

The Story of SEEMORG

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Many people have asked why Matrix Work has become Seemorg Matrix Work. There are two answers, the first practical, the second spiritual. Practically speaking, it turned out that the US Patent and Trademark Office had so many registrations for the word "Matrix" that it was not possible to secure one for Matrix Work.

For spiritual reasons, I wanted to find a name that emphasized the transpersonal nature of this energy psychotherapy. I asked for guidance, and what appeared was Seemorg Matrix Work. The word Seemorg (or Simorgh in its usual transliteration), literally means "thirty birds," and refers to a magnificent bird with long and beautiful tail plumage. Many tales about this mythological being can be found in the Middle East and India.

The Seemorg is a symbol for the Divine. Meeting and joining with the Divine is the goal of spiritual development in virtually all the traditions, and it is the goal of Seemorg Matrix Work as well. The most beautiful tale about the Seemorg occurs in the epic poem by the medieval Persian poet Farid-ud-din Attar. Below is a short version of this poem abridged by Jerome Wright Clinton and taken from the wonderful translation into English by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis (Penguin Press). It best conveys the meaning and spirit of the Seemorg as well as of Seemorg Matrix Work.

The poem begins with all the birds of the world gathering to search for their king, the mysterious. The hoopoe, who summons them to the quest, speaks below.

The Conference of the Birds

(Translation by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis)

It was in China, late one moonless night,
The first appeared to human sight -
He let a feather float down through the air,
And rumors of its fame spread everywhere;

Throughout the world men separately conceived
An image of its shape, and all believed
Their private fantasies uniquely true!

(In China still this feather is on view,
Whence comes the saying you have heard, no doubt,
seek Knowledge, unto China seek it out.
If this same feather had not floated down,
The world would not be filled with His renown -
It is a sign of Him, and in each heart
There lies this feather's hidden counterpart.
But since no words suffice, what use are mine
To represent or to describe this sign?
Whoever wishes to explore the Way,
Let him set out -- what more is there to say?

[There follows much discussion of the quest for God, and many allegories are told by the hoopoe to guide the birds to it.]

The lover who saved his beloved from drowning
A girl fell in a river -- in a flash
Her lover dived in with a mighty splash,
And fought the current till he reached her side.
When they were safe again, the poor girl cried:
By chance I tumbled in, but why should you
Come after me and hazard your life too?;
He said: I dived because the difference
Of 'I' and 'you' to lovers makes no sense -
A long time passed when we were separate,
But now that we have reached this single state
When you are me and I am wholly you,
What use is it to talk of us as two?;
All talk of two implies plurality -
When two has gone there will be Unity.

[As a word of explanation, the Sufi ideal is to worship the divine by loving it. Thus the devotee's relation to God is depicted as that of lover and beloved. It is a consuming and transformative love; an embracing so intense that all distinctions of "self"; and "other"; disappear before it.]

The moths and the flame
Moths gathered in a fluttering throng one night
To learn the truth about the candle's light,
And they decided one of them should go
To gather news of the elusive glow.
One flew till in the distance he discerned
A palace window where a candle burned -

And went no nearer; back again he flew
To tell the others what he thought he knew.
The mentor of the moths dismissed his claim,
Remarking: He knows nothing of the flame.
A moth more eager than the one before
Set out and passed beyond the palace door.
He hovered in the aura of the fire,
A trembling blur of timorous desire,
Then headed back to say how far he'd been,
And how much he'd undergone and seen.
The mentor said: "You do not bear the signs
Of one who's fathomed how the candle shines.";
Another moth flew out - his dizzy flight
Turned to an ardent wooing of the light;
He dipped and soared, and in his frenzied trance
Both Self and fire were mingled by his dance -
The flame engulfed his wing-tips, body, head;
His being glowed a fierce translucent red;
And when the mentor saw the sudden blaze,
The moth's form lost within the glowing rays,
He said: "He knows, he knows the truth we seek,
That hidden truth of which we cannot speak.";
To go beyond all knowledge is to find
That comprehension which eludes the mind,
And you can never gain the longed-for goal
Until you first outsoar both flesh and soul;
But should one part remain, a single hair
will drag you back and plunge you in despair -
No creature's Self can be admitted here,
Where all identity must disappear.

Finally, only thirty birds arrive at the palace; but
their entry is blocked by a herald.
The herald said: "This king for whom you grieve
Governs in glory you cannot conceive -
A hundred thousand armies are to Him
An ant that clammers up His threshold's rim,
And what are you? Grief is your fate -- go back;
Retrace your steps along the pilgrims' track!
And when they heard the herald's fearsome words,
A deathly hopelessness assailed the birds;
But they replied: "our king will not repay
With sorrow all the hazards of the Way;
Grief cannot come to us from majesty;
Grief cannot live beside such dignity.

Think of Majnoun, who said: 'If all the earth
Should every passing moment praise my worth,
I would prefer abuse from Leili's heart
To all creation's eulogizing art -
The world's praise cannot equal Leili's blame;
Both worlds are less to me than Leili's name.'
We told you our desire - if grief must come,
Then we are ready and shall not succumb.";

The herald said: "The blaze of Majesty
Reduces souls to unreality,
And if your souls are burnt, then all the pain
That you have suffered will have been in vain,";
They answered him: "How can a moth flee fire
When fire contains its ultimate desire?
And if we do not join Him, yet we'll burn
And it is this for which our spirits yearn -
It is not union for which we hope;
We know that goal remains beyond our scope."

