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# Pantacle





## TRADITIONAL MARTINIST ORDER

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

*Greetings in the Light of Martinism!*

Welcome to the sixth edition of the *Pantacle*. This year we feature a diverse selection of studies, reflections, and meditations that display the richness of the Martinist Tradition and the inspiration it provides to each of us.

First, we enter into a “Meditation on The Lord’s Orison,” a beautiful reflection on “The Lord’s Prayer” offered by Brother Puritus. Next, Brother Lloyd Abrams, Ph.D., practicing psychologist, RCUI instructor, and ardent student of the Kabbalah, considers the central Martinist concept in “Reintegration.”

Following this we can contemplate “The Feminine in the Temple” in an essay adapted from two messages written by French Grand Master, Brother Serge Toussaint. Finally, Brother Guy Eyhéribide presents his thoughts on “Human Freedom,” pondering this essential yet elusive subject for our meditations.

I hope that you enjoy these offerings from Martinists around the world, both for stimulating thought and moving the heart.

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

Julie Scott  
Grand Master  
Traditional Martinist Order

# Meditation on The Lord's Orison

by Brother Puritus

*Greetings Brothers and Sisters,*

Our past Sovereign Grand Master, Harvey Spencer Lewis, once described prayer as a “meeting of the minds, a spiritual communion.” It is a process of attunement or harmonization of our consciousness with that of the one we are praying to. In most cases, prayer consists of attuning our consciousness with that of Divinity. This concept finds great resonance with the following words of our most venerated Master, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin: “The only prayer I seek is that which makes us enter into the heart of God, and allows God’s heart to enter into our hearts, making us a friend and spouse of our divine redeemer.”

The Lord’s Orison (Prayer) is one definite way of communing with the Creator and attuning our hearts with the corresponding quality of the Creator. In this article we will attempt to harmonize ourselves with each of the seven parts of the Lord’s Prayer.

## **The First Part: Tetragrammaton**

Take three deep breaths, hold each comfortably, and then exhale. Recall an experience that left you with a feeling of profound peace. It may be a dream, a thought, or a sight that left you at peace with your whole being and your environment. Relive that feeling.

As you experience this condition of profound peace, see, surrounded by light in your mind’s eye, the phrase: יהוה Yod He Vav He

The intensity of the light increases so as to make the letters appear invisible. Then invoke Part One of the Lord’s Orison: “Our Father, Who art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy name.”

## **The Second Part: Ieschouah**

Feel and express your love for the God of your understanding. Feel and express love towards your neighbor as you do towards yourself, and as God does towards us all. See in your mind’s eye the Tetragrammaton manifested by the addition of *Shin* in Light: יהוה Yod He Shin Vav He

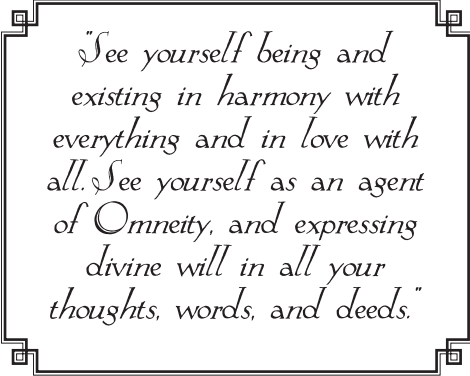
Intone *Ieschouah* eight times. Close your invocation with the second part of the Lord's Orison: "Father, may Thy Kingdom come."

Visualize yourself expressing all the qualities you associate with divinity. See yourself being and existing in harmony with everything and in love with all. See yourself as an agent of Omneity, and expressing divine will in all your thoughts, words, and deeds. Conclude with the following invocation:

**Non Nobis Domine, Non Nobis, Sed Nomini Tuo Da Gloriam.**  
 ("Not to us, O Lord, not to us, rather, to thy name be all glory.")

### **The Third Part: Thy Will Be Done**

Begin the third part of the Orison with these words: "Thy Will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven."



*"See yourself being and existing in harmony with everything and in love with all. See yourself as an agent of Omneity, and expressing divine will in all your thoughts, words, and deeds."*

### **The Fourth Part: Our Daily Bread**

Begin the fourth part of the Orison with a petition: "Give us this day our daily bread."

See yourself receiving a ray of the divine substance, and become fully illuminated. As your whole being tingles with the higher vibratory essence,

see yourself now illuminating your environment and all that you are in contact with. Realize that Divinity is the source of all and provides us with all we need for our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well being. Notice also that what may seem unpleasant now is actually food for our evolution, and would cease to be so once the lesson of growth has been learned.

Give thanks to the Divine for all blessings received, promising as agents of the Divine to extend such blessings to our brothers and sisters.

### **The Fifth Part: The Life Force Within Us**

To harmonize yourself with the fifth part of the Lord's Orison, recall a situation when you may not have been most appreciative of the life

force that has been freely granted you or yours. Recall that in spite of this, the life force was not taken away from you. In appreciation, you promise or commit to extend the best of yourself to those in need (including those who may have wronged you) physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

See and feel the light within you dispel shades of darkness within and around you, as rays of light in a darkened room, until you reflect completely the luminosity of the Grand Architect of the Universe. Note that the reflected rays continue to dispel the darkness between you

and your neighbor until both lights blend together and shine as one, revealing the divine spark within. Close your visualization with the fifth part of the Orison: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”



Gustave Doré's *The Multifoliate Rose* (1867), illustrating Dante's *Paradiso, Canto 31:1-8*. From the Rosicrucian Park Archives.

### **The Sixth Part: The Light Shines in the Darkness**

Sometimes the light appears to be dim in the presence of great darkness, as when we meet an apparently insurmountable obstacle. In such times we should invoke the Lord's Orison, with particular emphasis on the sixth part of the Orison: “Father, lead us not into temptation.”

