



BEHOLD THE SIGN

Ancient Symbolism

By

RALPH M. LEWIS

AMORC

BEHOLD THE SIGN

A BOOK OF ANCIENT SYMBOLISM



AMORC

By Ralph M. Lewis, F.R.C.

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Dedication



TO MY WIFE

*Whose patience, understanding, and suggestions
have been a source of inspiration to me,
and have lightened what otherwise
might often have been
grievous tasks.*

R.M.L.

“Man, when conscious of an eternal truth, has ever symbolized it so that the human consciousness could forever have realization of it. Nations, languages and customs have changed, but these ancient designs continue to illuminate mankind with their mystic light.”

—VALIDIVAR.

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Introduction

IDEAS ARE BORN out of things. The mind of man seeks to attach a meaning or give identity to each external thing which it experiences. The unknown is aggravating to intelligence, even to the intelligence of the primitive mind. Consequently, nothing which commands attention, or seems to touch our lives continually, is left unexplained by us. Where the natural causes are not observed, others are imagined by the fertile human mind. The savage man has an explanation for every phenomenon in his world of experience.

There are, however, some objects which we perceive which not only suggest their own nature to our minds, but likewise depict other ideas or concepts which we have had. In other words, such objects are representative of something other than themselves. Such objects become *symbols*. Natural symbols are principally the result of suggestion. There is something about the form of the sign which resembles an element or elements of some previous group of ideas in our experience. By association, the symbol continually makes us aware of these other ideas. A dark cloud, for example, is a natural symbol. It suggests all of that which is associated with a storm. Such natural symbols are obviously quite generally accepted by mankind, because they are related to common human experiences.

On the other hand, there are *artificial* symbols which a man or a group of men may create to represent notions of their own. Such artificial symbols or devices will be related to their own particular experiences and may mean nothing to any other group of persons. For example, we have the signs which are used by physicists and electrical engineers to depict instruments in an electric circuit. To the layman, they are unintelligible. These artificial symbols may exist for an indeterminate time, such as family escutcheons, or signs adopted by secret societies to represent their purposes. Frequently they gradually

or suddenly pass into oblivion. Conversely, natural symbols persist, since they are rooted in some phenomenon of nature which men of each century perceive more or less alike. The interpretation of the natural symbol may alter, namely, there may come about an elaboration of the ideas it represents, but it will continue to be related to man's original conception.

Artificial and natural signs are combined by the mind to form true *mystical symbols*. Just how is this combination accomplished? Intelligent men and women, those who have inquiring minds, look out upon nature. They study her, they observe her, to ascertain lessons from her operations. They look at the heavens above and they look at things of earth and they discover certain uniform occurrences in phenomena. When certain things happen time after time, they find that the same conditions prevail with each happening. In other words, man discovers that phenomena depend on certain basic conditions—that fire, for example, cannot exist or become manifest until these conditions become existent, and that there cannot be a flow of water, for further example, unless certain other conditions prevail. These uniform conditions of dependency are what man has decided to call laws.

Laws, therefore, are irrevocable Cosmic truths. They are immutable, so far as the consciousness of man is concerned. The important point to remember in connection with mystical symbolism, or rather symbols having a mystical meaning, is that a discerned truth, such as a natural law which we discover, creates in our mind its own symbol. The meaning we perceive in a law of nature is the symbol itself. When there flashes into our consciousness the realization that we are discerning a law, a Cosmic truth, the shape which that meaning, that understanding, takes in our consciousness, as a mental form, becomes the symbol itself. It is far closer to depicting the truth of which we are conscious than any other symbol which we could later devise or design to mean the same thing.

There are, therefore, no substitutes for true mystical symbols. A mystical symbol is the very *thought form* of the Cosmic law itself. We may say that a mystical symbol is the mental reflection of a Cosmic

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truth which we have discerned. We cannot discern any Cosmic truth without at the same time engendering a picture of it in our mind as a symbol. Therefore, I repeat, we cannot have substitute mystical symbols, because any sign we create that does not arise spontaneously in our mind from the discerned truth itself, is not a mystical symbol, no matter what we may call it.

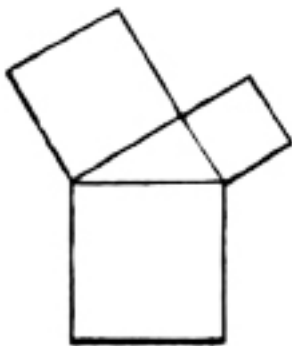
Let us examine in this book a few, a very few, of these eternal mystical symbols. We say they are eternal, because they have come forth from truths which early man came to know, and which mean the same to man today as they did to the ancients. When each of us, today, contemplates age-old truths, the same symbols shape themselves in our mind, so they are truly eternal.



The All-Seeing Eye

IN MODERN TIMES the Eye may be used to represent the eye of the Supreme Architect of the Universe, but this is a limitation of the interpretation which the mystics of old and of today give this very ancient symbol.

To them the Eye is symbolical of sight, but especially of that *clear sight* which gives realization. When the Eye was adopted as the symbol of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, it was intended to typify the all-conscious, or ever conscious mind of God which *sees all*, and therefore *knows* all. In this sense the Eye came to be the symbol of Divine Consciousness or *Cosmic Consciousness* (called by some modern mystics, the *universal consciousness*). Therefore this Eye is said to rule over the Sun and the Moon, the Comets and the Stars, and likewise the heart of man; not that these obey (by volition) the ever-watchful eye, as the child obeys the parent in fear of the watchful eyes, but all nature manifests according to the divine scheme conceived in the mind of God and all such manifestations are ever the same, ever true to principle, because the Eye of Divine Consciousness directs the operations of all Cosmic laws.



The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid

IT MAY WHEN understood in its geometrical presentation, arouse an interest in the arts and sciences, as is often claimed; but, the emblem is seldom presented in such light. To the average student of mysticism of modern times, the emblem means nothing, although it suggests some law pertaining to the square and triangle.

Geometrically, of course, the problem is a result of the work of Pythagoras, who studied the ancient Egyptian mysteries in the old temples and later founded a branch of the *Rosicrucian Brotherhood*. By it he proved that the area of the square was equal to the area of two smaller squares built upon the triangle, and vice versa.

To the mystics, however, the problem proves the contention of the Masters that the *triangle* is a symbol of perfect creation because it *contains all* and will support all that may be built properly upon it.

We find this principle utilized in many secret organizations as a law for the placing of the feet of the *initiated*; the feet are either placed so that they form the sides of a triangle or the two sides of a square.

There are, of course, other esoteric interpretations, which may not be given here.

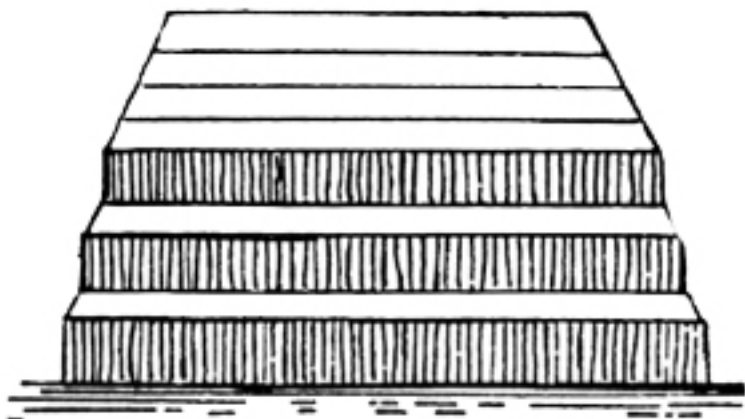


The Anchor and the Ark

HERE WE HAVE another dual emblem, part ancient and part very modern. The exoteric meanings of these two are too obvious for extended comment,—safe passage on the sea of life, and safe mooring in the harbor of peace. But the two emblems have other and more esoteric interpretations.

To the mystics the Ark was emblematical of the secret, sacred places wherein were deposited and preserved the sacred possessions of a material or worldly nature belonging to the Temple or the Officers or Brethren thereof. In this sense the Ark was held as a repository distinctly different from *The Book*. One contained and preserved the spiritual possessions, the Divine Laws; the other contained and preserved the secret things pertaining to earthly existence and the Temple's *work*. Therefore the Ark was the emblem of the concealed, tiled, guarded and safe *place* where the bonds which united the Brethren were secretly and sacredly preserved.

