TOLTEC FOUNDATION - texts

<http://www.toltec-foundation.org/>

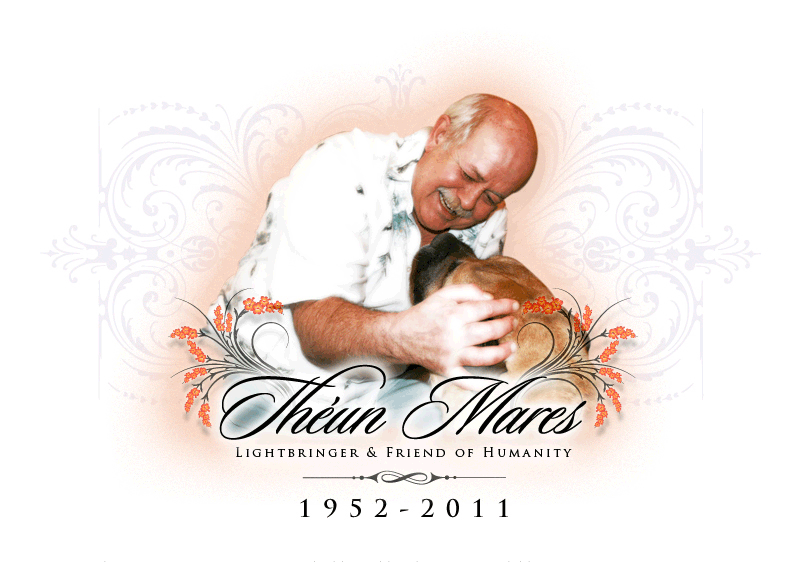
Théun Mares shows that the Toltec Teachings are a practical approach to life founded upon taking action in one's life.

Through learning to value our unique experience, as opposed to relying too much on information gleaned from others, we build greater self-reliance and self-belief.

This is the foundation for true knowledge, and through a practical knowledge of ourselves we begin to find purpose and meaning in our everyday lives.

*Life is an adventure to be lived and experienced, not an intellectual dogma to be embraced.*

# About Théun Mares



Théun Mares was never concerned with catching the eye.

Instead, his every movement originated from, and was addressed to, the heart.

The result is that Théun's life carries an influence that is powerful beyond calculation. All that we can say at this point is that the effects will be felt for aeons to come.

Théun Mares’ life ended peacefully in 2011.

If life can be characterised as a gentle, natural process of evolution, then the life of Théun Mares revealed that process.

In the world today, though, there is no such gentle, natural process. The problems we face are the result of spurning the process of life, and so the earth and all who inhabit the earth, are dangerously out of balance. But we know all this. The question is, how do we, as individuals, regain our balance? How do we again incorporate into our actions the interrelationship of all of life? How do we implement the principles, within our own lives, that will result in a new world coming into being?

One thing we can be sure of, and that is what we have tried so far, is clearly not working.

Throughout his life, Théun always sought that balance. What is it that causes a lack of balance in each of us? What specifically, in our own unique way, has caused us to be so out of harmony with ourselves, with our relationships, with the world around us? From his career as a classical dancer, to his career in education, and then writing books and guiding people, Théun strove to find the balance and poise within himself, and was able to impart this uniquely to others. As Théun said, “What is balance, but a finely-honed application of life’s guiding principles of intelligent co-operation?”

“If we can learn what it truly means to co-operate intelligently with all of life, then we can experience harmony, instead of destruction. If we allow life to evolve naturally and gently, then we can also experience regeneration. Such is the way of the warrior – to touch the world lightly – to learn to be fully part of the world, but yet not to despoil her.”

Yet, for far too long, our cultures have embodied the corrosive divisiveness that grows out of the extreme separativeness of a purely rationalistic approach to life. So we force our views continually on others and their societies – man vs man, man vs nature. We even force our views onto our own children. The books and courses of Théun Mares show how we can overcome the effects of separativeness within ourselves, and within our lives, and so achieve the balance and harmony we so desire. A balance between spirit and matter, feelings and mind, male and female, our light sides and our dark sides, a balance between all of the seemingly opposing forces that threaten to pull us apart. The end result is that once ALL our aspects have been brought into alignment; have been reconciled, we find that our life is evolving harmoniously and we feel constantly renewed.

Théun always said that he was a nagal in a hurry, as he needed to achieve so much in his lifespan. Consequently, in the many endeavours that Théun initiated, he trained a select group of people, who could be trusted to continue his work in their respective areas of specialisation - the work of bringing the Toltec Legacy, in its different forms, to humanity.

Charles Mitchley

# About Toltec

The Toltec teachings, as expressed by Théun Mares, are an approach to life that is empowering and leads to freedom.

This approach to life is non-dogmatic, helps people to find their own answers, and seeks to unite by revealing the richnesses that lie within our diversity.

Our lives today are filled with change, and we are constantly brought face to face with confusion, uncertainty, violence and fear. In the face of all this upheaval how can we find any real happiness, purpose and meaning?

The Toltec teachings show how each of us can find true fulfilment by learning to take action in specific areas of our lives. By addressing our current challenges in a new way, we can rid ourselves of our social conditioning, we can let go of the past, and we can discover true purpose and meaning in our life. Through taking the action that we need to, we also build self-belief and self-reliance - the true foundations of freedom.

How we can help you

Our primary concern is with behaviour. The roots of so many of our current problems lie in behaviour. We help people look at their behaviour in a new light. We help trace the causes of their behaviour and offer effective ways to bring about change.

Naturally, the thinking that has given rise to the behaviour also needs to be addressed, and helping people to understand and change their thinking is also a major contribution of Théun Mares’ work with the Toltec teachings.

Within the broad framework of behaviour, these are just some of the practical areas in which we can help.

Relationships

Our relationships seem to bring more and more challenges nowadays. Why is this? What can we do to improve our relationships? The Toltec teachings show how, through addressing and improving the relationship that we have with ourself, we can begin to transform all our other relationships and we can experience true openness, warmth and love.

Conflict

Conflict is a major issue in people's lives, especially when it comes to difficult relationships. The Toltec teachings show how we can look afresh at the conflicts that come into our lives and deal with them constructively and effectively.

Blame

Our tendency to blame others is one of the main barriers to achieving success, fulfilment and joy in our lives. We show how we can stop blaming others - as well as ourselves - for the events in our lives. By learning how to identify when we are resorting to blame and guilt, we can let go of our past, however bad or difficult it might have been. Through being able to let go of the past and move on - without guilt or blame - we are able to open the doorway to a new future, and to the chance of creating a solid foundation for lasting happiness and joy in our lives.

Fear

How much fear have you or your community been experiencing recently? With the onset of terror and war, as well as falling economies, there is a lot of fear permeating to the deepest levels of our lives at the moment. Many people feel extremely anxious and are asking themselves; "What can I possibly do, in the face of all this uncertainty and turmoil out there?"

When we are confronted with any extremes of events or reactions to events, it is easy for us to feel out of control, powerless and victimised. However, none of these options are going to help us very much. The Toltec teachings show how we can learn to avoid feeling helpless, how we can take charge of the events in our lives so that we no longer feel so powerless. The first step is to discover how to handle fear.

The Toltec teachings in the books of Théun Mares are about learning to find hope in a world which shows so little hope. They are about discovering value, when it seems to you that you have no value. They are about learning to believe in yourself enough to discover that your life is an adventure, that you do have a purpose that makes you unique, and that once you have found this purpose your life suddenly takes on meaning.

All you need to do is to take part.

"Would you know the meaning of laughter and joy?

Then come play with us now the game of life,

If you care to try! If you dare to lose!

Roll now, roll, roll again, roll the dice of life ...

... "What can you lose, friend, but an empty life?

What can you win friend, but a full rich life?"

# Toltec FAQs

Some of the questions asked about Théun Mares and Toltec

What does Toltec Mean?

Toltec means a man or woman of Knowledge, and the Toltec teachings, as expressed by Theun Mares, are a practical pathway of self-growth leading to self-knowledge.

Why is there so much emphasis on relationships?

Relationships form the essence of life. If you do not have the life skills to relate to others or to the world around you, then you will experience problems. It is especially important to be able to relate to yourself in a meaningful way. As you learn to do this, you will see how everything you do to uplift yourself through your personal growth also benefits the world around you.

Is this a religion?

Not in the accepted sense of the word, since there are no followers, no churches and no figures to worship. Also there are no rituals. However, religion in its truest sense implies going back to the Self – knowing yourself as who and what you really are. This is the most religious journey of all, for we are essentially all religious creatures yearning to get back to our roots.

What does going back to our roots imply in terms of our personal growth?

This implies that we need to rediscover our own purpose in life, and reconnect with our hearts.

Why are these teachings being made public now?

Previously, these teachings were transmitted orally, from a teacher. Now, however, people have reached a point at which they do not strictly need a teacher. For ages people have needed someone to tell them what to do and how to behave. However, more and more people are realising not only that they CAN think and decide for themselves, but that they HAVE to think and decide for themselves. This is what lies behind the trend towards self-sufficiency inspired by the current financial crisis. We are entering into an age of individual responsibility in which ordinary individuals no longer feel secure in putting their power in outside figures and governments – they want to claim back their power themselves. This is the essence of true personal responsibility and personal growth.

Do the Toltec Teachings conflict with established religions?

No. Not if we look at the real essence of the established religions. All true religions were founded upon the One Truth. It is only subsequently that this essence has been altered and obscured over time. For those who are willing to go beyond the face value of a religion as expressed today, these teachings can lead to a deeper understanding of other religions and especially their hidden teachings which have never been available to ordinary people.

I need something that is going to give me real life skills to improve my life. Is this approach practical?

Toltecs maintain that true personal growth requires action. Because we are all meant to participate fully in life, the concepts are not only practical - they also have to be lived. This is because true knowledge and personal growth only comes from experience – YOUR life experience. This also implies your ability to learn how to make your life work for you in practical terms, and so to discover purpose and meaning in your everyday life.

Is this going to change my life?

Remember that real personal growth and true change come from within. Remember too that your behaviour is founded upon habits you have built up over a lifetime. Undoing those habits takes more than just life skills. It takes hard work and commitment. We say: "In this life nothing is for nothing – you get out only what you put in."

Can anybody develop the life skills to benefit and grow?

Yes, provided that you are prepared to be honest with yourself and you make a commitment to yourself to put in the necessary work.

Do I have to meditate?

Since the Toltec Teachings are a practical and experiential approach to self discovery, meditation is not required.

Why is the world in such a mess?