The birds narrated then the moth's brief tale:
'They told the moth, "You are too slight, too frail
To bear the vivid candle-flame you seek -
This game is for the noble, not the weak;
Why die from ignorance?"; The moth replied:
"Within that fire I cannot hope to hide -
I know I could not penetrate the flame;
Simply to reach it is my humble aim"

Though grief engulfed the ragged group, love made
The birds impetuous and unafraid;
The herald's self-possession was unmoved,
But their resilience was not reproved -
Now, gently, he unlocked the guarded door;
A hundred veils drew back, and there before
The birds' incredulous, bewildered sight
Shone the unveiled, the inmost Light of Light.
He led them to a noble throne, a place
Of intimacy, dignity and grace,
Then gave them all a written page and said
That when its contents had been duly read
The meaning that their journey had concealed,
And of the stage they'd reached, would be revealed.

Joseph's brothers read of their treachery

When Malek Dar brought Joseph as a slave,
The price agreed (and which he gladly gave)
Seemed far too low -- to be quite sure he made
The brothers sign a note for what he'd paid;
And when the wicked purchase was complete
He left with Joseph and the sealed receipt.
At last when Joseph ruled in Egypt's court
His brothers came to beg and little thought
To whom it was each bowed his humbled head
And as a suppliant appealed for bread.
Then Joseph held a scroll up in his hand
And said, "No courtier here can understand
These Hebrew characters -- if you can read
This note I'll give you all the bread you need.";
The brothers could read Hebrew easily
And cried: 'Give us the note, your majesty!'
(If any of my readers cannot find
Himself in this account, the fool is blind.)
When Joseph gave them that short document
They looked -- and trembled with astonishment.
They did not read a line but in dismay
Debated inwardly what they should say.
Their past sins silenced them; they were too weak
To offer an excuse or even speak.
Then Joseph said: 'Why don't you read? You seem
Distracted, haunted by some dreadful dream.'
And they replied, "Better to hold our breath
Than read and in doing so merit death.;

*[This last section, in which the remaining thirty of the
original thousand birds finally discover the Seemorg
depends on a pun; See means 'thirty,' Morg means 'bird.'
So the see morg finally meet the Seemorg.]*

The thirty birds read through the fateful page
And there discovered, stage by detailed stage,
Their lives, their actions, set out one by one -
All that their souls had ever been or done;
And this was bad enough, but as they read
They understood that it was they who'd led
The lovely Joseph into slavery -
Who had deprived him of his liberty
Deep in a well, then ignorantly sold
Their captive to a passing chief for gold.
(Can you not see that at each breath you sell

The Joseph you imprisoned in that well,
That he will be the king to whom you must
Naked and hungry bow down in the dust?)
The chastened spirits of these birds became
Like crumbled powder, and they shrank with shame.
Then, as by shame their spirits were refined
Of all the world's weight, they began to find
A new life flow towards them from that bright
Celestial and ever-living Light -
Their souls rose free of all they'd been before;
The past and all its actions were no more.
Their life came from that close, insistent sun
And in its vivid rays they shone as one.
There in the Seemorg's radiant face they saw
Themselves, the of the world -- with awe
They gazed, and dared at last to comprehend
They were the and the journey's end.
They see the Seemorg - at themselves they stare,
And see a second Seemorg standing there;
They look at both and see the two are one,
That this is that, that this, the goal is won.
They ask (but inwardly; they make no sound)
The meaning of these mysteries that confound
Their puzzled ignorance -- how is it true
That 'we' is not distinguished here from 'you'?
And silently their shining Lord replies:
'I am a mirror set before your eyes,
And all who come before my splendor see
Themselves, their own unique reality;
You came as thirty birds and therefore saw
These selfsame thirty birds, not less nor more;
If you had come as forty, fifty - here
An answering forty, fifty would appear;
Though you have struggled, wandered, traveled far,
It is yourselves you see and what you are.'
(Who sees the Lord? It is himself each sees;
What ant's sight could discern the Pleiades?
What anvil could be lifted by an ant?
Or could a fly subdue an elephant?)
"How much you thought you knew and saw; but you
Now know that all you trusted was untrue.
Though you traversed the Valley's depths and fought
With all the dangers that the journey brought,
They journey was in Me, the deeds were Mine -
You slept secure in Being's inmost shrine.

And since you came as thirty birds, you see
These thirty birds when you discover Me,
The Seemorg, Truth's last flawless jewel, the light
In which you will be lost to mortal sight,
Dispersed to nothingness until once more
You find in Me the selves you were before.'
Then, as they listened to the Seemorg's words,
A trembling dissolution filled the birds -
The substance of their being was undone,
And they were lost like shade before the sun;
Neither the pilgrims nor their guide remained.
The ceased to speak, and silence reigned.

A hundred thousand centuries went by,
And then those birds, who were content to die,
To vanish in annihilation, saw
Their Selves had been restored to them once more,
That after Nothingness they had attained
Eternal Life, and selfhood was regained.
This Nothingness, this Life, are states no tongue
At any time has adequately sung -
Those who can speak still wander far away
From the dark truth they struggle to convey,
And by analogies they try to show
The forms men's partial knowledge cannot know.

No stranger followed them, or could unfold
The secrets they to one another told -
Alone at last, together they conferred;
Blindly they saw themselves and deaf they heard -
But who can speak of this? I know if I
Betrayed my knowledge I would surely die;
If it were lawful for me to relate
Such truths to those who have not reached this state,
Those gone before us would have made some sign;
But no sign comes, and silence must be mine.
Here eloquence can find no jewel but one,
That silence when the longed-for goal is won.
The greatest orator would here be made
In love with silence and forget his trade,
And I too cease: I have described the Way -
Now, you must act -- there is no more to say.