the symbol of matter, is found first in the four sides of our Temple: North, South, East and West. Then we have four executive officers: Master, Initiate, Associate and Archivist. Four rods are carried by the officers. On the S.I. insignia, there are two pairs of opposites symbolizing that each aspect of the spiritual primal division is itself bisexual. This twofold antagonism is reconciled through consciousness, and is indicated by the cross. The cross also stands for the harmonious relation of the four elements: fire, earth, air, and water in the maintenance of the manifested world. This cross is also a part of the pentacle.

**FIVE**, the number of creation or life, can be found in the pentagram sign the Master makes above the candles that have just been lit on the altar. But you can also find it in the cross of the S.I. insignia if you observe its arms and the point of intersection because it is from the point of oneness (the point of intersection) of the combined forces that the eternal creation and re-creation springs. Five is the combination of Two and Three and can be found thus in the pillars, representing the condition of tension, as against the three luminaries on the altar, representing the divine relationship. The Four plus One connection is found in the four sides of the temple with the altar in the middle.

**SIX**, the number of the material world, is found illustrated in the pantacle. There we find a hexagon around the perimeter and

inside that the two interlaced triangles which represent the uniting of the lower and higher worlds. The same triangles can be seen on the collars of the officers: Master, Initiate, and Associate as opposed to the Unknown, Archivist, and Sentinel. Our altar has the shape of a cube.

In conclusion, the number **SEVEN**, the Heptad, is expressed in the seven officers. The Six officers form the two triangles, plus one, the Orator. There are four executive officers and three ritualistic officers. Even the combination of Five and Two can be found if we look at the C.U.P.: Master and Sentinel, and the five not present officers. Finally, we also find the Seven in the seven knocks the Masters gives during the ritual. If the correct rhythm is struck, an expectation is created. It doesn't end here. The officers then provide the eighth knock. Each represents completion, the new Unity. In this regard, it is to be observed that during the leschouah ceremony, the Master knocks eight times. The old year is completed to herald a new year.



# The Spiritual and Mystical Value of Forgiveness

*By Jean Massengo*

One of the major obstacles to the Man or Woman of Desire's spiritual development on the path of Reintegration is the aversion or refusal to forgive.

At one point in our lives, we have all been offended, been victims of violence, or had our rights violated. On the other hand, whether consciously or unconsciously, we have sometimes been responsible for the same acts. And then we may have sought in vain to forget or regret our spiteful acts but without really managing to do so, either because we never really felt the need to or because, in our judgment, the other person should have done so towards us. We may remember at what point such an attitude on our part vexed us, and, at times, even destroyed us physically, morally, and perhaps even spiritually.

However, there may have been other occasions when we resolved to "break the ice" and face the one whom we offended and ask for forgiveness. We then realized at what point this approach liberated us, opened new perspectives, and made us happy. In any case, we have surely witnessed the marvelous effects produced by the power of forgiveness in the lives of many people, producing almost quasi miracles that broke the hardest of hearts, reunited homes divided for years, and transformed the most desperate of situations, etc. We can imagine the single impact this would have if collectively each human being seized this great privilege of forgiveness as often as possible. Conflicts would cease and we would see peace gradually established on Earth.

However, in this domain, as in many others, a good understanding and approach to forgiveness is required because, clearly, there is forgiveness and there is forgiveness. Its deceptive forms belong more to hypocrisy and produce no convincing result. Sincere forgiveness that comes from the depths of our being produces true miracles.

To clarify our understanding of the mystical and spiritual value of forgiveness, I suggest we consider the light of some Biblical passages, viewed by many Christians as inspired by God, and a study of which is of the greatest interest to us as Martinists, that is, as students of Judeo-

Christian mysticism.

What is forgiveness? Dictionaries define the word as “remission of a fault, an offence,” and the verb to forgive as “to abandon the punishment of a fault or the avenging of an offence, to be forbearing.” The Bible presents us with a variety of words revealing its meaning in at least five different aspects. The Greek word for “forgive” is *apheimi* which means to move away from, to make disappear, to liberate (used Matthew 6:12). In this understanding, when God forgives us, God wipes away our faults as if they had never existed. We find this meaning in Psalms (103:12) as follows: “He has removed our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.”

