



New York College  
Societas Rosicruciana  
In Civitatibus Foederatis  
Winter 2023



**From the Chief Adept**  
**R. Curtiss Montgomery IX<sup>o</sup> et Philologus Zelator**

Fratres, ego salutant vos.

The articles below from our Celebrant and Secretary clearly outline all the good things going on in New York College. I direct your attention to the date of our next convocation on July 29<sup>th</sup> and urge you to put that date in your calendar. With this convocation we will see the beginning of a new cycle of grade initiations in addition to the usual mixed and interesting program. I have already received four proposals for aspirants for our grades. If you know a Brother for whom our College would be a good fit, now is the time to bring his name forward. We would like the Zelator Grade to be conferred by a cast that is not “the usual suspects,” so if you are interested contact the Celebrant and if you do not already have a ritual (“the little red book”) contact the Secretary.

I wish each and every frater wherever he may be and in whatever circumstances, a thoughtful and reflective spring season. I look forward to seeing you on July 29<sup>th</sup>.

LVX,

*Curt*



**Northeast Regional Conference Planned for early Fall 2023**

For several years, The Southeast and West have held regional SRICF conference. This year one is planned for the Northeastern states.

This will be a one-day session, tentatively scheduled for **Saturday September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in Albany, NY** (exact location TBD).

Planned activities include an intensive look at the Zelator Grade, including commentary on each part of the ritual, and guidance on furnishings and floorwork.

In the afternoon there will be four practicums/workshops, followed by a banquet and guest speaker.

**Mark your calendars! Watch for more details coming soon!**

## **From the Celebrant** **RW Richard Powell VIII° et Philologus Theoricus**

Cari Fratres

Our recent convocation was highlighted by presentations from Fratres John Newman, VII° and Walter Cook, VIII°. Walter is a regular contributor to our College, but this was John's first go and he 's now ready to do more. Kudos to you both!

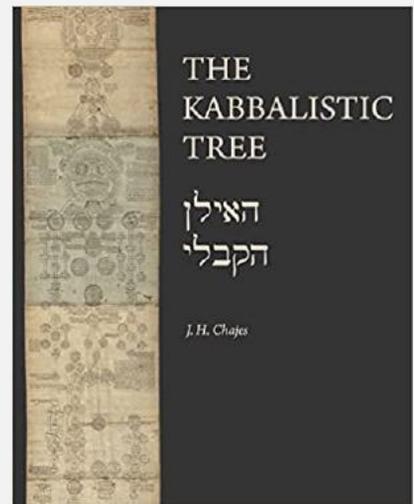
We are always looking for more presentations so please speak up if you are interested. It should be of an esoteric nature, and it doesn't always need to be a finished product. We are a good place to work through an idea as well.

I mentioned three books at that Convocation, and I would like to mention them here again in print, especially for any who might be interested.

### **The Kabbalistic Tree by J. H. Chajes** (\$99.95 Amazon)

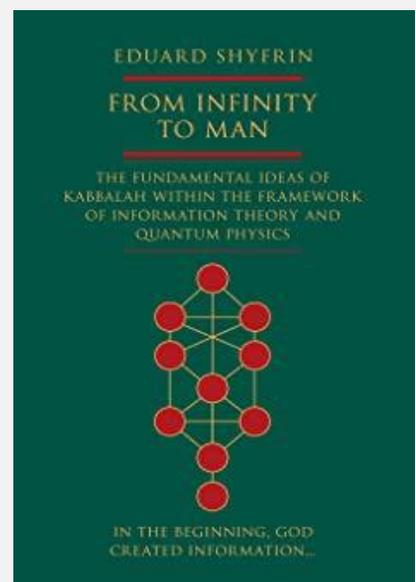
This book is an interesting look at the Kabbalistic Tree of Life "With 250 never-before-seen images reproduced in stunning quality, this chronological and typological survey is a singular combination of exquisite art and foundational scholarship."

The photos alone make this book worth its cost.



### **From Infinity to Man: The Fundamental Ideas of Kabbalah Within the Framework of Information Theory and Quantum Physics** by Eduard Shyfrin (\$24.99 Amazon)

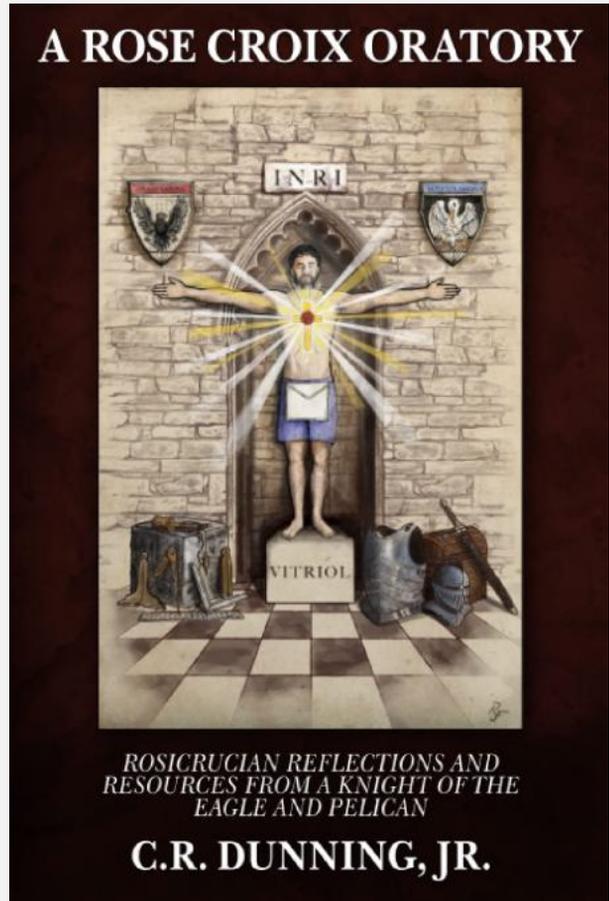
This book is a complicated read but very interesting. The author explains Kabbalistic ideas with the support of information theory and quantum physics. This might tie in nicely with a future presentation of Frater Myron Deputat's and to anyone interested in the Kabbalah and/or 21st Century Science, Information Theory or Quantum mechanics.



**A Rose Croix Oratory: Rosicrucian Reflections and Resources from a Knight of the Eagle and Pelican**  
Paperback by C. R. Dunning Jr.(\$16.95 Amazon)

The author, Chuck Dunning should be familiar to us as he was an online presenter during our COVID Quarantine period. He has also presented to the NYCOD Excelsior Initiative on Contemplative Masonry (<https://vimeo.com/707617455>).

This time around Brother Chuck "offers a comprehensive, powerful, and transformative system of self-directed inner work, drawing deeply from the waters of the Rosicrucian stream with its currents of Christian esotericism, Cabala, Magic, Hermeticism, Alchemy, and compassionate service to others." This should be of interest to all in the SRICF as well as for Scottish Rite Brethren.



Beyond the books, keep an eye out for emails regarding the Northeast Regional meeting this fall. Plans are afoot for a more localized take on the High Council Meeting that takes place in Louisville, KY every November. The plan is for a Northeast Regional meeting in the Albany, NY area to take place the weekend of September 30th. Watch for details and please consider supporting this event.

Our next College convocation will be on Saturday, July 29th. We hope at that point to present the Zelator Grade upon any new candidates that we might have. **Please send in any proposals you might have as soon as possible.** Enjoy the summer until we meet in July.

That's all for now. Email me at [richard.j.powell.33@gmail.com](mailto:richard.j.powell.33@gmail.com)

Sapere Aude...

*Rick*



## **From the Secretary**

**RW Myron J. Deputat, VIII<sup>o</sup> et Philologus Adeptus Exemptus**

Cari Fratres

I hope this message finds you well. I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for your continued dedication and support to our college.

I am pleased to report that our recent convocation on April 29th was a great success and to congratulate Frater John Newman on his first presentation - "The Egyptian Origins of the 47th Problem of Euclid." The demonstration he gave with rope and knots was excellent!

I encourage all fratres to reach out and try presenting. We are always looking for proposals for presentations and workshops. This is a wonderful opportunity for members to share their research and insights with the rest of the group, so please consider submitting a proposal if you haven't already. Remember that we are a working college and your presentations do not require the submission of a paper. If you have a work in progress and would like to present it, the College is an excellent forum where topics can be workshopped and discussed to help with your further research. We are all here together on the quest for further light.

Additionally, we are preparing for a new class at our upcoming convocation on July 29th. If you would like to propose a candidate for membership, please contact the Chief Adept or me for the appropriate application form.

I also want to remind everyone that our annual High Council convocation will be taking place in Louisville, KY on November 10th and 11th. I will forward details as they become available.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to seeing you all at our next convocation.

