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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 twenty-fourth edition of the *Pantacle*, the official magazine of the Traditional Martinist Order.

In this issue, we begin with a section from a book recently translated into English by the Traditional Martinist Order titled *The Tarot in the Light of Kabbalah*, by Josselyne Chourry-Benvelica. The text presented here introduces readers to the intricacies of the Tarot of Marseilles, one of the most famous versions of the centuries-old game, and to the Tarot's link to the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.

In the next article, we present another selection from a recently translated book by the Traditional Martinist Order, this one titled *The Major Concepts of Martinism*, by Rudolph Berrouët. For Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, the concept of peace was a recurring theme of his mystical explorations. For this article, titled "How to Attain Peace and Its Effects," the author guides readers on ways to establish inner unity and embrace the Divine Word.

In the third article, titled "Prayer of the Heart, Path of Silence," taken from a Martinist manuscript, the benefits and practice of prayer are explored in several ways. In Martinism, the Prayer of the Heart is an important concept, and this article helps explain its meaning.

In the following article, we present a selection from Karl von Eckartshausen's book *The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary*. In this selection, the renowned German mystic discusses a metaphorical school "in which all who thirst for knowledge are instructed by the spirit of wisdom itself."

Finally, we close this issue with a poem by longtime Martinist Michael Shaluly, titled "Unseen Self." The author explores how we seek to find the part of our being outside of our immediate senses.

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

Julie Scott
Grand Master

The Tree of Life and the Tarot Cards

by Josselyne Chourry-Benvelica, SI

If we start from the premise that the universe is an immeasurable circuit through and within which divine Energy flows, then there is a continuous back-and-forth flow of energy. The Sephirotic Tree illustrates this circulation by its paths between each SePHiRaH. These paths are the subjective experiences of moving from one SePHiRaH to another. Similarly, the Tarot cards are all paths for the circulation of energy. From this energetic vision, we can easily understand that the Kabbalah and the Tarot are mystical tools if we no longer consider them as mere intellectual, divinatory, or magical games. Thus, the paths can define stages of personal evolution, provided that we do not stagnate in the astral projection of their interpretation. This presupposes a balance between the constituent parts of our personality and our individual development process. All too often, the spiritual pitfall lies in the fact that many people turn to the occult and mysticism in the hope of unlocking mysteries and acquiring personal powers. But as there are no shortcuts to Knowledge, and no ready-made methods, these same people are quickly disappointed and burn what they had previously praised.

Introduction to Tarot

In the Tarot, there are seventy-eight cards divided into fifty-six minor arcana and twenty-two major arcana (including the Fool (the Mat) or “nameless arcanum” without number).

- The twenty-two major arcana, like the twenty-two Hebrew letters, reflect the Divine Plan and materialize the Divine Light. They represent the vertical axis of a cross.
- The fifty-six minor arcana: According to Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, the number 56 represents “the perverse Being at grips with the principles of nature and left to Its own justice; the Spirit of the Universe ascending towards its source.” Fifty-six is also the number of facets in a diamond cut for maximum

brilliance. Fifty-six is therefore an ambiguous number, a number of mutation that conceals a hidden beauty that must be discovered through the power of one’s own research. This is why it could be the number of the Dark Night, the beginning of a new vision of the world. The minor arcana represent the horizontal axis of a cross.

These fifty-six cards are themselves divided into four “colors” or “suits.” Each of the four suits has a different symbol: wand, cup, sword, and pentacle.

The minor game is therefore composed of four suits (four worlds) each made up of ten cards (ten SePHiRoTH) beginning with the Ace. Reading the four suits as four worlds, we obtain the following:

- 1) Clubs or Wand for the World of Emanation (‘aTSiLouTH).
- 2) Spades or Sword for the World of Creation (BeRi’aH).
- 3) Hearts or Cup for the World of Formation (YeTSiRaH).
- 4) Diamonds or Pentacles for the World of Action (haSSiaH).

The division of the cards into four series also allows analogies with the four seasons, the four cardinal points, the four Evangelists, etc.:



Fire	Wand	Club
Air	Sword	Spade
Water	Cup	Heart
Earth	Pentacle	Diamond

The total seventy-eight is the secret key to twelve (sum of numbers 1 to 12) -> seventy-eight keys to the future of humanity and the

universe. The seventy-eight-card deck dates back to the eighteenth century. Other decks existed with different numbers:

- There are ninety-seven cards in Florence’s Minchiate, a term that comes from an Italian word meaning “nonsense” or “trivial.” A letter written in 1466 by the poet and diplomat Luigi Pulci to Lorenzo de’ Medici refers to this game.
- There are fifty Tarot cards in the fifteenth-century Mantegna Tarocchi. It is a set of fifty prints in the form of cards which, to be honest, are not really a Tarot deck, but rather humanistic images for literate people. Despite his name, it does not appear that the painter and engraver Andrea Mantegna (ca. 1451-1506) was the master engraver or inspiration behind this deck.
- There are 62 cards in the Tarocco Bolognese, versions of which date back to the fifteenth century. A popular seventeenth-century version designed by Giacomo Zoni is in the style of the Tarot of Marseilles, with nuances in tones.

The Ten Minor Arcana

Ace of Wands – Root of the powers of Fire – KeTHeR in ‘aTSiLouTH – reference to the “Staff of Moses.”

Ace of Cups – Root of the powers of Water – KeTHeR in BeRi’aH – Reference to the “KiDDuSH Cup” used during SHaBBaTH in Judaism.

Ace of Swords – Root of the powers of Air – KeTHeR in YeTSiRaH – Reference to “the Divine’s swords of Light” (for Christians, reference to “the two-edged sword of Revelation”).

Ace of Pentacles – Root of the powers of the Earth – KeTHeR in haSSiaH – Reference to a seal, the “shield of David.” In the Tarot of Court de Gébelin, there is a rose in the center of the Ace of Pentacles.

2 of Wands – HoKMaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

2 of Cups – HoKMaH in BeRi’aH

2 of Swords – HoKMaH in YeTSiRaH

2 of Pentacles – HoKMaH in haSSiaH

3 of Wands – BiNaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

3 of Cups – BiNaH in BeRi’aH

3 of Swords – BiNaH in YeTSiRaH

3 of Pentacles– BiNaH in haSSiaH

4 of Wands– HeSSeD in ‘aTSiLouTH

4 of Cups– HeSSeD in BeRi’aH

4 pf Swords – HeSSeD in YeTSiRaH

4 of Pentacles – HeSSeD in haSSiaH

5 of Wands – GueBouRaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

5 of Cups – GueBouRaH in BeRi’aH

5 of Swords – GueBouRaH in YeTSiRaH

5 of Pentacles – GueBouRaH in haSSiaH

6 of Wands – THiPHeReTH in ‘aTSiLouTH

6 of Cups– THiPHeReTH in BeRi’aH

6 of Swords – THiPHeReTH in YeTSiRaH

6 of Pentacles – THiPHeReTH in haSSiaH

7 of Wands – NeTsaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

7 of Cups – NeTsaH in BeRi’aH

7 of Swords – NeTsaH in YeTSiRaH

7 of Pentacles – NeTsaH in haSSiaH



8 of Wands – HoD in ‘aTSiLouTH

8 of Cups – HoD in BeRi’aH

8 of Swords – HoD in YeTSiRaH

8 of Pentacles – HoD in haSSiaH

9 of Wands – YeSSoD in ‘aTSiLouTH

9 of Cups – YeSSoD in BeRi’aH

9 of Swords – YeSSoD in YeTSiRaH

9 of Pentacles – YeSSoD in haSSiaH

10 of Wands– MaLKHouTH in ‘aTSiLouTH

10 of Cups– MaLKHouTH in BeRi’aH

10 of Swords – MaLKHouTH in YeTSiRaH

10 of Pentacles – MaLKHouTH in haSSiaH

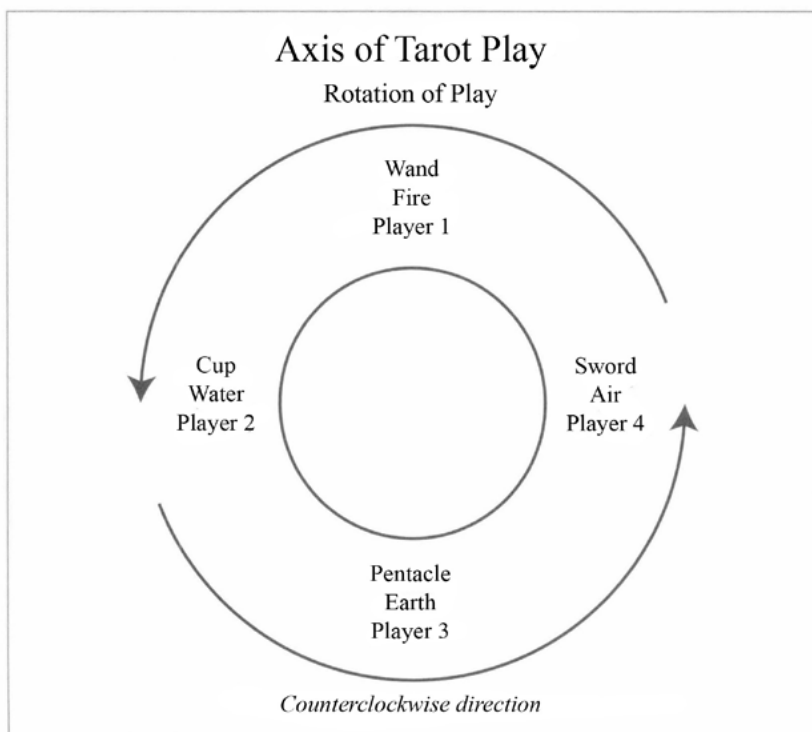
We also find the Earth-Water-Air-Fire elements already mentioned:

- The Wand corresponds to Fire, the animal kingdom, the body, and the senses.
- The Cup corresponds to Water, the plant kingdom, the heart, and the emotions.
- The Sword corresponds to Air; the human kingdom, the spirit, and the spiritual.
- The Pentacle corresponds to the Earth, the mineral kingdom, matter, and pragmatism.