The Anchor, on the other hand, is a more modern emblem and is in fact a development from the ancient symbol of the Caduceus of Hermes, which consisted of the wand entwined by serpents. That old emblem was a symbol of power and authority; and the Anchor is intended to convey the same meaning in connection with Temple or Lodge convocations. Therefore the above dual emblem means: The *depository* of the secret and sacred papers or jewels of the Temple, and the *power* or *authority* of the assembled body.



The Three Steps

WHILE EXOTERICALLY REPRESENTING the three steps or phases of life, —youth, manhood and age, or the three degrees of progress through the mysteries of Life, the truly ancient interpretation is quite different.

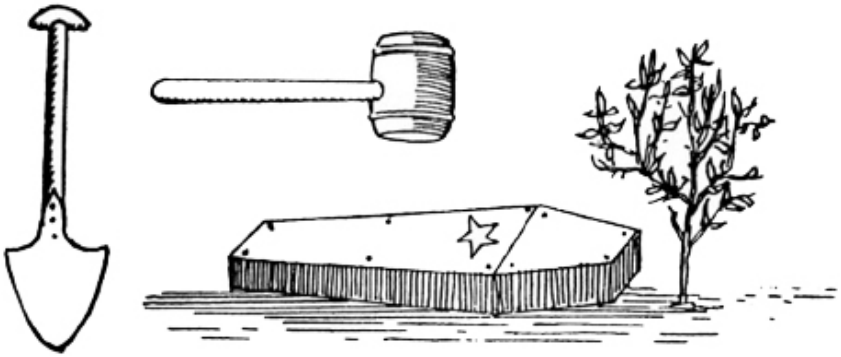
As temple after temple in ancient Egypt is brought to Light by the excavations of the various exploring organizations, we find that *three steps* lead to the entrances of these temples or to the altars within. In no part of these temples where any “holy” or sacred *point* was located do we not find *three steps* leading thereto.

The explanation—or interpretation—of this symbol is found in the triangle, the most ancient of all symbols or emblems. The equilateral triangle was a mystical symbol because it was possible to place it in any position and have it true in its representation. In this the *square* or cube was much like the triangle.

The principle is found in the figure 3. This numeral typified the ancient principles of *divinities*, or the law of creation, *perfect creation*. Therefore, in approaching a “holy” or sacred place, three steps were taken (as the last steps in reaching the point, not as three steps in the beginning or middle of the approach as is now often done) to indicate that he who approached the point was conscious of, or mindful of, the

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three principles of nature and God which gave him earthly existence. For, according to the law of the triangle, man's whole conscious existence depended upon the unity of these three principles in man. Exoterically the three principles were expressed as *body, spirit and soul*.



The Maul, the Spade, and the Coffin

IN THEIR COMBINATION these emblems form a symbol limited to one or possibly two forms of secret societies. But, separately, each has a mystical meaning quite interesting.

The Maul was ever the symbol of *directed*, or *controlled* force, possibly because it was so used in its practical application by the stone workers and others. Therefore, mystically, it represents a specific application of power or energy to one place, sudden and determined, with a definite and *final* result. Therefore we see how it came to be used in more modern symbolism.

The Spade was held as a symbol of research because it was used for *delving into the earth*. In this sense the digging of a grave with a spade is a mystical symbol of preparing an entrance into deeper or more serious mysteries.

The Coffin, like the Tomb, was a symbol of *confinement*, *imprisonment* and suspension of existence or manifestation. To be entombed was to prevent the continued transition of the body and the growth of a newer form of manifestation. With the Acacia at the side of the Coffin, growing naturally, the symbol meant that while the body was held a prisoner, the Soul was immortally free.

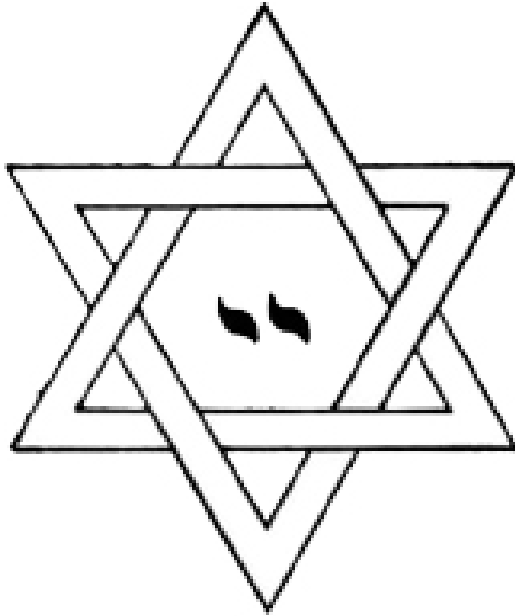


The Pot of Incense

PERHAPS ONE OF the most sacred of all points reached by three steps in the ancient Temples was the Altar. Upon this altar, always in the true, geographical East, was the sacred fire, burning in splendor and ever alive with heat and flame. But upon the altar or just in front of it was the pot of incense.

The incense may be used in modern times to symbolize the flame and heat of the fire on the altar, and it *may seem* to represent the flame or glow of appreciation in our hearts for our existence; but in truth the use of incense had a very distinct purpose in the days of old, and incense is still used in some sacred ceremonies of secret guilds for the same purpose as of old.

If the purpose of the incense pot were simply to demonstrate a burning fire, the incense itself might be disposed of and only the glowing charcoal used. But the incense used in Egypt, and still used in some ceremonies, was carefully prepared according to the laws of alchemy. The vibrations emanating from the incense pot were of such a nature that they first produced upon those in the Temple, a physical effect, then a mental effect and finally a *spiritual effect*, and this was the true purpose of the incense. The proper kind—known only to the sects using the ancient Egyptian ceremonies—will induce or bring about a spiritual attunement with nature's divine forces and thus make possible greater Cosmic or divine illumination. Therefore, we find that the present incense pot has lost its purpose and its symbolism. May it soon be *found*, along with the lost word, which is and is not lost.



The Double Interlacing Triangle

THE DOUBLE INTERLACING triangle is used in very many of the Jewish Synagogues, and is called the shield of David. The two Yods in center are not part of the shield, but are sometimes placed as shown; they are also used in the center of a triangle, and are an abbreviation of the word Jehovah, and are used by the Jews to express that word, on account of the prohibition to pronounce or write the word in full.

To the Rosicrucian, the triangle is the symbol of perfection. It depicts the unity of two polarities of a different nature resulting in a manifestation. All through nature, whether in the macrocosm or microcosm world, the law of duality exists, and when these opposites are brought together a creation results whether it be a material, spiritual, organic, or inorganic creation. Two points of the triangle allude to the opposite polarities, and the third point, therefore, is the place of their meeting or unity. It is the culmination of the law. The interlaced triangles, as in the above illustration, represent the perfection of the law of duality on both the material and spiritual planes.

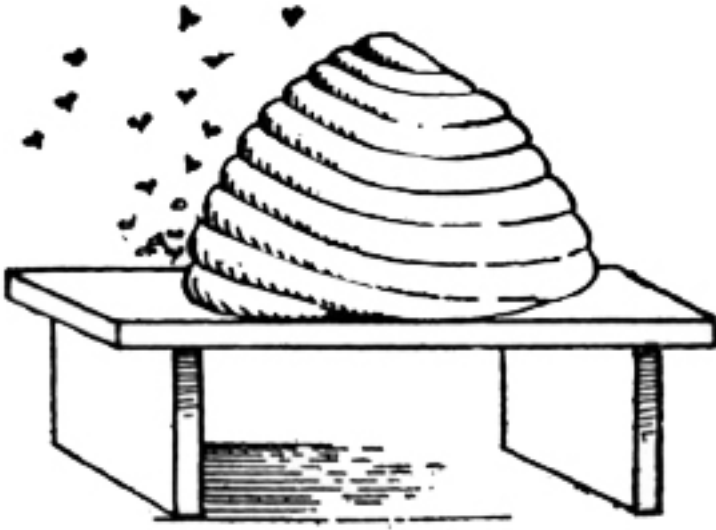


Dove: Symbol of God the Holy Spirit

THIS IS THE regular conventional treatment. Formerly, church decorators generally placed this symbol in a central position and kept to the conventional drawings, but there has been a strong disposition of late years to make this dove more natural. The dove is sometimes used as an emblem of the resurrection; it is then called the ascending or resurrection dove.