In some New Testament passages, forgiveness takes on the meaning of purification, that is, to purge, to cleanse, notably in the first epistle of John 1:7. Another word directly related to forgiveness is rebirth, or to generate and regenerate. It is used particularly in John’s gospel and in the first epistle of Peter. Leaving Nicodemus, Jesus said: “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you are born from above you cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Before Nicodemus’s bewilderment, Jesus stresses this imperative: “What is born from flesh is flesh, what is born from the wind is wind. Do not wonder that I told you. You must be born again from above.” (John 3:6-7).

To forgive is also to reconcile, That is, to re-establish new relations between a person and his or her neighbor and/or between humanity and the Divine. This expression is used to change hostility into friendship, as shown in Romans 5:10.

Finally, if we look at the equivalent word to forgiveness, “pardon” in French and English, we see that it is formed from “par” and “don” which stresses “through the giving of Self.” The word forgive-ness here takes on the meaning of compassion, that is, the fact of dedicating oneself entirely to others and of taking their suffering upon oneself, instead of cherishing oneself alone. In this understanding, it is our Higher Self that accepts giving some love to the one who has offended us. And through this “giving of Self,” we break the negative connections that linked us to that person. We therefore liberate the other at the same time as we liberate ourselves.

The original truth that brings forth these different aspects of the

word forgiveness is that God wishes and profoundly desires to forgive. It is the most natural expression of God's Love for God's nature itself is to forgive.

### Why Forgive or Ask for Forgiveness?

As a first approach, we could say that we should forgive because as Men and Women of Desire, that is, as Martinists who have not yet fully achieved Reintegration, we are all fallible. In the absolute, forgiveness is a faculty or Divine virtue we should learn to manifest



in our behavior with the aim of purifying ourselves, of freeing and regenerating and reconciling ourselves not only with others but also with the Divine within.

The Martinist tradition teaches that Adam, after the Fall, became aware of his error and begged for Divine forgiveness. According to Martinès de Pasqually, God sent Hély, the Cosmic Christ, to grant him this forgiveness and play the role of Teacher for humanity. We have also learned through the writings of our Master that Jesus was the incarnation of Hély, the Cosmic Christ. Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, Martinès de Pasqually's disciple, saw in Jesus Christ or Ieschouah, a dual Being: An incarnation of Hély, but also Jesus the man whose

acts were a reflection of Divine thought in uniting His will to that of God's through the intermediary of the Christ. He accomplished his mission through two main functions: That of "Repairer" and that of "Reconciler." One of the most neglected truths of Jesus's teachings is probably the message of forgiveness which is, nevertheless, a corollary of the law of Love, the basis of His Ministry. However, several Biblical injunctions exhort us to forgive.

In Luke 6:27–28, it is written: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and praise those who curse you. Pray for those who abuse you." It appears then that the forgiveness of others is a Divine mission for the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross reconciled humanity with God. That was the message the apostle Paul spread everywhere he went, notably in his epistle to the II Corinthians 5:18–20. "And all this comes from God who reconciled us with Him through Christ, and who entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation, we are therefore ambassadors for Christ...."

What may happen if we did not forgive and what would our refusal to do so mean? A refusal could stem from the seriousness of the hurt or from the physical harm we have suffered, which does not allow us to imagine any possibility of making amends, even by recourse to the law for compensation. A conscious refusal to forgive is spiritual suicide. Resentment or the lack of forgiveness can become the basis of stress leading to psychosomatic illnesses. It has been scientifically established that negative emotions lead particularly to difficulties of the cardio-respiratory system and a suppression of the immune system. That is why it is often said that forgiveness, by the relief it generates, is a source of healing.