There are ten Wand cards, ten Cup cards, ten Sword cards, and ten Pentacle cards. If we take a Tarot deck and look closely at the minor cards, we are surprised to find that the Pentacle cards are not numbered.

When reason fails to provide the explanations we are looking for, the power of myths takes over; and there is the myth of a coherent structure of the universe linked to the figure of a person. Classical Western imagery illustrates the correspondences between the planets and social activities, between the signs of the zodiac and certain parts of the body. The Tarot offers an even more subtle illustration, since the architecture of its images itself forms the bridge between the two universes: sometimes a mirror of the world, sometimes a mirror of a person under the gaze of the observer. This double game explains its fascination.

(Jean-Marie Lhôte, in *Court de Gébelin, Le Tarot*,
Berg, International Editeurs, 1983, p. 11)



Tarot is best played with 4 players.

Six is the number of cards set aside during the distribution. The rest is nicknamed “the talon.”

Cards are dealt counterclockwise.

Seventy-two is the number of cards needed to start the game, i.e., eighteen cards per player.

Note that $72=7+2=9$

$18=1+8=9$

Seventy-two is the number of years it takes for the vernal point (spring equinox) to complete an ecliptic cycle (in retrograde direction). The equinox precession cycle (linked to the gravitational force of the Moon and the Sun) is about 25,920 years. This phenomenon is due to the fact that the Earth is not a perfect sphere, but is bulging slightly at

the equator and flattened at the poles. If we look at the figure below, we can see two opposing movements:

Water (cup) extinguishes Fire (wand) and waters the Earth (pentacle).

Air (sword) fans Fire (wand) and dries up the Earth (pentacle).

Fire – 'eSH = 301

Water – MaiM (always plural in Hebrew) = 90

Earth – 'aDaMaH = 50

Air – 'aViR = 217

Total word values are equal to 658 as 'oRoTH Gué'ouLaH (Lights of Redemption).

$$6+5+8=19 = 1+9=10=1+0= \text{ONE}$$

And yet, in every life adventure, there is always a constant, which is the ONE on which multiplicity rests. The aim of this demonstration is to reveal the part of the mystery or SoD (secret) that is veiled in any process, be it creative or recreational. We will see that one of the major cards is unnumbered. But in fact, the Tarot has two special cards:

- The nameless arcanum (death), card number 13.

$$13 = 1 + 3 = 4$$

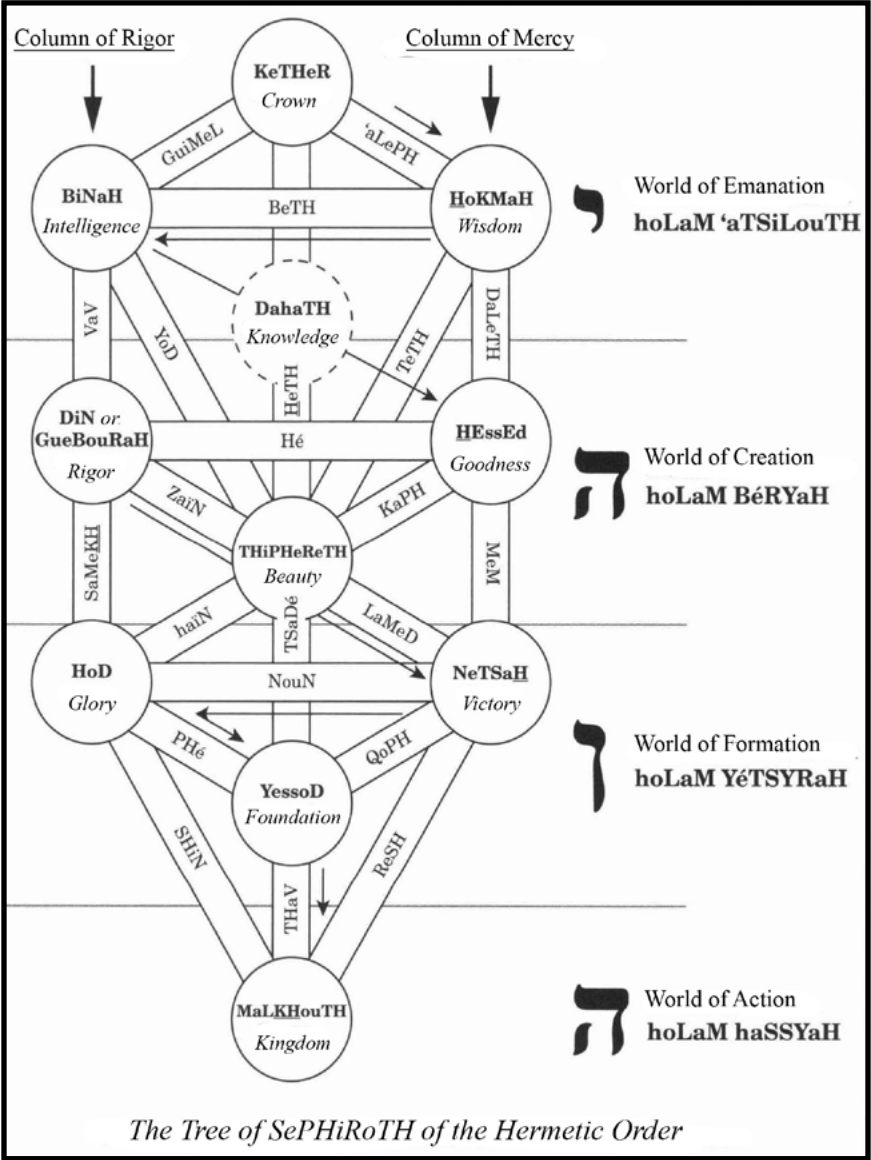
- The unnumbered arcanum (le fool), 22nd card.

$$22 = 2 + 2 = 4$$

Name and number operate in gematria, and the Tarot, like the THoRaH, conceals signs to be decoded.

Speculative research will only bear fruit if it becomes operative. The theoretical preparatory study presented in this essay corresponds to the work of an apprentice or initiate.

Each form achieves harmony only through the equilibrium of its proportions. The Tarot's numerical structure is based on the ternary and quaternary. But is the architecture of the Tarot like that of a Temple?



MaLKHouTH is linked to SePHiRoTH HoD and NeTSaH

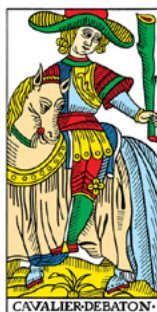
Characters in the Tarot

Four Pages:

- The Page of Swords serves the Queen and King of Swords.
- The Page of Pentacles serves the Queen and the King of Pentacles.
- The Page of Wands serves Queen and King of Wands.
- The Page of Cups serves the Queen and King of Cups.

Four Knights:

- The Knight of Swords is always partnered with the Page of Wands.
- The Knight of Pentacles is always partnered with the Page of Cups.
- The Knight of Wands is always partnered with the Page of Swords.
- The Knight of Cups is always partners the Page of Pentacles.

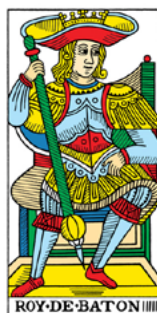


Four Queens:

- Queen of Swords.
- Queen of Pentacles.
- Queen of Wands.
- Queen of Cups.

Four Kings:

- King of Swords.
- King of Pentacles.
- King of Wands.
- King of Cups.

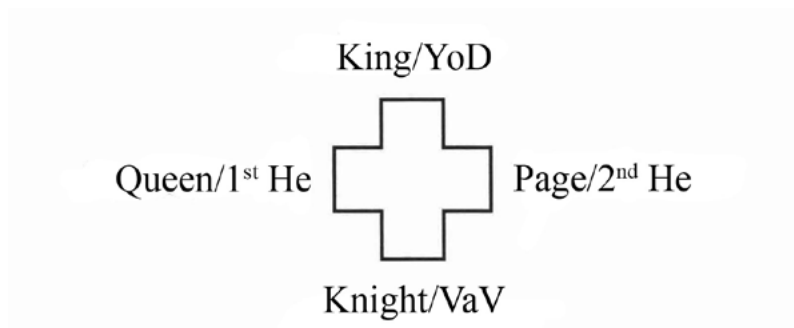


Among these four kings, the king of Pentacles is particularly miserable compared to the others; he does not have a crown nor an elaborate costume, and his throne is a simple chair.

