

VULCAN

The Planet, the People, and the Galaxy

A brief background study by Guy W. McLimore, Jr.
(Excerpted and condensed from *The Vulcan Way*, Vol. 33,
Issue 11 of **TO BOLDLY GO...the UFP Journal of Space Exploration**)

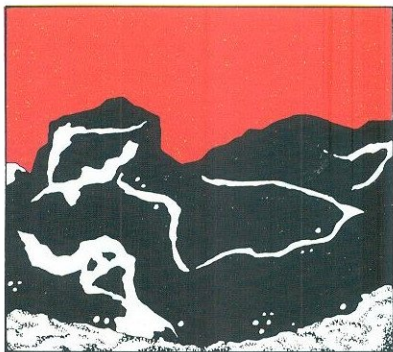
There is no such thing as a complete, short description of Vulcan, the Vulcan people, and their contributions to galactic culture. To fully understand any of these would require volumes. (And, it is said, you'd still have to be a Vulcan yourself to digest and correlate the information...)

Even so, humanity cannot afford to be ignorant of the ways and customs of these, our closest galactic neighbors – so like us and yet so unlike. Their accomplishments, philosophies, indeed their very existence, have reshaped human lives ever since the day Human and Vulcan first crossed paths and Man discovered he was not alone. Indeed, Vulcan's civilization is older than our own, and they began leaving their mark on our galaxy long before we struggled free of the embrace of Mother Earth and sought the stars.

Earth's earliest interstellar travellers encountered a Vulcan colony world early on in our push into the Galaxy. This was a fortunate circumstance, indeed, as one might imagine the result if our first nonHuman contact had been with Klingons or Romulans! But the lucky accident of the proximity of the Vulcan-home system of 40 Eridani to our own solar system, and Vulcan's early interstellar efforts, combined to make them our first interstellar contact.

The 40 Eridani system of one large orange star and two dwarf companions created a very different environment from Earth's (though still in the broad classification "class M"). There are only two true planets in the 40 Eridani system, Vulcan and a rocky, airless world that is now home to a Vulcan naval base and scientific station. Both circle the giant primary. One of the dwarf stars is ringed (the only ringed star known) and with its companion, makes even the night sky of Vulcan spectacular indeed!

Vulcan is a slightly larger world than Earth, with gravity of about 1.4 G. Vulcan's proximity to its primary makes it a hot, dry world with a thin atmosphere. Temperatures hover about a mean of 140 degrees Fahrenheit at the Vulcan equator. Much of Vulcan is thus desert and rock, with great, craggy mountains dividing major land masses. The seas cover less than half the planet, and are soupy and heavy in copper salts. There is little sodium chloride (normal salt, as in Earth's oceans) on the planet at all, so Vulcans developed in very different seas than ours.



But life, proven to be quite stubborn throughout the Galaxy despite widely varying conditions, did manage to develop in those copper-tainted seas. It flourished and spread to the land, and eventually the Vulcan race itself sprang from primate-like ancestors not much different in physical attributes from our own. These ancestors were a desert-dwelling species, however, and Vulcans today show the genetic heritage of their origins.

But the slow intellectual climb of the Vulcan species to sapience began long before our own. Before Mankind made the intellectual leap from animal to sapient being, the Vulcans had already built a thriving civilization. Today, the 40 Eridani system is home to over 14 billion Vulcans, in cities, such as the Vulcan planetary capital of ShiKahr, in desert villages and communal farms, and in space below the surface of their airless companion world, in orbital habitats, and scattered throughout the

vast 40 Eridani asteroid belt. Before looking at the development of this civilization, however, we must first see how the Vulcan race developed physically, and how they both resemble and do not resemble Earth Humans.

PHYSIOLOGY

Considering their origins in copper-salt seas and under three much-different suns, it is most difficult to understand why Vulcans resemble Humans so greatly. It is known that an ancient race known to us as "the Preservers" seeded pre-historic humanity throughout this section of the Galaxy. This fact helps explain why there are so many human-like species on far-flung worlds, with roots there going back before Man's recorded history.

But Vulcans only resemble us externally, not internally, and their race's anthropological origins are as well-documented (some say better) than that of Man on Earth. They cannot be an ancient Human offshoot, despite the similarities. The mystery remains to be solved.