Let us remember that the tests with which we are faced in life are generally of two types. Some are karmic in nature and others are the necessary obstacles to overcome for our spiritual evolution. Among the latter, are those which are said to be part of God's plan and are a source of spiritual growth and purification for those who can surmount them. And so we may experience spiteful acts from certain people who are, in effect, a reflection of some negative aspects of our own personality. The God of our Hearts would want us to become conscious of these and learn to purge them from our being.

By experiencing the negativity through the mediation of others and forgiving them in others, we are taking an important step forward in acquiring the corresponding virtues they accompany. It is one of the important aspects which spiritual psychologists like Carl Gustav Jung referred to under the term synchronicity. A refusal to forgive makes the suffering endured sterile while forgiveness regenerates us on all levels of our being, and converts the suffering into a source of redemption, puts an end to despondency and despair, and renews the spiritual strength within us so that we can continue the search for harmony, justice, and Peace Profound.

### **But How do We Forgive?**

We often hear the expression “I’ll forgive but not forget!” Perhaps we have said the same ourselves. Generally, this is a caricature of forgiveness, a superficial gesture, a human one let’s say, and nothing to do with true Divine forgiveness. Such a pardon leaves the heart with some bitterness and a grudge. It doesn’t get to the root of the problem. Let us not forget that it is as serious to forgive badly as not to forgive at all. We can have forgiveness on our lips without having it in our hearts. What are the main conditions to fulfill for forgiveness in a way that liberates us and others, and which accords with the divine law of forgiveness?

When people state that they have already forgiven a friend or family member, if we ask them how they did so, generally they answer: “With my friend, we discussed the problem that put us into conflict. He or she suggested that I forgive him or her, and so I did.”

This form of forgiveness is one in which people only do things by halves. Forgiveness could have been done verbally only, even if in the presence of a third person. The one who calls upon forgiveness, mercy, or compassion, and with a victim’s mentality, is in fact invoking pity. As a general rule, such a person will commit the same error again sooner or later.

We should ask for forgiveness when our conscience demands it of us for the wrong we have done to another, even before any appeal to the God of our Heart. In seeking out the one to ask for forgiveness, let us be aware of our attitude. Let us not be like the one who comes to ask for forgiveness but who leaves us with the impression that it is



us alone who are at fault and not the other. It is also important to seek to understand the reasons which motivated us to commit particular negative acts for generally there is a reason or several reasons for that. If we know them, it can lead us to act ultimately in a different manner in regard to others. We can therefore forgive genuinely and then forget because to truly forgive, we have to learn to forget.

On this subject and from a completely different field, when an Olympian was asked what the secret of his success was, he answered: "The only way to win a race is to forget your previous victories which can make you arrogant, and forget your previous defeats which can fill you with fear. Each race is a new start."

It is sometimes a paradox to state that, very often, we have the annoying habit of remembering what we should forget and forgetting what we should remember. And so when someone does us a wrong, we often incorrectly say: "I'll never forget what he did to me!" We churn this over all day and, instead of being purged, the wrong becomes embedded and more intense. This is an attitude contrary to seeking forgiveness because forgetting is an essential condition for sincere forgiveness. But to forget a wrong we have suffered or have caused another does not mean to blank out the memory, to have a sort of amnesia which deletes our past. A painful experience we have truly forgiven, even if it returns to the memory, will not hurt us anymore. We don't live it with the same initial emotional intensity because we have learned the lesson it brought us and forgiveness has removed its sting. In this context, we can recall the wrong we have suffered but without feeling the bitterness or offense. Genuine forgiveness has, in some ways, liberated us from the past!

Usually, for this liberation, the situation at the root of our forgiveness does not recur; that would be a new source of resentment. Should the situation recur, an injunction of Christ reported in the Gospel of Matthew (18:21–22) exhorts us to forgive: "Then Peter came to him and said, 'Sir, how many times shall I forgive my brother? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you as many as seven, but as many as seventy times seven.'"