At the same time, note that the inner light that appeared dim is growing in intensity, dissolving the darkness of the situation at hand.

### **The Seventh Part: All is Light**

For the seventh part, feel the intensity of the divine light within grow and harmonize with all those of similar thought, illuminating the darker corners of our world. You petition the Father to: “Deliver us from all evil.”

Suddenly all is light, as it was in the beginning, as it is now, and will ever be.

**AMEN**

# Reintegration

by Lloyd Abrams, Ph.D.

**R**eintegration is a central organizing theme of the Western Esoteric Tradition. In Jewish Kabbalah, the mundane world is seen as the end product of a series of successive emanations from the original Infinite Oneness, called *Ain Sof*. Kabbalists engage in a number of meditation and visualization practices aimed at re-uniting the terrestrial world and our mundane consciousness with their source in the Divine Realm; re-uniting the soul with God.

## **The Theme of Reintegration is Present in Many World Traditions**

Martinism teaches that our original estate is divine, but that there was a Fall from this original divine status to a degraded state of conflict and chaos, and that our purpose and goal is to return to that original Divine Estate. Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin said that “Divine Union is the true end of man; that we are all widowed and that we are called to a second marriage.”<sup>1</sup>

In esoteric Islam, the Sufi master Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan said that the essence of Sufism is “the story of every soul’s descent into existence, its experiences of suffering brought about by separation from its original state of being, and the subsequent journey of return and reawakening to its Divine nature.”<sup>2</sup>

Jacob Böhme said the same thing about the essence of Christianity: “The whole Christian religion consists in this: that we learn to know ourselves, what we are, where we have come from, how we left unity and entered into multiplicity, evil, and disjointed, strife-filled life, and where we are to return from this life in time. All that is necessary for us to know about religion derives from this: to come out of disunity and vanity, and to enter again into the one tree from which all of us stem.”<sup>3</sup>

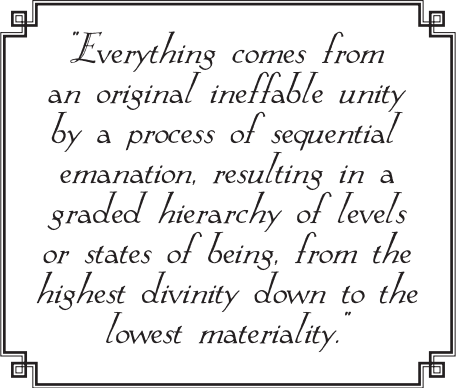
This theme of a Fall from a perfect state of unity and divinity into this material world of multiplicity and opposition, and striving to eventually reunite with the original divine oneness, is found throughout the entire Western Esoteric Tradition. I would like to explore some of the many different ways that this archetypal theme is expressed.

## The Neo-Platonic Model of Emanation and Return

This model is presented most directly and clearly by Neoplatonist writers like Plotinus, for whom the source of everything, the highest divinity and ultimate reality, is “the One,” a formless, infinite, simple unity. As such, it is beyond comprehension by the physical senses and rational thought. For the Neoplatonists, “all theoretical discussions of the One are finally inadequate, since its true nature is revealed only in the mystical union.”<sup>4</sup> Plotinus likened the One to a fountain that overflows, and it is this out-flowing or emanation from the One that gives rise to all of the other levels of existence. In this model, creation or causation is a sequential, stepwise process, from higher and more perfect levels down to lower and lower levels, finally ending with the material world of multiplicity and oppositions.

What exactly is it that emanates or flows out of the One? Since the One is a simple unity, without component parts or separate attributes, it must be the stuff of the One itself, infinite and unknowable. As we have seen, Plotinus compared it to water overflowing from a fountain. Often, light is used as a metaphor for this divine flow, because light is non-material and it expands infinitely in all directions.

Sometimes terms such as Spirit or spiritual energy are used to express this sense of flowing. The word “spirit” is related to wind or breath, both of which are flowing air. The Neoplatonists often used more abstract terms, such as “causation” or “influence” flowing downward from one level to the next. Whatever terminology we encounter in the various esoteric systems, we should remember that these are all metaphors for a metaphysical concept rather than descriptions of a physical process.



*“Everything comes from an original ineffable unity by a process of sequential emanation, resulting in a graded hierarchy of levels or states of being, from the highest divinity down to the lowest materiality.”*

Plotinus’s model includes three “hypostases,” or fundamental levels of reality. The first and highest is the unknowable “One,” which gives rise to the next level, which Plotinus calls *Nous*, translated as Divine Mind or Intelligence. This second level contains the Platonic Forms or Ideas which

we can know intellectually, and so this level is also called the Intelligible World. The third level is *Psychē* or Soul, which animates the physical world and serves as an intermediary between the Intelligible World and the world we know with our physical senses.

Later Neoplatonists added more and more intermediaries and multiple levels of being to Plotinus's original model, but the basic idea remained the same. Everything comes from an original ineffable unity by a process of sequential emanation, resulting in a graded hierarchy of levels or states of being, from the highest divinity down to the lowest materiality. This hierarchical structure has been called "The Great Chain of Being."

There are two seemingly conflicting implications inherent in this model. First, the sequential emanation of successively lower and lower levels of being emphasizes how we and our physical world are so separated from the divine level and so far from connection with the One. Emanation proceeds farther and farther from the original source, and each level differs more and more from the original unity and perfection of the One. At the same time, however, since everything arises by a process of emanation from the One, everything is ultimately composed of the same basic stuff as the One.