Now that we have seen these sixteen characters, let us see how they relate to the Kabbalah. Let us take a look at Papus's writings: "According to the ancient oral tradition of the Hebrews, or Kabbalah, there is a sacred word which, to the mortal who discovers its true pronunciation, holds the key to all divine and human sciences. This word, which the Israelites never pronounce and which the High Priest utters once a year amidst the cries of the profane people, is the one found at the highest level of all initiations, the one that radiates in the center of the flamboyant triangle in the thirty-third degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, the one that stretches over the portal of our old cathedrals, it is formed of four Hebrew letters and reads YoD-He-VaV-He."

- The king represents the active, man;
- The queen represents the passive, the woman;
- The knight represents the neutral, the adolescent;
- The page is the fourth term in this series.

יהוה



- The four elements (wand, cup, sword and pentacle) can be symbolized by a black triangle pointing downwards;
- The four honors or characters (page, knight, queen and king) can be symbolized by a white or red triangle pointing upwards.



Guillaume Postel (1510-1581), in his *Clavis abs cunditarum rerum*, and Eliphas Levi (1810-1875), in his *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*, applied Tarot symbolism to Christianity:

- The YoD or Tarot Wand represents the episcopal crosier.
- The 1st He or Cup represents the chalice.
- The shape of the VaV or Sword represents the cross.
- The 2nd He or Pentacle represents the host; a transition from the natural to the supernatural world, which may explain the particular

representations (no numbers and poverty of the king of Pentacles) attached to this figure.

The Tarot is a kind of memory aid for the Kabbalah, what Samuel Gabirol humorously qualifies as “Pocket Kabbalah.”

By adding the multiplication of these four symbols times four characters (16) to the preceding four times ten minor cards, we get fifty-six cards. When added with the twenty-two major cards, we get the seventy-eight cards in total to make up a complete Tarot deck.

The Twenty-Two Major Arcana

Let us take a look at the twenty-two major arcana. They are numbered in “progressive Roman numerals.” Thus we have VIII (5 and 4) and not IX (1 and 10).

The advantage of the Tarot is that it illustrates the paths of the Tree of Life, making them less abstract. The representations provide keys along the initiatory path. Tarot is not just a game, it is a means of awakening consciousness.

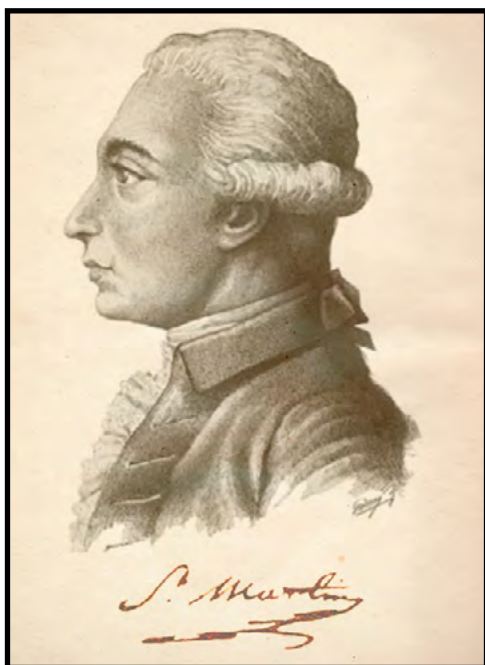
In addition to the House of God [the Divine] and Judgement, here are the groupings of the other major arcana:

- Seven of the arcana feature left-facing beings = oriented towards the past (the Magician, the Popess, the Emperor, the Hermit, Temperance, the Star, and the World).
- Five of the arcana feature right-facing beings = oriented towards the future. (the Fool, the Empress, the Hierophant (Pope), Strength, Death).
- Five of the arcana show beings facing forward = oriented towards the present (Justice, the Hanged Man, the Devil, the Moon, and the Sun).
- Three of the arcana represent beings in transition between past and present (the Lovers, the Chariot, the Wheel of Fortune).



How to Attain Peace and Its Effects

by Rudolph Berrouët, SI



The concept of peace is recurrent and extensively explored in Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin's writings. Each time, he offers us a key to achieving it.

The first point of his philosophy, which must not be forgotten when trying to understand his thought, is that his entire approach is directed toward union with the Divine. This primordial desire to know the Divine and to merge with It is his philosophy's foundation. To achieve this, the restoration of unity within ourselves is essential, and everything is put in place to accomplish it. Peace, moreover, is part of the Divine and is Its expression within us, whether or not we succeed in re-establishing this link or rather this identification with divinity. Yeshua himself was called the "Prince of Peace" by Saint-Martin, which indicates the importance of this notion.

Restoring Unity Within Ourselves

The concept of unity is clearly expressed in a passage from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:14-18). Indeed, we read: "He [Christ] is our peace. He made the two one, breaking down the middle wall of partition.... He did this in order to create in himself one new man to make peace, and in one body he could reconcile both groups to God [the Divine] through the cross, and thereby kill the hatred.... Through him we have access in one spirit to the father [the Divine]."

Thus, succeeding in establishing unity within ourselves is a fundamental notion if we wish to know peace, the true peace of Yeshua, divine peace.

In light of this notion of unity and the obligation to put it into practice, Saint-Martin warns us:

As images of universal unity, we must universally establish unities within ourselves.... For in our general work as in all our particular works, we will obtain nothing permanent, we will produce nothing perfect, we will enjoy neither peace nor any real light, if all that we obtain, all that we produce, all that we enjoy is not the fruit and the result of a unity.

This is perhaps the most salutary advice we can receive in this world.



Prioritizing the Unity of Desire

Further along, we find the close relationship between desire, the Divine, and peace: Desire, through the unity it allows to be induced, leads to the Divine, and unity with the Divine engenders peace. Saint-Martin indeed stated:

The principal unity that we should seek to establish within ourselves is the unity of desire, by which the ardor of our regeneration becomes for us such a dominant passion that it absorbs all our affections, and carries us along as if in spite of ourselves, so that all our thoughts, all our actions, all our movements are constantly subordinated to this dominant passion; from this fundamental unity we will see a multitude of other unities emerge which must govern us with the same empire, each according to its class; or to put it better, all these diverse unities are so closely linked to each other that they succeed and support each other mutually, without ever being foreign to each other.

Balancing Opposites to Draw Closer to the Divine

What advantage is there in establishing these various unities within ourselves, of which, Saint-Martin tells us: “our inner unity is the base and the hearth”? His answer is simple and precise:

By multiplying our connections with the supreme unity to such an extent that our resemblance to it becomes discernible,

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this supreme unity, drawn by its eternal divine attraction to its creation and its image, does not hesitate to intervene. It replaces our laborious actions with its own peaceful and revitalizing action. It so permeates our various aspects and our inner being that our spiritual journey becomes as natural and fluid as if we had never left the realm of holiness. Thus, we no longer experience resistance in our actions, obscurity in our understanding, or fatigue in our spiritual endeavors.

In other words, we must strive to polish our inner mirror sufficiently so that divinity can be reflected in it as best as possible. This slow work of polishing, which consists in gradually balancing the opposites within us (the various unities), must allow us to gradually express the divinity that we carry within ourselves. Thus, there will come a time when our actions will be fruitful, when our spiritual ascent will be facilitated, when the heaviness of the task will be alleviated, and when we will dwell in light and truth.

Establishing the Dynamic Relationship: Unity – Peace

We find this unity-peace couple again in Saint-Martin's commentaries on the Beatitudes. The seventh, indeed, relates to peace. According to him, the one who knows peace is the one who manages not to get bogged down in the mire of their inner battles and to place themselves outside and above this foul battlefield. By rising above the fray, a person can unite with the Divine and know Eternal Peace. Saint-Martin states:

Blessed are those who yearn for the peace of the spirit, and who walk on the path of peaceful works, by not giving themselves up to any of the opposing and furious parties that fight daily within people! By thus freeing themselves from the tumultuous mob of their own world, they will take as their parent the sovereign author of supreme tranquillity and eternal peace, and will thereby become the legitimate children of the Divine, since they will manifest the distinctive character of this source from which they have drawn birth, and which cannot fail to be calm.... Thus they can say to their enemies: tremble, flee, you can do nothing against me, because I bear within me a name that signifies the child of your Divinity.

Embracing the Word within Oneself

This last sentence, particularly the fact that the one who knows inner peace bears within them “a name that signifies the child of the Divine,” is significant because it highlights that attaining inner peace results in an incorporation of the Word, of Christ, of the Child of the Divine. It is therefore a state of illumination, the Christ-like state, the expression of the marriage of the Lamb; a state in which Christ takes up permanent residence in the heart of a person.



*Domenichino fresco of John, Peter, and Andreas
in the Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome, ca. 1628.*



Seventh-century mosaic in the Basilica di Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Italy.

Entering the Heavenly Jerusalem

In a passage from *The New Man* [Person], Saint-Martin writes: “When you feel weak, turn your eyes towards he who comes to consecrate you even in your innermost being, to be a priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, and you will then see yourself raised up to the heavens.” This counsel is essential, as it complements the previous notion of Christ’s presence within us once peace is attained. We are far from this point here; we are indeed prey to doubt, weakness, and temptation. However, once again, our solace remains Christ, for as repairer, reconciler, and redeemer, he is both the means and the end of our progression. Through him, and through the wise use—resulting from True Desire—of his name, we attain spiritual royalty and profound peace (Melchizedek being both priest and king); and once peace is attained, Christ becomes an integral part of ourselves.