LVX,

*Myron*



## From the Editor

RW W. Bruce Renner, IX<sup>o</sup>, KGC, PJDSM et Philologus Adeptus Exemptus

This month our exploration of various world religions takes us back to the Far East, and the religion of Buddhism. Although there is only a very small Buddhist community in the United States, it is perhaps the best known of Eastern religions. It is both deeply spiritual and highly pragmatic and was able to adopt many of the ideas of both the ethereal Taoist and moralistic Confucian. This inherent syncretism as well as its own unique insights allowed it to spread rapidly.

The New Age movement as well as the wide introduction of Eastern martial arts (associated with Japanese Zen Buddhist practice) brought it to a wider audience in the 1960's. The outer trappings like meditation were new and exotic to many people in the West (although Western religions have meditative and contemplative methods, they weren't generally available to the average church, temple, or mosque attendee). You may remember the many how-to books that had titles like *The Zen of Cooking*. Ultimately though, the real essence of Buddhist practice is still not widely understood in the West. Hopefully, our two-part essay will flush out our understanding and even provide a few epiphanies.

Elsewhere we have our usual message from our officers, as well as the latest College happenings and book reviews including a new installment of Frater Cook's exploration of esoteric texts of classic Western literature. If you haven't attended the College in a while its time to think about returning. The officers are always working hard to provide an interesting program of events.

At our recent convocation I had the pleasure of leading a practicum on meditation. There is so much information now on meditation that it can seem overwhelming. However, one can start very simply. The Buddhists talk of the "beginner's mind" and that is exactly how to approach meditation - as a child that feels free to explore and experiment. Although many meditation texts try to dictate how one should sit, how one should breathe, and what one should think, all these things are really up to you. This is *your* time.

People meditate for different reasons as they wonder through life. Sometimes we are anxious, sometimes we have trouble sleeping, sometimes we are depressed, and sometimes we are struggling to solve a problem. All these things can be addressed with meditation. Or it can simply be used to start or end your day in a state of calm. So, start small (5 or 10 minutes will do), find a quiet, comfortable place, and relax. Take your mind off high-gear and let it idle and drift as in a daydream. If you want a little guidance, try an app such as *Balance* which will guide you a bit. If, however, they suggest something that doesn't work for you, try something else. In this way your practice will benefit from new ideas, but also be true to your own needs.

Stay your Path, and, especially now, stay healthy!

Scire! Velle! Audere,! Tacere!  
To Know, To Will, To Dare, To Remain Silent

LVX,

*Bruce*



# College Happenings

At our spring Convocation on April 29th, we took a break from Grade work and devoted the whole day to two presentations and a practicum – although we also took a break for our usually pizza, salad, and cookie lunch

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First up was a presentation from one of our newest Fratres Frater Josh Newman, VII<sup>o</sup> who spoke on the Egyptian Origins of the 47<sup>th</sup> problem of Euclid that included some interesting reflections on the mathematics involved. A self-described work in progress, the talk elicited some interesting discussion. We think that Frater Newman would agree that the College is a good way to hone one's presentation skills, and that to teach is to learn!

Our practicum was led by RW Bruce Renner, IX<sup>o</sup>, KGC, and offered a review of basic meditation techniques. Afterwards, several fratres share their own meditation experience. It was gratifying to find so many of our fratres activity engaged in meditation practice!

After lunch, RW Walter Cook, one of our most prolific presenters, gave a lecture on the use Chambers of Reflection and his work to date on creating tracing boards specific to the College Grade system. As one might expect, this also created a lot of discussion.



Celebrant Rick Powell gives full attention the presentations



Frater Newman



Frater Cook

Chief Adept Montgomery and Celebrant Powell preside



A demonstration of the practical value of the 47<sup>th</sup> Problem



## Two Fratres reach highest levels of the Societas Philologi

During our Spring Convocation, two of our Fratres reached Adeptus levels in the Societas Philologi. RW Frater Myron Deputat, VIII<sup>o</sup>, received his certificate and tassels for both Adeptus Major *and* Adeptus Exemptus, the first frater to reach this level by a succession of highly imaginative presentations. Former recipients had reached these levels for long service (Robert Finley and Bruce Renner) to the College or as part of honorary membership (PSM William Koon). Congratulations to RW Frater Myron J. Deputat, VIII<sup>o</sup> et Adeptus Exemptus.

RW Frater Walter Cook, IV, VIII<sup>o</sup> reached the level of Adeptus Minor, again by virtue of high regarded presentations. Wait! Frater Cook presented at our recent Convocation so he will soon trade in his Red Adeptus Minor tassel for Purple. We're sure he will reach Adeptus Exemptus soon. Congratulations to RW Frater Walter E. Cook, VIII<sup>o</sup> et Philologus Adeptus Minor.

**Become more active in the College by writing a paper, giving a presentation, contributing to our infrastructure, or submitting an essay or book report for the newsletter. The Societas Philologi await you!**



College Secretary Deputat receives the purple tassel of Adeptus Major *and* the white tassel of Adeptus Exemptus



Frater Cook receives red tassel of Adeptus Minor

# Buddhism

## Part 1

### Introduction

Buddhism is the world's fifth largest religion after Christianity, Islam, the Non-religious, and Hinduism, the latter three of which we have discussed in previous essays. Although interest in Buddhism increased in the West in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the majority of its 500 million practitioners continue to be found in Southeast Asia. Like many of the religions we have explored, Buddhism had a progenitor in the person of Siddhartha Gautama who was born to an aristocratic family in India in about 566 B.C.E. He was drawn to an ascetic life, and as legend would have it, sat down under a tree and had an epiphany concerning the cause and cessation of suffering (*nirvana*). Ever



Encyclopedia Britannica

afterwards he would be known as the *Buddha* (Awakened One). He wanders the countryside for the remainder of his long life preaching his *Dharma* (teachings) and establishing the *Samgha* (Buddhist community).

For the next few centuries after Siddhartha Gautama's death, Buddhism continued to grow and evolve in India. However, Buddhism also continued to be a minority religion, and would never pose a serious threat to the well-established Hinduism that Islam would many centuries later. There was, however, a Buddhist King, Asoka who reigned from 268 to 239 B.C.E. and he was to send out the first Buddhist missionaries to nearby Sri Lanka. Out of this missionary movement came a dominant form of Buddhism called *Theravada* (tradition of the elders) in all countries of Southeast Asia with the exception of Vietnam. Asoka also embodied the concept of the righteous king, one who gives political expression to Buddhist ideals.

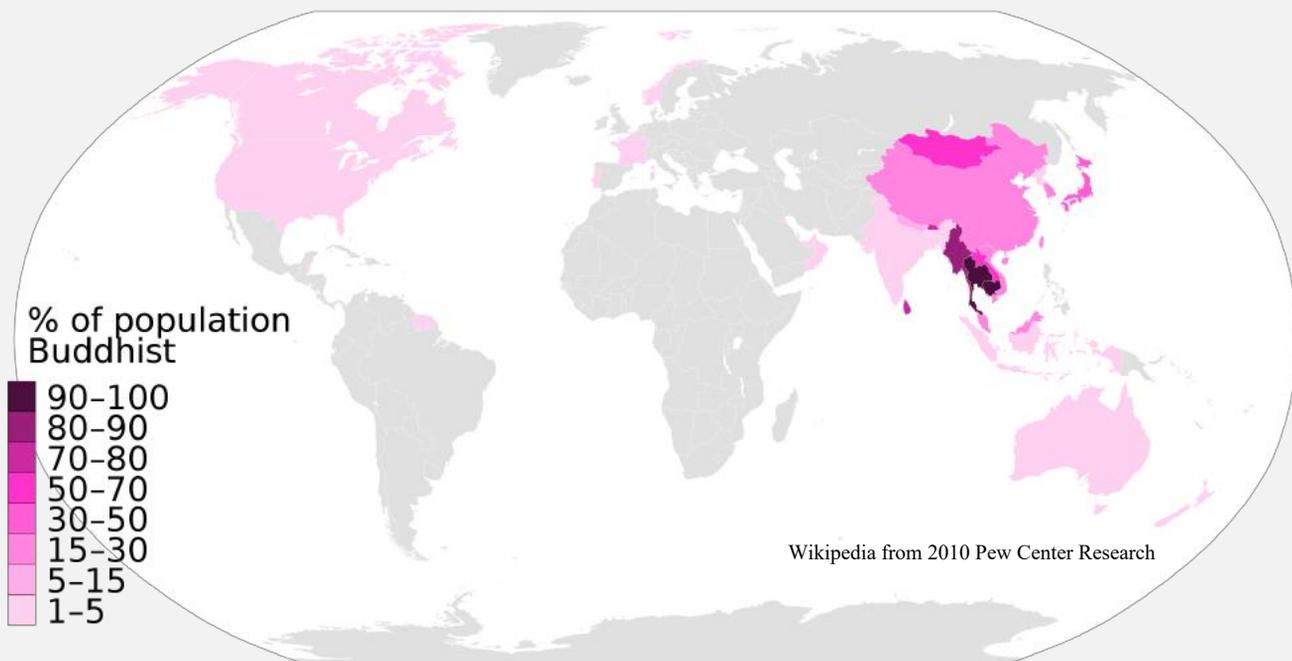
Two major traditions emerged in the Indian Buddhist community, the *Mahayana* (Great Vehicle) which preached the idea of the *bodhisattva* who postpones nirvana to help others escape the cycle of rebirth, and *Tantra*, whose focus was achieving liberation in this life.