Their origins in seas without sodium chloride means they have little of this salt in their blood chemistry. Indeed, where Earth-life has blood exchange chemistry based on iron-bearing hemoglobin, the Vulcan equivalent is based on copper. It is their copper-based blood that gives them a greenish-yellow complexion.

The characteristic Vulcan pointed ear shape is a function of their thin atmosphere. The oversized ear concentrates sound better, and Vulcans have extremely sensitive hearing. The patterns of facial hair vary subtly from that of Humans, resulting in upswept eyebrows. Other subtle cosmetic differences abound. Almost all Vulcans have dark hair (light hair is almost unheard of in their race). Also, Vulcans tend to be taller and thinner, on the average, than Humans.

Internally, the differences show up with much greater frequency. The Vulcan pulse and respiration rate is higher than that of Humans, which might be expected in a thin-atmosphere race. Their blood pressure is very low indeed, and fluctuates very little even under stress.

Their eyes have adapted to harsh sun and blowing sand with a nictating clear membrane which protects them from glare and abrasion like a second eyelid. The efficiency of this membrane is so great that Vulcans are immune to the damaging effects of glaring light in reasonable intensities. Also, it keeps the eye moist, so Vulcans do not close their eyes often, even to sleep. (A sleeping Vulcan with closed eyes is either sick

or in coma or meditation.)

The heavy Vulcan gravity and harsh conditions have combined to make their race hardier, stronger, and faster than Humans, with reflexes that are superhumanly fast. The internal organs of Vulcans are similar to Humans, but they are arranged within the body quite differently, and are better protected against stress and damage.

Most notable about Vulcans are their racially-universal telepathic tendencies. The use of these abilities is closely related to Vulcan philosophy, and will be discussed after we take a closer look at the history, philosophy, and society of Vulcan.

ORIGINS OF VULCAN PHILOSOPHY

The early history of the planet Vulcan was far different than one might expect from their current culture. The tribes of Vulcan fought bitterly over territorial rights, mineral resources, and especially water. The peoples of Vulcan were organized along loose family/tribal lines, with loyalty to family and one's duty stressed from childhood.

For many, many generations, wars were fought that were more bitter and destructive than any ever fought on Earth. Whole family lines were wiped out to the last man, woman, and child without mercy. Eventually, all of Vulcan was more or less united in two warring coalitions, each ready to destroy the other. Vulcan's military technology was such that this ultimate war would surely be the end of all Vulcan civilization.

Into this dark time in Vulcan history entered Vulcan's greatest hero – not a mighty warrior but a slim, unassuming figure who wore a tunic in a sea-shell pattern – a reminder of the common origins of all life on Vulcan. This was Surak, Vulcan's greatest philosopher and the father of Vulcan logical thought.

Surak was a simple tradesman, self-educated and sick to death of blood, death, and war. His message was simple. All violence, hatred, and evil stemmed from the unchecked expression of emotion by thinking beings. He believed that the ability to reason and think logically separated a thinking being from the animals, and that only by suppressing emotion in favor of pure logic could the mind be at rest and the problems of Vulcan be solved.



continued on page 35

Continued from page 6

It was also Surak's belief that violent action of any type was always unjustified. The ultimate pacifist, Surak refused to eat meat, and travelled in both warring camps speaking on behalf of reason and non-violence. His efforts delayed the waging of that final war for many years, as more and more Vulcans, tired of battle, joined his movement. Soldiers lay down their arms, tradesmen refused to manufacture weapons, officials failed to bring such people to trial for non-violent protests.

The spread of Surak's philosophies was rapid, but it still took many years for them to take hold. In this time, his followers made many attempts to get the leadership of the two warring factions to talk peace. Followers of Surak's teachings went into the enemy camps to bring a message of peace, and many were killed. But each time a messenger came in peace and was slain, more people were exposed to the message and some were converted to the new ideas. After many years, there were none left who would slay the messengers. All had heard and adopted the non-violent, non-emotional philosophy of Surak.

At long last, Vulcan was at peace, and the efforts toward war were turned outward toward the gathering of knowledge. But Surak's teachings also held that the exploration of the inner self was as important — perhaps more important than the gathering of scientific knowledge. For this reason, Vulcans are known both as great scientists and great philosophers.

Most of modern Vulcan society derives directly from the teachings of Surak and his followers. Vulcans believe that contentment comes only when reason supplants emotion in a being's thoughts and actions. The expression of emotion is considered unhealthy and in poor taste, and Vulcan children are taught at an early age that emotional expression is to be avoided at all times.