“And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him.” Mark 1:10.

Aside from the common theological explanation given above, there is a deeper mystical significance attributed to this symbol. The descending dove alludes to the consciousness of God descending to and pervading the mind of man in all of its purity. The ascending dove alludes to the God consciousness in man soaring heavenward and thus maintaining its unity with God. In other words, the descending and ascending doves represent the oscillation of Cosmic consciousness between man and the source of all Cosmic consciousness.



The Beehive

BEING “BUSY AS little bees” may give rise to the belief that the beehive is an emblem of industry and that it reminds us of the fact that we must labor and none shall be idle among us. But one could hardly call that a mystical interpretation of this symbol, and it most certainly is not the ancient meaning given by the mystics of Egypt and other countries to this strange, natural emblem.

The beehive, in the days of old, typified several laws of nature and several principles of divine mysticism. In brief they are: That we must build a place wherein to labor; this was to represent the Temple. That within the Temple, all must be engaged in mutual, cooperative production; this was the foundation or keystone of the cooperative crafts or guilds. That we are servants unto others and must devote our lives to extracting from nature those elements which are useful to man and refine them; in this sense honey was often used to represent the same principle or law for man to follow. That we must take from the material world such elements as will build our bodies into a home for the soul to reside, as the bee builds the hive into which is stored the sweets of life.

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In other words, the mystical interpretation of this symbol was that man must mold his outer and physical body so that it will contain, and preserve, the richness, sweetness, and fruits of his labors and experiences, not for his own selfish use, but for the up building and strengthening of others. There is, indeed, a great lesson to be learned from a study of this mystical interpretation, and we find the Pyramids in Egypt were built in similar design, in similar manner and for a *similar purpose*. And—the purpose has been fulfilled!



The Scythe

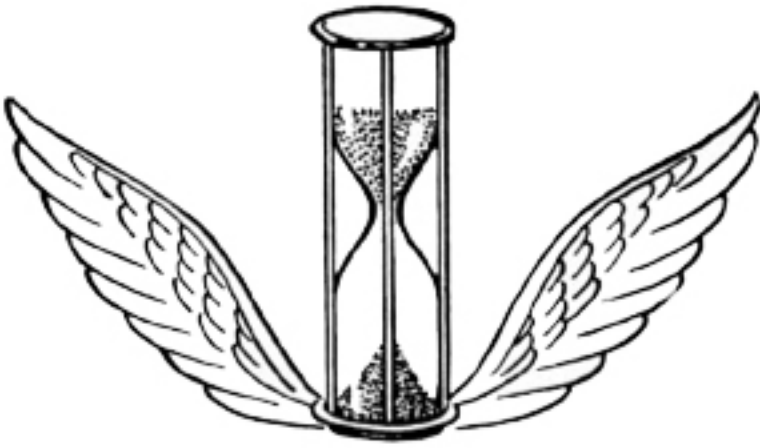
THIS IS SUPPOSED to be another symbol of time, reminding us of our short span of earthly existence. But this, too, is a purely exoteric interpretation of the emblem.

From the mystic's point of view, the Scythe represents the destructive forces of nature, so called by the semi-illuminated. To the illuminated mind the so-called destructive forces are actually the forces of *transmutation* or *transition*.

To the ancient alchemist— and even to the modern mystic— the process of regeneration includes action which seems to be destructive. To change a gross metal into a more refined metal required the work of the crucible, that the heat and flames might *tear down*, to some degree, the atomic structure of the gross metal so that the process of rebuilding might be more easily carried out.

The human body, like metals and other material structures, must, in time, submit to the tearing down process; it must come to a point where its component parts separate and seem to disintegrate. From this stage begins the process of transition resulting in a newer relationship of all parts, manifesting in another form of earthly expression.

Thus the Scythe is to remind the mystic that life on earth in the present form is but transitory, always becoming something else. It means *a change*.



The Hourglass

THIS IS ANOTHER emblem which has so obvious an exoteric meaning, that its mystical interpretation is often lost sight of. Truly, time is fleeting, and the human life on earth is like the passing of the sands.

But, to the mystics, the hourglass was not known and in its place *time*, measured by the sun's movements, was symbolical of opportunities that come and go.

In the first place, we must remember that the second, minute, and hour of time as now used, is a man-made affair and to the mystic no such arbitrary standard or *gauge* could have a deep and divine significance. To the Master mystic neither *time* nor *space* exist; both are artificial creations of man's mind to explain away, or excuse his inability to overcome *seeming* obstacles.

In the Cosmic world and in the world of thought, the *present* is linked with the past and future. What *was*, is *now*, and *shall be*. Thought travels so instantaneously that The Word spoken *now*, reaches all places as it leaves the mind and is *here* and *there* and *everywhere* at the same time. Thus time and space are *not* annihilated, for they *do not exist*; they are not *overcome* for they constitute nothing to be overcome. Thus the hourglass with the wings is an emblem or symbol to remind us that *time* and the journey through *space* are mere symbols themselves and that our lives on this earth are like unto the symbol—*seeming* conditions.



The Law and the Sword

WELL MAY SOME consider the “Constitution” as the law and the sword as the Guardian’s defense against cowans, but the symbolism of the double emblem is quite different from this.

To the mystics the law was Logos, and Logos was the law. In other words, THE WORD was THE LAW, and the word or law was represented first by the stone tablets with rudely cut hieroglyphics, then by the parchment scroll, and later by *the book*. Therefore, a tablet, scroll, or sacred book was always placed on the Altar along with the other sacred articles. This ancient custom was changed in the later years by substituting the Holy Bible for the ancient book, for the Bible came to be considered as *The Word or Law* through the influence of religion and the church which considered the Holy Bible as the permanent record of The Logos. This is the origin of the use of the Bible in so many secret societies and fraternities of modern times, although there are some such organizations which adhere to the more ancient custom and use neither the Bible nor Book of Constitution, but have a book, usually a hand-illuminated one, containing the ancient laws and rituals of the guild which they emulate.

The Sword, on the other hand, was symbolical of the *force* which would defend the brethren against attack and at the same time enforce the practice of the laws laid down in *The Book*. Therefore, the brethren were admonished or reminded by the combined emblem that “between the Law and the Sword was to be found decree and obedience.” A brother’s good conduct was safely lodged between the two and never conflicting with either.



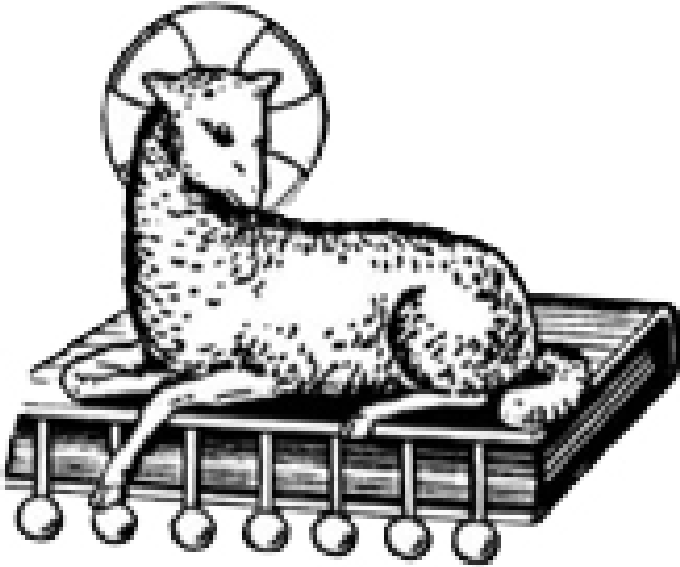
The Ark of the Covenant

ORIGINALLY A TEMPLE was a certain area of ground or space set aside for sacred purposes, or for worship, where men and women could congregate to make their offerings and to meditate. It was holy ground. It did not mean a structure, but rather a place. It was customary to have in this area a focal point represented by a small structure or altar, which alluded to the presence of God. This central point became known as the Sanctum Sanctorum and the altar became known as the ark or the Shekinah. Later when actual structures were erected to house or protect the sacred ground, the Shekinah or ark continued to be placed in the center. It was the place where the consciousness of God was thought to descend to the mundane. There has come down to us today in most religions the belief that wherever man may dedicate a place, a thing or a condition to God, there the presence of God dwells and makes that place, by virtue of its dedication, holy and sacred.



