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The Rosicrucian Order

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THE CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion



¶ We who are privileged to receive mystical training and guidance available only in the Mystery Schools should be profoundly grateful. Our journey on the Path with its eventual fulfillment in varying degrees of illumination has been made easier. Analysis of the lives of those highly evolved personalities who have attained Cosmic Consciousness indicates that only the few are permitted to reach this great height. The following quotation concurs with this conclusion:



There is another way to truth: by the minute examination of facts. That is the way of the scientist: a hard and noble and thankless way. It is not the way of the great poet, the rare unreasonable who comes once in ten generations. He apprehends truth by power; the truth which he apprehends cannot be defined, save by greater power, and there is no greater power.

—JOHN MASEFIELD, 1878—

(From *Shakespeare and Spiritual Life* Romanes lecture (1944). Cop. Oxford University Press, Inc., N. Y.)

To the Members of the Esoteric Hierarchy, Greetings!

In my last talk, I spoke about the mystical process called The Way or The Path. I want to touch upon this point again because many have had their interest in the Christian teachings reawakened through their membership in our Order, and I know that many in these higher Degrees are active in the Christian church.

The mystic can always find in the fundamental teachings of Jesus a great deal that is overlooked in modern interpretations of his doctrines. There is the example of Paul who was so closely related to the early Christian work, and who is looked upon as one of the most learned followers of Jesus. Many scholars and students of Christianity claim that Paul, in his writing and in his viewpoint, constitutes almost a second founder of Christianity inasmuch as he reveals between the lines of his writing and in his deeper statements a mystical interpretation of Christianity not to be found in the writings and statements of the other disciples. To Paul, Jesus pointed out a mystical Path while to others Jesus seemed to be pointing out a more or less practical or worldly Path. Paul is not concerned so much with the statements of Jesus pertaining to moral and ethical codes of living, as with the spiritual words. While Paul gave emphasis to everything that Jesus said, he seemed to have a finer understanding and interpretation of the mystical, esoteric side of these matters. Part of this is undoubtedly due to the fact that Paul was essentially a mystic both by previous religious thinking, and by previous incarnation. A study of Paul's writings always helps us understand the mystical side of Jesus' teachings.

This brings me to speak about the matter of Cosmic Consciousness. We have referred to it generally throughout our Degrees for the reason that the average person who joins our organization is interested in this subject. Even Neophytes often write to ask us for more information about developing Cosmic Consciousness. Yet it is a subject difficult to explain to a Neophyte because it takes understanding of many mystical principles in order even to comprehend what is meant by Cosmic Consciousness. I have felt personally that not until the higher Degrees could an adequate explanation be given our members of just what is meant by "attaining Cosmic Consciousness." It has been a subject for mystical research for centuries because of its connection with all phases of spiritual development.

Some years ago we recommended to our members a very excellent book by Dr. Richard M. Bucke entitled Cosmic Consciousness, now reprinted and available from the Rosicrucian Supply Bureau. Dr. Bucke did not tell how Cosmic Consciousness could be attained, nor did he point out any practical system for developing spiritual attainment; but he did analyze how Cosmic Consciousness manifests, and when and where we may expect to experience it. He



took the lives of eminent spiritual writers of the past and quoted passages from their writings to show that their spiritual revelations proved that they had at least some degree of Cosmic Consciousness.

Beginning with mystical and spiritual writers before the Christian era, he included Jesus and a score or more since. The analysis of the lives of these writers revealed that Cosmic Consciousness became a fact in the lives of spiritual persons around the 30th to the 33rd year. A man or a woman who had devoted his youth to spiritual study and thinking and had kept a prayerful, spiritual attitude of mind up to the 30th year, in the average case, had some experience of Cosmic illumination around that year. Dr. Bucke did not attempt to explain why this was so nor did he imply that a person could not be illuminated in the manner usually understood before the age of thirty.

There is no reason why Cosmic illumination should not come to a person under 30, but it is doubtful if it would to one under 21. Keeping in mind that our lives develop in cycles or periods of 7 years each, not until the close of the third period of 7 years would a certain degree of inner spiritual unfoldment be reached no matter what our studies or how developed we might be. The possible exception would be that of some mystic in the past who had reincarnated with such a recollection of his previous development during his youth that he might have periods of Cosmic revelation sufficient to give him many marvelous revelations. We must not, however, make use of the exceptional case in understanding the operation of the law. Jesus himself was an exceptional case and few, if any, have ever displayed even a small degree of his illumination. Between the fourth and fifth period of 7 years is a more logical time for the coming of Cosmic illumination because symbolically that is between the square and the cross, four representing the square and five representing the cross. It is just before the close of this fifth period that man's material ambitions and selfishness are supposed to be crucified, and he begins to develop an understanding of the higher things of life.

