MANIFESTO 6

Cogito, Ergo Sum
This Manifesto was written by one of the members of the Rosicrucian International Research Council, known worldwide by the acronym I.R.C. This Council is formed of Rosicrucians who assume an important responsibility in one of the sections of Rose-Croix University International (R.C.U.I.). Each member is an authority in a particular field of science, literature, or the arts. These experts include physicists, chemists, biologists, physicians, psychologists, philosophers, historians, musicians, painters, etc. Along with their professional work, they dedicate themselves, individually and collectively, to projects aimed at advancing their profession. By belonging to our Order, their approach is fundamentally spiritual and thus contributes to the evolution of consciousness. Let us specify that they work on the Council without monetary reward or personal recognition, their primary goal being to contribute their knowledge and experience to research projects under the auspices of AMORC.

The value of the Rosicrucian Manifestos is threefold. First, they are obviously of cultural interest, for they reflect discoveries made over many centuries in various fields of knowledge. Each of them is thus a synthesis of the laws and principles you need to know as a member of our Order and as a citizen of a world in which education assumes an increasingly important place. Second, the Manifestos provide experimental proof of postulates that the mystics of the past established intuitively following their many meditations. In this way the Manifestos confirm the soundness of Rosicrucian knowledge. Third, they anticipate the future and permit a glimpse of fundamental questions that future humanity must answer if it wants to rise toward a level of higher awareness and to have access to happiness.

NOTE: The phrase *Cogito, ergo sum* on the cover means “I think, therefore I am.” It is taken from the works of René Descartes, seventeenth century French philosopher and Rosicrucian, and expresses perfectly the Order’s reason for publishing the Manifestos. The Manifestos may be lent to persons interested in Rosicrucian philosophy and in scientific, literary, or artistic pursuits.
Dear Fratres and Sorores,

Scientific evidence is accumulating that supports the viewpoint that most diseases are basically caused by psychological factors at least in those countries where the most basic needs are met and where the conditions of life are satisfactory. Indeed, reliable studies indicate that many physical disorders are influenced by the patient’s mental and emotional state. Along these lines, it is more readily acknowledged that psychosomatic and physiological disorders are either caused or worsened by the individual reaction to stress, thus indicating an interaction between psychological and physical factors. Many researchers have tried to determine those factors which cause real harm to health. They have been studying how stress, anxiety, depression, and other negative states affect the body and cause or worsen other disorders. They are also searching for ways of reversing the process of degeneration. These researchers are on the brink of proving that optimistic and positive mental attitudes can heal an afflicted body.

Stress is accompanied by an activation of the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system. Relaxation, by way of contrast, puts into play the moderating functions of the parasympathetic division of this system. These two opposing states can be observed by using instruments such as a GSR, which measures the galvanic skin response. A person who suffers from chronic anxiety tends to react slowly to stress, but this state lasts a long time. In contrast, a person who regularly practices relaxation and meditation will react quickly to stress, but will then return quickly to a state of relaxation. Moreover, this person is capable of withstanding more stress than most other people. As Rosicrucians, we know various relaxation techniques. Some are based on breathing exercises, others on the intonation of vowel sounds. All these techniques allow us to regain inner harmony after moments of stress or strong emotions. Yet it is not enough to know these techniques; they must be applied so as to improve health and the quality of life.

Little is still known about our emotional states, although we are aware of many outward manifestations that indicate inner stress. We can cite a few examples: the contraction of blood vessels following a strong emotion resulting in pallor; an increase in perspiration (“cold sweat”); the stopping and drying up of the saliva; dilation of the pupils; hairs standing on end; the rapid beating of the heart; hurried breathing; the trembling or twitching of the lips; and so forth. The increased rapidity of the heartbeat can be outwardly noticed in the
throbbing of the arteries. On the other hand, there are other organs, hidden deep in the body, which do not reveal as obviously any disturbance resulting from intense stress. Nevertheless, they are adversely affected. This is notably the case when stress affects the digestive process.

DIGESTION: The first stages of the digestive process begin normally at the sight or smell of food. Any emotional excitement has great influence on the beginning of digestion, as well as on its proper continuation. In this respect it is important to know that the presence of food in the stomach is not the only condition that induces gastric secretion. As the familiar phrase “It makes my mouth water” illustrates, the mere sight or smell of food may start salivation. Thus, the sensory satisfaction of the palate and the subsequent flow of digestive fluids condition the normal start of the digestive process.