The Cross on the Rock

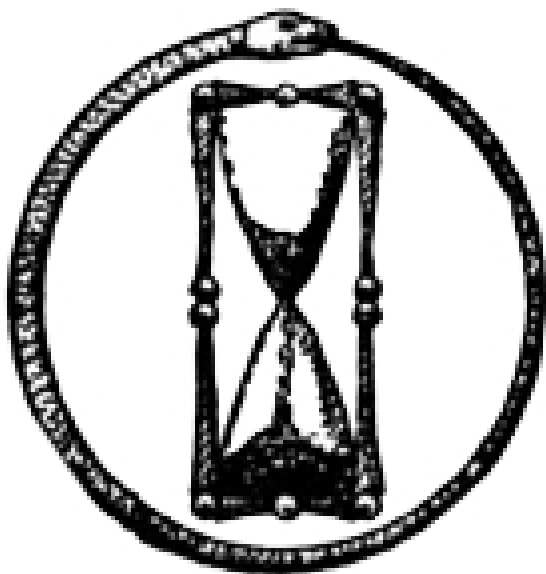
THERE ARE VARIOUS interpretations of the symbol of the cross mounted upon a rock. The most common theological interpretation is based on the following in Matthew XVI:18: “. . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The rock represents the stability of Divine principles being therefore eternal and enduring. The cross alludes, in the theological interpretation, to the Christian church and its righteous doctrines and teachings founded upon the rock of infinite truth. The mystical interpretation defines the rock as the permanency of truth and infinite knowledge, enduring time, and unchanged by the vicissitudes of man. Upon the rock may be mounted the symbol of any faith, teaching, or principle, if, in reality, it is built upon the stability of infinite truth.



The Lamb, the Book, and the Seven Seals

THIS IS ANOTHER composite symbol of which there are numerous theological interpretations. Therefore, we will merely give the mystical interpretation here. The lamb is generally alluded to as a symbol of purity, of innocence. It was customary to offer the lamb as a sacrifice for this reason and because among nomadic people it was one of the highest prized possessions. The Book represents the Word of God—unadulterated, true. The Seven Seals, it is commonly agreed, allude to the cardinal virtues of man, such as fortitude, temperance, etc.

Further, the above symbol or symbols infer that he who acquires the Truth of God and an understanding of Infinite Wisdom, or he who obeys the Mandate of God shall be possessed of the cardinal virtues, the Seven Seals, and have the purity and innocence of a lamb.



The Serpent and the Hourglass

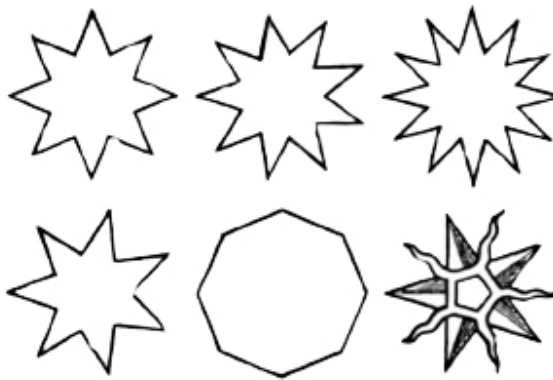
THIS SYMBOL IS a composite one—a combination of two very old symbols. The oldest of the two is the snake with his tail in his mouth. The snake has long been used as a symbol of wisdom by ancient peoples. There is no definite reason given in any sacred literature or in early records as to why wisdom has been attributed to the serpent, unless it arose from the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden and similar stories.

The symbol of the circle formed by the snake placing his tail in his mouth is a symbol of eternity—the universe without beginning or end, complete in itself, and all-wise. When this symbol is combined with the one of the hourglass which alludes to time, the interpretation is universal wisdom, being constant in its application and eternal in its existence.



Transition

THIS ILLUSTRATION IS a very beautiful and inspiring allegory. It is composed of a number of symbols, each very significant individually and each contributes to the meaning of the whole. The broken column in the foreground represents death. It alludes to the physical body of man still retaining after death some of its grace, beauty, and symmetry. The tower in the distance is the church, or any spiritual movement or organization, any uplift body, anything which contributes toward the development of the inner spiritual nature of man. Through it, or its method, one attains the Cross, which is in the upper center of the illustration. The Cross, of course, in its pure mystical significance has no sectarian meaning, but alludes to spirituality, and Cosmic Consciousness. The flight of the dove, from the broken column toward the tower, is indicative of the ethereal realm or the freedom of the soul consciousness from the mortal body. One can also notice a pathway from the tower to a stream in the foreground, the stream alluding to the moving force of life. A careful scrutiny and analysis of the illustration will reveal much other symbolism in this very unusual allegory.



God Geometrizes

THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHICAL ad age that “God geometrizes” is borne out in the significance attributed to these geometric forms:

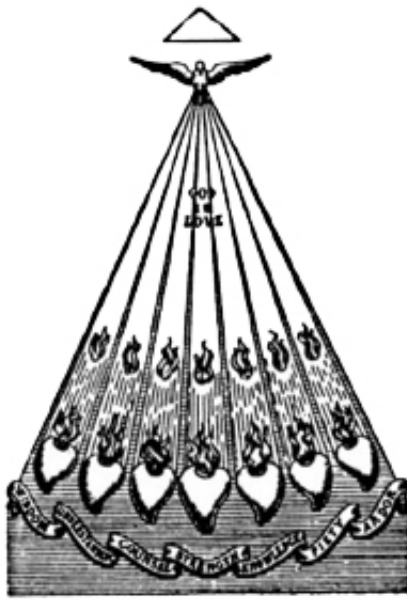
The Seven-Pointed Star. It represents the seven days of the week, seven branches to the candlestick of Moses, seven churches of Asia, seven mysterious seals, seven stars in the right hand of God, the point of unity of the triangles on the finite and infinite planes.

The Eight-Pointed Star. It depicts stability on both the Cosmic and material planes when they are at harmony with each other. Number four or the square is the symbol of stability and dependability; twice four or eight depicts stability on both planes.

The Octagon. Emblematic of regeneration; for this reason very often used for the ground plan of the fonts.

The Nine-Pointed Star. Emblematic of spirituality, love, joy, peace, temperance, goodness. Nine as a mystical number alludes to the ultimate completion and final perfection of any great under taking; it being the ancient symbol of the triangle. The triangle in itself is a symbol of perfection in any single undertaking either of material or spiritual nature.

The Twelve-Pointed, Star. It alludes to the disciples, the council of Divine Wisdom, the gathering of the prophets, the conclave of the holy masters who have dwelt among men.

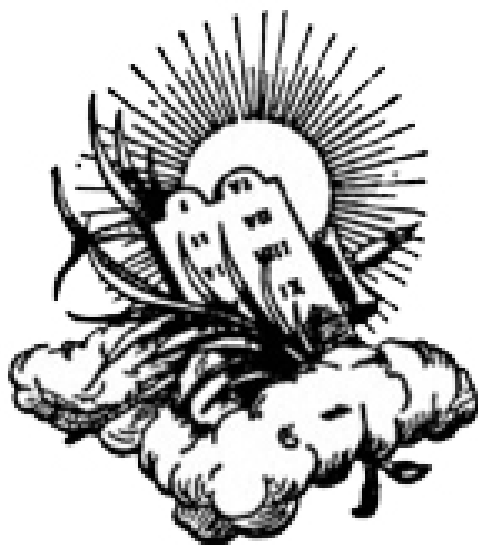


The Material Triangle, the Dove, Fire and the Flaming Heart

THIS IS ONE of the most esoteric forms of symbolism used by the ancients to express the gifts of the Cosmic.