Part of the world’s problems in excessive consumption and poor relationships lies in the fact that people are always looking outside of themselves for value, meaning and fulfilment. However, we try to show people that there is an enormous amount of beauty and magic in their ordinary lives – they just need the life skills to learn how to see it. There is also the problem that people nowadays live only in their minds. There is no place for the heart. And yet, we teach that life is a feeling and not an intellectual exercise – hence the importance of people learning how to get in touch with their hearts again.

How can I help change the world?

The best way is to start working on yourself. By taking charge of your personal growth, developing your life skills and truly uplifting yourself, you make a vast difference in the world around you, for all of life is interconnected, interrelated and interdependent.

# Toltec Legacy

Toltec Legacy is Théun's unique online teaching facility launched in February 2009

This online teaching facility was formed for 2 reasons: firstly, it enables participation by a far greater number of students interested in the Toltec Teachings than has hitherto been possible; and secondly, it provides students of the Toltec teachings who are working alone and without guidance the opportunity of being able to receive guidance for a fee that is affordable to everyone.

A brief history of how this new teaching facility came into being

Towards the end of 1999 Théun made a decision that was to bring about a radical change in his way of interacting with and teaching, not only his personal apprentices, but also students of the Toltec teachings seeking his guidance. This decision, outlined in a letter written by Neil Mason-Jones, succeeding nagal to Théun, results from Théun's belief that humanity is today ready to start working towards a far more inclusive approach towards all of life, as opposed to just seeking clarity on issues that pertain to their personal lives alone.

In order to promote this new approach in terms of his life's work, Théun started to work towards assembling a group of apprentices who are indeed ready and willing to manifest inclusiveness in their lives, as living examples of apprentices to the Warrior's Path.

Even more importantly though, has been the ability of this group to demonstrate upon the physical plane what it means to apply the teachings fully in working together, in unison, as a group of individuals, each and every one of whom demonstrates the one objective and one purpose; namely, group endeavour leading to group-consciousness -- the ultimate and definitive journey of the true warrior.

This was the start of the retreats run by Théun Mares.

Théun, assisted by his man of action, Russell Braithwaite, started running these retreats in 2000. At the beginning, there were four retreats per year, in March and September, held in two centres, England and the United States. In order to support the apprentices in the period between retreats, Théun also developed an e-forum in which he gave ongoing guidance to those who were sincere in wanting to learn to become warriors. Initially, because of the practicalities involved, as well as the restraints on Théun's time, there were three groups belonging to this e-forum: the UK group, the North American group, and the Russian group. However, as the apprentices started to gain a greater understanding of the teachings, Théun amalgamated the three groups into one.

In order to accelerate the apprentices' progress in learning to work together in an inclusive, rather than in an isolated, manner, Théun started to encourage apprentices from the three groups to attend retreats on a student exchange basis. This proved so successful that Théun was very soon able to stop the retreats in North America and hold only the retreats in England, which meant that all his apprentices now travelled to the same retreats. The consequences of this were not only that the apprentices benefited enormously from collectively calling forth far more in-depth guidance from Théun, but also that they started to foster amongst themselves the very real feeling of being, and working together as, one group of apprentices.

The results achieved by the formation of the group

In the eight years that Théun ran these retreats, he consistently increased the level of self-discipline and ruthlessly instilled in his apprentices a very deep-seated and real sense of impeccability and integrity. Needless to say, these have fostered in the apprentices a much deeper understanding of the teachings, and as a result, have inspired in them a genuine love of living the Warrior's Path, the effects of which have resulted in that sense of camaraderie and closeness which comes from sharing in each other's battles and challenges. Today the apprentices working within this group regard themselves as much more of a family in nature, rather than just another group of apprentices.

Content of the new website archive

An inevitable result of such a large group of people calling forth guidance on a daily basis is that the e-forum Théun formed for this group now holds a vast amount of Toltec material that is of an individually-tailored nature, and which does not appear in the books written by Théun. Examples of such material not in the books are; detailed teachings on concepts such as how to work with one's Direction (Easterly Dreamer, Man of Action, etc.), how to work with one's Predilection (Stalker or Dreamer), as well as how to work with one's Shortcoming and the expression of that shortcoming. But by far the most valuable aspects of the teachings contained in this archive are the examples of dedicated apprentices calling forth the guidance they need in learning to live the impeccable and power-filled life of the true warrior.

Therefore contained in this archive are the many examples of apprentices calling forth guidance on particular challenges they have faced in their lives. Also contained in the database are articles written by the apprentices of Théun demonstrating their understanding of the guidance, how they applied the guidance, what results they achieved, and what they learned as a result of all this.

In addition the archive also contains the substantial volume of teachings from the courses that Théun wrote for the Institute for the Study of Man, headed by Elizabeth Schnugh, a highly-experienced teacher of the Toltec tradition, as well as all the teachings he imparted to Elizabeth personally in teaching these courses to her.

This website contains all of the above-mentioned material and much more. Needless to say, this material is augmented by having the books written by Théun available online for the apprentices working with this website. Although the books in themselves remain an extremely valuable source of the Toltec teachings as presented by Théun, the material contained in this website forms the most valuable tool possible for the sincere student of the Toltec teachings who wishes to understand how to apply the teachings, as presented in the books, in a truly meaningful and practical way to his or her everyday life.

What this website offers apprentices

This teaching facility is unique, in that it enables students to find the answers they are seeking through working with the vast amount of teaching material contained in the database of this website. Should students using the database not find the answers they are seeking, they are able to call forth guidance from the group who worked for many years under Théun's guidance.

What adds even more to the unique nature, as well as the practical value of this teaching facility, is the fact that the group who worked under Théun's guidance is comprised of professionals from all walks of life. These members of the group are experienced enough in the Toltec teachings to be able to offer apprentices using the teaching facility expert guidance from the Toltec perspective, in a wide variety of professional areas, should they need it.

Conclusion

Everything you will experience on Toltec Legacy is not a virtual reality. Instead it is a reality, albeit a reality different from the common perception of reality, and is the culmination of the work of generations of Toltecs and their apprentices across millennia. So too are the people behind the Toltec Legacy website. The contents of the website are likewise based upon the real experience of real people treading the Warrior's Path.

# Relationships

"Life is just one huge system of relationships. Therefore, our wellbeing, happiness and success, are entirely dependent upon our skill in relating firstly, to ourselves; and secondly, to the world around us." Théun Mares

Relationships form one of the biggest issues in the world today, and as people's material well-being and financial security become ever more imperilled, the resulting strain on their relationships is only increasing.

In reponse to this strain and the ever-increasing demands for hands-on courses teaching practical ways of transforming ourselves and our relationships, The Institute for the Study of Man under the direction of Elizabeth Schnugh, is making relationships courses available to the wider public.

More about Elizabeth and the Institute for the Study of Man

Théun Mares elaborates on the importance of relationships:

"There is only one life, and we are all interdependent and interactive units of that one life.

Yet, because people have become so separative in their thinking and in their approach to life, they no longer relate to themselves or others in any meaningful way, and so it is no wonder that people are today so powerless, and that the world is in such a mess.

Unless I can relate to a computer in a knowledgeable way, I cannot utilise it. If I cannot relate to you in business, I will not be able to do business with you. If you cannot relate to your wife, your marriage will fail. And if I cannot relate to my right arm, it means that the nervous system in my arm has been damaged, and I am unable to use that arm.

Life is exactly the same, and the "nervous system" that enables us to engage life is our knowledge of relationships. Without a knowledge of relationships, we are paralysed and powerless, and will never achieve any kind of freedom."

For further information please visit:

[www.institute-for-the-study-of-man.com](http://www.institute-for-the-study-of-man.com)

# Numerology Revealed - the Secrets of the Art and Science of Numbers

What Insights can we Gain from Numerology?

In "Numerology Revealed" Théun Mares traces the origin of numbers. He explains how numbers are a fundamental vibration, and that these vibrations relate to everything in our lives.

Théun then shows how we can use numerology to reveal the unique vibration of our name, and so discover valuable and meaningful information about ourselves, our strengths, our weaknesses - in short, everything that makes us tick.

By developing an understanding of the qualities contained in the vibrations of numbers we learn how to build upon our hidden strengths, and how to transform our weaknesses. We discover the nature of our main challenges in life, our life cycles, and the hidden resources we can draw upon when facing severe challenges.

If this book is a practical guide to self-knowledge based on the esoteric and exoteric meanings of numbers, how is it that numbers can tell us so much?

God Geometrizes

It was Plato who gave us a clue to this, when he said: “God geometrizes continually.”

But what did Plato mean by this?

We can find some insight into Plato’s statement in the words of Madame Blavatsky:

“The term “God” – unless referring to the Unknown Deity or Absoluteness, which can hardly be supposed acting in any way – has always meant in ancient philosophies the collectivity of the working and intelligent Forces in nature. The word “Forest” is singular, yet it is the term to express the idea of thousands or even millions of trees of different kinds. Materialists have the option of saying “Nature,” or still better – “Law geometrizes” if they so prefer. But in the days of Plato, the average reader would hardly have understood the metaphysical distinction and real meaning. The truth, however, of Nature ever “geometrizing” is easily ascertained. Here is an instance: Heat is the modification of the motions or particles of matter. Now, it is a physical and mechanical law that particles or bodies in motion on themselves, assume a spheroidal form – this, from a globular planet down to a drop of rain. Observe the snowflakes, which along with crystals exhibit to you all the geometrical forms existing in nature. As soon as motion ceases, the spheroidal shape alters; or, as Tyndall tells us, it becomes a flat drop, then the drop forms an equilateral triangle, a hexagon and so on. In observing the breaking up of ice-particles in a large mass, through which he passed heat rays, he observed that the first shape the particles assumed, was triangular or pyramidal, then cubical and finally hexagonal, etc. Thus, even modern physical science, corroborates Plato and justifies his proposition.”

Your Names

In numerology your first name, commonly known as your Christian name, is the real YOU in this lifetime. In other words, it is that part of your true Self which is giving expression to itself through you. Therefore your first name shows us what your talents are, as well as your limitations.

So whilst your Soul Urge shows us what your true Self wants to learn in this lifetime, your first name shows us who you already are.

Your middle name shows us the specific talents and strengths you gained in previous lifetimes, and which you now bring with you to help with the challenges you have to face in this lifetime. In most cases these talents and strengths from previous lifetimes manifest as latent potential, which unfolds more or less automatically as you grow up and start having more and more life’s experience, as opposed to your unrealised potential, shown in your Soul Urge, which takes time and effort to materialise.

In the case of people having more than one middle name, the middle names are added together. In the case of people who have no middle name, we work exclusively with the Birthpath to determine what knowledge and skills are brought forward from previous lifetimes.