Buddhism next entered Tibet where it became strongly established as a powerful combination of Indian monasticism and Tantric practice. This is the home of the Dalai Lama and included four major schools of Buddhist practice.

Buddhism next stop was China. It can be said that Buddhism had a big effect on China, and China had a big effect on Buddhism. Had it not been for the raise of the anti-religious Communist state (some would say that communism *is* a religion) in China, Buddhism might be positioned much higher in the dominate world religions. At the time of Buddhism first entrance into China, however, the two dominate and competing religions were the pragmatic, moralistic here-and-now based Confucianism and the highly ethereal, mystical focused Taoists. Buddhism adopted many of the best attributes of both and integrated them brilliantly with foundational Buddhist thought. It was in China during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.) that several Chinese schools of Buddhist practice were developed, including the *Ch'an* School of meditation that would become *Zen* Buddhism in Japan.

Japan was indeed the next stop. Here Buddhism rapidly became aligned with the Japanese state. Many of the traditional Buddhist schools received a Japanese expression. For example, Tantra was the basis of the *Shingon* School. The *Tendai* School introduced the sophisticated study of Chinese Buddhism to the imperial court. During the Kamakura period (1192-1333 C.E.), Japan suffered wide social and political unrest. Reform came, in part, by Buddhism through the works of several brilliant Buddhist thinkers. It was also during this period that Zen masters emerged giving new expression to Buddhist meditation practices.

We will be exploring the Buddhist traditions in each of these countries in much more detail as this essay unfolds. First, however, let's take a deeper look at the life of Siddhartha Gautama.



## Siddhartha Gautama

Buddhism is one of the Axial Religions. These emerged in the first millennium B.C.E. They showed a significant advancement in religious thought. While their emergence (in a historical timeframe) at roughly the same time is acknowledged by historians, there is no common agreement as to why this happened. One interesting question is: are we due for another such leap in religious thought? Stephan K. Sanderson in his book, *Religious Evolution and the Axial Age* lists five characteristics of Axial religions (see Sidebar). To these I would venture to add another – a majority of these religions can trace their origins to a single human progenitor. These progenitors are usually not thought of as divine themselves, but are rather touched directly in some fashion by the divine and thus awakened to a greater reality.

Such is the case with Siddhartha Gautama known to posterity as the Buddha (the awakened one). At the time of the emergence of the Axial religions, history wasn't the rigorous, fact based, scientific sort of history we take for granted today. What was presented as history interwove stories and legends to flush out facts. In the case of the Buddha, historians generally agree that he was born into the family of King Shuddhodana and Queen Maya about the year 566 B.C.E. (although even here there are questions about the date raised by some historians). As a member of the Shakya tribe, his clan name was Gautama. His given name was then Siddhartha. It is common to refer to Siddhartha Gautama as Shakyamuni, "The Sage of the Shaka Tribe." Beyond these simple facts we must turn to the stories and legends. Interestingly, many of these deal with the Buddha's previous lives for reincarnation (*samsara*-literally wandering) was a basic assumption of Indian religious life. Samsara was not considered a pleasant prospect, but a burden to escape.

Stories about the Buddha's previous lives are told in texts known as *Jataka* (birth tales). Most of these stories conveyed simple moral lessons accessible to children. In a technical sense, these stories are not yet about the Buddha, but a future Buddha known as a *bodhisattva*. The key elements of these stories are widely found in Buddhist art and have an important influence on the way Buddhist imagine an ideal human life.

The birth of the Buddha was said to be surrounded by many miraculous signs indicating he would become a *chakravartin* (turner of the wheel). A *chakravartin* is destined to be a greater king who *turns* the wheel of conquest or as great religious teacher who turns the wheel of *Dharma* (religious teaching).

As the story goes, Siddhartha's father tried to protect him from the suffering of the world in the hopes he would become a

## The five Characteristics of Axial Age religions

***Monotheism*** – and with it religious intolerance, which is *inherent in the very idea of One True God*.

***Transcendence*** – God is nothing like humans. He is perfection itself – the “uncaused cause” and the “unmoved mover.” Whether the East and South Asian religions are fully transcendent is questionable, but they are certainly very different from pagan religions. Sanderson quotes Yehezkel Kaufmann, who says that in the *Upanishads*, for example, we “*find here the conception of an eternal, supreme, impersonal being, the source of all – Brahman-Atman. This is not the creator of the world but the world itself .... It has always existed.*”

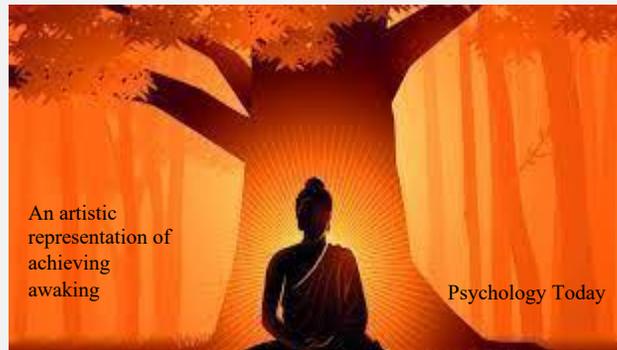
***Salvation*** – Although earlier religions postulated an afterlife, the concept of a soul that had to be “saved” was new. Life after death was no longer a continuation of life on earth, but a radically different and positive change in which only purified souls could share.

***Increasing potential punitiveness and strictness of religious demands*** – Sanderson asks how we can make sense of a supernatural power that is “*simultaneously compassionate and loving, on the one hand, and demanding and potentially punitive, on the other.*” He refers to two ideas – one from a study by Lee Kirkpatrick which showed that children (and so presumably adults towards their gods) form stronger attachments to authoritarian and demanding parents than to less demanding ones; and another from a study by Rodney Stark showing that humans are prepared to pay higher “prices” for Gods that are dependable and show concern for their well-being by acknowledging their appeals and answering their prayers. Says Sanderson, “*It is a matter of social exchange and reciprocity; the greater the rewards one party provides to another, the greater the obligations the other incurs. This is a fundamental principle of human interaction everywhere. It should be expected to apply to god-human relations just as it does to relations between humans.*”

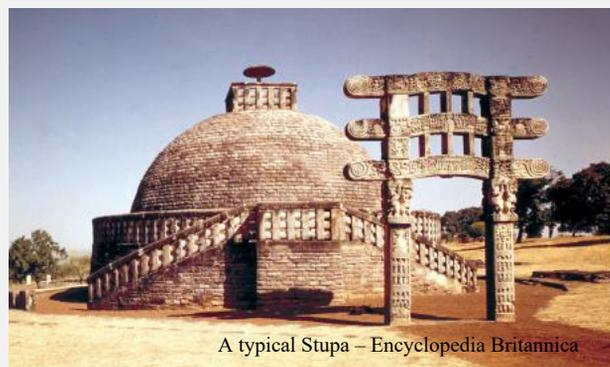
***The decline and virtual disappearance of animal sacrifice*** – animal sacrifice did continue, for example, in Judaism, but for different reasons, such as for the atonement for sins or in thanks.

great king. He was raised a prince, was married, and had a child. When he at last travel outside the palace he is said to have seen four sights: a sick person, an old person, a corpse, and an ascetic. These inspired him to leave palace life and become an ascetic himself.

In the beginning, he did severe fasting and self-discipline, but later adopted what became known as the Middle Path that avoided extremes of self-denial and self-indulgence. At some point he is said to have sat down under a tree and with intense meditation woke to the truth thus becoming the Buddha. He was said to have achieved a state of *nirvana* (to extinguish). In this state he extinguished the causes of suffering within himself. After achieving this state, he began to travel and preach about his realization and thus turned the wheel of Dharma. He did this as much by example as words, through gestures and through silence. In this way Buddhism evolved into a teaching about a way to live a serene and contemplative life.



At an age of about 80 the Buddha lay down between two trees and passed gently from the realm of death and rebirth. This event is known as the *parinirvana* (complete extinction). He was cremated, and his relics enshrined in reliquary mounds (*stupas*).



A typical Stupa – Encyclopedia Britannica

### **An important transition**

Religions, as we have observed, have some important transitions that occur over time. How the followers of a faith deal with these transitions often determine the long-term viability of their faith. This is particularly true of faiths which have a progenitor such as the Buddha. When the Buddha died and is said to have left the realm of rebirth altogether, to what could his followers look to for guidance?