It must be remembered that symbols are used to express in a picture form an idea, as the artist conceives the Cosmic truths. At the top you will note the Triangle in the form of a symbol of material manifestation. The dove, the symbol of the soul, is sending rays through eternal love, which reaches, first, the flames whereby all thoughts are purified, and descends to the seven flaming hearts, all symbols of spiritual love which culminate in the Cosmic gifts, wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, piety, and ardor. The straight lines signify water in which all truths have their solution.

The Trinity of Wisdom, Understanding, and Counsel, and the Trinity of Knowledge, Piety, and Ardor, support the entire structure in the Strength of the wisdom of the soul manifesting in the love toward humanity expressed in tolerance, harmony, and peace.



The Law, the Sword, the Palm, and the Cloud

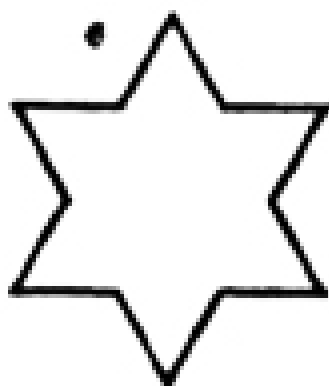
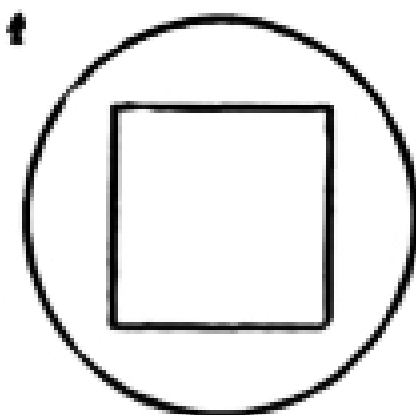
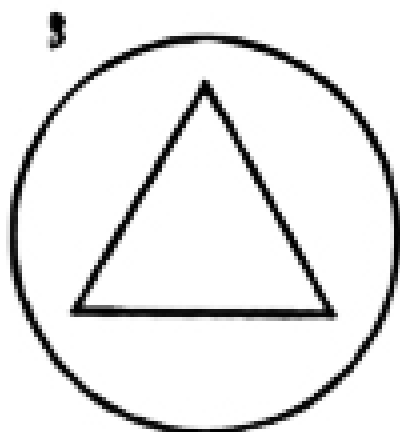
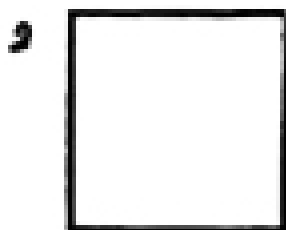
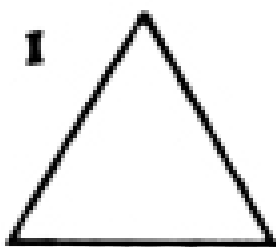
THIS SYMBOL IS the combination of the Law, Sword of the Spirit, and Faith. The clouds represent doubt and obscurity—sometimes grief, obstacles, difficulties in life; the palm, victory, conquest, success. The clouds overlies or obscures the palm of victory and the table of the Law which rests upon the Sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God). Over all is the sun (the source of light), emblematic of inspiration, revelation, knowledge and power. It is truly a remarkable symbol and this is merely the pure mystical interpretation. Each religious sect naturally interprets these symbols in accord with its own doctrines.



The All-Seeing Eye and the Triangle

THESE TWO SYMBOLS combined constitute one symbol which is the most enduring of all—that is, its significance today is just the same as it was centuries ago. It is not a symbol which had a meaning for a certain time, brought enlightenment to men's minds, and then was discarded in preference for another symbol or symbols, which more nearly approached universal truths. A true symbol portrays a definite law or a definite truth of nature or of the universe, and thus changes but slightly in its form with time. The All-Seeing Eye, as we find it inscribed on the Obelisk or the walls of grotto temples in Egypt or even as we find it used today, has always meant the all-pervading consciousness of God or the universal vision of the Deity. No matter where man may go, across the face of the earth, he can never evade the Divine consciousness represented by the All-Seeing Eye, nor is he outside the vision or the Divinity of its system of laws.

The triangle is a symbol of perfection. The law of duality, being a universal law, is represented by two points of the triangle. When two different forces or phases of nature are brought together throughout all of nature, a third condition or thing arises at the point where they will be brought together. That third point or point of materialization is creation and perfection. Thus the combination of the two symbols as we have them above alludes to the perfection of the Divine consciousness, its completeness, its thoroughness, its all-embracing nature.



Geometrical Forms

THE FIRST ASSOCIATION of mathematics with the laws of Nature, in a scientific manner, was by the Greek philosopher, Pythagoras. He conceived matter as being minute particles which combined according to the law of proportion and number. It was, he contended, the mathematical proportion and assembly of matter that accounted for its geometrical design and harmony. Plato, Archimedes, Euclid, and other early thinkers, assigned to certain geometrical designs a symbolical interpretation of natural law which has come down to us today. In fact, in Nature we do find, as one philosopher aptly put it, that “God geometrizes.”

Figure One alludes to the triangle. The triangle is the symbol of perfection. Two points represent the dual forces of the universe; the third point represents their perfection at the point of combining.

Figure Two alludes to the square, the symbol of stability and soundness, also the earth, earthly life.

Figure Three, the circle, alludes to completion, the universe without beginning, without end. The triangle within the circle represents a perfect universe and eternity.

Figure Four alludes to the eternity of life, being the square within the circle.

Figure Five is the five-pointed star, and it contains five Alphas. It is called the Star of Beauty; once called the symbol of health and held to be a talisman against witchcraft.

The six-pointed star is a symbol of the Creator. In reality it is the interlaced triangles, the symbol of perfection of the microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds, perfection in the physical universe, and perfection in the spiritual world. It is the symbol of the unity of both phases of existence of which man is aware.

	A		H
	Ā		KH
	Ā̄		S
 or 	I		S
 or 	U		SH(s)
	B		K
	P		Q
	F		K
 or 	M		T
 or 	N		T
 or 	R ^{and} L	 or 	TH
	H		TCH (í)

Egyptian Hieroglyphics

THE FIRST ATTEMPT by man to convey ideas from his mind to the mind of another were by pictures, straight lines, angles, curves—attempting to form pictures of the idea had in mind. Eventually one or more pictures were combined, forming phonetic sounds such as the picture of a bee, for example, combined with the picture of a leaf, forming the word belief. Opposite are illustrated some of the letters of the Egyptian hieroglyphic alphabet. It will assist you in understanding some of the early Egyptian writings to be found on relics in our leading museums and in books on the subject.

A careful study of the accompanying hieroglyphics will cause you to realize how the characters of our alphabet evolved from picture writing or ideographs. As time went by, the pictures were inscribed or drawn by the scribes so rapidly that they lost in appearance any relationship to the actual thing of which they were copies, but they continued to retain their original meaning. Many of the characters of our present day alphabet can be traced back through the Greek and Phoenician to the Egyptian writing of centuries ago.

You will notice in Figure Two that the symbol depicts the old Egyptian cosmological beliefs. The heavens were thought to be suspended upon four gigantic pillars—a sort of roof or ceiling over the earth, from which the stars were suspended on long cords. The four pillars were four mountain peaks actually seen by the Egyptians and thought to represent the outer boundaries of the universe.

It is not to be wondered that primitive peoples have always associated the sun with a Deity or in fact deified it. It was quite apparent that light, heat, and consequently life was dependent on it.

In the opinion of the early Egyptian masses it was a Divine Entity, but to the learned few of the mystery schools, Ra, as It was named, was a symbol of Divine power, a medium only through which universal energy radiated, and thus was not to be worshiped in its own right.

During a period of Egypt's history, the worship of Egypt was divided between Ra, the solar deity, and Isis, goddess of verdure. Affixed to

the circle, symbol of Ra, were spread wings, emblematic of his flight across the heavens from east to west daily. He later became known as the winged god.