The last name, commonly termed the family name, or the surname, is what you inherit from the family you were born into. This inheritance includes talents, strengths, weaknesses and challenges inherent within your family. It also includes challenges related to your family that have never been resolved since they first appeared amongst some of your predecessors, and therefore have been handed down from generation to generation. This is the meaning of the statement in the Christian Bible; “visiting the inequity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.”

In the case of double-barrelled surnames the two names are taken as one name, and are treated as one name.

What your Names Reveal

As Théun Mares explains; “After we have worked out and analysed the three most important of your numbers, we then need to look more closely at the details pertaining to those numbers. These details are found within various other numbers in your name. The first of the numbers revealing more detail is your first name.

But before we get lost in too much detail let us first, for the sake of clarity, briefly reiterate what we have learned about the numbers so far. Your Soul Urge is the real you and it shows us what you need to learn in this lifetime, whilst your first name shows us the part of the real you that is going to be doing the learning within this lifetime.

These words can be confusing, for you may well wonder what is meant by a “part” of the real you? So I will explain very briefly.

We learn lifetime after lifetime, and each time we incarnate we follow the script we have written for ourselves. But realise that no single lifetime is ever long enough to learn absolutely everything surrounding our lessons. So in practice we never really finish our learning, no matter how dedicated we may be. Very often in our learning we will excel in one area, whilst we may struggle with our lessons in another area. So whenever we reincarnate we either continue with the lessons we started in the previous lifetime but did not finish, or we focus on those lessons with which we struggled.

Yet if we consider how vast life is, and how much there is for us to learn, it stands to reason that in order not to scatter ourselves, and to avoid taking on too many different areas of learning and thereby stretching ourselves too thin, we need to choose our lessons very carefully, by focusing on what is most needed in terms of us evolving our awareness successfully. It follows that we never bring all of our evolving selves with us when we reincarnate. Instead, we bring with us only that part of ourselves which needs to be worked on in this lifetime.

For example, we either incarnate as males or as females. But when we incarnate as a female we do not also bring with us all of our knowledge concerning what it is to be male, and neither do we write into our scripts lessons to do with being a male. Likewise, unless we need to learn the lessons involved in being an adopted child, we will not write such lessons into our script, and neither will we bring with us any knowledge we may already have concerning this. And if we have to learn about the corporate world, we will not write into our script lessons concerning entrepreneurial pursuits, even though we may have a great deal of knowledge concerning being an entrepreneur. And so on.

So when I say that your first name shows us the part of the real you that is going to be doing the learning within this lifetime, I am referring to the real character you are in this lifetime, together with the knowledge you already have as this character, as well as the limitations of your knowledge. Yet as we know, you have also written for yourself a script, and this script is revealed in your Destiny Number, which tells us how you are going to learn the lessons you need to learn in this lifetime. And, just as happens on the stage, where every character also needs a personality to act out the script written for it, so in your case this personality is, of course, revealed in your Personality Number.

Now you should be able to see how your first name works in conjunction with your Soul Urge.”

(Extract adapted from "Numerology Revealed".)

What is the History of Numerology?

Many people today consider Pythagoras to be the founder of numerology. However, true numerology, which is the study of universal vibration, predates even mathematics. Numerology concerns how universal vibrations are expressed within life, and the relationships between the different frequencies of these vibrations, as expressed in numbers and also the letters of the alphabet.

How can Numerology Help me?

Correctly used, numerology can provide the keys to greater knowledge of self. “Know thyself,” is an ancient admonishment that is still true today. In fact, there is no greater power than the knowledge of self, because with that knowledge we are indeed the masters of our destiny.

How is Numerology both an Art, as well as a Science?

When working with numerology three principal processes are involved, and these three processes are divided into two aspects.

The Layout and Computation constitutes the first process. This stage simply involves correctly setting up the name that is to be studied. The next process is the Analysis, in which the components of the name are analysed, according to straightforward rules. Because these two processes together are based upon clearly-defined rules of mathematics, they are rightfully termed the Science of Numerology.

The third process, called the Interpretation, is less straightforward. The procedures involved in understanding the Interpretation are outlined in “Numerology Revealed.” However, it is because this aspect is more subjective that this is known as the Art of Numerology.

In Looking at my Name, What is the Correct Name to Use?

There are no accidents in life, and therefore the correct name is that which is on your original birth certificate – no matter whether this is incorrect, or if you have never used this.

What about the names for married women, divorced women, or children who have been adopted?

“Numerology Revealed” shows the steps to correctly compute all these names, as well as the correct names for widows.

What about the Alphabets? Are the Values of the Letters the Same across all Alphabets?

No. The order of the letters in other alphabets do not always follow the sequence of the numbers, as it does in the English alphabet. For example, in the English alphabet the sequence of the letters corresponds exactly to the sequence of numbers, but this is not the case in the Cyrillic and the Greek alphabets. This is no mere co-incidence or accident, but is instead the work of linguists of old, who were versed in the science of the esoteric properties of both numbers and letters. Depending upon the motive of the linguists, these qualities were either clearly revealed, as is the case with the English alphabet, or else hidden, by not ordering the letters of the alphabet to follow the sequence of numbers, as is the case with the Cyrillic and the Greek alphabets.

Uniquely, “Numerology Revealed” not only gives the numerological values of the English alphabet, but also those of the Spanish, Greek, Bulgarian and Russian alphabets, since these have hidden variations.

How can Numerology Help me in Difficult Times?

There is always a gift in whatever challenges we are calling forth in our lives. Through numerology, we can help to see the mind set and behaviours that have contributed to our calling forth our challenges, so that we can change our mind set, as well as our behaviours, and we can also better uncover the gift that the challenge has brought us.

In fact, all our circumstances within life can be made that much more understandable through the use of the simple equations that are explained in "Numerology Revealed."

# The challenge of individual responsibility

The journey of claiming our true uniqueness, or our power, is not easy, in spite of what many new age proponents might claim, and this is why the Warrior’s Path is challenging.

Because of the challenges, it is understandable why, for many people, it is far easier to hand their power over to a higher authority, whether the church, or the government, and simply to remain as “one of the crowd”. There is a lot of security in this, and this is partly the reason why there is such a rise in fundamentalism today. However, to give up one’s power, in the false hope of finding security, is to submit to slavery and to pave the way for dictatorships.

Toltecs believe that some of the many changes that are needed in the world today can be brought about through beginning with teaching individual respect and responsibility. This is because individuals form the foundations of every country. So if the people feel weak and worthless - just a number in a crowd - then that country will reflect this. If the individuals can be shown that they are worth something, then the country concerned will also reflect this.

We are all subject to certain universal laws, like the law of gravity. For example, no-one can see the force of gravity, and yet we all have to live and work with that force. The Toltec teachings are based upon a recognition and upholding of these universal laws.

Similarly, we have the law of cause and effect, which is often expressed in the phrase, “what goes round comes round”. This law is as pervasive as the law of gravity, and it applies throughout our lives. Therefore, if they lose their job, or home or partner, warriors do not look for someone to blame, and neither do they blame themselves. Instead they accept that simply because an event happened, they are responsible for setting it up in such a way that it did happen.

This forms the basis of the Toltec approach to individual responsibility. Warriors know that they have to take full responsibility for whatever happens in their lives. There is no place for blaming other people, or the devil or, for that matter, for saying that we have been punished by God.

Does this mean that there is no accountability? We are all accountable for our actions, but we also need to take responsibility for whatever we call into our lives. As we do this, we can learn not to feel victimised by our circumstances. Instead, we can learn to look upon our trials as challenges. They are there in order to help us to grow, to become stronger and wiser.

Thus it is said: “A warrior lives by challenge”.

Today, millions of people are disenfranchised in the true sense of the word – not because they have no money or cars, but because they feel that they are worthless and have no part to play in life. Millions of others have some money but have become disaffected with their jobs, their Churches, their entire lives, and for the same reason – that they feel that they are nothing more than numbers in a system.

A great many of these people give up on themselves and any connection with their spirituality, remaining hungry and disillusioned – and they will remain so for as long as they believe that they are merely the puppets of a capricious God, or the devil, or the government, or some other aspect of the system.

Toltecs believe that although there are many sources, with each revealing its value, at the end of the day, it is the responsibility of each individual to learn to light his or her own candle and discover their unique spark. For it remains a fundamental truth that the power to change the world lies not in governments, but in the strength and mutual co-operation of individuals.

Today, there are many prophets of doom, and just to look around at the world situation is to risk becoming completely disheartened. Yet, we offer a message of hope, and a very real approach for those who are open enough to see it.

# How to handle fear

Many events in the world today are shaking the foundations of people’s lives, uprooting their sense of security and permanence. Fuelled by sensationalist media coverage, it’s easy to allow these events to build a whirlpool of fear and to leave people feeling powerless.

However, there are steps we can take to help us cope when we are confronted with uncertainty and turmoil. The Toltec Teachings show how we can learn to change our thinking, so we no longer succumb to feeling disempowered and helpless when external events hit us.

The most empowering step is to learn how to handle our fear. At the outset, though, we should remember that it is not possible to avoid fear entirely, and neither is this desirable, because fear is an integral part of life. Look around in the world, and see if you can find anyone who is not subject to fear.

We tend to fear what is unkown to us, which is why most people prefer to stay within the confines of their comfort zones, rather than face change. One only has to see how many people stay stuck in the same job or the same relationship, even though they have lost all interest in that job or relationship, simply because they are too frightened to step out on their own.

Any change brings the unknown, and this is scary for all of us. What differentiates people, however, and makes such a difference in their life, is whether or not they have learned to handle their fear constructively, so that it does not debilitate them.

Becoming debilitated by fear is very common, and the effects are the same for everyone. When you are in the clutches of fear, you are drained of your strength, and you feel weak and powerless.

Below are some steps that are vital in handling fear:

Acknowledge it

The very first step is to acknowledge our fear, instead of trying to brush it aside. Many people feel bad about admitting to their fear, believing that fear is a sign of weakness. Even from an early age, we are generally told not to be afraid, and so we end up suppressing our fear, hoping that if we deny it, it will go away.

Yet all of life evolves through the medium of fear. Fear is an expression of the instinct to self-preservation, and, as such, we can learn to channel it.

Tackle it

It is not possible to be objective when our vision is clouded. Fear tends to distort our perception of what is really going on. Therefore the second step is to detach from our fear as detachment brings objectivity.

The first step in detaching from fear is to acknowledge its existence, as we mentioned above. We continue detaching by asking questions, to enable us to gain even more objectivity or clarity.

Clarity helps us to plan our next moves. It also helps ensure that when we are feeling fearful, we do not react inappropriately, or give up, by submitting to our fear.