This means that our act of forgiveness must be constant and unlimited. This is the way it is because forgiveness is the key to our relationships with others even in the most tragic of situations and the

most painful of circumstances. Without it, all communication becomes impossible. Only forgiveness will re-establish, transform, and improve our relationships. Think of the words Jesus spoke on the cross when he was crucified (Luke 23:34): “Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing.”

### **Repentance or Atonement: An Essential Spiritual Condition of True Forgiveness**

True forgiveness cannot be granted by the God of our Heart without a sincere repentance on our part. It is, in fact, an essential condition in order to attain that goal. But such repentance must go beyond simply being sorry for our actions. The verb “to repent” means to change one’s ways of thinking, to act and to live! Repentance has two complementary steps: first, turn away from the error committed, and then turn to the Divine. To turn only away from faults is merely an effort to improve and not a repentance. To repent is therefore not only a desire to see the past forgiven but also to want our personal life transformed entirely from then on and consecrated to the Divine.

An effective way of forgiving is to do it in a meditative state or through sincere prayer. In this particular state of consciousness, the constant flow of thoughts is slowed down and the intention to forgive acquires strength and reach, becomes more sincere and therefore more “effective.” In this state of consciousness, we are no longer on an intellectual plane or in thought, hence ego, but on a spiritual level, that is, on the plane of the soul. And that makes all the difference: The intention on the spiritual level becomes reality. In conjunction with repentance, it travels straight to its goal like an arrow. During this “soul to soul” dialogue, the individual has no interference from thought, and will, but only the intrinsic qualities of the deeper nature, that is, compassion or empathy, or better still, Love. Forgiveness requested in this condition transforms and liberates others at the same time as ourselves.

### **Is There Tangible Proof that Forgiveness has Achieved its Goal?**

The forgiveness asked for from a person through what we have called a “soul to soul” dialogue cannot leave us with tangible proof if there is no radical change towards an improvement in our relationship with the person concerned. In some cases, however, when the individual

has recognized the fault in a profound sense and asks for a sincere pardon, he or she will break down in tears. This is usually a sure proof that the request has been made sincerely and has produced the desired effects. This will do the individual an enormous amount of good. It will feel as if a great weight has been lifted from the solar plexus area. The lack of love is the basis of all conflicts and true forgiveness has the power to repair the damaged caused, even the most cruel.

To end this text, we stress to point out that there is nothing quite as beautiful, and at the same time as rare, unfortunately, as true forgiveness which transforms us and others, our prayers, and our faith in the Divine. Resentment or lack of forgiveness can therefore be a great obstacle to our spiritual progress. Grudges or bitterness must therefore not be fostered against anyone. If we have the habit of forgiving, we will see our prayers granted and have the Divine's presence in our lives.

To be wronged is nothing,  
unless you continue to remember it.

—*Confucius*

As I walked out the door toward the gate  
that would lead to my freedom, I knew  
if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred  
behind, I'd still be in prison.

—*Nelson Mandela*

The glory of Christianity is to conquer  
by forgiveness.

—*William Blake*

# Our Triple Nature: Body, Soul, and Spirit

*By Jean-Claude Mondet*

From the very first association with Martinism, the student is introduced to the triadic division of the universe, a variation of which, in the human being, is the ternary of body, soul, and spirit. The object of Martinist work deals especially with spirituality which obviously is related to spirit. But what should we understand by this term exactly? Is it intellect, the soul, or something else? The usual opposites of body and soul, spirit, and matter, are they equivalents? What do they cover? To clarify these ideas, not always clear in our “mind,” but nevertheless a part of human nature and therefore of prime interest to the Martinist, we will examine how the nature of this aspect was conceived over the centuries.

*Editor’s note: The Martinist concepts of body, soul, and spirit are not to be confused with the Rosicrucian concepts of body, mind, and soul, and spirit.*

## Since Ancient Greece

The idea of the Logos appeared during this time, which is of continuing interest to us primarily because of the Gospel of John. “In the beginning, the logos...” Five hundred years before the gospel writer’s “logos,” Heraclitus (around 540–480 BCE) described it as a superior principle that only the human soul, the psyche, can perceive. For Heraclitus, it was in some ways the thing that linked human beings to the Divine and allowed humans therefore to elevate themselves to divine reality which we understand clearly as the perception of the Divine’s reflection in our soul.