Therefore, in its deepest essence, even the lowliest particle of inert matter shares a common nature with the One. So there is a profound connection, or unity, underlying the apparent multiplicity of the physical world, and of the entire hierarchy of worlds. That is why it is possible for us to strive to return to our source, the One. The Neoplatonists asserted that all things naturally desire to return to their source, to reunite with their cause. As the One is the first cause of everything, all things have an inherent tendency to return to the One.

This Neoplatonist doctrine of emanation followed by striving for reintegration is often referred to as the doctrine of "procession and return." In addition to applying to the history of the universe, this pattern of procession and return also applies to the individual human life. The Neoplatonists believed that the individual human soul originates from the divine level, and that it descends through the seven spheres of the planets to arrive on earth and enter a physical body.

As it descends, the soul is "stained" and weighed down by taking on characteristics from each of the planets it passes near. That is how one's

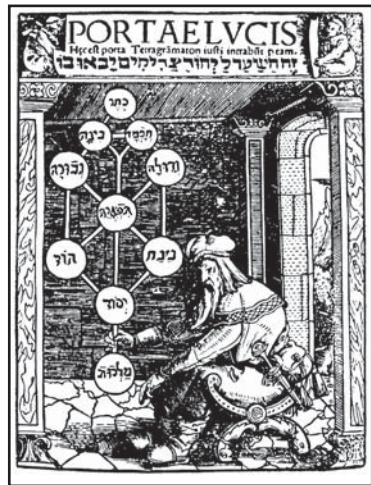


personality and fate are affected by the positions of the various planets at the time of birth. At the time of death, if the soul has not been too attached to the material world and the pleasures of the physical senses, it can rise back up through the seven planetary spheres, being progressively purified by giving back at each level what it had taken on during its descent, until it regains its original purity and finally returns to the One.

Mysticism is attempting to make that return trip to divine union while one is still alive, rather than waiting until after death. For the Neoplatonists, the model remains the same. The mystic purifies himself by not being too attached to the physical world and the pleasures of the senses, and by living in accord with the divine will. Then, by engaging in various means, such as meditation, prayer, and ritual practices, the mystic sends her or his soul or consciousness up through the spheres toward re-union with the One.

### Tikkun Olam: The Repair of the Whole World

In addition to individually seeking reunion or reintegration with Divinity for ourselves, in Martinism, as in Lurianic Kabbalah, human beings have the special purpose and function of bringing about the reintegration of the entire world with its divine source. In the Kabbalistic system of Isaac Luria, sparks of the emanated divine light have become trapped or imprisoned within the matter of the physical world, and the practices of Kabbalah serve to liberate those holy sparks and raise them back up to their divine source.



The Tree of the Sephiroth, from Paulus Ricius's *Portae Lucis* (Doors of Light), Augsburg, Germany (1516).

This process of raising the holy sparks of light is called *Tikkun Olam*, or “repairing the world.” Tikkun, or repairing, is associated with the Kabbalistic concept of the *Mashiach*, or Messiah. Martinès de Pasqually and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin also used this same term, “The Repairer,” to refer to the Christ.<sup>5</sup> Gershom Scholem, pioneer of the modern academic study of Kabbalah, often translated the Kabbalistic concept of *Tikkun* as “reintegration.”<sup>6</sup>

## Procession and Return: an Archetypal Pattern

The doctrine of “procession and return” is an archetypal pattern underlying many themes in the Western Tradition. In the Bible, the first description of “procession” from divine oneness is the fall of humanity. Adam and Eve are exiled from communion with God in Paradise and expelled into the terrestrial world. There is a tradition that the angel Raziel taught Kabbalah to Adam so that humanity might one day return to Paradise to be reunited with God.

In the book of Exodus, Egypt is called “The House of Bondage.” Leaving Canaan and “going down into Egypt” is an echo of Adam and Eve’s fall from Paradise. It is followed by a return and reintegration, via the Exodus from Egypt to a direct encounter with God at Mount Sinai. Thereafter, God literally dwells among the people. The *Shekhinah*, God’s presence in the terrestrial world, was said actually to reside in the Tabernacle and later in Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem.

There was another echo of this archetypal pattern when Nebuchadnezzar’s army conquered the Land of Israel, destroyed Solomon’s Temple, and carried the Israelites out of Jerusalem into exile in Babylonia. When Babylon was later conquered by the Persians, the Israelites were permitted to return to Jerusalem to start rebuilding the Temple. The various stories of exile and yearning for restoration are, like the fall of humanity, versions of the archetypal theme of “procession and return.”

Each of the ten *Sefirot* in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life symbolizes the expression of Divinity on a different level in the sequence of emanations, and each *Sefirah* carries a different Name of God. So it seems as though the Divine Oneness itself is fragmented into separate entities. The *Shekhinah* is the manifestation of the Divine Presence here in the terrestrial world, as distinct from *Ain Sof*, the infinite and transcendent Godhead. In a sense, “God is in exile from Himself.” But the Biblical prophet Zechariah [14:9] says that one day “God will be One and His Name will be One.” So another meaning of “reintegration” is reintegrating Divinity, reuniting the various aspects of God as they are manifested at each level of emanation. Martinism speaks of reintegrating Divinity, and this is also a major aspect of Jewish Kabbalah.

## From the Fall to a Restoration of the Primordial Tradition

Another version of the theme of a Fall from an earlier splendor to the current debased condition is expressed in the idea of the Golden Age. According to this idea, at some time in the past, people were wiser and more noble, they possessed secret knowledge that has been lost, they were closer to God and more in harmony with natural laws. But, for various reasons, humanity has degenerated, become more selfish and corrupt, and has lost the higher knowledge necessary for restoring our original status. However, it is possible for us to regain the lost wisdom and return to our previous noble estate. The story of Atlantis is a well-known version of this archetypal pattern.