Henceforth, it is he who expresses himself in us and through us, and no longer ourselves; we are raised up to the heavens, to the Heavenly Jerusalem, where according to John there is no longer any temple, for “the Lord, the Divine Master-of-all is his temple, as well as the lamb.” Our weak will has faded away in favor of the Supreme Will which is eternally wisdom, strength, and beauty, love, bliss, and peace!”

The Meaning of the Word

Let us now digress. We have seen that the wise use of the name of Christ allows one to attain spiritual royalty and profound peace. To speak of using a name automatically refers to the use of the word. It is therefore fitting to delve deeper, even briefly, into this notion to fully understand its implications. The best way is to refer once again to the writings of the Master. In the work *Presence of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin*, published by the Société Ligérienne de Philosophie (1986), we read:

Q. What is the word?

A. It is the agent of any operation whatsoever. We can say nothing, do nothing; we cannot produce any action without the word; and at the same time, the stronger and more expressive the word, the quicker and more exact the operation....The word is born of thought, and can only have force and virtue by reason of what the thought conceives and is able to produce, thus it is always thought that must be regarded as the true principle of our words and our actions....



Christ Preaching (La Petite Tombe), Rembrandt, ca. 1652.



From reading this text, we come to two major conclusions. Firstly, the word, speech, is at the origin of everything, including ultimately the depth of our inner state, our level of elevation, the quality of our emotions, and the perfection of our actions. Secondly, the action, the result of its use, is commensurate with our ability to mentally create the desired situation and effect. The more penetrating, clear, and precise our thought, the more intense the action of the word will be and the more unexpected limits it will reach.

It is therefore up to us to use the Word, as Christ personified it in the form of the sacred name “Ieschouah,” to refine and purify our thought. Only through repeated use and a slow and patient alchemy, always thanks to its employment, can we hope to perform operations in perfect harmony with the Divine Thought. Our word will then be law for all that it affects, and our actions will be in perfect alignment with the Divine Will.

In this sense, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of the daily and repeated use of the name of the Repairer, at the level of the heart, for it is only by this means that this name can be incorporated within us and penetrate the different levels of our being:

It has been said to you that whatever you ask the Divine, in the name of the Repairer, you will obtain; but how will you ask in the name of the Repairer if that name is not known to you, that is to say, if it has not penetrated into the intelligence of your heart, by the sweetness of its living activity? Here, then,

is how you can hope that this name will make itself known to you, and how you can use it profitably. (*The New Man* [Person])

Accomplishment of the Work Through the Employment of Virtues

To return to our ascent towards the Heavenly Jerusalem, what virtues must the new person demonstrate to reach this summit? Saint-Martin gives us the answer:

Here is how they employ the different aids that are granted to them by the Spirit and that they find within themselves through the various developments of their being. They place constance in the east, they place purification in the west, they place trust in the north, they place holy audacity in the south [...].” Constance, purification, trust, and audacity (in the positive sense of the term) are therefore the different tools that we must use to access our inner Jerusalem. They are the individual expression of the “orders or counsels” that we receive from the quaternary via intelligence, adhesion, zeal, and the work: the intelligence and understanding of acting no matter the cost (constance); the voluntary adhesion at all levels of our being (purification); zeal in applying the directives of our faithful friend, expression of the divine Wisdom within us (trust); courageous execution of the work (audacity).



A section of the Apocalypse Tapestry depicting John the Evangelist contemplating the Heavenly Jerusalem of the Divine.

Prayer of the Heart, Path of Silence

From a Martinist Manuscript

This article will begin with a discussion of prayer, and then it will try to define this term in the Martinist philosophy. Following this there will be a discussion of the notion of the heart, then that of the Prayer of the Heart, then finishing with the Path of Silence, before establishing the conclusion.

Thus, the presentation will be divided into four main parts:

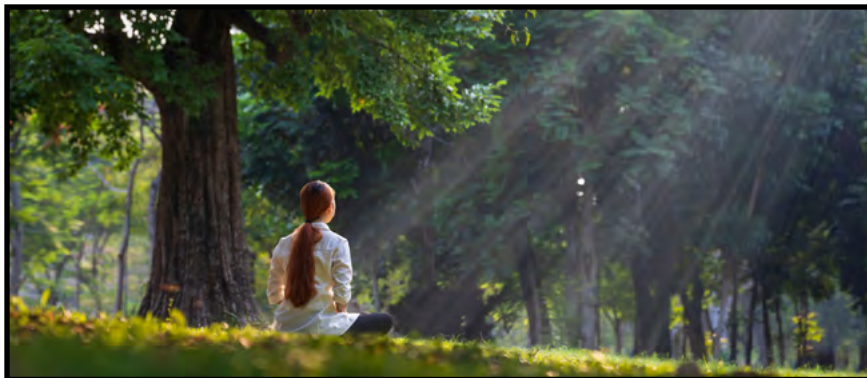
- 1) What can we say about prayer?
- 2) What place does the heart occupy in Martinism?
- 3) What does the Prayer of the Heart mean?
- 4) How can we understand the notion: “Path of Silence”?

1. What can we say about prayer?

1.a Definition of prayer throughout the ages and its importance

Many definitions have been given to prayer over the ages. Indeed, for Gandhi it is a “sacred alliance between God [the Divine] and man [people].” As for Victor Hugo, he defines prayer as “a spiritual bridge allowing people to reach the Divine.” For his part, Deepak Chopra, endocrinologist and mystic, has written: “A prayer is a request made from a small part of God [the Divine] to a large part of God [the Divine].” It is also said that it is a desire from heaven and a conversation with the Divine.





1.b Prayer in the Traditional Martinist Order

Knowing that the teachings of the Traditional Martinist Order are based, among other things, on the writings of Martinès de Pasqually, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, and Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, proving the importance of prayer for each of them is, in fact, equivalent to revealing its preeminence in Martinism. So, let us briefly consider prayer for each of them.

- Prayer for Martinès de Pasqually

Pasqually practiced theurgy a great deal; he certainly used the usual theurgic processes of ceremonial magic, such as: tracing circles; the use of words of power, angelic names, and names of the Divine; and respect for the phases of the moon. Whether composed by Pasqually or from Scriptures, invocations played a very important role in his practices and those of his disciples. Indeed, before starting their work, the Reaux-Croix apprentice must “remove themselves from the whirlwind of the world” and prepare for prayer. In the daily work of the Elus-Cohen, the Psalms occupied an important place. Those who emulated Pasqually prayed every six hours. Midnight did not end the day of an Elu-Cohen, which concluded with a very beautiful “prayer which had to be recited when lying down and ready to fall asleep.” The full force of the Elus-Cohen’s theurgy came from its invocative art. In fact, for Pasqually, prayer had to be vocal, an expression of the faculty of speech, thus manifesting the power of the Word.

Essentially, the purpose of all these practices of prayer was to provide the Elus-Cohen with the purification of the body, soul, and spirit necessary to attain a state of ideal spiritual receptivity or high states of consciousness—purification as perfect as possible, capable of making them receptacles worthy of the highest spiritual communications. The Cohen initiates thus purified were then able to enter into contact with angelic beings, intermediaries which became necessary, since the fall of humankind, to receive the Divine Light.

- Prayer for Louis-Claude of Saint-Martin

Every attentive reader knows the importance that the Unknown Philosopher gave to the practice of prayer. While it is clear that Saint-Martin had a natural inclination for prayer, it is likely that this tendency was developed by his work as an Elus-Cohen. A text dating back to the time when Saint-Martin was an active Elus-Cohen highlights this interest: “Prayer is true nourishment for the soul, when it particularly puts all of one’s faculties into action, and it is also from this that the soul gains its greatest strength and all evidence of light. The state of the soul in prayer is one of combat in which it casts away everything that is foreign to it in order to renew itself in purity, clarity, and the sublimity of its nature.”

Prayer is therefore a fundamental element of the belief of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin. This preoccupation with respect to prayer appears during his first steps on the Cohen Path. The texts in which





he spoke on this subject are very numerous. Among them, let us point out the Red Book, the notebook in which the young initiate records his reflections, where he testifies: “Purge your body and then present yourself for prayer; the rest will happen of its own accord, that’s the whole secret;” not to mention the beautiful testimony to prayer he left us with a collection of orations entitled “Ten Prayers,” probably composed towards the end of his life.

- Prayer for Jean-Baptiste Willermoz

Even if Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, one of the important figures of Martinism, left few writings, in a small volume entitled *My Thoughts and Those of Others*, he left us a magnificent text in which he emphasizes the complementarity of intellectual study and spiritual practice based on prayer:

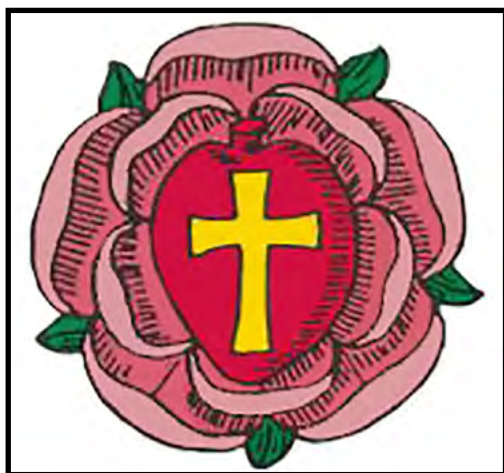
Study without prayer is true atheism, and prayer without study is a vain presumption. That is to say, the person who believes that they can acquire a true light through study, and by the sole force of its application, thinks and acts like an atheist, and that the person who presumes that to obtain the knowledge of the truth, it is enough for them to ask for it in their prayers, without making any effort to discover it and without meditating on its ways, is only a presumptuous person, a coward, or is indifferent. The first will acquire only a vain and dangerous science; the other will remain in the dark.