In seeking clarity we can ask ourselves questions, such as; “Why am I feeling afraid?” “Are there perhaps other reasons that I am not acknowledging?” “Is there any factual basis for my reasons, or are they based on suspicions?” “What more do I need to do to ensure that I am getting a full and objective picture of the situation and my fears?”

Very often, we get so caught up in our problems that an outside perspective can prove invaluable. Also, people see things differently, and different angles can help too with gaing an objective picture.

However, the goal is to gain new perspectives, not to get other people to tell us what to do. In the end, our decisions have to be our own, based on our own knowledge and judgement.

Take Action

Once you have started, keep going. The momentum of your action will propel you forward. This is a vital step we need to start as soon as possible.

Through taking action and moving forward we gain confidence and belief in ourself. Through taking action we soon find we can see our way clearly again.

Most of us know, for example, what it is like to be out of work, and how debilitating this can be. Most of us have also seen how, by taking action, one step at a time, every day, in our search for work, we can feel better about ourselves and keep our fear at bay. The result is that our spirits rise, we feel more confident and we can respond better to opportunities that come our way.

Look for the advanatge

Instead of just pushing it aside, use the fear positively to become wide awake, fully alert to opportunities, and to keep asking; “What’s really going on here?” Instead of allowing the fear to debilitate you, use it as a spur to become more creative.

If we are terrified of public speaking and we have to make a speech, we can use our fear to be hyper-alert to every aspect of our performance – our words, intonation, delivery, mannerisms. In short, we can use our fear to project an image of competence and self-confidence.

Finally, we need to look for the advantage in whatever is causing us to feel fear. Once we learn to get fear into its proper perspective, and can handle it, it is easier for us to see how fear can become a useful catalyst for change in our lives.

Remember fear can drive us forward to become bigger and better, wiser and more tolerant, more awake and therefore more responsive. Often we experience extreme fear when we are faced with the sort of crisis that leads to a major life change. Through learning how to handle our fear, we can become alert enough to use the opportunity that the crisis brings to become creative and to seize opportunities that we never knew existed.

Many have used the traumatic experience of losing their job as a springboard into a totally new and successful career. Although their initial experience may have been filled with fear, they focussed on the opportunities that they could gain, took the risk of branching into the unknown, and just kept going.

Through learning to handle our fear, our life starts taking on a new dimension of excitement, as we readily embrace innovation and change. Every step we take brings us more self-confidence. Soon we find that we have enough belief in our abilities to create for ourselves a life filled with success and meaning. For in the end, the biggest thing that prevents us from doing all this, is our fear.

# Using your emotions

Nowadays more and more people are becoming aware of how important it is to recognise and express their emotions, as opposed to just suppressing them. The “stiff upper lip” of the English way is gradually being superseded. Sadly, though, there is still little understanding of what emotions really are, and what it means to express them. Equally importantly, there is no understanding that emotions can and should be used constructively, as opposed to being indulged in with very destructive consequences.

Most people are nowadays aware of the negative effects of suppressing the emotions, and how these can lead to long-term dis-ease. However, we are also seeing an increasing incidence of emotions being allowed to run amok. So, we are finding out of control emotional reactions increasingly springing up everywhere, with people losing control of their emotions in their homes, in public, on tv, and also in numerous other forms, e.g. road rage, etc.

In addition to encouraging people to “express” their anger, there are a number of therapies suggesting that people “act out” their anger, in groups, or using tools, such as unsuspecting pillows, upon which clients can vent their long-suppressed fury. To a limited extent, these techniques can be helpful, insofar as they can lead to a true release of pressure.

However, releasing the pressure is just that – it does not address the cause, or bring about any change. Far too often the person concerned now just indulges in the emotion over and over again.

It is not the purpose of this article to deal exhaustively with emotions, or to explain the difference between emotions and feelings, (since they are not the same), but simply to give certain pointers in working with emotions.

Toltecs say that there are only 4 pure emotions - all other emotions, as opposed to feelings, are a mixture of these. The 4 pure emotions are: anger, fear, melancholy and joy.

When working with emotions the first point is to take responsibility for your emotions. They did not just come out of no-where, and just “happen” to you. You caused them – you called them forth through the quality and extent of your own perception. In other words, it is the way you perceive, or have always perceived an event or certain things in your life that will give rise to an emotional impulse. Why do people always react in the same way when someone pushes the same buttons? Simply because their perception surrounding those “buttons” has never changed! Similarly, if another driver cuts in front of you in the traffic, it is your perception of this event that makes you react with fury!

What can you do about this?

In the first place, by accepting that you are responsible for your own emotions, you are recognising that you yourself have the ability to change them, so that you do not end up reacting.

How do you do this?

You USE your emotions. We are all familiar with the emotion anger. So, we say that anger is the desire to fight. But do we want to use that desire to fight negatively, and annihilate the other person, or is there another way that is more constructive? Thus we can use anger to fight for clarity, to ask what is really going on in this situation. Therefore when you suddenly get angry, USE that anger, that desire to fight, NOT to strangle the other person, but to achieve true objectivity on the situation, and most importantly on WHY you became angry. The fact that YOU called forth the desire to fight for clarity means that YOU have something to learn from the situation, and that includes your perception of the situation.

Of course, in all this, it is not necessary in fighting for clarity to go home and think things through. You can learn to think and fight in the moment. But you should always be clear about the fact that the battle you are fighting is for your own clarity, and not that you are simply reacting to whatever is coming at you. Although it can sometimes be very satisfying to just give someone a “piece of your mind,” you always walk away knowing that you have never really changed anything – not yourself, not the other person, not the situation, and you have never actually learned anything either. And BECAUSE you called it forth in order to learn, then you will just call a similar experience forth again!

Whereas, if you accept responsibility for your own experience and your own emotions, you will always be able to USE your emotions to get the clarity you need, to change the situation, or if you cannot change the situation right now, at least to change your perception. And in this way, nobody will ever be able to push your buttons. Instead of reacting, you will be able to respond, and in your response, you will be able to choose the most appropriate course of action.

# Breaking the bondage

Many people have a dream that they might one day find a key to tap into the potential they somehow sense is hidden deep inside of them – to break free from their limitations and live the life they aspire to.

For many of those who have tried, through workshops or various self-development courses, this remains a mere dream. For, in spite of gaining new insights, they find that their lives, and most especially the way they feel about themselves and their circumstances, have not changed significantly.

For Toltecs, one of the most limiting factors in our lives is whatever we have come to believe, think and feel about ourselves and our world. This programming, of which our social conditioning is the biggest constituent, is known by Toltecs as our View of the World. This is an apt description, since our view of the world acts like a lens, through which we perceive everything in our lives, and through which all of our life experience is filtered.

When we are children, our perception is so much more fluid, free and clear, but as we age our interpretation of the events of our lives and the world becomes much more fixed. It not only closes down, but also becomes muddy and opaque, and we suddenly find that in all our thoughts, feelings, actions, reactions, hopes and fears, we have become enslaved – we have become the victims of our social conditioning.

Possibilities and opportunities that seemed boundless when we were children now appear to be narrower and more limited, and because of these limitations, we find it harder to maintain our balance, a sense of self, and a sense of purpose in our lives. We then wake up to the fact that, instead of being on a journey of adventure and excitement, our life has somehow lost its sense of meaning.

Often this is classified and dismissed as some sort of mid-life crisis – a skip in the groove of our life – that can be overcome. And so people mostly do nothing, or they search for a short while and may find themselves in a slightly different groove. And continue as before. Rare are those individuals who can use the sense of dissatisfaction to fathom their lives, and rediscover true meaning and purpose.

Is there a remedy? Yes, – and this is to undo our social conditioning and dismantle our view of the world. This is part of the journey undertaken by all those who tread the Warrior’s Path.

However, Toltecs have learned over the ages, that just as it takes time to acquire one’s social conditioning, to construct and to concretise one’s view of the world, so does it also take time to undo the effects of one’s social conditioning and to dismantle this view of the world. Therefore, in spite of what some people may profess, there are no quick or easy solutions.

What’s more, Toltecs have learned through experience, that even if there were easy and quick solutions, these would not be advisable or desirable. The reason for this is that life is a journey. Everything upon our journey has a gift. A vital part of our journey on the Warrior’s Path is learning how to extract those gifts as we dismantle our view of the world. If we avoid extracting those gifts, not only do we fail to enhance our awareness, but we also invalidate or deny our life’s experiences. If we do not enhance our awareness we might as well remain as cabbages, and denial is a far cry from breaking free from our limitations.

Through learning how to dismantle our view of the world, and to extract the gifts of power, we are able to claim the knowledge or power that our life has given us and we can begin to see our life in its proper perspective. In this way we can truly release the grip of our past and shape our future, free from our self-imposed limitations.

# Re-evaluating the concept of forgiveness

Today, as we see so much of our security eroding and lawlessness increasing, we can no longer doubt that the outside world – both people and events – are impacting upon our lives, and not always in ways that we welcome. These times may be highly uncomfortable and, for many, even dangerous.

As a result, we will often find it necessary to examine our beliefs concerning what is happening both to us and to others who may be close to us. In doing so, we will also be called upon to look again at concepts such as blame and forgiveness.

What does it mean to forgive? Can we always forgive others? Is this even necessary? Do our attempts to forgive all too often just lead to sweeping our real feelings under the carpet – with bitterness, anger and resentment simmering away – unresolved – until, one day, they find some other way of expression?

These are times in which so many issues are confronting the world – issues which will either escalate into disaster – or be resolved. If we wish to avoid the path of destruction it will be necessary for every one of us to seize the opportunities that are presented to us, and to resolve them fully for ourselves.

In order to resolve them, and in order for us to come to terms with the events in our lives, we need to look at what forgiveness really means, and what it involves.

However, forgiveness is not what we generally believe it to be.

The Toltec approach holds that real forgiveness has nothing to do with feeling sorry or apologizing – neither of which actually changes anything. True forgiveness is contained in its literal meaning. The word "forgive" is very old, and the prefix "for" means literally "to reject." So the word as a whole means "to reject the giving."

We need "to reject the giving" because, if we think we have wronged someone, we use our sense of guilt to give to that person. By giving, we hope to make it better, and to exonerate ourselves from our actions.

But giving from a sense of guilt can never lead to forgiveness. Neither can forgiveness be bestowed by another; it has to be brought about by ourselves. Conversely, if we feel that someone has wronged us, we will continue to demand payment for that offense. In the end, unless we can reject all this giving and truly forgive ourselves, we can never really move on and be free of the past.