The Renaissance humanists believed in an ancient *prisca theologia*, or primordial religious tradition, which contained the highest knowledge of God, and which had been lost over time. This motivated their interest in rediscovering and translating works from ancient Greek philosophy, the Hermetic writings, and the Jewish Kabbalah. They believed that all of these traditions flowed from the same, more ancient source, the *prisca theologia*.

For example, in the sixteenth century, the Christian Kabbalist Johannes Reuchlin wrote that “Pythagoras drew his stream of learning from the boundless sea of the Kabbalah,”<sup>7</sup> and “Almost all Pythagoras’s system is derived from the Kabbalists.”<sup>8</sup> The Renaissance humanists hoped that by rediscovering the ancient pagan and Jewish wisdom and incorporating them into their Christian system they could regain the previous, more intimate and authentic, relationship with Divinity.

Another example of this same theme is the idea of the Noble Savage, that primitive cultures are more beneficent, more moral, and more attuned to Divinity and natural law, and that modern society has fallen from this noble status to become corrupt, debased, and disconnected from our source. This is also echoed in ideas about childhood as an idealized state of natural goodness and closeness to Divinity, which is debased and lost through the corrupting effects of childrearing practices and education.

In its most generalized form, this archetype finds expression in the ubiquitous human experience of nostalgia, the yearning to return to an earlier and better existence. The doctrines of procession and return, or fall and reintegration, are expressions of this same archetypal pattern on the metaphysical and theosophical levels.

## Bringing the Divine World into the Physical World

Reintegration also means bringing the Divine world down into the physical world. Here are two examples, both from Gnostic Christian writings:

In the *Bruce Codex*, a Coptic papyrus from the second or third century, Jesus says,

“Happy is the man... who has brought down Heaven unto Earth, who has taken the Earth and raised it to the Heavens, so that they are no longer divided... If you know my Word you may make Heaven descend upon Earth so that it may abide in you.”<sup>9</sup>

A verse from the *Gospel of Thomas* says,

“His students said to him, When will the kingdom come? Yeshua said, It will not come because you are watching for it. No one will announce, Look, here it is, or Look, there it is. The father’s kingdom is spread out upon the earth and people do not see it.”<sup>10</sup>

And so, reintegration can also mean an enduring change in consciousness, in which we integrate the highest states of consciousness into our daily lives, so that we experience the unity underlying the multiplicity of the world; we see the radiance of the Divine Light shining through the veil of matter; we experience the presence of God in our everyday lives.

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Portrait de M. de Saint-Martin, fait par lui-même*, in *Œuvres Posthumes*, 2 vols. (1807), cited in A. E. Waite, *Saint-Martin: The French Mystic and the Story of Modern Martinism* (Kessinger, no date), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, *Awakening: A Sufi Experience* (Tarcher/Putnam, 2000), 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Versluis, ed., *The Wisdom of Jacob Böhme* (New Grail Publishing, 2003), 13.

<sup>4</sup> R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 2d ed. (Hackett, 1995), 59.

<sup>5</sup> Christian Rebis, “Ieschouah: Grand Architect of the Universe,” *Pantacle*, no. 2 (2002): 3.

<sup>6</sup> Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Religion After Religion: Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin at Eranos*. (Princeton University Press, 1999), 38-39.

<sup>7</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517; University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 233.

<sup>8</sup> Reuchlin, 241.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in Nevill Drury, *The Gods of Rebirth* (Prism Press, 1988), 4.

<sup>10</sup> “The Gospel of Thomas,” in Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer, *The Gnostic Bible*. (Boston: Shambhala, 2003), 69.

# The Feminine in the Temple

by French Grand Master Serge Toussaint

*Editor's note: This article is adapted from two of the French Grand Master's monthly bulletins.*

W e think it important to highlight the importance of the role of the feminine, its image, and its representation expressed by those we deem qualified as initiates. In mythical, ritualistic, and symbolic efforts, a Temple comes into being. What were the motives and aspirations of the first Temple “builders?” Perhaps they were attempts to capture the unknown and gain understanding in order to “transform” the apparent chaos in the cosmos and make life more human. By providing structure to a space or a site, they worked on reference points and markers, the seeds of civilization, and the first steps of a society desiring to forge a link with the Divine.

By constructing the Temple, topographic and aerial spaces were circumscribed, symbolizing time. By virtue of attitude, rite, and worship itself, its structure became a receptacle for the sacred. Within human experience, the sacred has a necessary value in becoming conscious of the reason and condition of being and existence. Since falling into matter, human beings have “destructured” their psyche, which is no longer connected to the soul's heart; through tests and trials, wholeness must be restored.

For this reason, women and men are searching for their divine regeneration. An unconscious memory and nostalgia of the creative source are ever present. Remember that before the Fall, Adam and Eve had the Divine Substance flowing in their veins that gave life and generated the heart of humanity. According to the Unknown Philosopher: *“Humanity was the living sign of God, God's universal figure, and we dwelled in the sanctuary.”*

The quest for the sacred developed a creative outpouring with its diverse forms of expression. The abstract was made tangible, giving it universal values and making its form accessible. We can even say that it is a law within the physical order of things that everything productive draws its substance and maintains itself from the source from which it had its own existence. Each mind emanates from Thought, the creative Word, and Divine Action.



The *Venus* or *Woman of Willendorf*, a 4 3/8 inch high statuette, approximately 22,000-24,000 years old, found near Willendorf, Austria in 1908.

Cave art turned out to be religious art with its paintings, engravings, and figurines of female figures (in the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods). Through observation, people became aware of “opposites”: the inseparable factors of life and death. The representation of divinities, for example, showed them with a body that was supposed to contain the whole universe with its creative, yet also destructive and chthonian potentials.