In this connection, Richet, in 1878, studied the case of a girl with an obstructed esophagus, who was fed through a gastric fistula. He observed that when the patient tasted savory food, a quantity of gastric juice flowed, although her stomach was empty. Hornborg found that when the little boy whom he was treating chewed agreeable food, an active secretion of gastric juice invariably began, whereas the chewing of a substance such as gutta-percha was followed by no secretion. He also noted that when the little boy was irritated, no gastric juice was secreted. At a later date, Bogen reported similar observations. Such findings demonstrate that the normal flow of saliva and gastric juice is favorably influenced by pleasant sensations that accompany the taste or smell of food during chewing. Anticipation caused by the sight or smell of choice foods will produce the same effect.

It has been shown that the conditions favorable to proper digestion are wholly suppressed when a person gives in to such negative feelings as vexation, worry, and anxiety, or great emotions such as anger and fear. The dry mouth experienced by an anxious person who is called upon to speak in public is a familiar example of the influence which thoughts exercise on salivary secretions. The “proof of rice,” as practiced in India, was a practical application of the knowledge that any excitement can inhibit the salivary flow. When several persons were suspected of a crime, they were given rice to chew. After a short time, they were asked to spit the rice upon a leaf of the sacred fig tree. If any of them ejected it dry, that was taken as proof that fear of being discovered had stopped the secretion, and consequently that person was judged guilty.
Bickel and Sasaki demonstrated that normal gastric flow or secretion can be stopped by a violent psychological shock. Thus, if a child has experienced a fit of anger, it is best not to urge the child to eat immediately afterwards. Food eaten under compulsion as the result of the parent’s stronger will, or because of a fear of being punished, is most likely to be vomited before the child leaves the table. Furthermore, Oeschrler has shown that psychological disturbances suppress the flow of gastric juice and impede the secretion of pancreatic fluid as well as the normal flow of bile. Likewise, gastric secretions and stomach movements can be adversely affected by strong emotions or stress. Cannon has also stated that just as the gastric secretion in humans is affected by worry, anxiety, or stronger affective states, the peristaltic waves of the intestines are also stopped by such thoughts. It may even occur that fear or vexation completely stop the stomach and peristaltic movements.

Wertheimer proved many years ago that pain quickly suppresses the contractions of the stomach. Netschaiev showed that the excitation of the sensory fibers of the sciatic nerve, causing pain for two or three minutes, resulted in an inhibition of the gastric secretion lasting several hours. Similar effects from painful experiences have been commonly noted in humans. Lim, Ivy, and McCarthy agree that any stimulus that excites gastric secretion acts essentially by increasing the active blood flow in the gastric glands. If Reh fus is right in stating that 69.2 percent of the digestive juices result from favorable psychological stimuli or influences, then it is of utmost importance that unfavorable psychic influences not be permitted to exert their deleterious effects before or during a meal, for any unfavorable psychological stimulus suppresses or arrests the flow of the digestive juices.

As mentioned above, harmful factors may be classified under the headings of anxiety, fear, worry, boredom, or anger. Gastric analyses have been performed on patients under the influence of such emotions and an almost complete suppression of gastric secretion was observed. After the patient had calmed down, the experiment was repeated and showed that gastric secretion had returned to its normal level.

In 1922 Bolton and Goodhart proved that when the acidity of the stomach during digestion reaches a certain point, the regurgitation of the duodenal contents into the stomach takes place and lowers the acid level by neutralization. They concluded, therefore, that one of the functions of the pylorus is to regulate
the acidity of the gastric contents. Anxiety or mental strain, by lessening or suppressing gastric secretion, and by reducing or stopping altogether the stomach’s peristaltic action, markedly delay gastric secretion and the normal digestive process in the stomach.

In many people who complain of digestive disorders in the upper abdomen, an x-ray examination shows no traces of alteration or lesions. The causes are mostly functional disorders of the organ. Practically all visceral organs alternate between periods of relaxation or rest and periods of intense activity. After the stomach has finished its active phase and enters its resting phase, the accessory organs of the digestive system, such as the small intestine and the pancreas, remain active for some time. In cases of disease or psychological disorders, there is often a disturbance in the normal sequence of periods of digestive activity and interdigestive rest. The active phase of digestion may encroach on the rest period by a prolongation of, or a delay in, food evacuation. This may occur not only in organic diseases but also during intense emotional or psychic upsets, which then can practically arrest gastric digestion.

Many people contract stomach ulcers after experiencing a severe emotional crisis that often involves family, work, or financial problems. Of course, many other less important causes may disturb a fragile personality and result in digestive disorders. In duodenal ulcers, one finds invariably a high quantity of gastric acid. The same is true for patients who manifest a strong emotional or psychical instability. In both instances the hyperacidity of the gastric secretion is caused by an abnormal tonus and sustained contraction of the pylorus, which interfere with the normal alkaline regurgitation of the duodenum into the stomach. In the absence of ulcers, hyperacidity as such does not cause any pain or discomfort.

