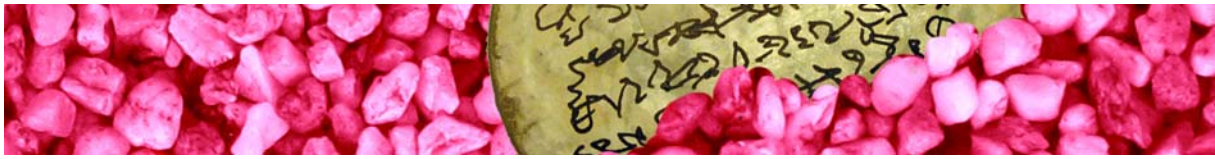


From the Kitchen

4 April 2012



I think it's time for me to start my own cult, before I get too old to enjoy the spoils. The trick is to be self-aware enough that I avoid behaviour that would place me outside the law. Therefore, no sexual hanky-panky in my cult. Everything in moderation and with sufficient restraint.

To launch my cult and develop a following, I will need to find or invent something about which people can be easily persuaded to adopt a fundamentalist attitude. I will, of course, have to be the source of all that will allow people to feel satisfied in relation to their fundamentalism, if I am to live comfortably from the proceeds. So, here goes.

My cult will be based around a split meteorite I found, inside which were 10,007 small, red pebbles and a ceramic disc with inscriptions on it. Years of work on deciphering the inscriptions and an insight that came during meditation, led me to the discovery that I had found a gift from a higher civilisation, not of the Earth, which wanted to share what it knew of wellbeing and possible immortality with any other intelligent civilisation upon whose planet their missile chanced to fall. It is fortunate for humanity, or at least for some of it, that it was I who came upon this beneficence and that I was able to decipher its significance.

The significance of the pebbles is that, ingested with the 'proper' diet, they can lead my followers to be healthier and even to hope to live for ever. There will be one pebble per person. Joining my cult will cost an individual \$10,007 plus a tithe – discounts for couples and families. Each new believer will be issued with his/her personal pebble. Of course, the pebble will have to be liberated from that person's excrement every few days. My followers will become poo sifters, a ritual that will in itself liberate them from many of their hang-ups.

I am still working on designing all the other rituals I will need to keep my acolytes and followers enthralled. There will, of course, be cleansing rituals for the pebbles, before they are re-ingested, and rituals to be applied before each meal. The higher being we will direct our general supplications to is named Schist and adherents to this new religion (because a religion it *will* become) will be known as Nutripetrians.

I have found someone to secretly manufacture the Prime of Pebbles. They will be inert and I expect them to survive my earthly existence. From time to time pebbles will be lost and the losers will have to submit to special forgiveness rituals to obtain another one, at a price.

Nutripetrians will have to limit their eating to prescribed foods and drinks, or the pebbles may cause harm. That this diet may seem similar to other, proven healthy diets is mere coincidence. After all, the Nutripetrian diet is prescribed by the unearthly authors of the Disc and the similarities can be explained: some people have received guidance from Schist in their own way. They will be even healthier if they now join the Nutripetrians.

In my meditations, I have communed with Schist and he has assured me a long and healthy life and a prosperous one, provided I can manifest sufficient ruthlessness to keep the growing number of believers subjugated and to mete out appropriate punishment to those who lapse. There will be naysayers, but they will be as grist for the mill of our growing power.

There will be some would-be followers who will first have to face exorcism of Morpheus and Statin to allow the Pebble of Schist to take hold. Some will have to forswear Al Cohol and many will have to give up getting stoned, in order to get pebbled.

I can envisage that, as the number of Nutripetrians grows, cracks will appear and small groups may flake off and form separate sects. There may be Boulderites and Granulars, but they will all still pay homage to the Great Schist. They will all eventually become as the grains of sand on the shore, washed by the sea of purity. Encouraging such schisms will work to increase the spread of all flavours of Schistism as each group vies for supremacy and tries to convince nonbelievers that they will end their days in loneliness and ill-health. Schistism will eventually rival even Narcissism.

Now I must go and pass my pebble, do some shit-stirring and cleansing. As the Great Schist says: “Whatever your petty concerns in this vast universe, everything is alimentary.”