### **The Feminine Principle in World Traditions**

The feminine principle appeared throughout an ancient and universal form of worship dedicated to a mother-goddess or the universal mother as a representation of the Creator’s will. The name of the divinity, along with its function and powers, was originally found in myths, rites, and religions of agrarian civilizations; these gave rise to matriarchal or gynaeocentric societies. The female body is analogous to the earth mother who is generative and nourishing, but also devouring and destructive—both a vault and a tomb.

In Egypt, the goddess Maat symbolized balance and social, moral, and cosmic order. The best known representatives of these agrarian divinities, goddesses of fertility, or mother goddesses, included the temple of Catal Huyuc in the south of Anatolia, (6000 BCE to 5000 BCE), the Venus of Pazurdzie in Bulgaria, the Venus of Willendorf in Germany in 20,000 BCE, and, from France, the Venus of Lespugue.

In the upper Paleolithic Period, in Laussel (Dordogne region), Venus carried a lunar crescent in the right hand. In their chthonian aspect and as representatives of this aspect of nature, there were Ishtar, Innana, Lilith, Sekhmet (third millennium BCE), Cybele, Hecate, Persephone, and, in India, Kali.

Temples dedicated to the worship of the serpent were also found. These include some African divinities like Mimma, worshipped among the

Touaregs in South Algeria, among the Yoruba in Benin and the Bantu in South Africa, and as the Wouivre, among the Celts.

The moon was also worshipped and said to have multiple powers in and over space as well as on earth. It had three phases of development: the crescent, the full moon, and darkness or the new moon. These cycles influence vegetation, water, the amino acids of the human organism, and the female cycle.

Even today religions that hold their festivities according to the lunar cycle demonstrate the importance of the moon's cycle. Further, consider the significance of the moon for lumberjacks, farmers, and gardeners. In the psyche, the lunar world with its dreams enables the transpersonal world to be reached: "a place where ego and linear space time become blurred."

These figures are mentioned in many myths and legends. In Egypt, the goddess Seshat was capable of drawing up the plans of a temple and designating where it should be located. In Greece, Phrasimede conceived of plans (she was from the family of Daedalus). In Europe, Melusine was the ultimate avatar of these master mistresses; she was responsible for the construction of abbeys, priories, and other buildings; in the Bayeux Gothic cathedral, there is a reference to this on a tapestry titled, "A Picture of the Lodge with the Virgin."

From a philosophical point of view, goddesses symbolize that which remains open within being and the tendency to express the self. Earth faces Heaven with the possibility of becoming Light. Goddesses designate the soul in which God receives the Divine Self, for God alone "Is."

### **The College of Vestals**

The Vestals were guardians of the sacred fire in the temple, a fire that was never extinguished. In Greece, the goddess of the



The Goddess Ishtar.  
Glazed Parthian coffin  
fragment (ca. 247 BCE  
- 228 CE), from the  
Rosicrucian Egyptian  
Museum collection.

hearth was Hestia-Vesta, an ancient goddess of Rome; in India, it was Agni.

The Vestals of the Roman Forum numbered ten. Sworn to Vesta, they were chosen by the only masculine element, a priest. They made a vow of chastity and served from five to thirty years. On the first of March, the festival of Vestalia took place, the relighting of the sacred fire. The cleaning of the temple took place on the fifteenth of June.

*"From a philosophical point of view, goddesses symbolize that which remains open within being and the tendency to express the self."*

In 534 BCE Tarquin the Proud (Lucius Tarquinius Superbus) promulgated an edict regarding the virginity of the vestals: they were to be severely punished if they broke their oath. The Vestals or Colombes, in their virginal state, meant and symbolized purity of the non-manifest, the non-revealed, and the conscience. We stress the existence of these "colleges of vestal priestesses"

who guarded the eternal flame, and their stories that told of the goddess Sessia, a protective divinity of seeds, wheat, and associated rites.

### Women Initiates and Goddesses

Women initiates, having made the vow of chastity, lived on the Isle of Sein off the coast of Brittany. In Ireland, too, ancient divinities existed: "feminine trinities" such as Fodla, Banba, and Ériu, as well as Druidesses guarding the hearth and the flame. The Celts worshipped Danu or Dana (Dôn for the Gauls). The goddess Epona was represented by the mare Rhiannon (sixth century); legends speak of Rhiannon as the "great Irish queen," "The Green One," and "Reigning Feminine Spirit" considered to be a mother goddess. Under a triple aspect in Greece, Hera was venerated as child, spouse, and widow.

The Yoruba in Nigeria and Benin worshipped an aquatic divinity called Oba Oshun Oya, the spouse of the god of thunder. This goddess had the capacity to metamorphose herself. (Note that in Europe, Melusine and Morgana were the equivalents of Oya, a buffalo, which transformed herself into a woman.) Melusine transformed herself into a mermaid or snake.



We know that even today there are rites dedicated to this “trinity” in Africa and Brazil (Macumba, with her priestesses called mambos of the *terreiro* or temple). To return to Ireland, in the sixth century, the Druids ruled; however, their religion seems to have disappeared by the sixteenth century. In a document preserved to our day, the archbishop of Dublin made a “charter” prohibiting this religion and its rituals.

### **Shekinah and her Presence in the Temple: Wisdom throughout Sacred Writings**

In Judaism, the personification of the feminine principle survived in the form of Chokmah or Sophia. In the *Book of Proverbs*, Sophia speaks of the world’s creation and the links that unite it with its Creator. She resided in the Temple of Jerusalem and personified Israel.

In the *Song of Songs*, a collection of poems, King Solomon says of his beloved (1:15): “How beautiful you are, my beloved, how beautiful, your eyes are like doves, your lips a scarlet thread.” Actually, he is referring to his encounter with the soul imprisoned in matter. These words remind us, too, of mystics such as St. Teresa of Avila or St. John of the Cross.