Empedocles (490–430 BCE) detailed these ideas by describing human beings as triple, with a body (*soma*), a soul (*psyche*), and a spirit (*nous*). Sometime later, Plato (428–348 BCE), rendered a very dualistic vision of human nature which, he believed, was made up only of what can be seen and of what cannot be seen. And so people have a body and a soul and, in his “Apology of Socrates” in the *Phaedo*, he shows the old philosophy wishing to detach itself from the body that hinders the soul in its search for truth. According to Plato, the body is a veritable prison of the soul. The soul, of divine origin and immortal, is naturally good; it is in harmony but becomes disharmonious through the passions, anger, and the fears of the body sheltering it. At death, the soul is finally released and

can flourish.

Aristotle (384–322 BCE) could not conceive of a material body into which a soul of divine origin would descend, and he returned to Empedocles's theory, refining it. For Aristotle, the soul was part of the body with which it was born and died, allowing the body to exist. The spirit, the nous, is part of the soul capable of perceiving the pneuma, or divine breath, and giving humans their spiritual dimension. The essential human duality then is not between body and soul but between the combined body-soul and spirit. Subsequently, these concepts were further refined by various philosophies. We can point to Philo (13 BCE–54 CE) an Alexandrian Jew inspired by Greek and Judeo-Christian thought, and who established three degrees of human evolution according to their spiritual level. Then we find Origen, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and a return to dualism with Descartes. For the latter, the soul, the seat of thought, is immortal and leaves the body when its vital functions can no longer retain it. The famous "I think, therefore I am" consequently limits our existence to that brief moment during which the soul is present within the body.

For Freud, a total atheist, belief in the existence of a soul comes from primitive animists who thought the body contained a principle animating it that is immortal and can reincarnate. Death consists then of a withdrawal of this soul to animate another soul. Freud thought that we actually "project" certain elements of our psyche, existing alongside what we perceive with our senses and which are only latent within us; this he named the "unconscious." According to Freud, it is on these bases that all our notions of life after death arise and it is the fear of death that has led to the belief in a super-human intelligence.

### **Up to the Modern Triple Human Being**

Currently, outside the circle of specialists, much confusion exists about these ideas and it seems to me that dualist thinking holds sway in the public mind, perhaps under the influence of religion. For scientists, the existence of an immortal principle is a religious idea that cannot be proven and is consequently questionable. The spirit is equated with the intellect and spirituality is limited to the search for the Divine but we now discover, surprisingly, that a spiritual elevation is possible without a Divinity conceived of as a person, as for example, in Buddhism.

It seems Martinism has a vision going beyond that of the human sciences, which is only interested in human beings as thinking animals. Typically the notion of spirituality is completely foreign to psychology while, on the other hand, we observe that spirituality integrates psychology. So, let's have a look at the triple concept of human nature as recognized in the great traditions and understood up to the Renaissance, and being rediscovered by some anthropologists and current philosophers.

The body: this is the Latin *corpus*, the Greek *soma*, and the Hebrew *bassar*. It designates something relatively simple; it refers to our bones and flesh with which we have a tendency to identify and in which we often see our entire being. It has its purely physiological needs, designed to ensure our survival and that of the species, and which rules individuals for the satisfaction of the pleasure it provides: rest, food, drink, and sex.

The soul: the word comes from the Latin *anima*, whose meaning is "that which animates." This is the *psyche* of the Greeks and the *nefesh* of the Hebrews. We can describe it as the vital force animating the body of which it is a part, since it dies with it. It includes the thoughts and feelings, and is a kind of intermediary between the material body and the spirit, as we shall see. It can lean towards either one or the other and consequently, invites the individual to spiritual aspirations or purely materialistic concerns.