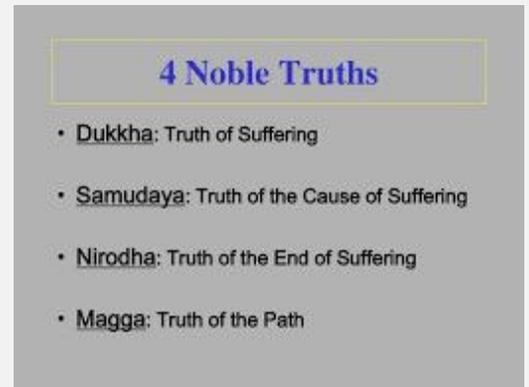
Buddhists came to two initial conclusions on this question. For those who wished to worship the Buddha, there was that which the Buddha left behind after his cremation. Initially these were various relics known as the Form Body, which overtime came to be any physical sign or representation such as objects he touched, places he visited, and eventually images of his form.

For those that wanted to follow his example, he left behind his Dharma or body of teachings. Out of this stream of Buddhist thought came the idea of the two bodies of the Buddha: the Form or physical body that passes away like any other part of this changeable and transient world, and a Dharma Body that is eternal and doesn't change. However, it is misleading to think of either as divine. The Buddha had reached perfect knowledge of and relationship with the divine, but wasn't thought to be divine himself.

## Dukkha, Samsara, and Nirvana

The traditional summary of the Buddha's first sermon has the impressive title *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dharma). In it the Buddha speaks of the Four Noble Truths (see illustration). The terms dukkha and nibbana are cited in Pali, the language of the earliest Buddhist scriptures. Pali is best understood as a vernacular form of Sanskrit.

The implication that all is suffering seems to indicate that Buddhists are inherently pessimistic. To the contrary. Buddhists find this concept to engender a sense of liberation and peace. Let's take a look at the traditional causes of suffering. The first is *dukkha-dukkha* (suffering that is obvious). As an example, you have an automobile accident. The second is *viparinama-dukkha* (suffering due to change). Returning to the automobile example, this is the suffering we feel when our new car deteriorates over time. The last form of suffering is *samkhara-dukkha* (suffering due to conditioned states). Here your sense of self is somehow enhanced by attachment to the car.



To carry this a bit further there are considered to be three marks of existence.

- Everything is suffering
- Everything is impermanent
- Nothing has any self, or "all is no self" (*anatta*)

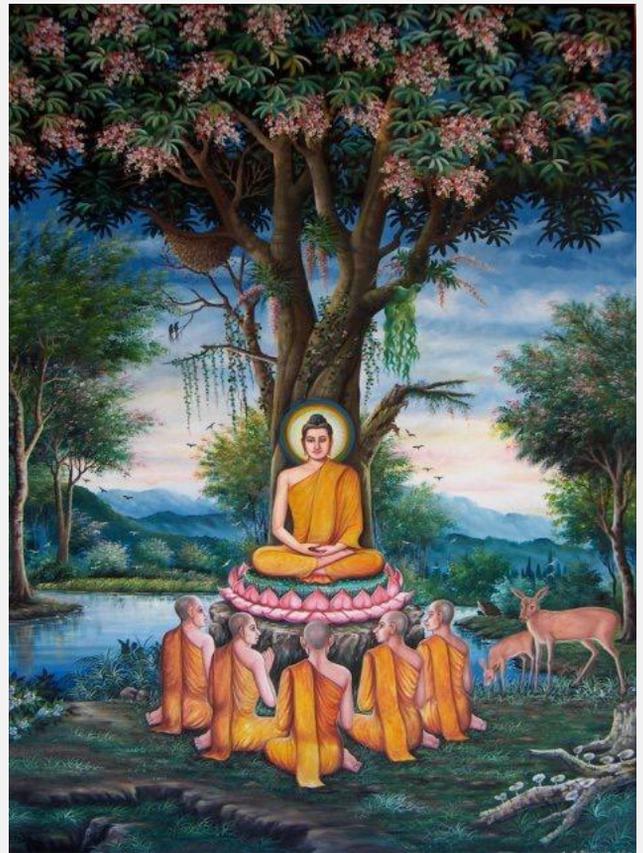
## No self

In traditional Buddhism, "no self" means that there is no permanent identity from one moment to the next. Our personalities are considered composed of five aggregates from a material form (*rupa*) to consciousness (*vinnana*). Although individually these five forms are only momentary, as a group they give the illusion of permanence. Because of the causal continuity between moments, it is possible to say that I am the "same" person from moment to moment. When we look closely, however, we realize that like a flame or a stream it changes at every moment, and the idea that one moment is the same as another is nothing but an illusion. What is reborn from moment to moment is the stream or flame of consciousness (*vi-ana*). We can see this is distinctly different from religions that promote the idea of the persistence of the individual even in death.

Although this seems at first exposure to be a pessimistic worldview, Buddhists see change as a pragmatic reality and suffering the result of our resistance to change. Accepting this allows even the most difficult situations to be met with lightness and freedom. In this way, the person moves through their own samsara (wondering, journey) toward nirvana. Ultimately this realization of no permanent self allows the person to free themselves from the cycle of death and rebirth and the need for samsara at all as one reaches nirvana.

### Moving toward Nirvana

The Second Noble Truth concerns the origin of suffering. It is the result of a causal sequence known as the twelve-fold chain of dependent arising (*paticca-samuppada*). Without going too deeply into the specifics, consider a simplified chain that proceeds from ignorance (the illusions of what is really important in life) to desire (that foster the need to act or possess something because of our ignorance) to birth (what comes into being because of these desires). The most fundamental form of ignorance is that “I” constitutes a permanent ego that needs to be fed by new and desirable experiences or objects.



The Third Noble Truth is then the cessation of suffering or nirvana. Through the use of the concept of no-self it is possible to extinguish the desires that fuel the need for samsara or wandering and to bring about is cessation or nirvana (which means to literally blowing out – in this case of ignorance and desire). This is a difficult process and may take many lifetimes to achieve. This relates to the concepts of karma (literally action, associated with the Western concept of fate) and reincarnation. Nirvana comes at two moments – the moment of awakening when this process is fully understood and accomplished (known as the nirvana with residues) and *parinirvana* (when the fires of personality finally flicker out – known as nirvana without residues).

### The Five Aggregates

Things you see as Self that are not Self



Form - Your body is not your Self, it is impermanent and a part of the world around you



Feeling - Your feelings are not your Self, they are impermanent reactions to your experiences



Perception - Your perception is dependent on there being things to sense, making it impermanent



Mental Formations - Your thoughts are impermanent and dependent on there being something to think about



Consciousness - Your awareness is impermanent and depends on there being things to be aware of

While this series of essays has avoided the comparison of various religions, at this point it is instructive to compare Buddhism with Jewish and Christian thought. According to Jewish and Christian thought God created the world from nothing - making something. The Buddha suggested the opposite. Facing an



## Samgha – the Buddhist Community

Having briefly reviewed the first two so called refuges of Buddhism – the person of the Buddha, and the teachings or Dharma, let us now consider the third, *Samgha*, the Buddhist Community. During his lifetime, the Buddha, in his wanderings, attracted many followers. These included those who would become monks and nuns, as well as lay people.

The ideal lay person is known as a donor (*danapati*-lord of generosity). Although generosity isn't one of the five moral precepts, it is their fundamental virtue. Generosity makes it possible for monks and nuns to live a monastic life and gives laypeople a tangible way to live the ideal of renunciation in their own distinctive way.



Monks arise early and go on the ritual morning begging round. The lay community provides them with food (remember that monks agreed to not eat after noon each day, so they are quite hungry by morning!). This act of renunciation mirrors the more complete renunciation that eventually leads to nirvana.

*Stupas* (reliquary mounds) became a prototype of places of worship. Buddhists often visit a temple to make offerings, chant prayers, and bow with their palms together. The objective is to help orient the Buddhist on the path to nirvana

The Buddha was reluctant to establish an order of nuns, but finally did so at the behests of his great aunt, Mahaprajapati Gautami. Originally, nuns had an inferior rank to monks, but were still able to achieve awakening and nirvana. They have evolved over the centuries to a powerful force in Buddhist communities. Today these communities are found principally in China, Tibet, and Korea.

Originally the monks and nuns were wanderers, but in rainy seasons roads were impassable. They then would stay in one area with a stable lay community for support. These evolved into settled monasteries (*vihara*) where monks and nuns stayed on a permanent basis. This has become the standard in Buddhist communities. Such monasteries function as sophisticated centers of learning.

While the Buddha was alive there was a single authority to turn to questions of faith. After his passing, the *Samgha* was vulnerable to persecution, as various communities confronted the problem of authority in matters of doctrine or discipline. After the Buddha's *parinirvana* (death, the second nirvana), senior monks convened a council to recite the Buddha's teaching and establish an authoritative body of doctrine and discipline. Doctrinal teachings became the *Sutta-pitaka* (basket of discourses), rules and regulations became the *Vinaya-pitaka* (basket of discipline). Later a third basket, *Abhidhamma* (systemic reflections on the Buddha's teachings) emerged. It is common to call the three baskets collectively the *tripitaka*, a canon of Buddhist scripture, although they were not written down until several centuries after the Buddha's death. The contents of these baskets are often quite simple and pragmatic.