Much of the Galaxy operates under the false assumption that Vulcans have no emotions. This is false, though many Vulcans would themselves make this statement. But centuries of Vulcan discipline have trained Vulcans to divorce their emotions from all actions and contacts with other people. This suppression of emotion leads Vulcans to be very concerned with personal privacy.

The ultimate form of Vulcan nonemotionalism can be found in the ancient and arduous Kolinahr discipline. The Masters of Kolinahr have achieved the non-emotional state in its ultimate form, with their emotional responses buried so deep that even a

mind fusion cannot detect them. According to tradition, the Kolinahr state frees the mind for totally logical thought, enabling the full potential of the individual to be achieved. It is true that many great works of science and philosophy have been created by the few Vulcans every generation who successfully complete the rigorous Kolinahr training, but many great Vulcan statesmen and scientists have not achieved Kolinahr. Usually, the Kolinahr disciplines are only embraced by those Vulcans who cannot find peace of mind in any other fashion. Only a few attempt it each year, and only three or four will succeed in any given generation.

The non-violent philosophy of Surak remains a major part of Vulcan custom today. Vulcans practice this in various degrees. Almost all Vulcans are vegetarians solely, and hunting of animals for sport is totally forbidden. For one Vulcan to perform violence to another is unthinkable, for, as the Vulcans believe, all violence stems from emotional states, and no Vulcan would allow an emotional state to control his actions. The philosophy does seem to work. Vulcan has no violent crime whatsoever among its own people.

Some Vulcans maintain that Surak's total non-violence is the only true Vulcan way, and disdain even violence in self-defense, under any circumstances. Some others, however, maintain that at times it is logical and necessary to resist violence done to yourself, your family, or your world. Such actions must only be undertaken after careful, logical analysis. Thus, the most militant Vulcan might still be called a pacifist anywhere else.

Early in the history of the Federation, service in Star Fleet was considered somewhat scandalous on Vulcan, since Star Fleet was partly a military service. But years of peace and the exemplary record of Vulcan officers in Star Fleet service have reduced this feeling among Vulcans quite a lot, and many respected Vulcans now serve in Star Fleet. Few Vulcans will actually serve aboard an active-duty military vessel, or in an actively military position (such as in ship's gunnery or as combat troops). Most Vulcans seek scientific, technical, instructional, or diplomatic positions.

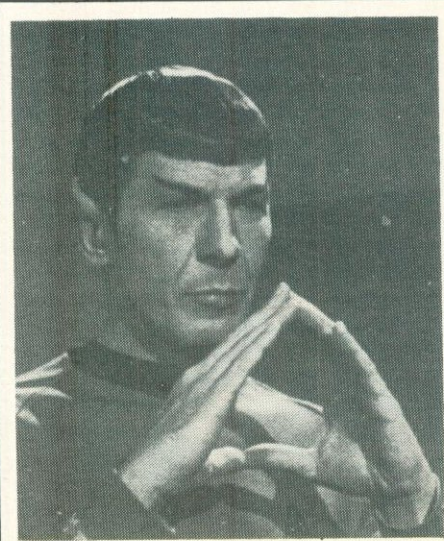
The ancient Vulcan traditions of family pride and devotion to duty and personal honor still remain. Vulcan's government is a loose association of family leaders who make decisions based on logic and reason. Their decisions are rarely questioned, and the families of Vulcan grant their leaders

the respect and deference due them. The bonds of family mean much to Vulcans, and it would be unthinkable to refuse aid to even a distant kinsman, or to place shame upon your family name through incorrect actions.

Vulcan expressions of respect show up in all their dealings with other races as well. The well-known Vulcan hand salute has the right hand raised and held forward from the body, palm outward. The thumb is extended alone, and the first and second fingers form a unit, separated from the union of the third and fourth fingers by a "V" shaped gap. The salute denotes respect and courtesy, and reminds the viewer both of the differences that separate people and the similarities that unite them. The common Vulcan salutation, rendered in English as "live long and prosper", shows their respect for age and belief that long experience brings wisdom.

Surak's most important argument for peaceful coexistence among people with vast differences lay in the Vulcan concept of *none*, meaning *all*. It was Surak's belief that only the variety in life made living worthwhile. This has evolved into the IDIC (Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations) principle of modern Vulcan philosophy.