Moreover, in this living testimony of his spiritual practice, one can read the text of the “Six-Hour Prayers” of the Elus-Cohen, followed

by special prayers for the Order of the Elus-Cohen for the deceased, relatives, and friends, and for the king and the prosperity of the kingdom. The book ends with the “prayer which had to be recited when lying down and ready to fall asleep,” all written by his own hand.

Thus, all these masters of the Martinist Tradition have made prayer the keystone of their spiritual work. Whether with Martinès de Pasqually, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, or Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, it occupies a fundamental place. One can even go so far as to say that it constitutes, without any doubt, the heart of the Martinist path.

This brings us to the second point of our presentation: the place occupied by the heart in our Tradition.



2. The Heart as a Symbol

The heart has always been the symbol of love. In a metaphorical way, you give your heart to the person you love to tell them that you entrust your life to them. It is also a common symbol used since the dawn of time to represent the center of emotional, spiritual, moral, or intellectual activity. More widely, the word “heart” designates what is in the center, as for example, the heart of the night, the heart of the problem, etc. Thus, the heart is symbolically related to all that is most essential. This is how it came to occupy a primordial place in our language to represent love, generosity, frankness, courage, etc.

Before talking about the heart in the Martinist Tradition, let us examine the symbolism that has been attributed to it through the ages.

- The Egyptians believed that it is in the heart that the very essence of people, including that of their supernatural life, is found.
- Hebrews made it the seat of all the faculties of the soul and of its intelligence, in its purest expression.
- Native Americans saw in it the sanctuary in the center of which dwells the “Great Spirit,” that is, Divinity.
- A Chinese proverb says this: “The bottom of the heart is farther than the end of the world.” For them, it is therefore the heart and not the head that is at the origin of thought.

For today’s religions, the heart is also of great importance.

- In Judaism for example, an expression that is often used is to “speak to one’s heart.”
- According to the Upanishads, hridaya, or the heart, is the residence of the Atman, that is to say, that which is most divine within us. And according to the Bhagavad Gita (The Song of the Divine), which is a beautiful classical Sanskrit text, the Divine is reflected in the heart when our mind is purified.



A page from a nineteenth-century Sanskrit version of the Bhagavad Gita.



The Great Mosque in Mecca.

- Muslims say that the heart is the place where Divinity dwells, or the elusive point where humankind meets the Divine. “Neither My Heaven or My earth can contain Me, but the heart of My believing servant can contain Me,” declares Allah from the mouth of Mohammed.
- In the Christian faith of the East from the fourth to sixth centuries, the heart held a fundamental place. To be convinced of this, it is sufficient to read the works of Isaac of Nineveh, Angelus Silesius, and the “Desert Fathers” – founders of the mystical movement called the Hesychasm, whose texts were collected in the Philokalia. In fact, these texts say that the heart does not belong to the body, nor to the soul, nor to the spirit, but rather to a higher level. The heart integrates the totality of the being.

2.a The Heart in the Martinist Teachings

At this point, we must emphasize that Martinism is often defined as “the way of the heart,” that is to say, that it also gives a primordial importance to the heart. However, if Martinism refers to the “way of the heart,” is it because one tends to consider the heart as the seat of feelings? The answer is no, because evoking the heart in the Martinist Tradition means going beyond sentimentality and emotions.

If the Unknown Philosopher had to say that “The heart was chosen to be the universal interlude of good and evil,” he did not fail to point out the responsibility of people by adding: “If people closed their heart to iniquity, it would have no way out to slip into the world.” That is a crucial statement; but how is it possible to close one’s heart? Indeed, if we can let evil pass and allow it to come into being, and in this case, choose to be agents of the destructive forces, we can just as easily choose to close our heart to the destructive forces, and open it to constructive energies. On the other hand, all this can be done only from the heart, which, according to Saint-Martin, is not only the channel through which we are given the opportunity to circulate the Divine Light, but also the sanctuary that Divinity wishes to inhabit, to the extent that we allow It free access.

This truth leads Martinists to consider the heart under two different aspects designated by the Unknown Philosopher under the phrase: “The two doors of the heart.” One of them is called the “lower door,” and opens unto the world of darkness or the world of prevaricating spirits; and the other is called the “upper door.” The latter opens instead unto the world of Divine Light. We understand then that if they do not want to descend into darkness, or rather if they want to move away from it in order to enjoy the splendor of the Divine, it is essential for people to learn to open the upper door of their heart. It is therefore more than a necessity. It even seems that it is an obligation to themselves and to those prevaricating spirits that they have the responsibility of returning to the Divine Light; and also the responsibility to their Divinity to fulfill the mission that It originally entrusted to them.

At this point, of course, a question that one might ask is how people are able to open the upper door of their heart. The teachings of Martinès de Pasqually and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin have taught us that



The seal of Martinès de Pasqually.



The Guardian Angel,
Jacques Callot, 1636.

it is through the spiritual guide that the exiled people have received from Divinity the power to open the upper door of their heart. This spiritual guide, which can be compared to the guardian angel of Christianity, is also called “good companion spirit” by Pasqually and “faithful friend” or “guide” by Saint-Martin. Its essential mission is, among other things, to allow us to communicate with Divinity despite the abandonment of our glorious body for a corruptible body. Too powerful, the Divine Light would consume us if it were not filtered by the wisdom of our inner sentinel. Thus, the only

possibility left for people to keep open the upper door of their heart is to desire it fervently and learn to ask their “faithful friend.”

At this point, it is important to recall what the Christian tradition, through the “Desert Fathers,” calls “the guarding of the heart.” This is the best attitude to use to prevent evil from expressing itself through us. It consists, in fact, of always being fully attentive to each of our thoughts, to each of our desires, and to each of our actions. The guarding of the heart can only be done through the practice of spirituality through meditation, prayer, study, and inner silence.

Naturally, the opening of the heart is an art whose mastery requires long-term work, and it is only the tireless practice of the guarding of the heart that will allow us to go through one of the first and most fundamental stages: the meeting with our spiritual guide.

3. The Prayer of the Heart

Martinism, through the teachings of Pasqually and Saint-Martin, shows us that the heart is the crucible in which alchemy takes place, which must lead to people opening themselves up to the Divine and

their participation in the harmony of Creation. This process, simple and difficult at the same time, is possible only through the application of the way of the heart, or, in other words, the interiorization of everything at the level of the heart through the use of prayer.

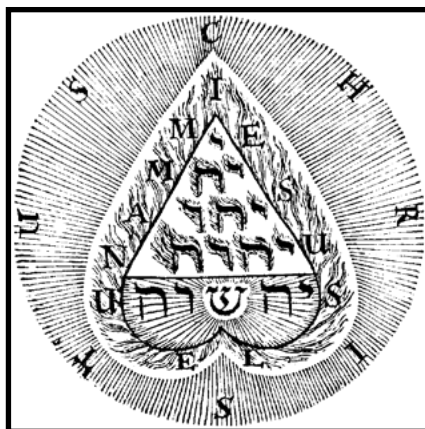
Mother Teresa said: "Prayer to be fruitful must come from the heart and must be able to touch the heart of God [the Divine]." This evokes the concept of the heart linked to that of prayer and brings us to the center of our subject, namely the Prayer of the Heart. It is based on two essential principles:

- a. Invoking Divinity or a spiritual entity by means of the Divine Name.
- b. Making this invocation at the level of the heart, in order to situate it truly on the level of the soul, a necessary condition for it to be effective and to produce the spiritual effects specific to it.

Consider these two principles separately.

3.a Invoking Divinity or a spiritual entity by means of the divine name.

Divine names have always played an important role in religions. For most of them, these names were considered to be endowed with supernatural virtues. We can cite as an example the importance that the Hebrews gave to the Tetragrammaton (*Yod - He - Vav - He*), the ineffable name of Yahweh. According to the Hebrew tradition, its exact pronunciation contained considerable power. In fact, only once a year, on the day of Yom Kippur, is the high priest allowed to pronounce it. The first Christians themselves granted a particular power to the name of Christ, Ieschouah. In a general manner, all mystics, at





whatever periods they lived in, have used a divine name to commune with higher worlds, even with Divinity Itself. In fact, many traditions and religions incorporate meditation or prayer techniques based on the pronunciation of a word of power. Examples include mantra practices, japa yoga, bhakti yoga, Yuzu Nembutsu, and Dhikr (Zikr), which is its equivalent in Islam. In Martinism, it is the Prayer of the Heart that is used for this purpose. These methods aim to produce a deep interiorization that often leads to a feeling of plenitude and mystical ecstasy. All these methods have a common point. They are like a brief invocation, usually based on the repetition of a divine name in a short sentence, such as: “namu amida butsu” which means: “I take refuge in the Buddha of infinite light,” or the Islamic affirmation: “la ilaha illa'llah” which means: “There is no Divinity but the Divine,” or the “Kyrie eleison” of Christianity, generally translated as “Lord, have mercy.”

It should be emphasized that some authors recommend reducing the Prayer of the Heart to one name such as Father, Abba, or Yeshua. For Martinism, which works in the Name and to the glory of the Grand Architect of the Universe, it is the name “Ieschouah” which is used in the Prayer of the Heart.