In the *Gospel of St. John* (3:21), the text says: “He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy is therefore fulfilled.” In the Gospels we find the rich and contrasting image of Sophia as a “repentant sinner.” She is still considered by Gnostics to be the Initiate’s model.

In an Egyptian text from the third century titled *Pistis Sophia* (Faith and Wisdom), Jesus states: “Mary of Magdala and John should be placed above all my disciples and all those who will be initiated into the Mysteries of the Ineffable.”

Mary Magdalene is considered to be the mother, sister, and companion of the incarnated Logos. She is the first one to have “seen” and heard the risen Christ. She took him for the *Rabbouni* (gardener). Actually, she had essentially “seized” the conducting link of the One who works in our secret gardens.

For Meister Eckhart, the virgin soul becomes the spouse in so far as it is the influx of illumination. As it develops fully in humanity, it will elevate the soul to its highest degree, which is “the state of the Mother of God.”

He writes:

“If we always remained virgin, no fruit would come from us. To become fertile, we must be woman... it is the noblest word that can be given to the soul, and is far nobler than virgin. That we receive God into ourselves is good, and in this receptivity, we are virgin. But that God becomes fertile in us is better, because to become fertile through the gift received is to be grateful for this gift.”

In Islam, reference is made to the nuptials of the Sophia, of the soul. In the Qur'an of Iranian Islam, it states: “The virgin of light reveals to the elected one the spiritual form that is within us, the new man or woman, in becoming our new guide and leading us upwards.”

### **Theotokos: Bearer of the Divine**

In ancient cults we found the Earth Goddess oriented towards Heaven. Fertile, she becomes a transfigured Earth, an Earth of “Light.” The Greek term *Theotokos* (“bearer of God”) signifies the alter ego of Sophia. The Virgin Mary, for example, is the symbol of the capacity of the soul to become a receptacle of the Divine Fruit. The fact that God receives the Divine Self by emanating God's Self—for God alone is—is proof of the divine incarnation. According to Jean-Yves Leloup, “All souls are feminine in the eyes of God. Because what makes us God, is the Goddess; what makes us Human, is Wisdom.”

After the involution of being, the Shekinah was exiled into matter. “The feminine element of God,” the Superior Shekinah, became illumined by the Divine Light that caresses the earth. On this philosophical and wisdom-loving earth, of which we are an image (Adama), Initiates and Men and Women of Desire seek to travel the ascending path towards the “heart of life,” the life of the spirit, the essence of life, and the way leading to universal unity.

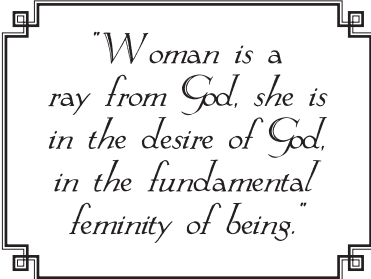
### **Divine Alchemy: The Reunion of all that is Scattered**

In the reconstruction of the Temple, the Martinist initiate must reunite all things that are scattered. The initiate must leave behind the fascination of matter and its appearances: the “emptiness filled with too much.” In this way he or she can become his or her “own monarch.” In *Ecclesiasticus (The Wisdom of Sirach)* (33:15), we read: “Look upon all the works of El, everything is in pairs, the one opposite the other.”

A merciless combat ensues between the archangel and the dragon in order to gain access to the place within the soul where matter and spirit are potentially united. This place has to become “the heart of the soul.” The birth of the new woman or man takes place within the Self; the heart becomes conscious; and the power is given to perceive the transcendent and become the eyes of the soul—the virgin mother who gives birth to ideas. *Ecclesiasticus* again states (33:5): “The cowardly heart is like the wheel of a chariot, its thoughts are an axle that turns on itself.”

As far as the physical heart is concerned, it has a dual action of contraction and expansion, pushing the blood from the top of the head right down to the toes. It extends outwards and returns towards the center. The heart for the initiate becomes a symbol of the womb, the foundation, and the rhythm.

Divine alchemy takes place within this receptacle. The four elements are no longer part of the material attributes and become transmuted into a subtle energy. Salt, sulphur, and mercury—the vectors of spiritual energies—“react” within the purified thought and a dismembered ego. The transmutation of vices into virtues begins. Consequently, the reconstruction of the Temple (and of one’s self), begun from a degree of unconsciousness, ignorance, and bias, will be consummated in a discovery of the Presence, Essence, and Substance that the Creator places within our hearts.



*“Woman is a ray from God, she is in the desire of God, in the fundamental femininity of beings.”*

In the “Temple of Harmony,” or the new person, the soul will sing the praises of the divine nuptials: “I have seen the two worlds united into one: the first, the last; that without and that within; simple as the breath of one who breathes.” (Rûmî — *Mathnawi*, Book 111).

### **The Role of Woman: the Female Initiate in our Lodges and Heptads**

In this context, the female initiate, considered as desiring truth, love, and unity, and consciously exercising her authority, teaches her brother to look into himself and come to know the fundamental

femininity of his being, the complimentary image of his soul. This is valid, too, in mundane life.

The initiate, whether man or woman, knows that in this world of duality, we exist in different forms and appearances; and that in the absolute there is neither the feminine nor the masculine, but only being whose divine descent drives the person to Reintegration. Woman's authority is considered to be one of her principal qualities, along with her intelligence, intuition, and knowledge. She balances and complements power, a masculine quality.

The initiates in our Lodges and Heptads, knowing that Isha is the heart of humanity and that Aisha is the conscience or free will of Adam, are aware that the Shekinah can transmit its secret and its energy into being. In the work of Reintegration, Isha must, with Aleph Shin He, rejoin Ish and his Aleph Yod Shin. Together, they will create a being of light, a new person. The Savior of the initiates, the Repairer, acts within this mystery.