The IDIC symbol shows a circle and a triangle joining to form a faceted stone in the center. This symbolizes the joining of very different elements to create beauty. It is the Vulcan belief that diversity is to be cherished, since only through the mixing of many different cultures, ideas, and beings can beauty and truth be created. For this reason, Vulcans believe that beings and cultures who are different should not only be tolerated, they should be delighted in and their differences studied and enjoyed by all.



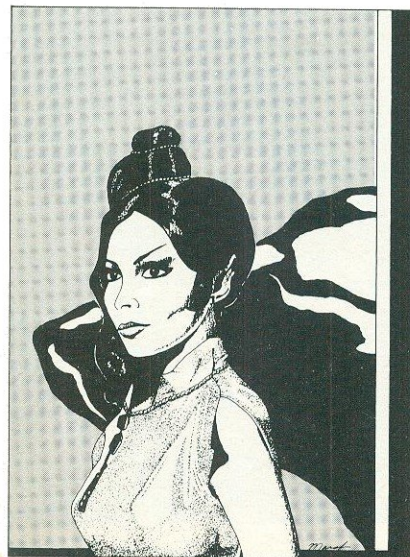
The Vulcan ideal is a being that is both physically and mentally as well-prepared as possible. Certainly, the harsh conditions of Vulcan made physical preparedness a necessity, but even the more comfortable modern Vulcans believe in training the body to maximum efficiency. They do not, however, discriminate against the physically handicapped or infirm. They believe that each individual should strive to accomplish as much as he/she can with what they are given.

Still, Vulcans do not revere physical accomplishment as humans do. Vulcan athletics do not involve illogical competition for its own sake. Instead, it is considered a duty of each Vulcan to maintain him/herself in good physical condition, without comparison to others. Vulcans are far more impressed by intellectual capability than physical competence.

Scientists, artists, and statesmen are revered on Vulcan. Vulcan's most prestigious establishment is the Vulcan Science Academy, perhaps the finest teaching and research institution in the Galaxy. The directorship of the Academy is a position of much power on Vulcan, and the pronouncements of the Academy, while not having the force of law, shape the logical, rational decisions of the Vulcan people in ways no other institution save the family unit can accomplish.

THE TIME OF MADNESS

There is only one time during which the logic and reason of Vulcans crumbles – the *pon far*; the time of mating and madness. The Vulcans themselves do not discuss the matter, as it is the most personal and private of all times. It is a time when the barriers of emotional repression fail and the animal ancestors of the Vulcan people take over.



The emotions associated with the mating drive common to all sexual animals are repressed in Vulcans except once every seven years (more or less), when the *pon far* calls them back to their native lands to satisfy the physical demands and perpetuate the race.

In childhood, each Vulcan male and female are linked mentally and physically in a ceremony that is less than a marriage, more than a betrothal, and deeper and more meaningful than either. At this time, the seven-year adult cycle of *pon far* is synchronized between them.

At the proper time, the couple, mentally linked even across the enormous distances of space, are both drawn to their families' homelands to the *koon-ut kal-i-fee*, the marriage ritual. If prevented from returning, a Vulcan will suffer the breakdown of his mental discipline. His physical functions will also begin to fail eventually, leading inevitably to madness and death.

Upon their return to their appointed place of *koon-ut kal-i-fee*, the male Vulcan claims his mate. The ceremony is conducted by the most prestigious Vulcan (male or female) who the families can persuade to perform the duty. The older and more respected the individual officiating, the more important and prestigious the family. Once selected, this official has the absolute last word on all matters pertaining to the marriage. The families and participants have no further say whatsoever. The female Vulcan is not property, however, to be given against her will. She may declare a challenge if she does not desire to wed, and name a champion.

If challenge is offered, and the chosen male agrees to act as the female's champion, the two males battle for the woman. In challenging, the woman has agreed to become the bride of the winner of the conflict.

By now, the called male is deep in the *plak tow*, the blood frenzy. He has little rationality left, and often cannot speak. All his efforts are centered on controlling his actions and winning the challenge. All such conflicts are to the death, with such ancient Vulcan ritual weapons as the *Ahn-woon*, a leather band with handles that can be used as a garrote, a sling, or a bola, and the *lirpa*, a heavy staff with a bludgeon on one end and a semi-circular blade on the other.