It is interesting to note that what is believed to be the Buddha's first sermon (The discourse on turning the Wheel of the Dhamma) speaks about avoiding extremes – the extreme devoted to passions and worldly pleasures, and the other devotion of self-mortification. Instead, he suggested one to seek a Middle Path. Sound familiar! The Middle Path for a Buddhist is expressed in the eight-fold Path.

The Buddha's teaching is sometimes expressed in short, easily memorized verses, as in a collection known as the *Dhammapada* (The words of teaching). These sayings are quite pithy and convey the simplicity of the Buddha's teaching.

Buddhism expanded rapidly and suffered all the issues associated with it. It continued to become more and more difficult to enforce a standard of uniformity, prompting a second Buddhist council about a hundred years after the death of the Buddha. Out of the dispute came a split between two major parties. The first was known as *Sthaviravada* (Doctrine of the Elders) the predecessor of the *Theravada* tradition that now dominates countries of Southeast Asia (with the exception of Vietnam). The other is the *Mahasamghika* (Great Community) that dominate the Buddhist countries of North and East Asia.

Disputes in the *Samgha* eventually gave rise to 18 separate schools only one of which, the *Theravada* survived today.

## Mahayana Buddhism

*Mahayana* means Great Vehicle. It emerged after the 19 *nikayas* (schools) which it refers to as the *Hinayana* or Lesser Wheel. This tradition originated in India but would become the dominate expression of Buddhism in China, Tibet, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. To illustrate the difference between the Mahayana and Hinayana, the parable of the burning house (see sidebar) is often told.

While scholars are uncertain of the origin of the Mahayana, its own legends suggest it emerged



A unique feature of Mahāyāna is the belief that there are multiple Buddhas which are currently teaching the Dharma

as a secret tradition taught by the Buddha during his lifetime to a special assembly of bodhisattvas and excluded other Buddhist practitioners. This was concealed, so the legend goes, for several centuries, until the world was ready to receive it. On the face of it, this seems a bit un-Buddha like!

## **The Story of *Malunkyaputta* and the Arrow**

### **An example of Buddhist pragmatism**

A man Malunkyaputta asked the Buddha to tell him whether the world was eternal, not eternal, finite, infinite; whether the soul was the same as the body; and whether the Buddha existed after death. The Buddha responded by comparing Malunkyaputta to a man shot by an arrow and will not let anyone remove it until he is told who shot it, what it is made of, and so on. The Buddha said that Malunkyaputta should be concerned with removing the arrow of suffering rather than with useless doctrinal speculations.

## **Parable of the Burning House**

Found in the Lotus Sutra, it related of story of a father (who represents the Buddha) trying to lure his children out of a burning house, in which they are blissfully playing unaware. He promises them each a different cart (or vehicle) to lure them out, but when they do escape, he offers the just one vehicle (representing the Mayayana).

The concept of bodhisattva is an important innovation by the Mahayana tradition. It means Buddha-to-be or future Buddha. They are seen as those who do not attempt to go straight to *nirvana* but return to this world to help others along the path. Interestingly, they maybe laypersons, as well as monks or nuns. They cultivate two important virtues. First, they display the wisdom (*praj-a* in Sanskrit) that leads to nirvana, but in addition compassion (*karuna*) that serves the interest of others. It is sometimes represented as a two-way street and at other times as a circle leading to nirvana, and then returning to samsara.

It is incorrect to say that a bodhisattva renounces nirvana in order to lead others to it. At most, they delay their own Buddha-hood to help others. Eventually, they become Buddhas, when their aspirations have reached fruition and their practice of the path complete.

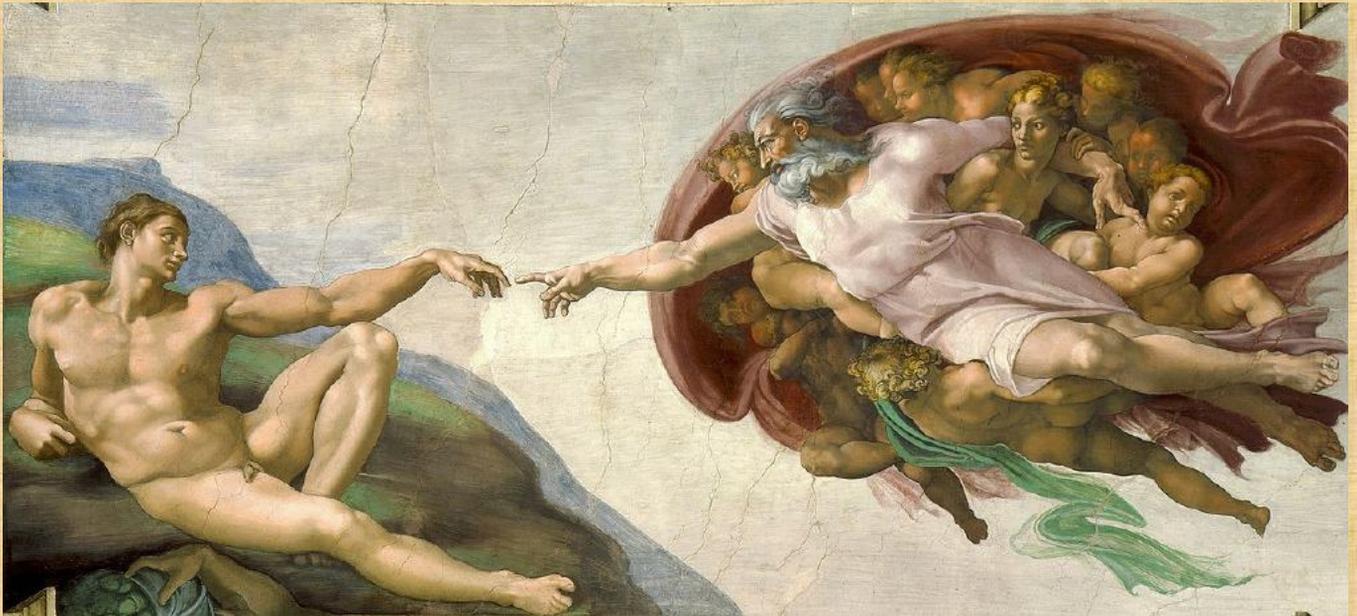
In classic Mahayana literature, the most important conceptual expression of the bodhisattva path is the mind of awakening or bodhicitta, expressing the combination of wisdom and compassion. It is often expressed in the form of an aspiration: "May I achieve Buddha-hood for the sake of all other beings!" Formal accounts of the path are divided into a series of stages most commonly 6 perfections (generosity, moral conduct, patience, courage, mental concentration, and wisdom) or 10 stages that incorporate and expand on the first 6.

Several theories of the emergence of the Mahayana tradition have been suggested, that are more pragmatic than the legends. Some believe that the Mahayana tradition emerged as the result of meditation, often accompanied by fasting, that provided visions and revelations from great Buddhas and bodhisattvas. While this might have been partly true, most agree it isn't the complete story. A view of some scholars that Mahayana arose in circles of laypeople who were worshippers of particular stupas has also been discredited, as it is clear the Mahayana had a strong monastic component from the very beginning. It is likely then that the tradition evolved in a monastic setting that gradually dispersed to the outside world.

## In bibliothecam

### Bereshit Chapters 1-11 “From the beginning to the Flood”

By RW Walter E. Cook, IV, VIII<sup>o</sup> et Philogi Adeptus Minor



This entry to *In Bibliothecam* has been both difficult and informative in equal measure. Allow me to explain: the cursory surveying to The Pentateuch done at the beginning of this project yielded little more information on this entry than “The first five books of the Hebrew Bible”. This seemed simple enough to find, and so the wrinkles of complexity did not become apparent until much further into my process than I prefer.

For example, typical google searching for “Judaic book of Genesis” and similar, only yielded Christian websites containing translations from the Christian point of view. These were not appropriate for this entry, as the goal was and is to proceed to the modern day from the age of remote antiquity. This being the case, Christian commentary (even unconscious) was not a suitable resource. I needed to find a resource authentic to at least the modern-day Jewish people.

I eventually discovered <https://www.torah-box.net>, which is the version of Genesis that I will be using for this review. This was possible by realizing that “Genesis” is the way that Christians refer to the book of creation, it goes by “Bereshit” or “בְּרֵאשִׁית”. After searching for why this is, I found that the Jewish people seem to know full well that to truly appreciate the holy books, they must be studied *in their own language*.