Egyptian hieroglyphics pertain to the heavens and the earth. Star, or Sothic time, was used in Egypt.

The lives of the Egyptian people were colored by their religious thoughts and philosophy, even to an expression of this thought and philosophy in their art and hieroglyphic symbols. There were three permanent ideas of focal facts: the Sun, overhead, as a positive godlike energy; the Earth and its waters as the negative force receptive to the Sun; and the more personal idea of solving the mystery of man's life after death in relation to the above-mentioned two great Cosmic precepts.

In the Pyramid texts, one concept of the afterlife was the abode of the soul of the deceased in the heavens. The Circumpolar stars, probably because they never went into obscurity below the horizon, were considered as the locale of the soul's abode after death.

Figure 18 gives another concept of the abode of the dead in the Underworld. This is the Osirian concept which conflicts with the Solar idea of the next life in the sky. The Egyptian interpretation of figure 18 came probably from their observation of the starry night sky.



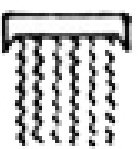




From the early Egyptian symbols originated some of the characters of our present-day alphabet. For instance, the combination of figure 16 and figure 17 is the basis upon which our calendar term, "month," was originated.




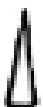





As we look upon the peculiar inscriptions of the ancient Egyptians, we are apt to think that the meaning attributed to them was either exaggerated or that the crude pictures are not relevant to the ideas they were intended to convey. However, if we take one of our own ideas and attempt to reduce it to those pictures which will cause another to realize our meaning, we will be startled by the similarity of our own designs to some of the Egyptian hieroglyphs.

BEHOLD THE SIGN

Generally we associate the Egyptian hieroglyphs only with the inscriptions to be found upon the walls, tombs and sculptures of Egypt, partially obliterated by the ravages of time and the elements. They seem to us as the markings of a dead race and age; however, many of them have found a place in our present-day civilization, for we find them constituting the symbols used by many of the crafts and guilds of today. Some of our outstanding fraternal organizations, especially those of a philosophical nature, employ these ancient symbols to designate meanings differing but slightly from those assigned to them by the ancients. Study the accompanying symbols and you will notice a similarity to those used by many fraternal organizations today, even in your own community.

In the early history of the Egyptians we find stress laid upon their very accurate laws dealing with land and property ownership. These laws were based upon an intricate and amazingly correct system of Geometry and Mathematics. It became necessary for the Egyptians to evolve such an ethical system because of the frequent periods of inundation of the Nile which necessitated establishing new land borders and surveys to be correctly carried out to discern property lines. Measurements were necessary for building, construction and engineering purposes. It was during the Third Dynasty that the Prime Minister Imhotep engineered the first large construction in stone for King Zoser. It is an established fact in Egyptian history that signs and symbols were used in stone masonry as early as the Second Dynasty. Archaeological excavations have uncovered massive blocks of stone bearing these signs and symbols which serve as a journal of record of some of the geographical conditions of the early Egyptians, and give us an insight into their ingenuity in overcoming many of these obstacles.

1.  *pet.
her.* That which *is* above, Heaven, the Divine World; the blue dome.
2.  *kerh* Sky or Heaven at night with stars shining clearly; a clear night. A bright lamp (light) in the sky.
3.  *ätet* Water falling from sky, rain; dew (if added to No. 7), storm (if added to No. 4).
4.  *ehen* Lightning; forks of light coming down from Heaven.
5.  *qert* One half of Heaven; the Eastern half of the sky.
6.  *Rā.
hru,* The Sun, Day, Source of Life; Symbol of God in the Heaven; Aten; Midday; Noon.
7.  *kw.* Sun shining brightly; radiance; splendor of light; sparkling.

8.  *Ra.* Symbol of Egyptian Sun-God. A temple god.
- 
9.  *Nu, uben* The sun sending forth its rays; beams of blinding sunlight. Fire from the sun.
10.  *Sept* (The star "Sothis") To be provided with; that which is given or acquired.
11.  — Sun's symbol with uraei.
12.  The winged Sun.
13. 
 *Na.* The sun rising in East, beginning of day, the first hour of the day; eastern horizon.
14.  *part.* Cake; an offering, a prized piece of food enead of Gods.

15.  *sper.*

A rib; to arrive at, to reach (a place or condition); termination of a journey.

16.  *šāh,*
šbt,

Moon; one month, a period of 28 days.

17.  *šb,*
tuš,

Star; star of dawn; one hour; to pray.

18.  *tuš.*







The underworld, the world of darkness, sin, and despair.

19.  *ts.*

Smooth land; land of good, fine soil; the most fertile land; a very receptive mind.

20.  *ts.*

Rough land; land of soil mixed with large stones, wood, etc.; a mind filled with sin or delusion.

21.  *set.* *Mountainous land; land of hills and valleys.*
22.  *kw.* *Mountain of wickedness. Really, a valley of wickedness and despair; a barren valley.*
23.  *hut.* *Horizon; usually the East horizon (but *hw* is also used to mean the East horizon)*
24.  *Foreign; barbarians; A stranger on our mountain tops. (Applies to things and conditions as well as persons.)*
25.  *hosp.* *A home; an infected place; a place of evil manifested; error coming forth.*
26.  *afob.* *Land on either side of the Nile*

- 27 Land on both sides of the Nile. usually designates all of Egypt
- 28 Land in a small meaning, specifically, a bounded lot, plot, farm, city, etc
- 29 *ust.* A roadway, an established or public highway, the way to a place
- 30 *kas m.* Side, one part of a thing.
- 31 *ânen* A large stone of one piece; a unit of stone work or masonry; used to sometimes indicate the inner hall of stone Temples, or the "loose"
- 32 Stone work composed of many stones, a collection of stones, sometimes used to mean a tiled floor



The Pelican

THIS ILLUSTRATION DEPICTS the pelican shedding its blood for its young, which is an ancient superstition and has been proven false. When this was believed, however, the pelican was adopted as a symbol of Christ shedding His blood for the church and mankind.

This, however, is purely a theological interpretation of the symbol; it has another purely mystical significance. It is a symbol of self-sacrifice, that as we give of ourself, of our possessions, of our intellect and our ability, so we nurture our virtues, develop our character and our personality, and as the years go by our self-sacrifice is reflected in good deeds which live long after ourselves, the result of the sacrifices we have made.



The Benediction

BRIEFLY, THE THEOLOGICAL interpretation of the symbol above is “The souls of the redeemed in the hands of the Almighty.” This is undoubtedly founded on the Biblical inscription—”In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.”—Job XII:10. The mystical interpretation of this symbol is that the five miniature figures represent the five objective faculties of man, and which at all times should be devoted toward aiding him to live a godly life, and that man should not permit his senses to lead him from the guiding hand of God. The symbol on the right was originally the Greek form of benediction. In the Greek form of benediction, the forefinger is extended to resemble the letter “I,” while the middle finger is bent in a “C”-like form. The thumb and third finger are crossed to make an “X” and the little finger is bent into a “C” again, so that we get “I, C, XC,”—the initials and final letters of the Greek name for Jesus Christ.



The Dragon

THE EVIL FORCES of nature and of man have always been represented, if in form, as a hideous being. Usually the form has no equal in nature. Most times it was a composite of all the fearful animals or reptiles of which man had experience. If these were not fearful enough in appearance, man's imagination supplied the need.

One of these grotesque beings, emblematic of Satan, sin, and pestilence, has been, since antiquity, the dragon. Archaeologists have claimed that the dragon, as we see it depicted today, has some foundation for its use in that it resembles a prehistoric reptile. Even so, it is safe to say that the above includes embellishments of man's superstitious mind.