Let us have a look at the value of the word “Ieschouah” for Martinists. It represents both Christ who has become human to regenerate humanity, and the most powerful spiritual force at work in Creation. Its use therefore allows the initiate to establish the equilibrium within or to find the point of union between the three pillars adorning both

the universal temple, as well as our inner temple or our heart, namely Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty.

3.b Making this invocation at the level of the heart, in order to situate it truly on the level of the soul.

It is not only a question of repeating the name of Ieschouah, but it is necessary to know how to proceed. This brings us to the technique of this spoken prayer. Nevertheless, a warning is necessary before going into the details of the Prayer of the Heart itself. In fact, it is more an art than a technique, and it must be practiced regularly to gain full mastery. By practicing it consistently, the treasures of the Way of the Heart will be discovered. However, one should not expect to reach the summits of spiritual communion after trying a few times. Obviously, as in the meditation techniques proposed by the Rosicrucian Order, many will find that it is not easy to keep the inner silence and let the heart express itself. Indeed, during one's practice, scattered thoughts can invade the mind. The same advice is therefore given to the practitioners of the Prayer of the Heart: "If you are faced with these thoughts, do not try to chase them away, because they will come back right away. Just let them

pass without paying attention to them." This attitude will favor their gradual disappearance and allow the soul to rise toward the spiritual world, where it will be able to be in communion with the Divine.



Prayer Before the Meal, *Vincent van Gogh*, 1882.

Regarding the name to use, there is the possibility to try several. However, after a period of trial and error, it is advisable to always stick to the same invocation, because it makes its way within us and goes into the subconscious. In fact, the more you become familiar with the same name, the more its pronunciation will facilitate over time a quick communion. That said, once the

name is chosen, it can be said orally or mentally. In any case, at any time, in any place, everyone, from the humblest worker to the greatest contemplative, can say unceasingly the Divine Name in the secret of their inner silence. The repetition is done slowly, peacefully, without trying to feel any emotion or sensation except love and adoration. It is necessary to let oneself be permeated, seized by the vibrations created by the repetition. Naturally, some prefer to repeat without any space between the successive invocations; for others, a time of silence will be necessary between each invocation in order to be permeated by its resonance. In reality, in doing so, attention should be paid to the heart rate in order to feel each pulse. Once you are fully aware of this rhythm, you must slow down the breathing, so that it is as calm as possible. That done, you should mentally repeat the word while keeping your attention on the heart.

Thus, the Prayer of the Heart is more like a form of devotion leading to silence, during which it is advisable to repeat the chosen word slowly, and as long as necessary, to reach a transcendent state of consciousness.

It is important to not formulate words or phrases. These must not become magical fantasies, but instead should express immediate contact with the desired reality. They are at the same time pronounced and obsolete, for all the attention is invested with the Presence. Consequently, it is not a question of reflecting, of keeping the intellect awake by a discursive activity on the spoken words, but rather of penetrating their intuitive sense, of savoring their vital content. Perhaps even the Name will fade one day to give way to its sole reality.





Some will probably think that the monotony of repetition can be an obstacle to the success of the exercise. On the contrary, far from being an impediment, this repetition is a great way to restrict the field of rational consciousness and favor the furrow towards the depths of the heart.

If, in the Prayer of the Heart, one of the two principles remains the use of a divine name, we must nevertheless remember that the use of the heart, as the spiritual center where this name must be said, remains the necessary condition so that it may be effective, and produce its specific spiritual effects. Indeed, for such a prayer to be operative, we must go to our inner sanctuary, which made Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin say: “It is not the head which is necessary to advance in truth; it is the heart.” The invocation gradually becomes spontaneous and continual as, with time and patience, it descends from the lips to the depths of the heart, which then takes care of it without any further effort. Everything unites in us and around us, peace and light become our companions, and all that comes toward us participates in it. For Saint-Martin, as for all the adepts of Philokalia, the heart is the central organ of our inner senses and truly corresponds to the root of our being. It is in this sense that the art of prayer consists in finding what the Unknown Philosopher called the “Place of the Heart,” known by other mystics as the “Place of Silence.”



4. The Path of Silence

What meaning can we give to the notion of silence? “Silence is the path through which we discover ourselves,” writes Aline Charest. Thus, our weaknesses and our flaws are revealed to us in order to be able to work on their transmutation. So, we see that it is important to learn to keep quiet more often and to practice the sacrifice of silence.

Of course, on the mystical path, it is recommended to first seek external silence. For this purpose, it is necessary to eliminate any external noise. This suggests not only seeking a quiet, silent place where we can devote ourselves to spiritual work; it also means to suggest ceasing useless chatter. In this practice of the search for external silence, one realizes at a certain moment that the surrounding silence appears as a haven of peace, like a deep breath that purifies. It also appears that, after a while, outside silence is not enough. We must then find inner silence. But this step requires a greater effort from the mystic, for the conquest of inner silence is much more difficult. It means silencing the imagination, the mind.

In fact, the spiritual practice of silence helps to conquer the purity of the heart, the inner serenity, because being silent does not necessarily mean to stop speaking; it is something deeper still that goes beyond thoughts. This is very important in the spiritual journey, as it rules out any possibility of escape. In the inner silence, we turn inward, therefore

toward the Divinity inside us. And silence, once established inside and outside, allows us to access communion with the Divine. However, it must be understood that the work of the mystic does not stop there. To take a quotation from Saint-Martin, let us say that mystics must “enter into the Heart of the Divine and make the Heart of the Divine enter into them, to make an indissoluble marriage, which makes them the friend, the sibling, the spouse of their divine Repairer...”. Thus, we understand that the Prayer of the Heart is the path that can lead the mystic without failing to silence, because his or her practice allows access to this ineffable state that corresponds to the spiritual marriage of the soul with the Divine, previously described by Saint-Martin.

In some traditions, the Divine is also called the “Abyss of Silence.” Meister Eckhart said: “Nothing in all creation is so like the Divine as stillness.” Should we understand by this assertion that silence is the Divinity or that the Divinity is silence? Is this the reason we can look for the Divine and find the Divine in silence? And since the heart is the holiest of the holy places, it is therefore at the level of the heart that we must seek It. On the other hand, being quiet helps to get closer to the Divine. That is why the Prayer of the Heart is called the “path of silence,” because it allows us to transcend the limits of our own heart to enter into the very heart of the Divine.



Thus, the more the being rises spiritually in prayer or through prayer, the more the being enters the silence of the Divine. At a certain moment, the words of prayer fade before It; even thoughts fade. Time ceases to exist and then, in total silence, Its Presence penetrates us, fills us, permeates us, just as an oil spread on a paper makes it silently transparent.

Then, in the heart, prayer finds the power to bring us into the silence of the Divine, and to contemplate Its face in all beings. We must therefore work to remain silent, to enter into silence to find the Divine, because only when we have reached this stage of seeing the Divine in all beings, whatever their age, their appearance, their color, it is only then that we will know the true happiness that lasts and remains the true quest for all beings. Then we will know the love that is beyond love, this dimension of superconscious love.

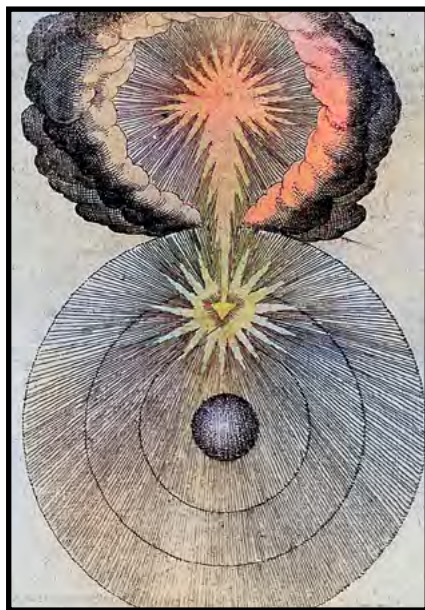
The main gesture of religion is prayer, because it is prayer that connects our hearts to our minds; and it is only because our hearts and minds are not connected enough that we commit so much imprudence, and that we live in the midst of so much darkness and so many illusions. When, on the contrary, our mind and our heart are linked, the Divine naturally unites with us.

Prayer centered on the heart thus remains the most effective means at the disposal of those who wish to advance on the path of initiation, and as Saint-Martin further stated: “The secret of our advancement consists in prayer, the secret of prayer in preparation, the secret of preparation in pure conduct, the secret of pure conduct in being sensitive to the Divine, the secret of being sensitive to the Divine in Its love. Thus, love is the principle and the focus of all secrets.” We therefore understand that for Martinists, prayer also remains a privileged way to spread the Divine Light and to work in the service of the Good. Well understood, it inevitably leads to silence and allows us to begin the journey on the path of our reintegration in joy, peace, and love.



The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary

by Karl von Eckartshausen



An illustration from Robert Fludd's Philosophia sacra, 1626.

It is necessary, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, to give you a clear idea of the interior church; of that illuminated community of the Divine which is scattered throughout the world, but which is governed by one truth and united in one spirit. This enlightened community has existed since the first day of the world's creation, and its duration will be to the last day of time.