I suddenly felt quite humbled sitting alone in my office, being called out for my vulgar point of view by a consensus opinion of Jewish scholars. I didn't know whether to rue the day Martin Luther made biblical study as approachable as it is by translation into German, or bemoan the classical education into Latin, Greek, and Hebrew that would have made my religio/philosophical pursuits so much easier.

In any case – Bereshit is called what it is, because that is the first word in the book. There. Now we know.

All exasperation aside, Bereshit is the Jewish account of Genesis with 50 chapters in all. This review will touch on only the first 11 chapters. This is due to a problem of depth.

Bereshit is one of the two most mystical books in the bible, so I am told by esoteric scholars more learned than myself. (The other is Revelations for those who are curious.) As such, there is a judgement call that must be made: how deep do we go into each topic?

If we go as deep as is possible (at least for me), we'd be spending an awfully long time chasing conceptual rabbits down their rarified rabbit holes as we look into the shape of letters, numerological significance, and other such esoteric extrapolation. If on the other hand we err on the side of brevity, we'd lose the point of reviewing these works in the first place. Most people are familiar with the story that starts with "In the beginning..."

The solution I've adopted is to go by one major theme at a time, and write on what seems to be most interesting about it as we go. The first major theme is "creation" or to put it another way "framing God's picture of the world." I choose the latter metaphor intentionally, and will explain towards the end of this review.

Bereshit is what I've come to think of as the "real" version of Genesis, as opposed to the version I was given in the "Good News Bible" by the American Bible Society while I was a young man. Comparison reveals translations that while technically correct, serve to make the bible more accessible while removing specific wording that was and is crucial to understanding God's creation.

For example, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden has angels known as "Kerubim" or "Cherubim" to guard the garden. They could be translated as "strong ones," or have been in most of the books I've read. Instead, the "Good News Bible" translates them as "living creatures," perhaps in reference to the Holy Living Creatures that are about God's throne, but this seems to be a strange choice as it obfuscates the meaning and renders a fantastic scene rather banal. One may rightly assume that the living creatures could be anything living, like a few mice and a toad for good measure.

Perhaps the translators of this bible thought God was engaging in some clever reverse psychology at that point. "No one would think I'd put mere rodents and amphibia here to guard the Garden. Foolish mortals!"

In any case, Bereshit gets it right and is as faithful as I've seen to the original writings as one can hope. This being said, let us begin the Beginning.

The first chapter is cosmogenesis, and details how God made everything, starting with heaven and earth. There are successive divisions and days of creation until we end with the sixth day. Following this first chapter, we may reflect on the four worlds given to us in the Qabalah, and see that there are layers to creation, to God, and thus to Man that bear reflection. Perhaps the first and most important is that the first aspect of creation was the instantiation of heaven and earth – they are twins, born at the same time. We all have a dense material aspect, and a rarified spiritual aspect.

Careful study line by line will bear much fruit, particularly for those interested in the celestial world of the stars, planets, or even dreams where we put down our mortal coil for a while and see with the mind of soul.

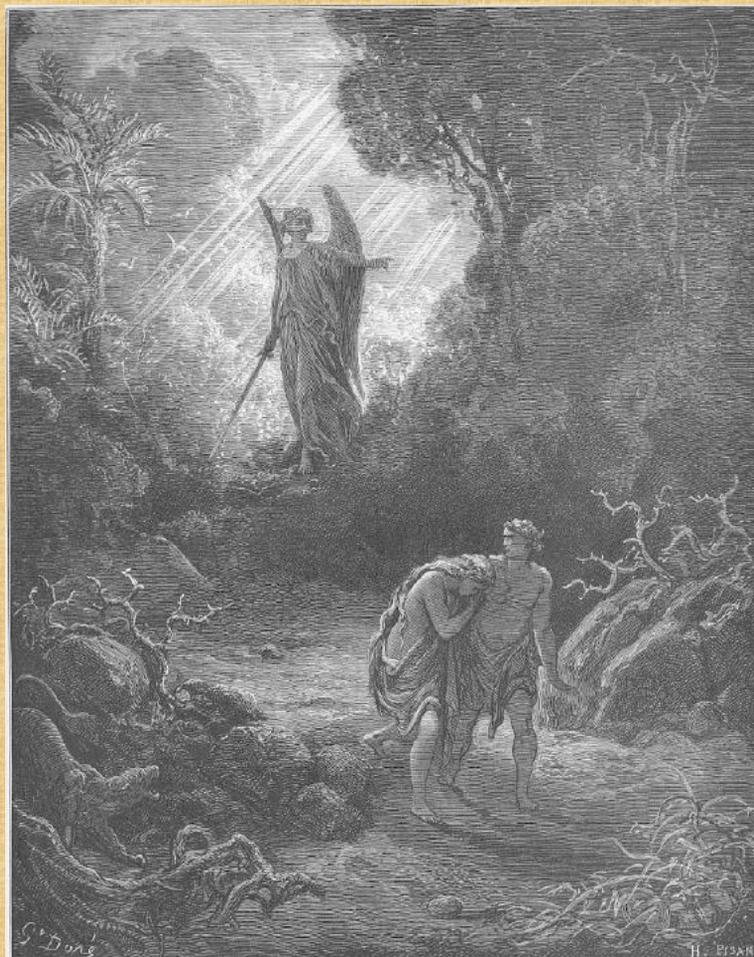
The second chapter begins with the seventh day, and God resting and inventing weekends.

There were seven "days" thus far, and it seems that at this point the first rough sketching of the universe was complete. God then set to work populating the universe with material creatures. This includes, animals of all kinds, plants, and Man.

There is a brief diversion into the geography of Eden, where is named several rivers and qualities of land. In the garden there is already the Trees of Life, and of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam is created to “dress and keep it,” so the oldest occupation is actually that of groundskeeper. In fact, Eve is not created for another seven sentences, subsequent to Adam naming all the animals.

It does seem interesting that there is brief mention of man leaving his father and mother and cleaving to his wife at this point as well. This must be editorializing by the later rabbis, because father and motherhood at this point in creation had not yet been invented.

The third chapter details the serpent tempting Eve, the eating of apples, the cursing of snakes, and the first person laid off from his job and becoming homeless. There was even an armed guard stationed out of the garden. God really meant business.



The wording of the flaming sword is interesting, however. It does not mention “barring” Adam and Eve or suggesting interposition in any way. In fact, the wording is “...the flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way to the tree of life.” This actually sounds to me something like lighting the way home.

I am not a rabbi, but I believe I’m not the first person to notice this turn of phrase, as nearly every esoteric fraternity out there seems to interpret its initiatory structure on the Tree of Life through its Sefirah in reverse order. This would be akin to us following that flaming sword along the way back to Eden.

Chapter four discusses the sons of Adam and Eve, being Cain and Abel. Here murder is invented, and Cain is given the first life sentence of hard labor. Interestingly, this chapter suddenly lets the reader know

that there are other people around that were not accounted for prior to this point. Cain takes a wife, and is given a mark on his forehead to keep him safe from people that would do him harm. I'm not the first person to remark on the sudden appearance of more people, but it does point out that we've entered into a sort of change in tone of the story of creation where things become more realistic than they were before. Cain sensibly fears for his life, as he is now a murderer which makes one, at the very least, unpopular. Cain's unnamed wife suddenly makes an appearance in order to make possible the generations of offspring detailed in the rest of the chapter. Chapter four concludes with Adam and Eve having a third son named Seth, who then has a son somehow (it does not mention Seth having a wife) named Enosh. The appearance of Enosh is rather important for this phase of God's work, as only after he shows up do people "call upon the name of the Lord."

Calling upon the name (Name?) of the Lord is interesting. It seems to me at this point in time, Man begins to pray, or in some way attempt to reach back to God in an attempt at reunion or communion. This moment may be the moment where Man takes its Arthur C. Clark-ian evolutionary leap into its next phase of development. Until now, Mankind was just sort of bumping around doing things that came to mind, eating suspicious fruit from talking snakes, inventing clothing, killing a quarter of the human population out of jealousy, etc. Now with Enosh, mankind recognizes that God is an important aspect of one's wellbeing and seeks closer contact the divine.

I would prefer to see how life worked at this point for Enosh and "men" calling upon the name of the Lord, but we don't get to see that.

Chapter five starts over again with the creation of Adam. It says "and called their name Adam", so I suppose this is the inclusive "Adam" as "Mankind." The chapter goes on to details the sons and mentions the daughters, but especially the sons and lists how long they lived. The years of life are of note to those who have an eye for numerological gematria. I'll give you one example, the most famous one: Enoch.

Enoch, son of Jared, father of Methuselah was possibly the most divine of any of the early men of the bible as Enoch "walked with God" and "God took him." This is usually what people think of when they hear the name Enoch, but what is also interesting is that Enoch lived 365 years. That is not an arbitrary number, as the Hebrews knew how many days were in a year, having had contact with the Egyptians who have a whole myth about correcting their calendar from 360 days to 365. Three hundred sixty-five is explicitly a number of completion and return, and according to Godwin's Cabalistic Encyclopedia is equivalent to "Neshiah – Oblivion; one of the Seven Earths (corr. To Tiphareth)."