How does forgiveness work in practice? Say that you have taken responsibility for your past by changing your behavior. The reality is that you may still have unresolved feelings about what you have done. The process of forgiveness enables you to resolve these feelings so that you can move on.

By simply feeling bad about the past, we never really move on. What’s more, we imply that the past is meaningless and has no value. What a waste. For, if we have caused harm, surely we should try to find some meaning in our actions rather than living with a heap of regrets?

Forgiving ourselves means finding value in any experience. Instead of writing off an experience as a meaningless and painful episode, we should look for the value in that experience and try to take out of the experience whatever we can learn.

By searching for meaning and value from our past, we ensure that there is no more need to give or demand payment; we can, indeed, "reject the giving" and so forgive.

Too often today, forgiveness has come to be regarded as a process we apply to others or their actions. This is a process that is concerned primarily with “making an excuse for” the actions of others, or choosing to regard these actions “indulgently”.

However, this is a far cry from the true meaning of forgiveness, and neither does it lead to any form of resolution. Instead it keeps all parties locked into a cycle of blame – a destructive cycle which perpetuates the illusion of victimhood.

How, then, can we look at forgiveness in a more constructive manner?

Yet, if we look again at the original meaning of the word forgive, namely; “to reject the giving,” it is clear that the process of forgiveness has nothing to do with making amends; or atoning; making excuses; or being indulgent. Instead it is a very personal action – an act of the self, for the self.

Toltecs believe that the process through which we free ourselves from resentment, genuinely and lastingly, is a vital one, if we ever hope to achieve resolution. It is the only process that will result in a full acceptance of self, as well as an ungrudging acknowledgement of the fact that whatever is happening now, and whatever has happened in the past, we have ourselves called forth.

Théun Mares expresses this concept in the following way. “What then is true forgiveness? Only when we reach that point of clarity at which we can clearly see that every one who has ever played a role within our lives was there in order for us to have the experiences that have aided us in moving forward in terms of our learning about self, does it become possible for us also to see that no-one has ever done anything to us.

“In other words, no matter how much we may have loved, or hated, or despised, or worshipped, or adored, or mistrusted, or doubted, any of the people within our lives, each and every one of them have been merely instruments of power that we, ourselves, have called forth for our learning.

“And it is only once we have found the gifts of power within our experiences: not only the gifts that pertain to the mutual experiences, but even more importantly, the gifts that are uniquely our own as a result of the experiences, can we truly see that in terms of how we have orchestrated the unfoldment of our fate, there was simply no other way in which we could have learned, other than through the experiences which we, ourselves, have called forth.

“Once we can see the gifts for what they truly are, all sense of judgement of self falls away like a coat that has served its purpose, and we finally stand free and victorious in our battle for self-acceptance.

“In that moment of realisation we know that we are neither "good" nor "bad," but that we are simply warriors struggling to learn, warriors who at times falter, stumble and fall. But falling in itself does not make us bad! The only thing that makes us "bad" is failing to fight whenever we do fall down! It is so very easy to say and even to think that we accept ourselves, but to do so is a huge battle, and it takes time and it takes courage.

“But when finally we do accept ourselves without judgement, and without justification of the past, it is utterly impossible to "forgive" those who have helped us along our way, for the simple reason that there is nothing to forgive them for. Are we going to "forgive" them for having helped us? Are we going to "forgive" them for the very experiences that have helped us to break free from self-judgment? How very idiotic to even entertain such ideas! The only person we ever needed to forgive is ourself. And this is only really possible once we are willing and able to let go our self-image and our view of the world. Until then we can at best justify our actions, and thereby judge the actions of those around us as being "good" or "bad" or "understandable" or "permissible given the circumstances."”

Justifying or judging actions – whether these are ours or those of others – can never lead to proper resolution. Instead justification and judgement only lead to a festering resentment.

It is only through striving for and by reaching the point at which we can acknowledge the gifts in our past and current experiences that we can fully resolve them and come to true forgiveness.

# An act of survival

A recent article in The International Herald Tribune made a strong point about some of the social consequences of the present economic crisis:

“It was a Turkish businessman who warned of a “social crisis that we should keep in mind.” For when economies collapse, bad things happen. The beast comes to poor countries first, but the potential of social upheaval awaits the rich too. Think of the 1930s and the surge of communism and fascism. Recession-related strikes and demonstrations have already bedeviled France, Russia, and Britain. The riots that spread from Greece could be a foretaste of worse things to come.

“Marxism is back,” said Oxford historian Timothy Garton Ash. “A young, educated person who can’t get a job looks about him and says ‘It’s the system’s fault, not mine.’ There are worries about a new wave of leftist violence in Europe, reminiscent of the Baader-Meinhof, Action Directe, and Red Brigades, which tortured Europe in the 1980s.

The world is sliding downhill fast, and no one can say if the rope will hold.”

If we look around us, it is clear that finding a new way to relate to the world is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. Fuelled even more now by an economic crisis, this necessity has its roots in the breakdown of many aspects of our society, which have left people feeling more and more alienated and lacking a sense of meaning and purpose. The absence of meaning and purpose quickly leads to a loss of confidence.

A lack of confidence, unless remedied quickly, leads to the decay and end of a society or civilisation. History has shown this throughout the ages in different parts of the world. We now witness this decay spreading, with almost every aspect of what we know as civilisation in decline, with natural resources in decline, with basic food and water in decline, and all of this impending collapse hastened and made more urgent by an imminent financial collapse.

It is a time when people are going to be thrown fully onto their own resources, as scant as these may be. And because of the scant nature of their resources, people will be forced to interact with others, to form groups, and to learn the skills necessary for relating in a meaningful and life-supportive manner.

Is it simply a question of being a pessimist or an optimist? Often these supposed choices are mostly just the two sides of the same coin. In other words, the pessimist bemoans the fact that that things are not what they were before, and also tends to feel like a victim. However, the optimist all too often has a naive belief that things will not change too much: “We’ll muddle through,” and “All’s well that ends well!” Neither approach really embraces change. It is often hard to leave behind the familiar, especially when there are no guarantees of what is going to happen next.

It is only when they are pushed by their circumstances to such an extent that they have their backs against the wall, that most people are prepared to take their chances and go for the new, simply because it is an act of survival.

Yet what could be the foundation upon which we can build the new?

The foundation as shown by Toltecs, is an acknowledgement of the interrelationship of all of life, and therefore the need to co-operate intelligently with all of the many facets of life that surround and impact upon us.

The Toltec teachings are based upon a deep and practical knowledge of relationships, and it is the re-evaluation of all the relationships within our lives, and so learning the meaning of intelligent co-operation, that will form the foundation for all that is new. Whether this is the relationship between members of a family, between employer and employees, between government and the people, man and the environment. With the correct understanding of the principles of relationships, and the knowledge of how to put these into practice, a very different world can evolve.

In learning to handle everything that is happening, an important principle is to learn how to bring everything back to the self, as opposed to the traditional practice of being self-centred.

Self-centred is, “Aw! Why is this happening to ME!? I don’t deserve this!It is all the fault of X, or Y, or Z. You must sort them out! Just let me be in peace!”

The Toltec approach of bringing things back to the self is, “I accept my own responsibility for whatever has happened. Now, never mind WHY all this happened, the question is WHAT can I learn, and HOW can I use that to my advantage and that of those around me?” In other words, “I am both the cause, as well as the solution.”

The self-centred approach is disempowering and not life-supportive. The second is highly empowering to ALL, and is totally life-supportive.

The Toltec teachings show how to evaluate between action that is life-supportive versus what is not life-supportive.

At the core of the Toltec approach is learning to live in a life-supportive way. How to be a responsible human being, so that you are acting in harmony with your own inner being, and therefore co-operating fully in the unfoldment of your fate. This implies also learning to relate fully to yourself, to other people, to the world around you. Relating fully implies a lot more than just tolerating, or co-existing - it implies first and foremost that you have a deep undertanding that you have a unique role to play in life, a knowledge of what that role is, and how to fulfil it.

# Resolving control

One of the shortcomings is described as “obsession with the need to control.” Wanting to control life is a major factor for many people today, and especially for those with this shortcoming. This article highlights one of the effects of control.

A lady called Dora used to suffer from candida. She was one of millions of people troubled by this disorder, and for whom life had become a dietary misery. Dora’s condition was so bad that she could sometimes only survive by following a strict diet and taking countless supplements. The candida was controlling Dora’s life.

Sadly, Dora’s case is all too common today. But apart from the many candida sufferers, there are millions of other people for whom stringent dietary control has become an all-consuming life focus.

However, apart from the inconvenience to her life, Dora soon discovered that following the prescribed diet and taking all the supplements only provided a temporary relief. For while her condition did indeed improve, the slightest crisis in her life simply resulted in her becoming ill, and having to start the diet all over again. She despaired of ever being able to break out of this cycle.

Luckily Dora discovered that there is another way of looking at her condition. By learning to look at her life as a whole, and by learning to make adjustments not only to her lifestyle, but also to the way in which she relates to herself and others, she could eliminate her need for dieting. What’s more she could also find the joy and fulfilment in her life that she had never been able to experience before.

Through working on herself and uplifting herself, Dora came to see how important it was for her to achieve balance in her life. If her life was in balance, her body and health would also be in a balanced state. But if her life was out of balance, no matter how many supplements she took, and what diet she followed, her health would suffer in the end. Dora also found out that balance encompasses everything – her work, her home life, her relationships, and most importantly, her relationship with herself. For, in her rush to succeed, Dora had ignored this primary relationship.

As she looked deeper into her life, Dora soon discovered that the main reason why her life was so out of balance, was because she was a “control freak.” Through wanting to control and restrict every aspect of her life, she was limiting her experiences, her growth and most especially, her happiness. Ironically, Dora was such a control freak, that she ended up having to control even her eating – just so that she could continue with her illusion of remaining in control of her life.

When she looked deeper, she discovered that the reason for this was that Dora’s life had become all about striving to achieve certain fixed goals, and trying to force her life to fit into certain pre-determined expectations. Yet, these goals and expectations often have little to do with what we truly want, in terms of following our hearts or the reality of our lives, and so we find we have to expend more and more effort, and exercise more and more control, in order to meet them.

Dora was a high achiever in her career, working for a company that was very successful. Yet in spite of her outer success, she was not inwardly happy, and so her life became one long process of control in order to keep her inner feelings of emptiness at bay. It was this that brought about the imbalance in her life and led to her serious candida condition.

By finding out what balance means for us, we can let go of the need to control, and by accepting that life is based on relationships - that it is a give and take process - we can heal ourselves, and experience true happiness and fulfilment. Through being open, we can learn to flow with life, and so allow ourselves to enjoy all the many richnesses that life has to offer.