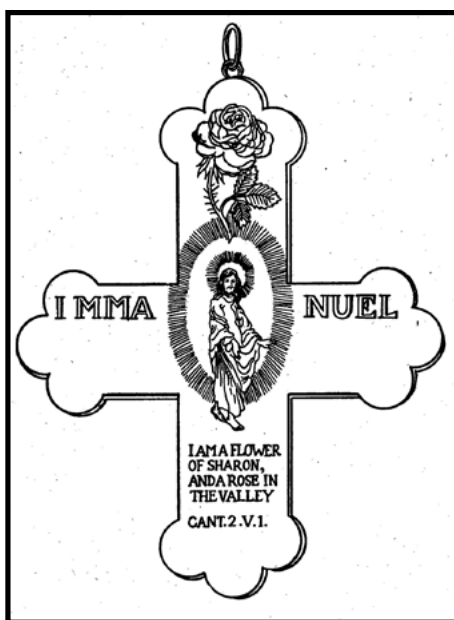
This community possesses a school, in which all who thirst for knowledge are instructed by the spirit of wisdom itself; and all the mysteries of the Divine and of nature are preserved in this school for the children of light. Perfect knowledge of the Divine, of nature, and of humanity are the objects of instruction in this school. It is from her that all truths penetrate into the world, she is the school of the prophets, and of all who search for wisdom, and it is in this community

alone that truth and the explanation of all mystery is to be found. It is the most hidden of communities yet possesses members from many circles; of such is this school. From all time there has been an exterior school based on the interior one, of which it is but the outer expression. From all time, therefore, there has been a hidden assembly, a society of the elect, of those who sought for and had capacity for light, and this interior society was called the interior Sanctuary or church. All that the external church possesses in symbol ceremony or rite is the letter expressive outwardly of the spirit of truth residing in the interior Sanctuary.

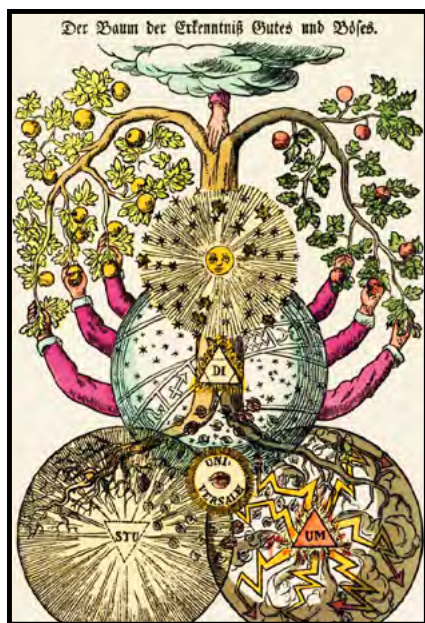
Hence this Sanctuary is composed of scattered members, but tied by the bonds of perfect unity and love, has been occupied from the earliest ages in building the grand temple through the regeneration of humanity, by which the reign of the Divine will be manifest. This society is in the communion of those who have most capacity for light, i.e., the elect. The elect are united in truth, and their chief is the light

of the world himself, Christ, the one anointed in light, the single mediator for the human race, the way, the truth, and the life—primitive light, wisdom, and the only medium by which humankind can return to the Divine.

The interior church was formed immediately after the fall of humanity, and received from the Divine first-hand the revelation of the means by which fallen humanity could be again raised to its rights and delivered from its misery. It received the primitive charge



An illustration from Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians, 1785.



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

of all revelation and mystery; it received the key of true science, both divine and natural.

But when humanity multiplied, the frailty of people and their weakness necessitated an exterior society that veiled the interior one, and concealed the spirit and the truth in the letter. Because many people were not capable of comprehending great interior truth, and the danger would have been too great in confiding the most holy to incapable people. Therefore, interior truths were wrapped in external and perceptible ceremonies, so that individuals, by the perception of the outer, which is the symbol of the interior, might by degrees be enabled safely to approach the interior spiritual truths.

But the inner truth has always been confided to those who in their day had the most capacity for illumination, thus becoming the sole guardian of the original trust, as high priest of the Sanctuary.

When it became necessary that interior truths should be enfolded in exterior ceremony and symbol, on account of the real weakness of some who were not capable of bearing the light of light, then exterior worship began. It was, however, always the type and symbol of the interior, that is to say, the symbol of the true homage offered to the Divine in spirit and in truth.

The difference between spiritual and animal humanity, and between rational and sensual humanity, made the exterior and interior

imperative. Interior truth passed into the external wrapped in symbol and ceremony, so that sensuous humanity could observe, and be gradually thereby led to interior truth. Hence external worship was symbolically typical of interior truths, and of the true relationship between humanity and the Divine before and after the Fall, and of their most perfect reconciliation. All the symbols of external worship are based upon the three fundamental relations—the Fall, the Reconciliation, and the Complete Atonement.

The care of the external service was the occupation of priests, and every father of a family was in the ancient times charged with this duty. First fruits and the first born among animals were offered to the Divine, symbolizing that all that preserves and nourishes us comes from It; also that animal human must be killed to make room for rational and spiritual human.

The external worship of the Divine would never have been separated from interior service but for the weakness of humanity which tends too easily to forget the spirit in the letter, but the spirit of the Divine is vigilant to note in every nation those who are able to receive light, and they are employed as agents to spread the light according to humanity's capacity, and to revivify the dead letter.

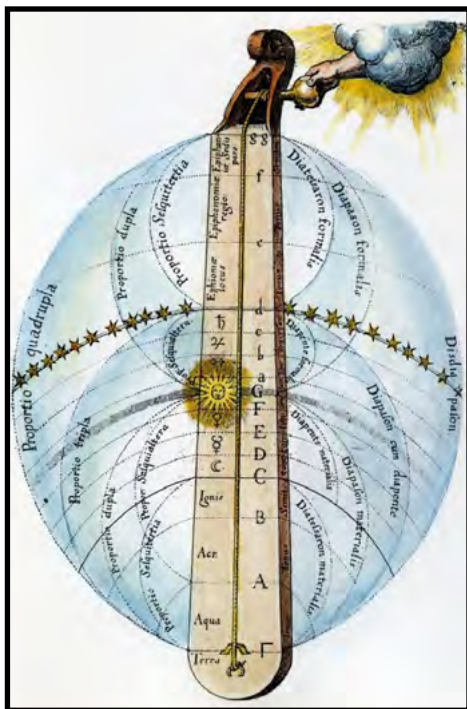
Through these divine instruments the interior truths of the Sanctuary were taken into every nation, and modified symbolically according to their customs, capacity for instruction, climate, and receptiveness. So that



*Giuseppe Molteni's The Confession
(1838).*

the external types of every religion, worship, ceremonies, and sacred books in general have more or less clearly, as their object of instruction, the interior truths of the Sanctuary, by which humanity, but only in the latter days, will be conducted to the universal knowledge of the one absolute truth.

The more the external worship of a people has remained united with the spirit of esoteric truth, the purer its religion; but the wider the difference between the symbolic letter and the invisible truth, the more imperfect has become the religion; even so far among some nations as to degenerate into polytheism. Then the external form entirely parted from its inner truth, when ceremonial observances without soul or life remained alone.



*An illustration from Robert Fludd's
Utriusque Cosmi, 1617.*

When the germs of the most important truths had been carried everywhere by the Divine's agents, It chose a certain people to raise up a vital symbol destined by It to manifest forth the means by which It intended to govern the human race in its present condition, and by which it would be raised into complete purification and perfection.

The Divine Itself communicated to these people its exterior religious legislation, It gave all the symbols and enacted all the ceremonies, and they contained the impress, as it were, of the great esoteric truth of the Sanctuary.



The Meeting of Abraham and
Melchizedek, *Adriaen Collaert,*
ca. 1584.

The Divine consecrated this external church in Abraham, gave commandments through Moses, and It received Its highest perfection in the double message of Christ, existing personally in poverty and suffering, and by the communication of Its Spirit in the glory of the Resurrection.

Now, as the Divine Itself laid the foundation of the external church, the whole of the symbols of external worship formed the science of the temple and of the priests in those days, because

the mysteries of the most sacred truths became external through revelation alone. The scientific acquaintance of this holy symbolism was the science to unite fallen humanity once more with the Divine, hence religion received its name from being the science of rebinding humanity with the Divine, to bring humankind back to their origin.

One sees plainly by this pure idea of religion in general that unity in religion is within the inner Sanctuary, and that the multiplicity of external religions can never alter the true unity, which is at the base of every exterior. The wisdom of the ancient temple alliance was preserved by priests and by prophets.

To the priests was confided the external—the letter of the symbol, hieroglyphics. The prophets had the charge of the inner truth, and their occupation was to continually recall the priest to the spirit in the letter, when inclined to lose it. The science of the priests was that of the knowledge of exterior symbol.

That of the prophets was experimental possession of the truth of the symbols. In the interior the spirit lived. There was, therefore, in the ancient alliance a school of prophets and of priests, the one occupying itself with the spirit in the emblem, the other with the emblem itself. The priests had the external possession of the Ark, of the shewbread, of the candlesticks, of the manna, of Aaron's rod, and the prophets were in interior possession of the inner spiritual truth, which was represented exteriorly by the symbols just mentioned.

The external church of the ancient alliance was visible, the interior church was always invisible, must be invisible, and yet must govern all, because force and power are alone confided to her.

When the divine external worship abandoned the interior worship, it fell, and the Divine proved by a remarkable chain of circumstances that the letter could not exist without the spirit, that it is only there to lead to the spirit, and it is useless and even rejected by the Divine if it fails in its object.