The winner of a challenge may then claim the woman as his bride, or release her if he is displeased by her decision to challenge. If the woman is claimed, they are then mated for life. If the woman is released, both parties are free to seek mates elsewhere. If one's prom-

ised mate dies prior to the adulthood call, the bond is broken and the survivor is also free to seek a mate elsewhere.

The rites of marriage are passed down through the families of Vulcan and are not discussed with outworlders. Very few human beings have ever been allowed to examine Vulcan family records on the matter, and fewer still privileged to witness the *koon-ut kal-i-fee*. It is a holdover and reminder of the violent, emotional heritage of the Vulcan people, and some say it is Nature's way of compensating for their lives of emotional denial.

DISCIPLINE OF THE MIND

Of course, the most renowned attribute of members of the Vulcan race is their well-developed telepathic ability. Early Vulcans showed a racial tendency toward telepathic ability, but it was only when Vulcans began developing mental and emotional discipline that their full potential was released.

Vulcans guard their privacy closely, and the mind, to them, is the most private thing of all. The Vulcan reluctance to touch or be touched stems partly from the fact that telepathic sensitivity is increased by touch. Thus, Vulcans do not shake hands or engage in casual contact.

Indeed, deliberate touching is indicative of great trust between two Vulcans. A husband and wife may ritually touch fingertips or palms as an expression of mutual trust and pair-bonding, and close family members may touch palms with hands crossed at the wrist in a gesture of openness to one's kindred.

A Vulcan child learns very early mental disciplines for deprivation or ignoring pain. The Vulcan healing trance has become instinctual, with an injured Vulcan entering almost a cataleptic state. At this time, the full attention of the mind is turned to healing, and all outside influences must be ignored. The vital signs drop to almost undetectable levels until the body is ready to make a final struggle to restore itself. The consciousness then fights to reassert itself, and can be aided by a healer who may deliberately strike the injured person, producing pain sensations which the victim may use to help him/her recenter on the conscious level. The sight of a Vulcan healer repeatedly slapping a semi-comatose patient is unsettling to Human doctors, perhaps, but the technique is effective.

Because of the discipline a Vulcan learns in controlling his/her own body, a member of the race is especially sensitive to the functions of living organisms. There are few Vulcan doctors who work directly with non-Vulcan pa-

tients because the cold, pragmatic approach of a Vulcan physician is not an effective "bedside manner" with non-Vulcan patients. But Vulcans can tell much about a living being by touch, and can manipulate the nervous system of Vulcan-like races by touch alone.

A form of non-violent defense that dates back to before the time of Surak, the principle behind the Vulcan nerve pinch is widely known. But only a being with the physical strength and mental discipline and sensitivity of a Vulcan can perform it. By applying pressure to a nerve center (between the neck and shoulder in most Vulcan-like/Human-like species), a Vulcan who knows the technique can produce instant paralysis and/or unconsciousness in a being.



Related to the Vulcan nerve pinch are certain Vulcan techniques in which nerve centers are manipulated to reduce pain for the victim. The technique does not reduce the severity of an injury, but in certain cases it can block the pain impulses for a length of time.

The ancient Vulcan discipline of *tal-shaya* is a method of swift, painless, and instant execution, in which the neck and spine are snapped by a swift twisting action. In ancient times, Vulcan criminals were executed in this manner. Today, though it is almost never used, all Vulcan officials above a certain rank are required to know the technique, as a matter of tradition. It is also believed that *tal-shaya* is the technique practiced by the ritual guards of the Vulcan mating ceremony for the swift execution of any who disrupt the ceremony.

Most celebrated of all, however, are the purely mental/telepathic techniques known to all adult Vulcans. The techniques of the mind touch, mind meld, and mind fusion are very private concerns, and not to be used lightly. They are part of a Vulcan's most personal life.

The mind touch is a method by which thoughts and feelings are shared between two individuals telepathically. Physical touch improves the contact, but it can be done over distance with more effort. The depth of the contact can vary greatly, depending on the wishes of the persons involved and the conditions under which the mind touch

is attempted. In simplest form, the mind touch may communicate only a vague feeling or a bit of the conscious surface thoughts. A deeper touch may share memories or physical feelings. In its deepest form, the mind touch makes it impossible to hide one's true intentions or motives. Modification of memories or behavior may also be accomplished.