The law of averages ceases to apply, however, to the mystic studying the various principles and teachings, especially those of this Degree; therefore, you have certain advantages and helps that will change the general course of your life in regard to spiritual unfoldment. Those of you under 30 may expect a certain amount of Cosmic illumination and development shortly, regardless of your age; and those of you over 30 or 35 who have not yet experienced Cosmic Consciousness need not feel it will be further delayed until later life, or perhaps until another life as it might be if you were dependent upon the natural course of events.



As Dr. Bucke pointed out, the coming of Cosmic Consciousness between the 30th and 35th year did not apply to all walks of life, but only to those students of sacred literature who were attempting in their own individual way to attain spiritual

unfoldment. He did not imply that this average held true for those connected with mystical schools. As I have just said, they would be out of the ordinary class and so would have certain advantages and helps from their teachers that might bring the Cosmic attunement much earlier. The average man and woman going through life without any special spiritual training or mystical instruction would probably reach the 50th or 70th year before beginning to have an appreciation of the mystical side of life and of the higher hidden elements in all universal matters.

Cosmic Consciousness is not merely a matter of spiritual attunement. A person may develop and maintain a certain degree of attunement or spiritual appreciation of things through his church or through prayer and devotion, but such spiritual attunement does not constitute Cosmic illumination or the awakening of Cosmic Consciousness within the inner self. Persons may be devout in their selected religion, and live clean, upright lives and yet develop only that degree of spiritual attunement that will help them sense the spiritual values of life. Many preachers and clergymen are spiritually attuned but nevertheless show no degree or no phase of so-called Cosmic illumination or Cosmic Consciousness. The term Cosmic Consciousness is primarily a mystical and metaphysical term and not a religious one. Poets, philosophers, and students of nature, such as Walt Whitman, have attained a degree of spiritual illumination and Cosmic Consciousness; but they have not been leaders in religion or in religious work. Some religious workers, too, have developed Cosmic Consciousness, but we must keep separate in our minds the Cosmic Consciousness of the mystic and the spiritual attunement of the religious devotee.

One of the great religious leaders in modern times was Dr. Robert Norwood, long-time pastor of the Church of St. Bartholomew in New York, and author of books, plays, and philosophical lectures. He had a high degree of spiritual illumination which his friends, his Bishop, and the members of his congregation keenly sensed, which made him the most beloved of all of the enthusiastic preachers of the day. In addition to this spiritual attunement, which gave a wonderful and beautiful value to his church work, he had Cosmic attunement and illumination which enabled him to preach, write, think, and talk in a masterful manner. I have listened to him when his soul and consciousness would seem to rise above the limits of his subject and he would soar into the heavens with marvelous eloquence. An aura would develop around him and his very countenance would seem to change. But Robert Norwood was more than a theologian; he was a mystic. He was devoted to Rosicrucian ideals, was proud that one of the great crosses on the altar in his church always had a fresh red rose in the center every Sunday morning, and encouraged Rosicrucians to come to his church not merely to listen to him, but to help him. He was a living example of how Rosicrucian mysticism could be combined with the Christian mysticism in doing great things for his church.



What is this Cosmic Consciousness that it is so different from spiritual attunement? To answer that, we must go back to our former discussion of the counterpart of the consciousness in us that remains in the Cosmic. You will recall the simple analogy of the form cut out of the dough to the counterpart space in the dough in which the form would fit again. If we look upon the Cosmic Consciousness as a great universal mind and the consciousness in each of us as an extension of that consciousness, we will realize that we have in us a portion of the great Cosmic Consciousness. This is sufficient for our average earthly needs. It constitutes the divine heritage born in us, controls the body in its important functionings and aids us in deciding important questions at crucial moments. It supplies us with that essential knowledge necessary to guide us aright in life. But the small portion of this consciousness in us cannot have the great wisdom possessed by the larger body of Cosmic Consciousness. Only when we are in contact with the universal consciousness do we manifest a superior wisdom that enables us to sense all things and to understand. It is like entering a library of reference books covering every subject. The amount of Cosmic Consciousness in each of us is equivalent only to one book of that library; yet when we attune to the library itself (come in contact with the universal Cosmic Consciousness), we are like the person in the library, with immediate access to all the books.

How is this contact made and developed? Through projecting the Cosmic Consciousness active in us upward and back again into the Cosmic Consciousness from which it came. It is like taking the little cookie cut out of the rolled dough and putting it back into the place from which it was cut. In projecting our Cosmic Consciousness upward and into the broad Cosmic Consciousness of the universe, we lift the spiritual, soul part of ourselves into the opening from which we were taken at the time of our birth. By fitting ourselves again into the counterpart, the exact place from which we came, we become a part of the universal Cosmic Consciousness and are, therefore, attuned with all of the wisdom this universal consciousness has.

During that time all of our consciousness is absorbed, so to speak, into the universal consciousness, and we think not as an individual or earthly personality but as a universal mind, a universal being.