The Spirit that is of interest to us here is not the intellect but is written with a capital letter. The Latins called it *spiritus*, the Greeks *pneuma* (or *nous* in some schools), and the Hebrews called it *rouah'* (*h'* represents a guttural sound). It is also an intermediary, or interface in modern parlance, but here between the soul and an entity external to it, an opening upon another world which could be God or the Goddess for believers or, for many, something indefinable and inaccessible to the human spirit.

To become spiritual is not to acquire a religious spirit or to start believing in the Deity of religions. It is simply to turn the soul towards Spirit, it is to acknowledge that our body is not our unique component and that we are connected to a reality that escapes us, and towards which we want to elevate ourselves. Within this vision, matter and spirit are not opposites but two parts of the Whole that is also the One.

## Triple Human Being and Martinist Initiation

Martinism helps us to become aware of the different parts that make up our being and then unifies them. Once this is realized, we have not become pure spirits but we are no longer enslaved by the desires of the body. We do not deny them, nor obey them; we are whole, as One, we are human. That is one of the most profound messages from the Tradition.

The tripartite condition of a human being has its consequences. Following Philo's conception, the Neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus (205–270 CE), disciple of the Alexandrian school in the third century, defines three categories of people based on their preoccupations and correspondences to the three divisions we have discussed.

The person of flesh is attached to things of the body and only seeks the material pleasures, like food or the senses. These pleasures are not to be condemned in themselves but they are dangerous because they easily lead to excesses. If they remain moderate, these people will foster friendship but will not seek spiritual aspiration.

The person of the psyche, on the other hand, is not just interested in the material world but seeks peace and harmony; he or she wants to improve and make the world better, sometimes sensing a lack thus making him or her a Man or Woman of Desire, not the desire of material satisfaction but of an indefinable something missing.

Last, the spiritual person goes even further for in seeking the invisible behind the visible, he or she believes the known world is not the totality of existence. A creator principle is acknowledged, which may be God or the Divine, but cannot necessarily be defined.

Now it is quite obvious that to make divisions in this domain is artificial and that there are as many types of men and women as there are human beings. But the method agrees with the Martinist approach which points us to our dualities and opposites in order to balance them through a third means, and which we can apply to Plotinus's concept of the triple human being.

Nevertheless, he saw people classified once and for all into a category while the Martinist wants to progress. Martinists will begin by identifying their various tendencies: the needs of the body coming from the animal part and the primal need to perpetuate the species; the desires

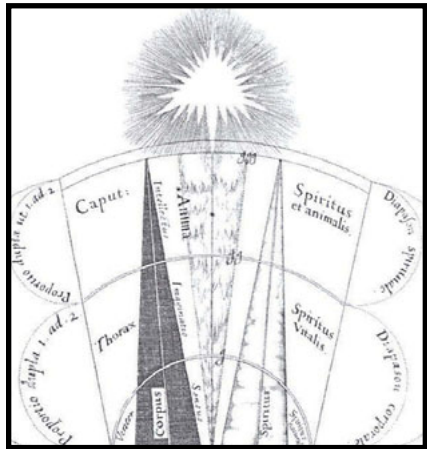
of the soul, including love of others and the need to better the human condition driven by the emotions, morality, justice, the ideals of duty and responsibility. All this follows logically due to the need for transcendence, for all are experienced while finding one's place in the immensity of the universe, a process during which the spiritual person feels both very small and an integral part.

The Martinist is these three types all at the same time, at least potentially. In the 1870s, Haeckel, the founder of phylogeny (dealing with the formation of species), wrote: "Ontogenesis (dealing with the formation of individuals) briefly reproduces phylogenesis." In other words, the individual, in the process of personal evolution, passes through the stages through which the species has passed, from the original creature up to its current stage. Of course he thought about the passage from the stage of the new-born to the adult, and isn't this looking at the initiatic process?