The Heart, Chalice, Dove and Arrows

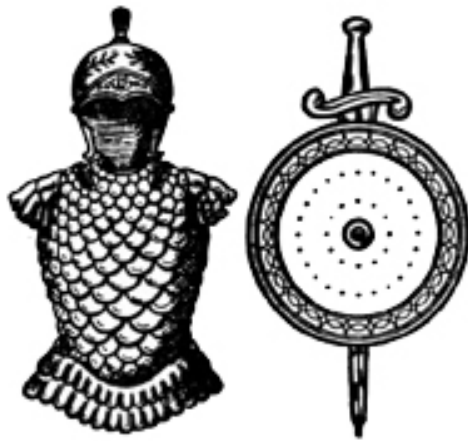
A GAIN WE HAVE a composite symbol with a multiple meaning. The cup or chalice in the mystical sense alludes to the fullness of life, the richness and joys of living. Above the cup is suspended the heart, emblematic of the emotions and sentiments which are required to temper life and guide it from sensuous paths. The cross seen upon the heart indicates that spiritual interests must keep man's emotions within their proper bounds. The dove, as usual, alludes to purity and ascending consciousness. In this symbol the dove depicts the true life, the ideal of purity and the desire to raise the consciousness to a lofty plane. The arrows represent temptation striking at the very soul of man and which he must resist regardless of the torture and torment such resistance affords. The theological interpretation of this latter element of the symbol is found in 2 Timothy III:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."



The Phoenix

EMBLEM OF IMMORTALITY and Resurrection. A fabulous bird of antiquity; was said to be like the eagle in form and size, but of very beautiful and vivid plumage, mostly gold colored and crimson.

Among the Egyptians it was the emblem of the soul. It was said to live about six hundred years, and then to make a pyre of aromatic gums and spices, lighting the pile with the fanning of its wings and then to be consumed; and from its ashes it arose reinvigorated and with its youth renewed. Although this myth has long since been proven false, the Phoenix is still a favorite symbolism.



The Sword, Shield, Helmet and Breastplate

THE EARLY ARMOR of man has often been used symbolically and allegorically in classical, philosophical and ecclesiastical literature. The following are allegorical Biblical references to the armor of a warrior:

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

“Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Ephesians VI:13-17

It is quite infrequent that allegories of the Christian Bible may be interpreted in the same sense mystically, but in this instance they may be without any loss of value and without suffering a limitation of meaning.



Flowers

FLOWERS HAVE ALWAYS had a spiritual significance and have been used for centuries as a mystical symbol. Philosophers and mystics have referred to the budding of man's soul, the flowering of his mind, the blooming of the consciousness of man. The flower has also been likened unto the brief span of man's life. We quote below Biblical references wherein the analogy of the flower has been used.

“As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourisheth.

“For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”— Psalms CIII:15, 16. “. . . they are like grass which groweth up.

“In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.”— Psalms XC:5, 6.



The Wreath and Torch

THE WREATH AND torch generally represent death and victory. Usually, however, the inverted flameless torch is emblematic of death and the laurel of victory. Very many of the early converts to Christianity were from among the so-called pagans. Their early training influenced their ideas after conversion. They were familiar with many of the emblems of the Greeks and used them with new ideas in their religion.

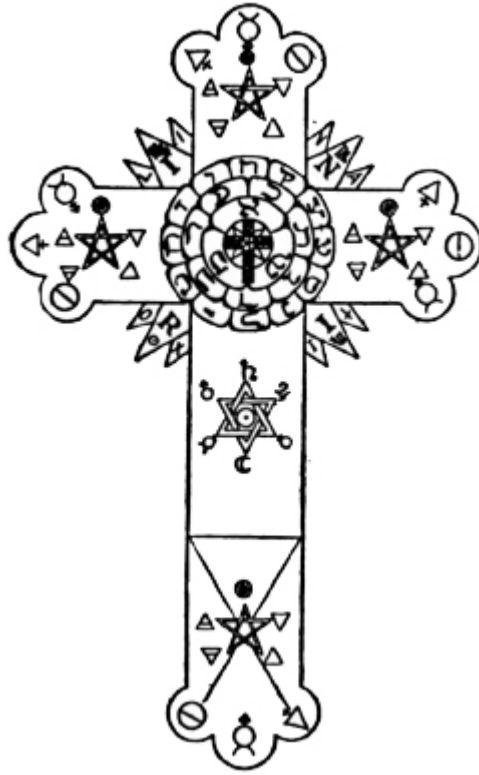
These emblems are from the early Greeks. We do not know of any two emblems which are more expressive of their significance than these two. The early Christians used the symbol to depict life and peace, death and victory through Jesus, the Christ. Since that time the torch and wreath have been used separately to convey many other meanings.



Celtic Cross

PERRHAPS ONE OF the oldest symbols of man, and which still is prominent today, is the cross, but there are various forms of the cross, many of which had no religious significance, but were purely geometric or mystical. The most commonly known crosses are the Crux Ansata, the looped Egyptian cross, the Tau cross, the Swastika, and the various ecclesiastical forms.

One of the oddest forms of the cross is that which is illustrated here, known as the Aberlemno, or Celtic. The original is formed of a single slab, seven feet in height. If our readers will refer in their local public library to the subject of "cross," in any of the leading encyclopedias or Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, they will find, therein, some intensely interesting and instructive reading about the origin and significance of the different forms of the cross.



The Hermetic Rose Cross

THIS INTRICATE SYMBOL is called the alchemical and hermetic Rose Cross, and is a very old mystical symbol. It is composed of two Rosy crosses united into one: the small Rosy cross at the center—representative of man, the microcosm—is in turn the center point of a larger rose residing at the heart of the large cross—symbolic of the macrocosm. Upon the four ends of the large cross are inscribed the three alchemical symbols: mercury, sulphur, and salt. At the top of the cross, mercury is placed in the center, sulphur on the left, and salt on the right. Upon the other ends of the cross the symbols have been inscribed in such an order as to conform to the esoteric tradition.

Also upon each arm, adjacent to the alchemical symbols, is the symbol of the pentagram. This five-pointed figure is a symbolic representation of the Rosy cross itself: the victory of the quintessence over the four alchemical elements. The wheel at the top of each

pentagram represents the quintessence; the small triangle on the left, with the point downward and a line parallel to the base, symbolizes earth; the triangle above, with a line parallel to the base but with the point upward, represents air; the upper triangle on the right of the pentagram, with the point downward, symbolizes water; the lower small triangle on the right, with the point upward, represents fire.

On the lower arm of the figure, below the large rose, is a hexagram—symbol of the macrocosm— composed of two interlaced triangles. At its points are inscribed the six planets, according to the ancient astrological tradition: at the bottom is the Moon, at its right is Venus, followed in turn by Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and Mercury. At the center of the hexagram is the Sun. The order of arrangement of these symbols conforms to certain Cabalistic rituals.

The lower end of the longest arm is divided into four sections by two diagonal lines. These sections are colored according to the four colors of Malkuth of the Cabalistic “Tree of Life.” The four sets of three rays which extend outward from the center of the large cross symbolize the Divine light. The letters inscribed upon each large center-ray combine into I N R I, which combination, according to the Rosicrucian historian Fr. Wittemans, represents a Latin motto meaning “Nature is completely renewed by fire.” The letters upon the smaller rays represent evocative names of Latin, Egyptian, and Greek origin.

The petals of the large rose on the cross are twenty-two in number, and stand for the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew Cabalistic alphabet. The outer circle of twelve petals represents the twelve single letters of this alphabet, and in particular the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The next circle of seven petals symbolizes the seven double letters—in particular the seven astrological planets. The innermost circle of three petals represents the three Mother-letters—air, fire, and water.

At the center of the large rose is the microcosmic rose cross, an unfolded cube with a five petaled rose at its center. Four barbs emerge from behind this cross, pointing into the four directions in space.

The complete symbol or “Encyclopedic” Rose Cross symbolizes all the majesty, power, beauty, and protection of the Rosicrucian Order.