Oblivion is defined by merriam-webster as "the fact or condition of not remembering: a state marked by a lack of awareness or consciousness" or "the condition or state of being forgotten or unknown (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/oblivion>)." If we look at the first definition, then a lack of awareness or consciousness seems to be something akin to transcendence, as God has taken Enoch. The latter definition suggests that he was utterly forgotten. Since we're discussing him right now, this cannot be taken on the face of the definition, but rather Enoch could be said to forget himself when taken by God. I tend to subscribe to this second interpretation, as the angel Metatron is said to be Enoch via transubstantiation. This transformation into an angel is not however detailed in this chapter.

Chapter five ends Lamech having a son named Noah, and the listing of Noah's sons of Shem, Ham, and Japeth.

Chapter six starts with men multiplying, and daughters being born. For this reason, God seems to make another change and limits the age of mankind to 120 years. This number has a certain importance to alchemy through the value of the letter Samech, and perhaps this points to a change in human

Psychology at this point in time. Another interpretation may be to say that man's life is limited by the influx of force from this letter through creation. Further speculation would only serve to lengthen this review so instead if you're interested just ask and I'm sure we'll have a great conversation.

The Nephelim are briefly mentioned, right before the world is condemned for corruption and the Flood was getting ready. The understanding that I had been given by osmosis or pop culture was that the Nephelim were horrible monsters, but instead here they are called "...the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." While the Nephelim are mentioned almost in the same breath as the world is being described as being ruined by sin, it is not explicitly stated as such. Indeed, in my "Good News Bible," they are translated as "famous men".

As pure speculation, some of these Nephelim may be names familiar to us. In our study of the Homeric works, we know that stories Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Herakles were already told and were old! These famous men could well include stories from further east such as Gilgamesh (who met his own version of Noah...). If you recall the Theogony from some time past, the genealogy of heroes was a topic discussed. Many heroes were described as demigods.

Considering the poor rationale for the slaughter created by the Trojan war, I have some grounds to understand God's point of view here. I doubt, however, I would have agreed with so much collateral damage.

The chapter ends with Noah preparing his famous ark.

Chapter seven details the events of the flood: the forty days and nights of rain, certain measurements of how much water fell, the assurance that everything that wasn't a fish really did die if it wasn't on the ark, and a final note that the waters prevailed upon the earth for "a hundred and fifty days." Those of you who have seen Graham Hancock's miniseries on Netflix may make of this what you will.

This is another adjustment God seems to have made to the Earth. While Enosh seemed to move things in the right direction pretty early in the game, it seems that things went bad at some point within the world of Man. A reason isn't really stated as to how or why Mankind went astray, but it was time for the world to start over.

Chapter eight details the ending of the flood, God speaking to Noah and disembarkation. Noah makes a burnt offering to God, and God makes his promise "...I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done." This seems a bit mixed to me. I'm relieved that the Almighty will not destroy the world for mankind's errors, but he does say that we've got a bit of bad baked into us. I'd like to say that this is evident from our capacity for error and ignorance, rather than essential corruption.

Chapter nine sees mankind starting over with Noah and his family. Animals are made to fear mankind, so now we have another adjustment made to creation. God tells Noah to eat animals and plants, but not another human, setting dire consequences for cannibalism.

God then details his promise to Noah that he won't destroy the earth again, and sets the rainbow in the clouds as proof of this.

Things then get back to normal where Noah and his family start planting fields and making wine. Wine actually becomes a problem when Noah gets drunk, one of his grandsons accidentally sees Noah passed out without clothes on, and so this grandson (Canaan) is consigned to a life of servitude to the new

Favorite grandsons Japheth and Shem who found a way to put clothes on Noah without seeing him. I always thought this was weird and I have no explanation for it.

Chapter ten gets back into the habit of ancient people listing every son begotten by whomever. I don't want to make light of foundational documents to Western culture, but it always seems tedious and I don't often see the point.

We do however get to see Nimrod mentioned, who despite the misunderstanding of a certain Bugs Bunny cartoon, was "...a mighty hunter before the Lord..."

Eventually chapter ten ends with the summary "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations; and of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood."



Chapter 11 begins with the development and creation of the Tower of Babel. Apparently, God did not like the audacity or hubris of, "a city, and a tower, with its top in heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." It is often said that the reaching of the tower to heaven was what angered God, and required the destruction of the Tower and the scattering of the people. However, this chapter does not say that the Tower was destroyed. God did confuse their language and scatter them, but there is the weird detail of "let us make us a name; lest we be scattered..." How was the name to protect them from their fate? Did they create it? How was it spelled? What was its numerological equivalents? I have never seen this detail before, and it just begs for further exploration. However, as wont of the ancient documents to do, it moves on without mentioning it again.

Following the scattering of the people of Babel, the chapter details the generations of Shem, right up to and including Abram.

This is where we stop, because after this the tone departs from the dramatically mythological to something more grounded. We'll pick up the story with Abram and his dramatic name change in the next issue.

I'd like to get back to what I mentioned a few pages ago, "Framing God's picture of the world."

I've often heard the Old Testament God described as a childish deity obsessed with the adoration of His creations, no better than a needy child. That argument always felt peevishly academic to me, because it insists on a human viewpoint being the pinnacle of creation. We've spoken of meditation and lucid dreaming in practicums and presentations in the past. These techniques allow us to be creators like God (in kind of not degree) through the use of imagination. When making a visualization, or memory palace, or even a grocery list in our mind's eye, we can get things wrong or notice room for improvement. I would like to put forward the antithesis to "God is a child" as "God is an Artist."

We probably can't know why God created creation, as we are finite and God is infinite with infinitely inscrutable motivations. However, the closest thing we may have to a reason an infinite being with no needs or requirements for its existence would have to make *everything* is likely *self-expression*. After all, with omnipotence, is anything else possible but to express what is within one's self? And since creation is God's work, since through these chapters God makes changes, we can see that this work is not yet complete. Through the process of creation, we must change things, add things, and cut other things out. We do not ask the paint if it would hurt its feelings if we want to wash away a poorly crafted tree, we merely get to work.

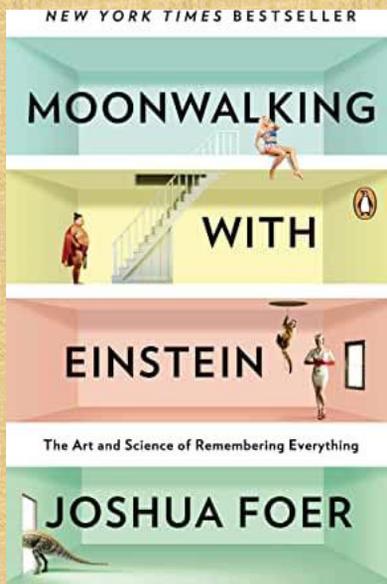
I interpret the more fantastic aspects of any ancient document in the realm of myth, which is to say that it is of "poetic truth, but historic doubt." From the standpoint of physical history, I doubt much of what is being said could be the literal truth. There is just too much not said, and the things said only make sense when certain words are swapped with others, such as "day" when God is separating heaven from earth with something like "epoch" or "aeon."

However, if one insists on a literal interpretation, one could point out how ruthless God seems to be when wiping out so much life. If we limit our perspective to that of atheistic materialism which is an assumed point of view of modern academics, then this is the only point of view. However, we are not atheists, nor are we materialists. Let us then imagine that God has a point of view. That point of view is necessarily superior to ours, and likely incorporates the wellbeing of souls before, during, and after a stint in the mortal coil.

So again, I return to the notion of God is an Artist, and to take part in the fabric of that work is the greatest privilege there can be. We don't need to understand God's work all the time, but it is probably best to appreciate it when and where we can. I don't think that the Old Testament God is any different than that of the New Testament, or the God of now.

I think rather that these ancient documents preserve truths that speak to us in a way that helps us live our lives. They may be confusing, or even insensible at times, but the effect is that they equip us for the trials and vicissitudes of life. And that is worthwhile.

Next time we pick up this back up at chapter 12.



# Moonwalking with Einstein

## The Art and Science of Remembering Everything

By Joshua Foer

Reviewed by RW W. Bruce Renner, IX°, KGC

This is a book about memory. So, what's with the funky title? It turns out that images, the funkier the better, can be helpful in remembering more abstract items such as text and numbers. There is a whole collection of methods outlined in this book which comprise what is known as the Art of Memory, whose center piece is called the Method of Loci, better known as a Memory Palace. Although not comprehensive, there is enough here to help you get started on experimenting with these techniques yourself, but that is far from its full content.