The goal of initiates is to evolve with humanity, and the feminine and the masculine are necessary and transitory manifestations to reach the unique and One God. In the home or in the professional world, initiates have the duty and responsibility to do whatever is required so that "the attitude towards a woman" and the "feminine" evolves beyond seduction, submission, or aggression. As Rûmî again said, and we conclude with this: "Woman is a ray from God, she is in the desire of God, in the fundamental femininity of being."

*There are for us three desirable things:*

- *Never to forget that there is another light than the elementary of which this is but the veil and the mask.*
- *To realize that nothing either can or should prevent us from accomplishing our work.*
- *To learn that what we know best is that we know nothing.*

*-Adapted from the prayers of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin*

# Human Freedom

*by Guy Eyhérabide*

*Editor's note: This article is adapted from the 2006 Pantacle of the French-speaking jurisdiction and turns to the ever puzzling question of what freedom is.*

**T**he question of freedom has been a recurrent one since the time of the ancient Greeks, and each philosophy responds to it in terms of the view of the world it endorses. It is firstly appropriate to make a distinction between two definitions of this word, which assume quite different outlooks.

The first of the most widely held meanings today is often found expressed in a plural form. Freedoms are possibilities granted to people by the society in which they live so that individuals can express themselves and act according to their conscience, provided others are able to do the same. Hence the period of the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolutions championed and prescribed a series of freedoms and rights that promoted the dignity of human beings and life in a democracy: freedom to think, to discuss, and assemble. It was undeniably a step of progress and is a model that has tended to spread over the entire planet.

However, these are liberties granted to people from without. There is another definition of freedom that sees it as an individual's inner potential. It has been called free will. It is the faculty enabling people to choose and direct their thoughts and then act according to their choices. It has an intimate relationship with will and is more directed towards accomplishing duties than defending rights.

Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin points out that this faculty needs to be revitalized since the Fall. He adds that we are not the masters of the thoughts that cross our consciousness but that we can choose to favor some at the expense of others. This is the latitude individuals are given in the conduct of their lives. It is both very broad, and also more restricted than what people today believe.

We will examine the latter definition of the word in this article, deliberately ignoring any social or political implications stressed by the

former meaning. We will examine the question from three aspects: freedom and self-consciousness, freedom and karma, and lastly, the paradoxes of freedom.

## Freedom and Self-Consciousness

Freedom, as we have just defined it, appears with consciousness of self. It presumes a duality of subject and object, of self and the world, implying a separation or barrier between an inner and an outer. This separation exists at the level of the cell (perhaps even the atom) as an embryo of consciousness; but in a human being a leap is made. This separated “I” has both power over the self and outside of the self. We know that a child only acquires this awareness fairly late, towards the age of seven; but that it is being developed well before this stage, is revealed when a child recognizes her or his own image reflected in a mirror.



Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, from the *Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians* (1785).

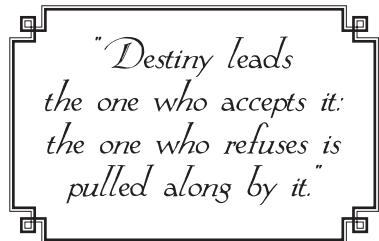
This new power of action which we call freedom or free will is the basis of ethics and morality, meaning that there is a discernment of good and evil, determining the way we behave in the social world and in the natural world. The tree of good and evil is firmly planted in Paradise, but as potential only. The individual having the desire for knowledge will actualize it.

After the Fall, Adam and Eve discovered they were naked. They became aware of their separation and isolation from the time their bodies were dressed in flesh and they forgot their divine origins. They were going to have to experience good and evil, the duality of consciousness, in order to attain the knowledge they had been seeking from the time they had eaten of the fruit of the tree.

Good and evil are born with freedom, and are relative notions having educative and initiatic value. Thus, freedom, consciousness of self, and the knowledge of good and evil, are intimately linked ideas that engender one another. They are born with the symbolic Fall which allows the soul to become aware of itself through descent into material form.

Freedom is therefore linked to the human condition; it is a phase within the process of the soul's evolution. The soul, united with God, separates in order to experience multiplicity; and in this way, it acquires the awareness existing in the mineral, developing into the vegetal and animal, and finally being reflected in the human being. Humans are the only beings able to inquire into and experience their own nature.

Here we encounter the first paradox, however. Generated by the consciousness of self, freedom is both a rupturing and a blessing. As a result of the law of duality, it manifests a breaking away from unity which leads to the loss of certain powers for the individual, but also to the appearance of evil born of the first rays of consciousness. Various myths speak of this wound as outer, rather than inner, since there is a separation of the inner self and the outer self, between the body and the soul, the ego and the soul.



*"Destiny leads  
the one who accepts it:  
the one who refuses is  
pulled along by it."*

As we are told in *Genesis*, consciousness and freedom appeared when Adam and Eve became clothed in a body of flesh. The appearance of the physical body is a source of limitation, impermanence, ignorance, and confusion of thought since it causes the separation of the sexes, the forgetting of origins, and a confrontation with death. This explains why a human being is perpetually dissatisfied, why there is nostalgia for unity due to the division and fragmentation of being.

The myth of the Fall is an expression of this alienation. And from this, we have another paradox: human freedom arises when we lose our original freedom. And although a rupture, freedom is nevertheless a blessing because it also signals the appearance of independence and responsibility. Life is an initiation by which the individual acquires knowledge through experience, and hence carries out the transformation and metamorphosis of being.

## Freedom and Karma



Justice, from the *Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians* (1785).