Wouldn't our method consist of leading these adepts from the stage of a purely material human being to a spiritual one? It seems to be the case as the candidate who makes the first entrance in the temple being a kind of new-born leading to the stage of the Unknown Superior. In addition, how could we not notice that these three phases are represented in the three great Kabbalistic pillars towards which the Martinist is heading, the Force being understood as that of the body, Beauty that of the feelings, and Wisdom which the initiate attains through the Spirit?

We find the three phases in the three degrees with the unusual aspect that the rite seems to be in the reverse order of things and encourages the initiate to descend into self, in search of soul which is hidden. Its Beauty will then enliven the Force of the Initiate and the Wisdom of the Unknown Superior.

Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, well known to Martinists, pictorially presents this evolution throughout his writings. He asserts that a human being starts by being a "person of torrents," in which he



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or she is carried away like a straw without any control over their destiny. However, an overhanging branch can be seized and an attempt can be made to get out of the stream. People at this point thus become “men and women of desire.” While desire is longing for something one doesn’t have, according to Saint-Martin’s thinking, it is clearly about the desire for the Divine. The third stage is that of the “new person,” or spirit-person.

We can see that the passing of human beings through three states is fairly similar to those we have described in the spirit of the eighteenth century. I am thinking of the Enlightenment movement, of course, that sometimes came as a complement, and sometimes in opposition to the rationalist movement represented by the Encyclopaedists. “The Spirit” of the Enlightenment is actually situated at the level of the desire to understand, and therefore at the level of the intellect; in our terminology, however, this is the level of the soul, and not that of “Spirit.”

An easy way to differentiate the three human types is their approach to the word “love.” And so for the person of flesh, love is concerned with the body and therefore physical attraction, the desire for possession and the loved, and the sexual act. This is the *Eros* of the Greeks in its meaning of physical love.

For the person of the psyche it is no longer just a sexual aspect that is dominant but a feeling of not including any will to possess, a sense of being disinterested, not demanding any reciprocity and not being focused on one person only but on other human beings. This is the *philia* of the Greeks, approaching friendship but with a much stronger meaning.

Finally, the third stage of the spiritual being, concerns the Greek love of *agape* which is a superhuman love, the love the Divine has for all creatures, and that the spiritual people would like for themselves and other human beings. *Agape* contains the true meaning of Jesus’s commandment to his disciples: “Love one another as I have loved you.”

To end with these ternary anthropological ideas, it is useful to point out that Biblical tradition makes this clear but that it is difficult to find these in translations. We need to return to the Greek and Hebrew versions for that. And so in the beginning of Genesis, it is God’s *rouah* that hovered over the waters, the spirit. Later, having received the divine breath *pneuma*, the man of clay became a living soul, *nefesh h’ayah*.

It must remain clear to everyone, however, that the tripartite condition of a human being is only a way of presenting things to explain the functioning of the spirit (in lower case) human. It is an aid, through deconstructing the stages of spiritualization for one who, at first, is a carnal being. Each step, made from resolved dualities, depends on the previous ones made and leads to the taking of the next. This is how a person constructs a unity of body, soul, and spirit, for they are One.

## In Conclusion

We can see that this is a broad subject and far from exhausted in explanations. Let us nevertheless attempt to close by saying that human beings are limited and that we can discern only what is relative. We do have, however, an intuition of an absolute, with no limits, which we might call the First or Creator Principle and which is found in a dimension that escapes us completely. Our spirit is situated on the fine point of our soul, the force animating us and ruling the intellect and the feelings. We aspire to move beyond our own limitations and approach this absolute, and this we call spirituality, allowing for an escape from a purely biological framework.

This progress demands much humility because it recognizes that something exists beyond us. But, at the same time, it gives us a lot of courage, with “strength of soul,” because it leads to individual progress outside the beaten track of religions which are only particular paths of spirituality and far from the universal approach provided by initiation and the Martinist way.

The PANTACLE is published annually by the Grand Heptad of the Traditional Martinist Order at 1342 Naglee Ave., San Jose, CA 95191 (fees paid through membership).  
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All mystics speak the same language,  
for they come from the same country.

—*Louis Claude de Saint-Martin*