The mind meld is not practiced as often. It involves a group mind touch in which all parties involved share freely. The participants will all gain insight into each other's true thoughts and feelings.

The mind fusion is the deepest, most difficult of the mental disciplines. In a successful mind fusion, the total thoughts, memories, and personalities of the two participants are blended, with the innermost self of each revealed to the other. Such a fusion is very difficult and embarrassing for a Vulcan, and somewhat dangerous, as it may be hard to sort out the two sets of memories and motivations later. In extreme cases, the fusion may become permanent, which usually results in madness for both parties, or loss of one or both personalities entirely.

The ultimate Vulcan mind contact involves a very personal, very private ritual that a Vulcan practices only when death is imminent: the preservation of the "essence". This practice is the most astonishing (and least discussed) of all Vulcan mental feats. Until recently, very few non-Vulcans were even aware of the ancient practice.

Vulcan tradition accepts the survival of the personality after death, not as a matter of religious faith but as a matter of known fact! The ancient Vulcans who first practiced mental contacts became aware that living beings do, indeed (according to their writings), have some sort of "immortal part", a personality and mental pattern that can survive death.

When a Vulcan believes death is imminent, he or she makes arrangements for the preservation of the "essence" in some manner. Most often, it is passed along to a family member or other close contact through use of the Vulcan mind fusion. The "essence" is not removed from the dying "donor", merely duplicated in the unused part of the mind of the recipient. Later, through an ancient ritual still shrouded in mystery and known to only a few Vulcan "priest (or priestess)/philosophers", the "essence" is preserved as part of an ever-growing repository of wisdom. What form this repository takes is not known, at least not to non-Vulcans.

Writings from the earliest period of Vulcan rational civilization seem to indicate that it was believed that a certain

technique could indeed rejoin the "essence" to another body, but this practice is apparently unknown to modern Vulcans. (At least, no Vulcan has ever expressed to a non-Vulcan a belief in such a technique...)

Vulcan experts contend that it is the mental discipline of logic and non-emotion that makes such abilities possible, not any physiological difference in the Vulcan mind. Some Vulcan mind techniques have been successfully taught to Humans, if the motivation of the human was great and the Vulcan teacher was patient, but these cases are very rare indeed.

VULCAN & THE GALAXY

Contact with the Vulcan culture has enriched the Galactic Community greatly. The Vulcan preference for intellectual pursuits and professions has led to great strides in philosophy, science, art, and diplomacy.

The works of the greatest of all Vulcan philosophers, Surak, form the basis for all of modern Vulcan society. Surak's teachings have influenced non-Vulcans as well. The IDIC principle in particular has spread to many cultures throughout the known galaxy. Many Vulcan-like teachings also have taken root in the youthful movement known variously as "Seekers of the One" and "Edenists". The Vulcans themselves are not evangelical in their beliefs. They believe that all living things must find their own Way, and delight in the cultural differences between rational beings.

The modern Vulcan leader T'Pol is a philosopher and teacher who is considered to be perhaps the most powerful single person on Vulcan. Despite her personal prestige, she holds no elective or appointive office and in fact has no official position of authority whatsoever. She is the only being ever to turn down a seat on the Federation Council, and she avoids such official entanglements on her own planet as well. Nonetheless, a suggestion from the venerable T'Pol may as well have the force of law on Vulcan, and a request from her is likely to bring immediate results from the UFP government itself. There are still many things about the Vulcan Way that outworlders will never understand fully.

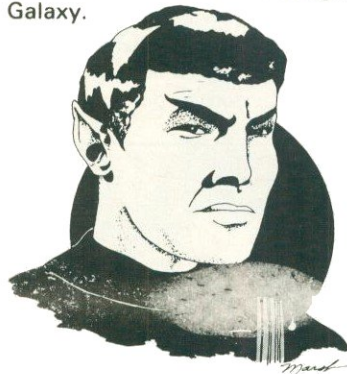


As scientists, Vulcans are without peer in the known Galaxy, largely because they are able to perform intricate experiments with an attention to detail and a scientific method that is unmatched by any other intelligent race. The unfailing logic of the Vulcan mind is perfectly suited for scientific inquiry in established fields. Even so, the Vulcan denial of the concept of "intuitive reasoning" means that the bright flashes of insight are often left to others to create.