Aerophagia or air swallowing is a condition which is among the most common seen in diseases of the stomach. The majority of patients who swallow air or belch gas suffer from this condition. Although this phenomenon may appear to a certain degree in individuals of a calm nature, it is much more frequent and pronounced among psychically unstable individuals. Nervous types, ones who are easily impressionable and emotional, suffer from it more than others, for the anxiety or uneasiness which they are often subject to accentuates this physiological anomaly. Those who are affected have poor appetites and feel quickly satiated upon eating. Moreover, they belch frequently during their waking hours.
Cardiospasm is another digestive anomaly involving an increased and unnatural contraction or spasm affecting the lower esophagus, at the point where it joins the stomach. The spasmodic contraction of the cardial muscles presumably causes pain and difficulty in swallowing. Experience shows that this type of spasm generally occurs among neurotics. This conclusion is shared by many observers. We stress, however, that by neurotic we mean persons affected by strong emotional disorders or those suffering from a pronounced nervous instability.

Pylorospasm is a term used to describe the tonic contractions of the pyloric sphincter. This sphincter is a circular-like muscle that controls the lower exit of the stomach, at the point where it joins the duodenum, which is the first portion of the small intestine. As is true of cardiospasms, there are several causes for pylorospasms. Most commonly, they involve emotional and psychic upsets that can be, once more, classified under the headings of fear, worry, anxiety, and anger. Pylorospasms inhibit the normal passage of food from the stomach into the small intestine. The delay may last from seconds to minutes or even hours. These spasms may give rise to pain, a feeling of fullness, belching, heartburn, nausea and vomiting, and not infrequently to headaches. Pylorospasms can greatly reduce and delay hunger sensations and normal contractions. In 25 to 60 percent of adult patients, the spasms are caused by a nervous condition.

We have already mentioned some symptoms that may appear with pylorospasms. Other abdominal symptoms may likewise arise from nervous, psychic, or emotional causes. Among these symptoms are general abdominal pain, flatulence, bloating, and constipation alternating with diarrhea. If we add indigestion, loss of appetite, belching, heartburn, headache, nausea, and vomiting, we have a very formidable list of symptoms that show how mental and emotional upsets and stress affect digestion.

The influence of our thoughts and emotions on digestion is clearly shown in this often-heard remark: “Why is it that when I am invited out, I can eat anything without feeling the slightest discomfort, but when eating merely a light meal at home I feel indisposed?” The answer is simple. When the person in question is at home, he or she may be loaded down with various worries and fears, which inevitably lead to indigestion. By eating in company this person temporarily forgets such fears and allows the digestive system to function normally. The chronic indigestion in this case is caused by constant worrying, which disappears when happy thoughts take over.
It has been repeatedly observed that an individual who has broken a bone in an accident will vomit food that was consumed several hours earlier. This often happens to children. It is reasonable to suppose that the combined effects of pain, worry, and fear temporarily arrest the secretory and motor activity of the stomach, which is then incapable of continuing the task of digestion and thus regurgitates the food. In fact, any negative mental state has a deleterious effect on digestion. No one escapes illness after having opened the door to one’s mind and soul to the depressing influence of fear, stress, and other harmful emotions. But as surely as negative thoughts and emotions cause indigestion and all kinds of abdominal and gastrointestinal discomfort, positive thoughts and emotions bring health, happiness, and Peace Profound.

**RESPIRATION:** Humans can live about thirty days without food, three days without water, but barely five minutes without breathing. The average human breathes in about 16 kilograms (35 pounds) of air every day, which is six times the weight of the daily food and water intake. A process called respiration takes place in animals, plants, and metals. An eleven-year cycle of respiration is even attributed to the Sun, the heart of our Solar System.

Every living thing depends entirely on some sort of respiration to maintain existence. In humans this rhythmic function is controlled subconsciously by the autonomic nervous system day and night. Its regulation is governed by the demands of the body. It should also be remembered that, to function properly, the brain requires three times as much oxygen as the rest of the body. Proper respiration increases vitality and produces feelings of relaxation and well-being.

Because of the balancing and harmonizing functions of the autonomic nervous system, the frequency of the heartbeat is in direct response to the effects of breathing. If the breath is held for a few seconds, the pulse rate increases; with rapid breathing, the heartbeat decreases. Such readjustments take place on a small scale for every exertion when breathing. On the other hand, variations in the heartbeat occur not only with every inhalation and exhalation, but during times of anxiety or stress, for the breath is then held for brief periods and the inhalations are short and rapid. Thus, respiration, like digestion, is influenced by our mental state.