We will come back to this subject again and develop it a little more so that we will be ready to take further steps in the process of attunement.

May Peace Profound abide with each of you.



Fraternally,

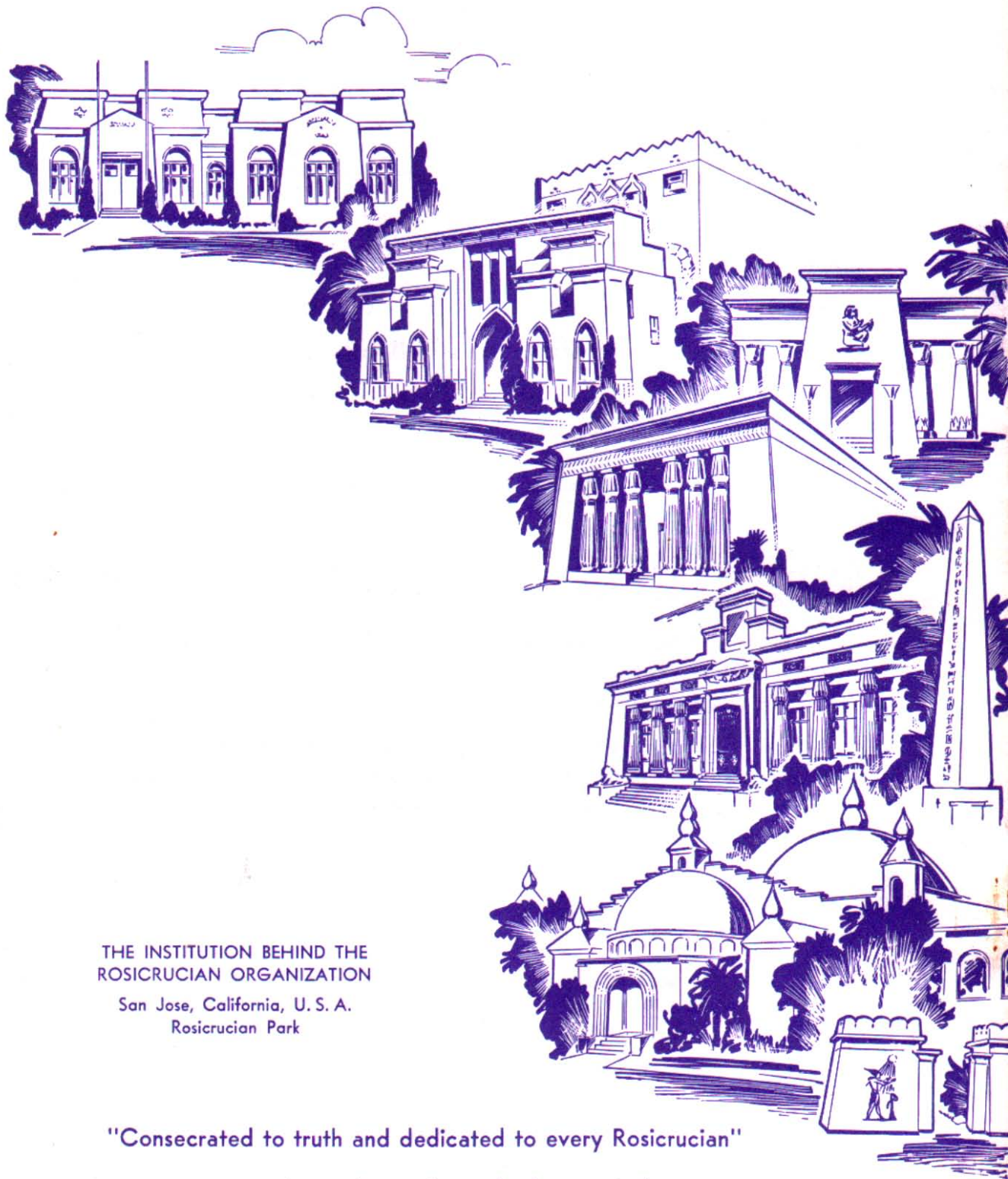
YOUR CLASS MASTER

Summary of This Monograph



Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ The fundamental teachings of Jesus contain much that is not obvious to those unacquainted with mystical teachings and principles.
- ¶ What is meant by “attaining Cosmic Consciousness” is difficult for any but the most advanced student of mystical principles to understand. It is primarily a mystical and metaphysical term rather than a religious one.
- ¶ Dr. Richard M. Bucke in his book *Cosmic Consciousness* analyzed the manifestation of Cosmic Consciousness in the lives of eminent spiritual teachers and writers, showing that the average age of illumination for such highly developed personalities was 35 years.
- ¶ Contact with the universal Cosmic Consciousness manifests in a superior wisdom and understanding known as illumination or Cosmic attunement.



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