Vulcan honor and personal trustworthiness is known throughout the Galaxy, making them excellent choices as diplomats. A Vulcan cannot be accused of bias, or emotionalism, or fear. They make excellent envoys, mediators, and negotiators.



One of the most respected of modern Vulcans, Sarek, began his career as an astrophysicist, once heading the Vulcan Science Academy itself. He then was appointed ambassador to Earth and gained great fame as a diplomat, particularly for his actions at the Babel conference on the Coridan admission. At this conference, after an attempt on his life that almost succeeded, he negotiated the entry into the Federation of the Coridan worlds with one of the most stirring presentations ever recorded about the duty of "the fortunate worlds of the Federation" to protect the interests and freedom to choose of smaller, more vulnerable societies. Sarek's excellence in two fields, science and diplomacy, has earned him much respect on Vulcan and throughout the Galaxy.



Vulcan lack of emotional expression has not prevented them from becoming admired artists and performers as well. The Vulcan IDIC concept guides their arts, with wildly varying media being combined to produce great beauty. Vulcan musical instruments such as the *lyrette* combine ancient melodic techniques and traditions with modern scientific sound creation devices to produce unique and beautiful harmonies. Vulcan visual arts range from painting and sculpture to esoteric vibratory pattern recreations and three-dimensional shifting light patterns. A Vulcan artist is often not just creating art, but creating a new form of art!

Vulcan traders are well-known throughout the Galaxy as well. Some of Vulcan's oldest and most prestigious families are involved in interstellar trade. These trade companies are huge family-owned businesses run with cold and perfect efficiency, and smaller independent traders have to scramble to compete with them in most areas.

Vulcan interactions with other cultures reveal much about them. Their philosophies and culture may be at conflict with some cultures, but few races in the Galaxy do not respect them, even if they do not admire them.

Of course, as signatories to the original Articles of Federation, Vulcan has a permanent place in UFP politics. Vulcans are the second most numerous racial type in the Galaxy (right after humanity), and as such wield great political and economic clout. Their tendency to conduct business and political relationships as large family groups consolidates their power. Vulcan is traditionally the important swing vote in the Federation Council, and one can be sure that their decisions will be based on solid and unshakable logical grounds.

Vulcan's relationship with the Klingon Empire is older than the UFP itself. Though the Empire maintains an officially semi-hostile posture toward Vulcans as a member of the UFP, they still are known to permit Vulcan observers in Klingon space and do not go out of their way to antagonize Vulcan through interrupting merchant traffic, interfering with research missions, etc. Though the Empire disdains Vulcans for their pacifistic attitudes, it is thought by many cultural historians who specialize in studying the Empire that Vulcans, because of their unshakable reputation for honesty, are among the few peoples that Klingons can trust. There are many speculations about the Vulcan cultural observers known to be affiliated with some important Klingon officials and

households, but both the Empire and Vulcan remain silent about such matters.

Throughout the Romulan War and the long period of uneasy truce thereafter, there was no contact of any sort known between Vulcan and the Romulan Star Empire. Nonetheless, it has now been discovered that a deep bond exists between the two cultures. Based on evidence gathered in more recent contact with the Romulans, it is now believed by most galactoanthropologists (including those of the Vulcan Science Academy) that the Romulan race is an ancient offshoot of the Vulcan race, from a time dating before Vulcan gave up warfare and bloodshed.

The exact time the split occurred, or how the Romulan offshoot moved across the parsecs to their current home planet, is unclear. One speculation is that the ancient Preservers, who seeded Humanity throughout this arm of the Galaxy, may have had a hand in starting the Romulan branch race as well.

The Romulans do not exhibit the mental discipline of the late-period Vulcans (nor, of course, their pacifistic nature), but their physical appearance and internal organ arrangement is too similar to be coincidence. Without Romulan cooperation (which is unlikely to be forthcoming in the foreseeable future), it is unlikely the mystery will ever be solved.

SUMMATION

The complexity of the Vulcan Way makes a quick analysis impossible. But that is as it should be, according to the philosophy of the Vulcans themselves. The differences between Humans and Vulcans should be studied and cherished and preserved, and their diversity and mystery mingled to create new and even greater ideas and cultural developments. There is much for Humankind to learn from the Vulcan Way and, perhaps, much to teach as well. In the interface between these two Great Races may lie a greater hope for the future of both.