Toltecs say that life is not a problem to be solved, but an experience to be savoured. By excluding so much of life through our efforts at control, we cannot savour anything, but are simply inviting bitterness and dissatisfaction.

# The riddle of the Sphinx

Théun Mares talks about the riddle of the Sphinx and the answer to our deepest questions about "what is man?"

It is impossible to address this question fully in one short answer, for it is vast! It is the story of HU-MAN, that is, of spirit-matter and the relationship between them!

But to keep it simple, I am sure you know the riddle, namely, "What goes on four legs in the morning, on two at midday and on three in the afternoon?" The answer is, of course, MAN! But what the myth refers to is NOT the face value riddle, but that unanswerable question, "What is man?"

To grasp what I mean you must realize that MAN is not a thing that can be DE-FINED! The only true knowledge we have of MAN is what we have learned from the relationship between spirit and matter, that is, between nagal and tonal! In other words, the REAL riddle concerns the fact that although we can and do learn about the RELATIONSHIP between the primal opposites, we are still no closer to being able to say with any certainty, THIS or THAT is MAN! People get so very carried away about all this "knowledge" they have about themselves, and they are so very convinced that they KNOW themselves that they never get in touch with the MYSTERY we term Life!

But for me personally, the riddle of the sphinx was verbalized so very beautifully, eloquently, profoundly and poignantly by Jung when he stated:

"The uniqueness of the psyche is of a magnitude that can never be made wholly real, it can only be realized approximately, though it still remains the absolute basis for all consciousness. The deeper "layers" of psyche lose their individual uniqueness as they retreat further and further into darkness. "Lower down," that is to say, as they approach the autonomous functional systems, they become increasingly collective until they are universalized and extinguished in the body's materiality, that is, in the chemical bodies. The body's carbon is simply carbon. Hence "at bottom" of psyche is simply "world."

What Jung explains is, of course, what is symbolized in the sphinx, having the head of man and the body of a lion, or in other words, the indwelling spirit utilizing the animal form, or the true self indwelling the little self, etc.

Erwin Schroedinger, a renowned physicist, agreed with Jung when he stated in his own way:

"....inconceivable as it seems to ordinary reason, you - and all other conscious beings as such - are all in all. Hence this life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of the entire existence, but is in a certain sense the whole; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance. This, as we know, is what the Brahmins express in that sacred, mystic formula which is yet really so simple and so clear: TAT TVAM ASI, this is you. Or, again, in such words as, "I am in the east and in the west; I am below and above; I am this whole world."

But Jung goes on to point out that implicit even within statements such as these is the fact that we are STILL not addressing the question or the riddle, "What is man," and goes on to suggest that in order to answer this question we have to see the SELF, not as a unit isolated from, or separated from the One Life, but as THE one and only nagal or spirit, for only in this way can we even BEGIN to understand who and what man really is. On this Jung says:

"The widened consciousness is no longer that touchy, egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, ambitions which always has to be compensated and corrected by unconscious counter-tendencies; instead it is a function of relationship to the world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute, binding and indissoluble communion with the world at large. The complications arising at this stage are no longer egotistic wish-conflicts, but difficulties that concern others as much as oneself. At this stage it is fundamentally a question of collective problems, which have activated the collective unconscious because they require collective rather than personal compensation. We can now see that the unconscious produces contents which are valid not only for the person concerned, but for others as well, in fact, for a great many people, and possibly for all."

But perhaps the closest Jung ever did get to verbalizing the question or the riddle of man, was when he stated:

"All opposites are of God, therefore man must bend to this burden; and in doing so he finds that God in his 'oppositeness' has taken possession of him, incarnated himself in him. He becomes a vessel filled with divine conflict."

On the essence of man, and his "burden," as Jung refers to it, Jung sums it up most poignantly when he stated:

"Complete redemption from the sufferings of this world is and must remain an illusion. Christ's earthly life likewise ended, not in complacent bliss, but on the cross. The goal is important only as an idea; the essential thing is the opus which leads to the goal; THAT is the goal of a lifetime."

And, yes, so the great work, the opus, continues, as we strive in our learning to honour the ancient admonishment, "Man know thyself!"

# Stepping over versus suppressing emotions

In the books of Théun Mares there is a lot of information about how to use our emotions, and also not suppressing our emotions. Here Théun highlights the main differences between suppressing and stepping over our emotions.

First of all, realise that suppression means the suppression of one's KNOWLEDGE of something. For the sake of clarity we speak of suppressing our emotions, or suppressing our sexuality. But in reality what we are suppressing is our understanding or our knowledge of emotions, our knowledge of sexuality etc. What this means is that we IGNORE whatever knowledge we do have, in the sense that we do not apply the knowledge we do have, but instead PRETEND that we do not know what is going on for us.

Different people will use different ways in which to ignore their knowledge, and everyone will do it for different reasons. For example, one person may FEAR the consequences of becoming angry, and so every time he becomes angry he pretends to himself and others that he is NOT angry, and he will immediately try to shift the focus AWAY from his anger until the anger subsides. Another person who may have grown up believing that sex is a sin, will do much the same, in that every time he feels sexually aroused or stimulated in whatever way, he will immediately pretend that he is NOT sexually aroused, and will desperately try to shift the focus to something else until the arousal has subsided.

This, of course, is using the technique of Not-Doing in a negative manner, and if perpetuated over a long period of time, the person concerned gradually builds what is termed a conditioned reflex in the nervous system which sets off an automatic shift in perception every time the FEARED emotion arises, and in time such an automatic shift becomes so powerful and subtle that eventually that person NO LONGER registers anger or sexual arousal or whatever else has been suppressed.

However, suppression of the emotion does NOT mean that the emotion or the sexual response, or whatever, no longer arises, but it means that the person concerned can no longer register, or more accurately, can no longer PERCEIVE the emotion within himself when it does arise, for he has to all intents and purposes blocked it out of his perception. This then starts what is termed in the books as the pressure cooker effect, for a time will come when the person concerned can no longer keep suppressing the suppressed emotion, and then the emotion in the MOMENT triggers ALL of the emotion that has been suppressed for years and years!

The result is always in the nature of a cataclysmic eruption that invariably leads to absolute violence, either a violence directed at the person who has caused the outburst, or else at the self, often resulting in severe mental trauma. Typical examples of this type of eruption are road rage, a woman shooting her husband, a man killing his children, temporary insanity, sudden strokes leading to permanent paralysis, chronic heart attacks, etc.

Stepping over an emotion is an altogether different kettle of fish, and a MOST useful technique! Stepping over an emotion is as simple as ACKNOWLEDGING one's emotion, and then WORKING with it with SKILL IN ACTION! For example, if you become hugely angry, you acknowledge that anger to yourself and then USE it to fuel your clarity, your sense of courage and above all, your ACTIONS! In other words you make the anger work FOR you in the moment it arises!

This is equally true when you make yourself angry! Whenever you become angry at yourself, for whatever reason, instead of beating up on yourself for having been stupid or careless or slow or whatever else, you USE your anger to FIGHT against the behaviour that has made you angry! In other words, you say to yourself, "Okay! Enough is already enough of this behaviour! From now on I am going to make EVERY effort to not keep on INDULGING in this stupid behaviour that makes me feel shit about myself!" You will be amazed at how quickly one can break a HABIT or change a behaviour by USING one's anger at oneself instead of INDULGING in feeling bad or guilty or sorry for oneself!

Although I have used only the example of anger, what I have explained here is equally true for all emotions as well as for mental responses and reactions.

# The Toltec approach to life

The Toltec approach to life is based upon a deep knowledge of life, its roots being as old as humanity itself. As humanity has evolved, so has Toltec knowledge evolved, adapting to the needs of the age. The oral tradition was kept alive by groups of Toltecs, meaning men and women of knowledge. These men and women of knowledge have existed throughout the world in different guises and under different names, yet amongst themselves they are known as Toltecs.

Today, most people are only familiar with the Mesoamerican civilization that went under the name Toltec. Yet, this represents only a small part of Toltec knowledge, and men and women of knowledge today do not partake in any of the different forms of ritual and shamanism that have emerged from the Mesoamerican traditions.

On the contrary, Toltec knowledge is vast and intensely practical. It provides deep insights into all the varied disciplines of human endeavour, as well as a practical basis for approaching these disciplines.

Today there is a wide array of analyses of the world’s problems and challenges. As a result, there is at least a consensus that we do indeed have challenges. However, there is little knowledge or agreement both as to how to solve these problems, and also as to the true causes of those problems.

Here are three ways in which the Toltec Teachings can help by offering practical cures and solutions.

Behaviour

The roots of so many of our problems lie in behaviour. The Toltec teachings contain a huge body of knowledge related to behaviour and its causes. Through this body of knowledge, we can help trace the true causes of behaviour, and offer effective ways to bring about change.

Thinking

At the base of so much behaviour lie thought-patterns. Therefore, the thinking that has given rise to the behaviour also needs to be addressed. Helping people to understand and then to change their thinking is a major part of the Toltec teachings.

Feeling

An important element in changing our behaviour is to discover why we feel the way we do about ourselves and the world around us. Then, in learning how to handle our emotions with skill, we can respond intelligently to life, rather than reacting in our accustomed manner.

At the end of the day there is only One Truth, and One Life and it is the knowledge of this that forms the base of all true religions.

All true churches started from a truth that is based upon the One Truth, and it is an understanding, and an experience of the nature of this One Truth that will lead to the building of bridges, and to the realisation not only that we are all One, but that each and every one of us is needed in his or her true uniqueness, in order for the One to become a proper functioning whole.

# Are the Toltec teachings a religion?

In the way that people currently use the word religion, the Toltec teachings are not a religion, and neither are they a philosophy, yet the Toltec teachings can reveal the fundamental truths behind all religions

For many people, religion implies going to church, or becoming involved in some kind of worship. Religion is often looked at as a matter of faith that is largely determined by one’s background and race, while a philosophy implies a pursuit of intellectual ideas and ideals.

The word “Toltec” means “a man or woman of knowledge”, and so the Toltec teachings may be described as a pathway to knowledge. This may sound like a philosophy, until one discovers that knowledge, in the sense used by Toltecs, means experiential knowledge. Information only becomes knowledge once it has been put into practice in one’s life – once it has been directly and empirically experienced.

The wonderful thing about life is that everyone’s experience of it is unique! We know all too well how so many different people participating in an event can have equally many and differing experiences of that event.

This implies that our experience of life is always personal; that our knowledge is personal. It is inextricably tied up with who we are. For if we were someone else we would not experience life in the same way. Therefore our experiences often tell us more about our self than about the event, since our perception of any event is anyway always subjective in nature.