As the spirit of nature extends to the most sterile depths to vivify and preserve and cause growth in everything susceptible to its influence,



The Hermetic Emerald Tablet, *from*
Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians,
1785.

likewise the spirit of light spreads itself interiorly among nations to animate everywhere the dead letter by the living spirit. This is why we find a Job among idolaters, a Melchizedek among strange nations, a Joseph with the Egyptian priests, a Moses in the country of Midian, as living proofs the interior community of those who are capable of receiving light was united by one spirit and one truth in all times and in all nations.



One of the earliest depictions of Yeshua, from the fourth century.

To these agents of light from the one inner community was united the chief of all agents, Christ himself, in the midst of time as royal priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The divine agents of the ancient alliance hitherto represented only specialized perfections of the Divine; therefore a powerful movement was required which should show all at once—all in

one. A universal type appeared, which gave the real touch of perfect unity to the picture, which opened a fresh door, and destroyed the number of the slavery of humanity.

The law of love began when the image emanating from wisdom itself showed to humankind all the greatness of their being, vivified humanity anew, assured them of their immortality, and raised their intellectual status to that of being the true temple for the spirit.

This chief agent of all, this savior of the world and universal regenerator, claimed humanity's whole attention to the primitive truth, whereby one can preserve their existence and recover their former dignity. Through the conditions of Yeshua's own abasement he laid the base of the redemption of humanity, and he promised to accomplish it completely one day through his spirit. He showed also truly in part among his apostles all that should come to pass in the future to all the elect.

He linked the chain of the community of light among the elect, to whom he sent the spirit of truth, and confided to them the true primitive instruction in all divine and natural things, as a sign that he would never forsake his community.

When the letter and symbolic worship of the external church of the ancient alliance had been realized by the incarnation of the savior, and verified in his person, new symbols became requisite for external use, which showed us through the letter the future accomplishment of universal redemption.

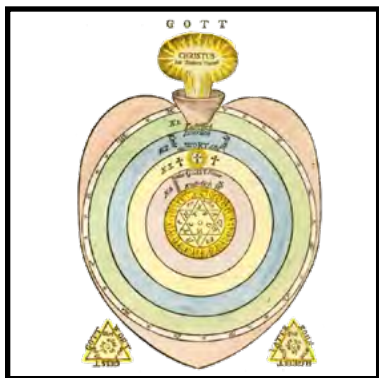
The rites and symbols of the external Christian Church were formed after the pattern of these unchangeable and fundamental truths, announcing things of a strength and of an importance impossible to describe, and revealed only to those who knew the innermost Sanctuary.

This Sanctuary remains changeless, though external religion receives in the course of time and circumstances varied modification, entailing separation from the interior spirit, which can alone preserve the letter. The profane idea of wishing to secularize all that is Christian, and to Christianize all that is political, changed the exterior edifice, and covered with the shadow of death all that was interior light and life. Hence divisions and heresies, and the spirit of Sophistry ready to expound the letter when it had already lost the essence of truth.

Current incredulity increased corruption to its utmost point, attacking the edifice of Christianity in its fundamental parts, and the sacred interior was mingled with the exterior, already enfeebled by the ignorance of weak person.



*The ruins of the Sanctuary of Isis in
Dion, Greece, built in the second
century CE.*



*A detail from an illustration
in Secret Symbols of the
Rosicrucians, 1785.*

Then was born deism; this brought forth materialism, which looked on the union of humanity with superior forces as imaginary; then finally came forth, partly from the head and partly from the heart, the last degree of humanity's degradation—atheism.

In the midst of all this, truth reposes inviolable in the inner Sanctuary.

Faithful to the spirit of truth, which promised never to abandon its community, the members of the interior church lived in silence, but in real activity, and united the science of the temple of the ancient alliance with the spirit of the great savior of humanity—the spirit of the interior alliance, waiting humbly the great moment when the Lord will call them, and will assemble their community in order to give every dead letter external force and life.

This interior community of light is the reunion of all those capable of receiving light as elect, and it is known as the Communion of Saints. The primitive receptacle for all strength and truth, confided to it from all time—it alone, says Paul, is in the possession of the science of the saints.

By it the agents of the Divine were formed in every age, passing from the interior to the exterior, and communicating spirit and life to the dead letter as already said.

This illuminated community has been through time the true school of the Divine's spirit, and considered as school, it has its chair, its doctor, it possesses a rule for students, it has forms and objects for study, and, in short, a method by which they study.

It has, also, its degrees for successive development to higher altitudes.

The first and lowest degree consists in the moral good, by which the single will, subordinated to the Divine, is led to the Divine by the pure motive of willing with and to Christ, which it does through faith. The means by which the spirit of this school acts are called inspirations.

The second degree consists in the rational intellectuality, by which the understanding of the human of virtue, who is united to the Divine, is crowned with wisdom and the light of knowledge, and the means, which the spirit uses to produce this, is called interior illumination.



The Conversion of Paul, *Cherubino Alberti, 1575.*

The third and highest degree is the entire opening of our inner sensorium, by which the inner human perceives objectively and really, metaphysical verities. This is the highest degree when faith passes into open vision, and the means the spirit uses for this are real visions.

These are the three degrees of the school for true interior wisdom—that of the illuminated society. The same spirit which ripens humanity for this community also distributes its degrees by the co-action of the ripened subject.

This school of wisdom has been forever most secretly hidden from the world, because it is invisible and submissive solely to divine government.

It has never been exposed to the accidents of time and to the weakness of humanity. Because only the most capable were chosen for it, and the spirits who selected made no error.



*An illustration from Speculum
Sophicum Rhodostauroticum,
1618.*

Through this school were developed the germs of all the sublime sciences, which were first received by external schools, then clothed in other forms, and hence degenerating.

This society of sages communicated, according to time and circumstances, unto the exterior societies their symbolic hieroglyphs, in order to attract humanity to the great truths of their interior.

But all exterior societies subsist through this interior one giving them its spirit. As soon as external societies wish to be independent of the interior one, and to transform a temple of wisdom into a political edifice, the interior society retires and leaves only the letter without the spirit. It is thus that secret external societies of wisdom were nothing but hieroglyphic screens, the truth remaining inviolable in the Sanctuary so that she might never be profaned.

In this interior society humanity finds wisdom and with her—All—not the wisdom of this world, which is but scientific knowledge, which revolves round the outside but never touches the center (in which is contained all strength), but true wisdom and humanity obeying her.

All disputes, all controversies, all the things belonging to the false cares of this world, fruitless discussions, useless germs of opinions which spread the seeds of disunion, all error, schisms, and systems are banished. Neither calumny nor scandals are known. Every person is honored. Satire, that spirit which loves to make its neighbor smart, is unknown. Love alone reigns.

Want and feebleness are protected, and rejoicings are made at the elevation and greatness which humanity acquires.

We must not, however, imagine this society resembles any secret society, meeting at certain times, choosing its leaders and members, united by special objects. All societies, be what they may, can but come after this interior illuminated circle. This society knows none of the formalities, which belong to the outer rings, the work of humanity. In this kingdom of power all outward forms cease.

The Divine Itself is the power always present. The best individual of their times, even the chief, does not always know all the members, but the moment when it is the will of the Divine that one should accomplish any object, one finds them in the world with certainty to work for that purpose.

This community has no outside barriers. They who may be chosen by the Divine is as the first; one presents oneself among the others without presumption, and one is received by the others without jealousy.

If it be necessary that real members should meet together, they find and recognize each other with perfect certainty.

No disguise can be used, neither hypocrisy nor dissimulation could hide the characteristic qualities of this society, they are too genuine. All illusion is gone, and things appear in their true form.

No one member can choose another, unanimous choice is required. All humanity is called, the called may be chosen, if they become ripe for entrance.

Any one can look for the entrance, and any person who



*Detail from The School of Athens by
Raphael, ca. 1511.*



is within can teach another to seek for it; but only one who is fit can arrive inside.

Unprepared people occasion disorder in a community, and disorder is not compatible with the Sanctuary. This thrusts out all who are not homogeneous.

Worldly intelligence seeks this Sanctuary in vain, fruitless also will be the efforts of malice to penetrate these great mysteries; all is undecipherable to one who is not ripe, one can see nothing, read nothing in the interior.

One who is ripe is joined to the chain, perhaps often where one thought least likely, and at a point of which one knew nothing one's self.

Seeking to become ripe, should be effort of one who sees wisdom. But there are methods by which ripeness is attained, for in this holy communion is the primitive storehouse of the most ancient and original science of the human race, with the primitive mysteries also of all science. It is the unique and really illuminated community which is absolutely in possession of the key to all mystery, which knows the center and source of all nature and creation. It is a society which unites superior strength to its own, and counts its members from more than one world. It is the society whose members form a theocratic republic, which one day will be the regent mother of the whole world.

Unseen Self

by Michael Shaluly, SI

Will you come to me
Upon pleas finding quiet rest?
Will you come to me
Upon moments of great duress?
Oh muted cues and weary heart
Exploring that unknown abyss,
Your bewildered throes I ponder
Those glimmers that beckon bliss.

Will you come to me
When tears adorn my falls?
Will you come to me
When joy abounds my halls?
Your touch brings inspiration,
A glimpse of your subtle wares.
Yet desire's hold must relent
As you slip through the grip of my prayers.

Oh my mysterious unseen self,
Animating that which I see
Upon my thoughts alone you appear...
This magic of you through me.