Foer is a journalist and initially took this investigation as an assignment, not realizing where it would go. By the time he decided to move on he had competed and won the 2006 USA Memory Championship, although not fairsing as well in international competition (Europeans seem to be better at this than Americans). Part of the book is then devoted to his increasing addiction to memory work, and his experiences in the community of people involved in training themselves and others to compete in various tournaments.

He also relates some history of the Art that goes back to classic times, as well as modern day research into memory. Particularly interesting are his visits with a man who seems not able to forget anything, and another who after an injury lacks any short-term memory at all. An interesting question arose particularly with the first case. Was the person a true genetic anomaly or merely a skilled practitioner of the Art?

Deeper philosophical questions about memory are lightly brushed against throughout the book especially at the end, but it is clear that the major focus is elsewhere. This is a shame, as memory is, like language and imagination, one of those magical human qualities we take for granted, not realizing it for the superpower (with or without memory palaces!) that it is. Without it, we would be forever stuck in the present moment lost to our sense of self.

RECOMMENDED

Review post note: My adventures with memory

Those of you that have been Fratres of our Society for a few years may remember that we did some memory exercises using a free app called *Mimir Mnemo* which is still available at the Apple Store. For those of you who read Foer's book and became a bit intrigued, this app is a good, though simplistic, introduction to the various methods of memory enhancement.

When I was Celebrant, especially in the early days of the College reboot, I had to come up with 4 hours of content for every convocation. Thankfully, we now have many contributors! Although I have a pretty good background in esoteric subjects, I didn't always present from material I already knew. Rather, when I found something interesting, I invited the Fratres to explore it with me, and while I would coordinate a bit, we were all essentially learning together for the first time. Such was the case with memory, at least, the type of memory work known as the Art of Memory. As I recall we had some fun with it!

Of course, memory work is central to Masonic practice. I've run across references to the Art of Memory being introduced into Freemasonry early on, although educated people of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were likely to know it from other sources. However, I haven't found any written manual of instruction for Freemasons on the subject, and it is lost to the modern Craft, at least in the standard work.

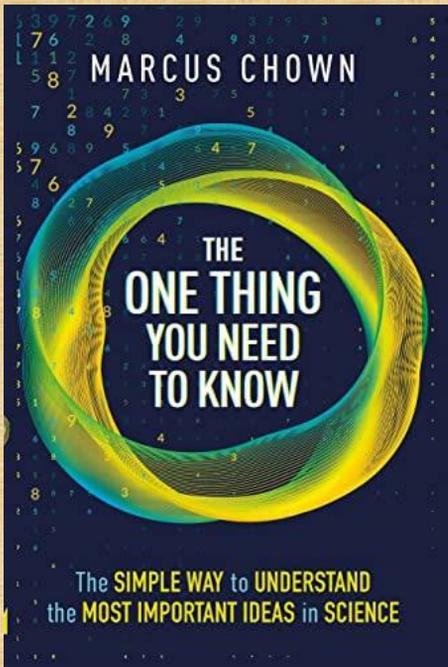
Likely, my readers share with me the same method of memorization I employed in my school years – rote practice. Indeed, looking back on my school years, a vast amount of how my learning was evaluated was by my ability to regurgitate facts from memory – from multiplication tables and ABC's to college engineering studies. My hope is our new generations are more focused on creative thinking and problem solving than the memorization of facts which are often quickly forgotten. These days, I have less need to memorize, but the exercise of memory, like many esoteric practices, whatever their other benefits, is good mental exercise.

A while ago, I ran across some material on using the Qabalistic Tree of Life as a memory palace that I found intriguing. Those who study Western Esoterism quickly find that the Tree is central to Hermetic philosophy and practice. Each part of the Tree's 10 Sephiroth (nodes) and 22 Navithoth (paths) have a variety of correspondences e.g., divine names, archangels, angels, planets, tarot cards, and letters of various ancient language alphabets. It is useful for a number of reasons to commit these to memory and one way of doing this is to visualize them using the Tree as a memory palace. I've endeavored to do this with mixed results.

Most of the Art of Memory techniques focus on recalling a large amount of information sequentially. For example, memorizing the order of a deck of cards, the first hundred digits of pi, and, perhaps more usefully, text. What I required though was a random-access memory. I wanted to jump to a place on the Tree and retrieve the information I had storage there *without visiting the intermediate nodes and paths*. I was able to effectively build the palace, but I found that this random-access ability didn't come automatically. Rather it came after many, many sequential wals throughs the Tree. Then and only then was I able to begin to visit various places randomly. In other words, only after a great deal of rote work, albeit of a different kind. I will note also that the Tree fades if not constantly refreshed, but it is relatively easy to reestablish. I find that is true when I memorize ritual in a more conventional manner, as well.

*Have you read an esoteric book lately? Why not write a book review?*

*We are always looking for material for the Newsletters. Most of the time, the same few people contribute. New voices mean new insights and equally important contribute to the Newsletter's and College's long-term continuity.*



## The One Thing you Need to Know

The simple way to understand the most important ideas of science

By  
Marcus Chown

Reviewed by RW W. Bruce Renner, IX<sup>o</sup>, KGC

I ran across this book, as I do many, while looking for something else entirely. It turned out to be a good find. According to the author, he got the idea for the book when he was asked to give a lecture on quantum computing to a group of lawyers. What, he asked himself, would be the one thing they needed to know?

Let me say that while the concept is intriguing, I'm not completely enamored of the implementation. Take, for example, the aforementioned quantum computing. The One Idea is stated to be:

“They either exploit copies of themselves in parallel universes or behave as if they do.”

I'm not sure this is the one idea I would keep on quantum computing. Actually, I like better the quote presented after the one idea:

“If you imagine the difference between an abacus and the world's fastest supercomputer, you would still not have the barest inkling of how much more powerful a quantum computer could be compared with the computers we have today.” (Julian Brown)

In all there are 21 chapters in this book, each dedicated to a single aspect of science. Each has a title, the One Thing, a quote from a notable on the subject, and a short essay (typically 15-20 pages). While the One Thing and accompanying quote might stimulate speculation, the essays are a sheer delight, although a few got deep enough to lose me a bit. While topics of cutting-edge science like quantum computing might be the first thing that attracts you, it is the essays on such things as *Electricity* and *Why is the Sun Hot?* that I found most satisfying. Why this is, I think, is because these are subjects, I thought I knew pretty well, but which Chown manages to present in a fresh and insightful way.

This is certainly not a practical book. It is entirely geared to the scientifically curious layman and addresses the big ideas. So don't expect to learn how to repair your cellphone! You will, however, come to appreciate, or perhaps be reminded of, the profoundly positive effect scientific inquiry has had on the human condition. **RECOMMENDED**

**Philologi Societas  
(in order of initial induction)**

VW Frater Joseph F. Oelgoetz, VII° et Philologus  
Theoricus\*\*

VW Frater Philip G. Beith, VII° et Philologus  
Theoricus \*\*

RW Frater Gerald T. Coleman, VIII° et Philologus  
Theoricus

RW Frater W. Bruce Renner, IX°, KGC, PJDSM et  
Philologus Adeptus Exemptus

VW Frater Marlon Gayadeen, VII° et Philologus  
Zelator

VW Frater John Comstock, VII°  
et Philologus Zelator \*

VW Frater Charles Hancock, VII°  
et Philologus Theoricus

RW Frater Robert S. Finley, IX°, KGC et  
Philologus Adeptus Exemptus \*

RW Frater Richard J. Powell, VIII° et Philologus  
Theoricus

RW Frater Paul Barrera VIII° et Philologus Zelator  
VW Frater Clyde Card, VII° et Philologus

Philosophus\*

RW Frater R. Curtiss Montgomery, IX° et  
Philologus Zelator

VW Frater James N. Stoll, VII° et Philologus  
Zelator

VW Frater Richard Simpson, VII° et Philologus  
Zelator\*

MW Frater William Howard Koon II, IX, KGC et  
Philologus Magus (Honorary)

RW Frater Walter E. Cook, VIII° et Philologus  
Philosophus

VW Frater Caleb Haines, VII° et Philologus  
Zelator

VW Frater William M. Hodwitz, VII° et  
Philologus Zelator

RW Frater Myron J. Deputat, VIII° et Adeptus  
Exemptus

VW Frater Frank Rice, VII° et Philologus Zelator

VW Frater Clint Lewey, VII° et Philologus Zelator

VW Steven J. Joyce (for Zelator)

**IN WAITING**

RW Frater Walter E. Cook, VIII° et Philologus  
Philosophus (for Adeptus Major)

VW Frater Josh Newman, VII° (for Zelator)

\* Deceased

\*\* Not now a member

**Have a need to communicate?**

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Right Worthy R. Curtiss Montgomery, IX°

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**Assistant Editor**

Right Worthy Frater Walter E. Cook, IV, VIII °

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!  
UPCOMING 2023  
CONVOCATIONS**

**Next College Convocation**

**Valley of Buffalo**

**Saturday**

**July 29<sup>th</sup>**