The Toltec teachings represent a way in which we can go back to our roots, and going back to our roots, in order to find that inner spark or essence, is the very purpose and meaning of the word religion. In this respect, then, the Toltec teachings are deeply religious in essence, even if they do not form what is currently looked at as a religion.

Going back to our roots implies a journey back to the Self. This is quite the hardest of all journeys, for this is a journey of rediscovering who and what we really are, as well as what our purpose or fate encompasses.

The warrior’s aim is to unravel our own spark of individuality; to find out what it is that is unique and special about us – what makes our unique signature – and then to make our full committment to life by exploring and utilising our gifts or potential to the utmost. For this reason Toltecs claim that the only true knowledge is of the self – knowledge that is gained through one’s practical experiences of life.

Each of us has a unique role to play in life. Therefore, unless we start uncovering our potential and learn to unfold our fate in our own unique way, we deny our reason for being alive, or as Christians would say, we are failing to live as a son of God.

At the end of the day there is only One Truth, and One Life and it is the knowledge of this that forms the base of all true religions.

What separates and divides, and causes so much strife is humanity’s tendency to compartmentalise and, in doing so, to set themselves apart from other people and other religions. It is only a short step from this to religious intolerance and aggression.

One of the effects of this intolerance is to breed more intolerance and suspicion, so that there are today a host of different churches, going their own way, and most highly suspicious of each other.

Yet all of these churches have a truth that is based upon the One Truth, and it is an understanding, and an experience of the nature of this One Truth that will lead to the building of bridges, and to the realisation not only that we are all One, but that each and every one of us is needed in his or her true uniqueness, in order for the One to become a proper functioning whole.

Toltecs do not wish to start another religion; that is not our purpose, and the time for structures is past. However, we are willing to become involved in the building of bridges – to share our knowledge with existing structures and religions who wish to open themselves to a fresh insight.

# The Toltec teachings conveying humanity's heritage

The Toltec teachings are described as being humanity’s true heritage – a heritage that is as old as humanity itself. But what does this mean?

Simply, that there exists a Universal Truth that there is but One Life, which is expressing itself through countless different forms. This is a Truth to which the individual form of each of our various religions should bear witness. However, over the ages, the form, as well as the desire for dominance of many religions have become more important than the Truths which they are supposed to embody. This has led to so much separativeness, bigotry, fanaticism and, consequently, to so much destruction, instead of upliftment.

Now the time has come for the true nature of man’s heritage to be revealed, showing the underlying essence that does lie behind all true religions, and enabling man to seek the at-one-ness as an individual unit of the One Life that he or she so earnestly desires.

In trying to grasp the underlying truth, it may be useful to point to the similarities in at least some aspects of the established religions. These similarities show that what we now understand as separate religions, are, in fact far more interlinked in their origins and form than many would believe.

Let us start by looking at the early Mithraic religion, where the worship of the Sun God, Mithra, was carried out by the Magi.

We find that the Mithraic religion had its sacraments, its baptism, its penitence, its Eucharist and its consecration by mystical words; the catechumens of that religion had preparatory trials, the Initiates or the faithful marked their foreheads with a sacred sign; they admitted also the dogma of the resurrection; they were presented with the crown, which ornamented the forehead of the martyrs; their sovereign Pontiff was not allowed to marry several times; they had their virgins and their laws of continence; in fact they had many things, which were later practised by the Christians. [Dupuis – The Origin of All Religions.]

We are also told by Macrobius that feasts of the Passion, or of the death and resurrection of the God Day, which had been fixed at the equinox of spring, were to be found in all sects of the religion of the Sun. With the Egyptians, it was the death and resurrection of Osiris, with the Phoenicians it was the death and resurrection of Adonis, and with the Phrygians it represented the tragic adventures of Atys, etc. Therefore the God Sun experiences in all religions the same misfortunes as Christ, like him he triumphs over death, and this happens just at the same epochs of its annual revolution.

If we look further, towards the Hindu religion, we can also see present the principle of the virgin birth. There we find that their supreme avatar, Krishna, although the eighth such, was the first to have descended in all plenitude from the Godhead, and to have been regarded as Vishnu himself in a human form.

Krishna was born of a chaste virgin, called Devaki, who, on account of her purity, was selected to become the “mother of God.” Buddha Himself was born of the virgin Maya, or Mary. The Siamese had a Virgin-born God and Saviour whom they called Codom. [Diegesis – Robert Taylor.]

Dean Millman, in his “History of Christianity”, refers to the tradition, found amongst the Chinese, that an early saviour, called Fo-hi, was born of a virgin, and he remarks also that the first Jesuit missionaries who went to China were appalled at finding, in the mythology of that country, a counterpart of the story of the virgin of Judea.

These are just one or two examples, but for the serious student of comparative religion, there are many well-researched accounts of the large numbers of similarities, both in form, as well as in belief between various religions, and earlier paganism too.

The problem, though, has come about through humanity’s insatiable desire for power over, and control, and thus using the letter of the ‘law’, or the peculiarities of a specific form, to claim that they are right and that all others are at best wrong, and at worst evil.

This practice started even as far back as the early Christians. For example, in his First Apology, St. Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) points to the large number of similarities between Christianity and other pre-existing religions as evidence why Christianity should be accepted. However, he also goes on to say that in spite of all these similarities, Christianity is the only true religion. Further, he maintains that where pre-existing religions are similar, these similarities were “imitated” in advance, by “the influence of the wicked demons, to deceive and lead astray the human race." This line of reasoning was perpetuated by Tertullian and, ever since, by a host of others.

Nevertheless, as Dupuis puts it: “there is not the slightest difficulty, without the intervention of the Devil, to perceive, that whenever two religions resemble each other so completely, the oldest must be the mother and the youngest the daughter.”

If, then, it is blind reliance on the form by power-hungry, fanatical or misguided adherents, then, one may wonder, what is it in any religion that lies beyond the form?

Beyond the form, or behind the veil, as expressed in the occult terminology, lie the hidden, true teachings; the inner core; the true legacy, for which the outer teachings are nothing more than a vehicle to lead the dedicated searcher into true understanding. The true inner teachings are, in reality, so powerful in their utter simplicity, that they could not be revealed to any but the most trusted initiates, for the very real fear that they would be abused.

Thus, for example, in earlier times, in India, it was because of this risk that the last of the Brahmans’ precious manuscripts were secured and hidden during the reign of the Emperor Akbar. In spite of all his bribes and threats the Emperor was never able to succeed in extorting from the Brahmans the original text of the Veda. [Prof. Max Müller, Lecture on the “Science of Religion.”]

Today, as a result of either the safeguarding of these inner teachings throughout the world, or the wholesale destruction of much of the evidence that points to them, by fanatics of every country, there is little written evidence of their existence, and even less true knowledge of their use. And in this respect, it is doubtful that there exists in the West today, true original versions of the texts of any of the major Eastern religions.

Yet, for those who truly have the eyes to see, and the HEART, as opposed to the MIND, with which to hear, the truth is still discernible – a truth that is the same foundation for all true religions; namely, that there is, and has always been, but One Life, evolving One awareness, through the utilization of One matter – the One, the Supreme Cause; nameless and formless, about Whom naught may be said, but the One from Whom and of Whom all issues.

Concerning this One Supreme Being, the ancient Vedas, predating even the oldest of the psalms, speak thus:

“Who has seen the primeval being at the time of His being born? What is that endowed with substance that the unsubstantial sustains? From earth are the breath and blood, but where is the soul – who may repair to the sage to ask this? What is that One alone, who has upheld these six spheres in the form of an unborn?”

Elsewhere we find:

“The germ that still lay covered in the husk

Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.

Then first came Love upon it, the new spring

Of mind; yea, poets in their hearts discerned,

Pondering this bond between created things

And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth,

Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?

These seeds were sown, and mighty power arose,

Nature below, and Power and Will above.

Who knows the secret? Who proclaimed it here?

Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?

The gods themselves came later into being.

Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?

He, from whom all this great creation came.

Whether His will created or was mute,

The Most High seer, that is in highest heaven,

He knows it; or, perchance, e’en He knows not.”

[History of India, Vol. 1 by Talboys Wheeler, and History of Sanscrit Literature, by Prof. Max Müller.]

From the Boundless One, proceeds Every-Thing, the Universe, and all that we know, or are able to describe.

In terms of cosmology, as expressed through the Toltec teachings, this Supreme Being relates to the origin of life, life unmanifest, or the Unspeakable, or what Toltecs refer to as the nagal, or pure spirit.

From the above arises the basic duality, as expressed through the little-understood law of polarity. This knowledge, embodied in all life-forms, was acknowledged and celebrated by the ancients through the early depiction in so many different religions, of the sexual organs. As Dupuis expresses it: “Those images and symbolical expressions of the two great forces of the God-Universe, were as simple as they were ingenious; they had been imagined in those ages, when the organs of generation and their union had not yet been blemished by the ridiculous prejudice of mysticism, or dishonored by the abuse of lewdness. The operations of Nature and of her agents were held as sacred as herself: our religious errors and vices have only profaned her.”

From the Unspeakable also arises the fundamental triplicity of the godhead that is found at the heart of all the great religions. Thus, we have, for example; God the Father, God the Holy Spirit and God Jesus Christ; Brahmâ, Shiva, Vishnu; Agni, Sûrya, Vâyu; Kether, Binah, Chokmah; Osiris, Isis, Horus, etc.

Yet, as we have seen, because these representations, or forms, have not been recognized as symbols for inner truths that can never be spoken about, but only lived and experienced, they have led to bitter conflicts as to which is the superior, and thus have led to extreme separativeness and destruction.

It is little wonder then, that the inner teachings have always had to remain hidden, for man is indeed the microcosm of the macrocosm, and the pathways to man’s inner being, as revealed through knowing and living the Eternal Truth, provide man with the most powerful keys, not only to his own life and happiness, but also to the entire universe.

These are the keys that are contained within man’s true heritage, and which are being revealed through the Toltec teachings as expressed by Théun Mares.

# The distinction between true knowledge and sorcery/shamanism

It is hardly surprising that the word Toltec should be associated in some people’s minds with Mesoamerican practices of sorcery and shamanism

This erroneous association has arisen mainly because, although Toltecs, meaning men and women of knowledge, have always existed throughout the world, it is only Carlos Castaneda who has used the term Toltec in his books, and thus Toltec has ended up by becoming associated with the Mesoamerican traditions of sorcery and shamanism, through the readers of his books.