Besides functioning to balance the body, the autonomic nervous system acts as a mechanism to protect the body and ensure its survival. It gives rise to the appropriate emotional state according to the assessment which the brain
makes of a particular situation. If the condition seems menacing, feelings of alarm and fear are produced. The sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system dominates in this instance and triggers such specific body reactions as accelerated breathing, rapid heartbeats, dilated eyes, sweaty palms, stopping of intestinal movements, etc. Under more pleasant conditions, the parasympathetic division of the autonomic system predominates, as is the situation when one is in a state of deep relaxation or meditation. The body then becomes calm and relaxed, with the heartbeat and respiration slowing down. This is the reason why mystical experiences are always accompanied by deep physical and mental relaxation.

Each body cell uses the energy contained in food by means of oxidation—that is, by burning its nutritive elements. The totality of the metabolism in each cell constitutes the total consumption of oxygen and determines the body’s global metabolism. During sleep, the consumption of oxygen diminishes slowly until it reaches a rate of less than 8 percent that of the waking state. In the first ten minutes of a period of deep relaxation, a decrease of 10 to 20 percent is shown on average. Such rates of decrease cannot be induced by any other means. The decrease in the oxygen consumption during a period of deep relaxation is accompanied by a net diminution in blood lactate, a substance produced by the metabolism of the skeletal muscles. This substance is of particular interest, in that a relatively recent study associates lactate with anxiety. In fact, the proportion of lactate in blood increases considerably during stress, and decreases to a large degree during deep relaxation.

Besides the changes in metabolism discussed in the previous paragraph, some experiments indicate that relaxation brings about an increase in the activity of the parasympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system and a calming of the sympathetic division. One of the best indicators of such activity in the autonomic nervous system is the electrical conductivity of the skin surface. Conductivity varies according to the degree of perspiration. Any emotional stimulus activates sympathetic reactions, which includes an increase in the moisture on the surface of the skin. This permits therefore a larger amount of electric current to flow. In contrast to this, the conductivity of the skin decreases progressively during relaxation.

Body and soul are both influenced by the positive polarity of Vital Life Force contained in the air. Therefore, attention needs to be paid to the mode of breathing at the start of concentration, meditation, or visualization exercises.
with the goal of either curing a pathological condition or of becoming receptive
to intuition or inspiration. By practicing the relaxation exercises taught in the
Rosicrucian monographs one will succeed in mastering the physiological and
psychic duality of respiration, which is a duality based on inhaling and exhaling.
With practice, breathing should assume a single rhythm which includes all the
others. Deep breathing—positive, negative, or neutral, as the case may be—
assists one in mastering the duality of respiration.

In general, deep positive breathing is accompanied by sympathetic
activation; deep negative breathing by a parasympathetic stimulation; and
depth neutral breathing balances sympathetic and parasympathetic activities.
When applying Rosicrucian healing methods, the nerve energy resulting from
these three respiratory rhythms is focused on the sympathetic ganglia and
channeled spontaneously by the radial nerves to bring about particular psychic
manifestations.

The goal of a breathing exercise is not to acquire a certain skill in the
intellectual analysis of the breathing process: “Now I breathe in, now I breathe
out.” Rather, we should become increasingly aware of the continuous flow of
Vital Life Force introduced into the body with each breath. Likewise, the aim of
meditation is not to reach a certain proficiency in the proper technique. Rather,
it is to communicate with Cosmic Consciousness by means of a mental state
that allows experimentation.

Moreover, we may also direct our attention to the breathing process while
meditating, just as we do while engaged in our daily activities. Every time we
breathe in or out we are reminded of the permanent relationship that exists
between the inner world and the outer world. Inasmuch as we comprehend life
more consciously, every new inner experience brings about a corresponding
change in our outer attitude; and every new outer attitude induces a new inner
experience, one always following the other in a cycle of life energy that is
propitious to our health.

We will now conclude this discourse by stating that Vital Life Force
as a whole is a sacred energy which is omnipresent and essential. It is
a pervasive essence that gives real existence to life. The mystical art of
digestion and respiration involves the control of this energy which
penetrates everything. By according sustained attention to the manner
of eating and breathing, we then can develop the ability and willingness
to obtain control over our body. In the Rosicrucian quest for Cosmic Illumination, the Vital Life Force may be considered the chemical and alchemical catalyst which enables mystics to reach this goal.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

International Research Council
Consecrated to truth
and dedicated to every Rosicrucian

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