Similarly, what is the relationship between freedom and karma? We need to consider two forms of will here: divine will and human will. Divine will fulfills the law of its own nature. Within Divinity, there is no gap between thought, speech, and action. The same cannot be said for a human being. In this case the will in action can ignore the law and suffer the consequences while trying to give the impression of being free. People can believe themselves to be free, but be enslaved by their needs, desires, and passions. It is also possible to choose to study and know

the law, and then decide, through an act of will, to adhere to it for the sake of the greater good.

Stoics gave the following definition of freedom: “It is the consciousness of necessity.” Seneca went further and said: “Destiny leads the one who accepts it: the one who refuses is pulled along by it.” The following allegory illustrates this statement: the universe is like a chariot driven by Zeus that moves forward according to the laws called the *logos*. All humans are attached to this chariot. Each individual can choose between two ways of thinking: either be dragged along by the chariot in which case the connection becomes a painful bond, or decide to walk alongside the chariot so that the bond becomes a symbol of the relationship between us and God.

This is an interesting allegory because it shows the ambivalence of this connection. The bond that we endure is like the link of a chain, while the one we accept is like a wedding ring. We can also speak about this in terms of attachment of which love is the highest form. For Martinists, free will in this relationship is a capacity given to us to act according to our deepest nature which is the reality of our being.

## The Paradoxes of Freedom

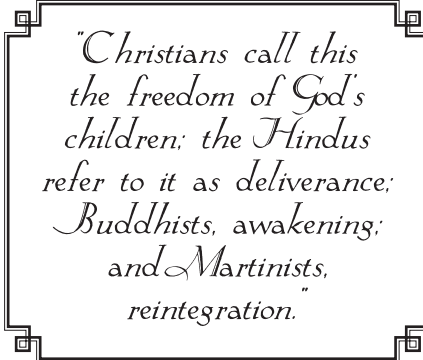
Next, there are two paradoxes of freedom. Some we have already covered: freedom as a blessing and a rupturing, and freedom as a consequence of the Fall which, for the soul, is a loss of spiritual freedom.



The world of freedom is that of the intermediary world, of the human world in which life becomes self-conscious. It is a world of error and truth in which humans can fail, err, and doubt. We can also call it the world of opposites. Freedom does not exist in the world of nature, the world of necessity, or in the world of the Unknown Superiors where the question is no longer an issue.

Freedom in human terms supposes uncertainty and contradiction because freedom alone can provide value to our adherence to divine work. Beyond the manifested world, there is no freedom since there is only light without shadows, or in other words, only the freedom of eternal light.

The essential paradox of human freedom is illustrated perfectly in Plato's myth of the cave. Where, in effect, is freedom for those chained to the cave wall and with their backs to the light? We can imagine these "prisoners" all settling down in that cave, loosening the bonds between them a little and allowing communication among themselves. That would certainly be an improvement of their condition, but in no way would this resolve their fundamental problem. Public freedoms are related to this scenario, and again, it is immaterial whether they live in a country in which they are free to think, discuss, and gather.



*"Christians call this the freedom of God's children; the Hindus refer to it as deliverance; Buddhists, awakening; and Martinists, reintegration."*

Now, would it not be more important to break the bonds that hold the prisoners in the cave so that they can turn around and leave it to attain the light? This conversion of vision is precisely the approach of every initiatic path. Humanity lives here below in darkness, a symbol of limitation and ignorance, also called exile. The light is promised to those who are able to turn around. Only knowledge allows us to penetrate the world of appearances and attain true freedom.

Christians call this the freedom of God's children; the Hindus refer to it as deliverance; Buddhists, awakening; and Martinists, reintegration. Human freedom has educative value for a yet higher freedom: divine freedom, which can only be obtained by surpassing the human condition.

The ultimate paradox is that when we abdicate our will, we reach true freedom. We die in order to be reborn, again and forever.

### **Conclusions: Freedom, the Universe, and Transcendence**

During this discussion, several key ideas have been examined. The first is that humanity is free by divine decree, and the Fall has not changed this fact. The second can be summarized as follows and is only an apparent contradiction of the first: human freedom only becomes a reality through incarnation when it manifests consciousness of self. Two consequences follow from this: on the one hand, in our original state of innocence, humanity united with God, we do not exercise autonomous freedom; on the other hand, before human consciousness, the question of freedom does not arise, nor does it after human consciousness. And finally, the latter reveals that humanity only really knows freedom when our will is united in full consciousness with the divine will.

*"...human freedom  
only becomes a reality  
through incarnation when  
it manifests consciousness  
of self."*

Hence, even in a state of exile, humanity maintains the power to choose and direct its thinking, and to adopt a particular view of the world. It is also important, of course, to know what this point of view is. If it remains an individual, partial, and segmented point of view, then reality will reflect this

and exile will remain. If, on the other hand, a universal point of view is adopted, individuals will no longer be closed off or turned in upon themselves, but they will be connected to all people, and to the universe, through the transcendence of Divinity.

Are these points of view irreconcilable in reality?

Are we not asked rather to make a synthesis in what Martinists call the mystery of the meeting of opposites?



*Take back my will, O Source of All, take back my will; for if I can suspend it one instant before Thee, the torrents of Thy life and light, having nothing to resist them, shall pour impetuously within me. Help me to break down the woeful barriers which divide me from thee; arm me against myself; triumph within me over all Thine enemies and mine by subduing my will. O Eternal Principle of all joy and of all truth! When shall I be so renewed as no longer to be conscious of self, save in the permanent affection of Thine exclusive and vivifying will? When shall every kind of privation appear to me a profit and advantage, by preserving me from all bondage, and leaving me ample means to bind myself to the freedom of Thy spirit and wisdom?*

*—Adapted from the prayers of  
Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin*