Additionally, owing to the widespread destruction of sacred records in different parts of the world, as well as the destruction of so many plain historical records, (such as codices, by the Spanish conquerors in South America), there is little evidence now of the true height of the civilisation and advanced nature of our very early cultures.

In order to set the record straight, and in response to questions posed by many readers, we would like to start by clarifying some of the misconceptions surrounding the relationship between Carlos Castaneda and his teacher Juan Matus. The first point to note is that Don Juan was indeed an utterly impeccable warrior dedicated to the Path of Freedom, and nagal of the Toltec tradition. On the other hand, Carlos Castaneda, as is clear from his books, was not interested in freedom, but rather in the Path of High Adventure and sorcery/shamanism.

Although Don Juan was Castaneda’s teacher, one important fact that is made clear in the latter’s books, but which seems to have escaped the attention of most readers, is that Castaneda’s training was never completed. Indeed, even at his final meeting with Don Juan, Castaneda did not have a fully restored memory. The consequence of this is that Castaneda still laboured under the influence of a highly selective perception, which enormously affected his ability to pass on or to interpret the Toltec teachings with any degree of reliability or authority. In this respect, it should be remembered that what has always grabbed the attention of the serious reader of his books are those passages where Castaneda directly quotes Don Juan verbatim. The value of these passages should be contrasted with the unreliable field notes recorded and fancifully misinterpreted by Castaneda and which constitute the bulk of his work.

Moreover, in relation to the references to sorcery in Carlos Castaneda’s books, the extracts quoted below should clarify that whilst knowledge relating to sorcery is indeed part of the history of the Toltec tradition, its practice does not lead to freedom. The extracts also clarify another important point, namely that the Toltec teachings as taught by the Warriors of Freedom have nothing to do with the shamans of Mexico.

Any true reading of Castaneda’s books will further reveal that his teacher, Don Juan, was always clear and uncompromising in maintaining that sorcery/shamanism was not compatible with the pathway to becoming a true man or woman of knowledge.

Thus, in “The Fire From Within,” Don Juan describes some of the early Toltec history to Castaneda; “Ages before the Spaniards came to Mexico," he said, "there were extraordinary Toltec seers, men capable of inconceivable deeds. They were the last link in a chain of knowledge that extended over thousands of years.

"The Toltec seers were extraordinary men, powerful sorcerers, somber, driven men who unraveled mysteries and possessed secret knowledge that they used to influence and victimize people by fixating the awareness of their victims on whatever they chose."

"But you don't consider yourself a sorcerer, Don Juan, do you?" I asked.

"No, I don't," he said. "I am a warrior who sees. In fact, all of us are los nuevos videntes, the new seers. The old seers were the sorcerers.

"For the average man," he continued, "sorcery is a negative business, but it is fascinating all the same. That's why I encouraged you, in your normal awareness, to think of us as sorcerers. It's advisable to do so. It serves to attract interest. But for us to be sorcerers would be like entering a dead-end street."

Don Juan later elaborates about the differences between sorcerers and true men of knowledge: "Those conquerors," he went on, "took over the Toltec world - they appropriated everything - but they never learned to see."'

"Why do you think they never learned to see?" I asked.

"Because they copied the procedures of the Toltec seers without having the Toltecs' inner knowledge. To this day there are scores of sorcerers all over Mexico, descendants of those conquerors, who follow the Toltec ways but don't know what they're doing, or what they're talking about, because they're not seers."

"Who were those conquerors, Don Juan?"

"Other Indians," he said. "When the Spaniards came, the old seers had been gone for centuries, but there was a new breed of seers who were starting to secure their place in a new cycle."

Further in this book, Castaneda reveals more about the fact that he had not really been taught about sorcery, and how all the talk of sorcery was simply a clever ruse to catch his attention; “It was in his teachings for the left side that Don Juan let on what he, Don Genaro, and their companions were really doing to me, and who they were. They were not teaching me sorcery, but how to master three aspects of an ancient knowledge they possessed: awareness, stalking, and intent. And they were not sorcerers; they were seers. And Don Juan was not only a seer, but also a nagual.”

Don Juan then explains more to Castaneda about one of the reasons why sorcery never actually leads anywhere; “He stated once again that the old seers had concentrated exclusively on developing thousands of the most complex techniques of sorcery. He added that what they never realized was that their intricate devices, as bizarre as they were, had no other value than being the means to break the fixation of their assemblage points and make them move.

“I asked him to explain what he had said.

"I've mentioned to you that sorcery is something like entering a dead-end street," he replied. "What I meant was that sorcery practices have no intrinsic value....”

In “Tales of Power,” Castaneda makes it very clear that he knew very well that the practices of sorcery did not lead to freedom, for Don Juan reveals to him; “Sorcerers have learned after generations of using power plants to account in their views for everything that is accountable about them. I would say that sorcerers, by using their will, have succeeded in enlarging their views of the world. My teacher and benefactor were the clearest examples of that. They were men of great power, but they were not men of knowledge. They never broke the bounds of their enormous views and thus they never arrived at the totality of themselves, yet they knew about it. It wasn’t that they lived aberrant lives, claiming things beyond their reach; they knew that they had missed the boat and that only at their death would the total mystery be revealed to them. Sorcery had given them only a glimpse but never the real means to get to that evasive totality of oneself.”

In “A Separate Reality,” Don Juan provides this final epitaph; “To be a sorcerer is a terrible burden,” he said in a reassuring tone. “I’ve told you that it much better to learn to see. A man who sees is everything; in comparison, the sorcerer is a sad fellow."

# A note about modern sorcerers

It may seem from the article on true knowledge versus sorcery that sorcery is old-fashioned hocus pocus, and that it has no real relevance to us today, or to the lives of ordinary everyday people.

But do not be deceived – we may have moved on from the days of the old sorcerers and their weird practices, but the bottom line of sorcery has everything to do with controlling and asserting one’s power over others. Therefore practices of sorcery in vastly different guises run through the whole of society today. They may not parade under the name of sorcery, and they may not require elaborate rituals and strange clothes, but the fact is that the structures that are now in place in the world allow the power-hungry to manipulate and control their fellow beings far more subtly, and, sadly far more effectively.

Take any field of human endeavour, and you will find people who are motivated by greed, lust for power, and who will want to get ahead, to win at any cost. Look a little closer, and you may begin to see at least some of the techniques of control and manipulation that they employ to gain and then maintain their power over others.

A glaring example of this can be seen in the news media, controlled largely by a few, and so consistently towing their party line, and manipulating the public with “spin”, innuendo, half-truths and downright lies. But the same is true in any area nowadays in which people have access to power, whether it is the Church, the law, politics or even some so-called humanitarian agencies.

These principles are expressed clearly in The Toltec Teachings – Volume IV:

“Most people, even devout Christians, never come to realise that sorcery, in spite of old wives’ tales, is nothing more than a certain set of practices designed to manipulate others into doing one’s bidding. This is true, irrespective of whether a so-called shaman is using ritual in his attempts at casting a spell of misfortune upon his adversary, or whether a businessman is trying financially to manipulate a business opponent out of the market; whether a witch doctor is using herbs in attempting to heal a patient, or whether the lawyer of a criminal is relying upon his cunning use of words to pull the wool over the jury’s eyes.

Forceful manipulation remains the basis of all sorcery practices, no matter if the practitioner looks like a sorcerer or not, and no matter in what guise the practitioner wishes to dress his actions. It is just plain stupidity to believe that it is the dress of a sorcerer that makes him a sorcerer, or the fact that he uses strange sounding words in performing obscure-looking rituals, that gives him his power. What makes a sorcerer a sorcerer is his actions, and his motive for those actions.

Therefore realise that a judge in a court of law wears equally strange-looking garb, just as the technical jargon of law can sound strange to the uninitiated, but such dress and such jargon do not mean that all judges are sorcerers. However, should such a judge use his knowledge of law to manipulate a court case to fit his sense of justice, then he is indeed as much a sorcerer as any of those who openly profess to be shamans.”

# Working with aphorisms

What are Toltec aphorisms and how are they used for self-knowledge?

Aphorisms are encapsulated verbalisations of specific Toltec concepts and teachings. You will find aphorisms throughout the books of Théun Mares. In addition, The Toltec Teachings - Volume VI holds a unique compilation of all the Toltec aphorisms.

Toltec aphorisms are not like a mantra or affirmation - repeating them will not take you anywhere. They are also not like Zen koans. They are statements that if worked with practically in everyday life, can help you to discover a great deal of knowledge about yourself and your world, including how you relate to yourself, to others and the world around you.

In fact, all of the Toltec Teachings are contained within the aphorisms. The accompanying explanations serve mainly to bring out and to make clear particular aspects that Théun is trying to express in his books.

It is important point to remember this when you are reading the books and trying to get a grasp of the teachings being expressed. It is simply impossible to convey in words the full extent and meaning of each aphorism, since these are vast. Also, people will not relate to the same aphorism in the same way. This is because every person is different, every person's experience is different, every person's perception is different and every person is at a different point in the evolution of his or her awareness.

Working with aphorisms can also help you to discover for yourself the root causes of many of the deeper questions you may have about your life.

All of the aphorisms are interrelated, so, although it may seem that they can be worked with fairly simply, if you keep searching for the correspondences, you will find that they lead into many different aspects of the teachings.

By working with the aphorisms within the context of your everyday life, you will not only gain a wealth of knowledge about yourself, your behaviour and the behaviour of others, but you will also gain invaluable insights into your life and your fate and purpose.

Example:

*The only failure in life is the failure to fight*

What does this aphorism mean? At first sight it seems quite straightforward with not much to it. However, in using aphorisms you need to go beyond the face value, and start using the aphorism as a sounding-board in order to see what you can find out about yourself from your own experience.

So, you would ask yourself questions that relate to your own beliefs and behaviour, such as; "What do I regard as failure?" "What do I do, to myself, and to others, when I see myself as having failed in anything? "Do I take it out on myself, or others?" "Do I indulge in feeling guilty?' "Do I give up?" "Do I know how to turn an apparent failure into success - so that all can benefit?" "If not, how do I keep myself stuck and timid after having made a 'mistake'?"

"What does it mean to fight?" "What does it mean to fail to fight?" "What are the rules by which I should fight?" "If the only failure in life is the failure to fight, then what is the purpose of life?"

You see, the questions can go on and on! But, if you are honest in gaining your own answers from your life, you will uncover a wealth of knowledge about yourself - about how you think and feel about yourself and others, and about life in general. Practically, you will also discover the many different ways in which you trip yourself up, and how you prevent yourself from materialising your dreams. This knowledge will be your knowledge.

Knowledge of the self is true power - power that nobody can take away from you.