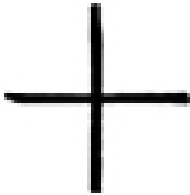


Fig. 1

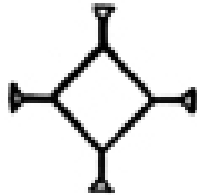


Fig. 2

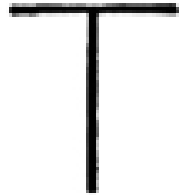


Fig. 3

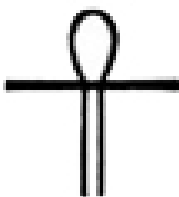


Fig. 4

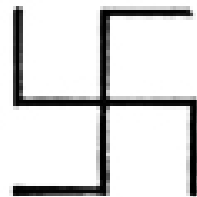


Fig. 5

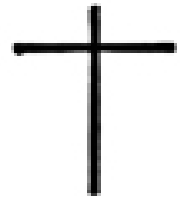


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

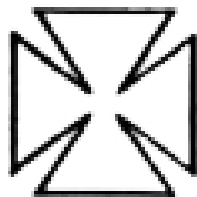


Fig. 8

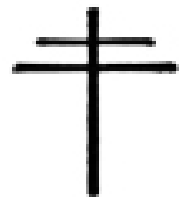


Fig. 9



Fig. 10

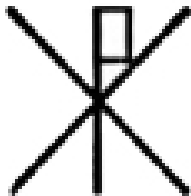


Fig. 11

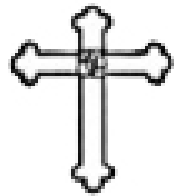


Fig. 12

Crosses and Their Meaning

THE CROSS IN its various forms may be traced back to remotest antiquity. It is not endemic to civilization, for it has been found inscribed on the pottery of peoples that may be archaeologically classified as prehistoric.

What did the cross in its earliest form suggest to the mind of primitive man? Perhaps the conception of *duality* was the most dominant idea identified with it. If you, today, were to pictorialize, in a very simple form, the unity, the marriage, if you will, of two different conditions or things, can you think of any more expressive form than a simple, *equilateral* cross? (See Figure 1)

All crosses, of course, do not have a psychological and natural foundation. Others have a religious, mystical, and heraldic significance. The religious and mystical interpretations are, however, at their bottom, principally related to the psychological principles from which the cross sprang. There are as many as 385 different types of crosses, a number of which are purely ornamental designs. A form of the equilateral cross was depicted by the Chaldeo-Assyrians, as a symbol of the sky and its god Anu (Figure 2). It possibly suggested as well the radiation of space, of extension, and direction.

The *Tau Cross* (Figure 3) is so named because it effects the design of the Greek letter Tau. With the Gauls, the *Tau* comes to stand for the hammer of Thor. Even with the Egyptians, it was the sign of a two-headed mallet, the sign of the *enforcer*.

The *Crux Ansata*, or looped cross (Figure 4) is really a Tau cross with a handle or loop attached to its top. To the Egyptians, this symbolic device, cross, was known as the Ankh, which means "life." The sign was placed in the hands of gods and personages to show that they were living, not perhaps in the physical sense, but that they were living in the next world.

The *Swastika*, or gammated cross (Figure 5), only of recent times has come into ill repute, by symbolizing an anxious political regime. Heretofore, it has been venerated by peoples of every era for exalted

meanings. It is often alluded to as the gammated cross, because it appears like four gammas (the third letter of the Greek alphabet) joined together.

The Swastika's suggestion to the primitive mind was principally one of motion. The apparent diurnal movement of the sun across the heavens, the movement of the earth, running water, the wind, the uniting of four castes—all of these were associated with the early Swastika.

The *Christian Cross* began as a glorification of the Roman *Lignum-Infelix* (unhappy wood). This Roman cross was in reality a wooden post, with a horizontal crossbeam near the top upon which it was the custom of the day to execute criminals just as we in many countries of the world today execute criminals upon the gallows, also principally of wood. Since Christ was crucified upon the Roman cross, it became to the Christians a symbol both of infamous wrong and of His sacrifice. The *Crux Immissa*, or Latin cross (Figure 6), finally in the early centuries took its place officially as the symbol of Christianity.

The *Crux Decussata*, or Saint Andrew's cross (Figure 7), is an example. It derives its name from the Roman number ten (X), upon which type of cross it is claimed Saint Andrew was martyred.

The *Maltese*, or rayed cross (Figure 8), is still another example. This cross was worn as a decoration by the hospitalers, for their Christian deeds of charity. The latter were a knighthood formerly known as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Its form is still often used as a meritorious military award.

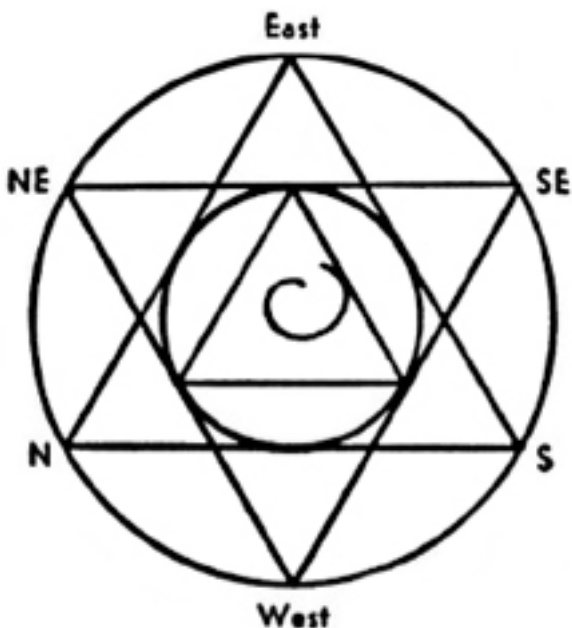
Again the *Patriarchal Cross* (Figure 9) was so named after the Bishops of the early Christian church, who were known as patriarchs. This form sometimes had three and more horizontal bars. The *Cross Perronnee* (Figure 10), so named because it is mounted on steps, is more commonly known as the Cross of Calvary.

A form of the St. Andrew's cross also evolved into the monogram or emblem of Christ (Figure 11). X is also like the Greek letter *Chi*. P is the Greek letter Rho. These constitute the first two letters of the

BEHOLD THE SIGN

Greek word for Christ. The abbreviation, namely, X and P combined, as shown, became the symbol of Christ. It is for that reason that the term *Xmas* is still often used today as an abbreviation for Christmas.

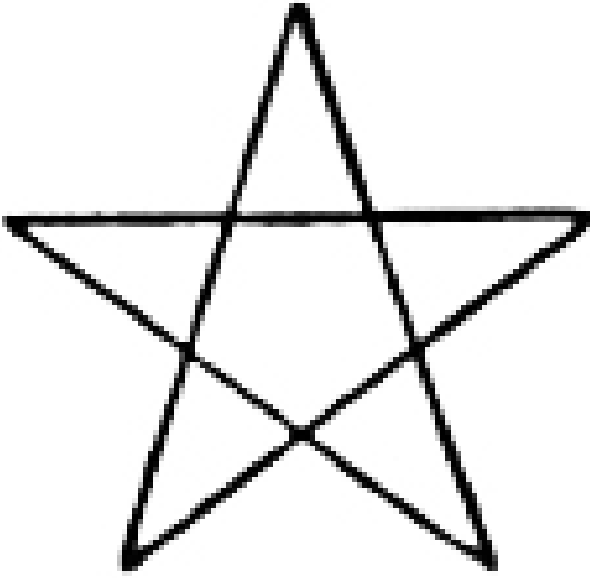
The *Rosicrucian Cross* (Figure 12) has a distinctly mystical and allegorical meaning, unique unto itself. It may be held that the cross represents the physical body of man, with arms outstretched, in salutation before the sun in the East, the latter depicting the *Greater Light*. The partially unfolded rose in the center of the cross represents the soul of man, the inner self unfolding within him as it receives more of the light. The rose placed in the exact center of the cross, where the two lines intersect, depicts the point of unity. It alludes to that point where manifestation occurs, by virtue of the two different conditions—the material and the spiritual—having joined their natures in a common purpose.



Sri Iantra

THIS SYMBOL IS called Sri lantra and is of Hindu origin. The large circle represents the universe without beginning or end. The triangle with the apex up depicts the positive or male element, the triangle with the point down, the female element. Both, though visibly distinct, are united. The unity of these two creates a microcosm or small world, represented by the next smaller circle. For religious purposes an idol or image of a god or avatar is placed in the exact center of the symbol when it is drawn upon the ground.

The symbol has been adopted by numerous esoteric orders and societies, and its interpretation as a whole varies. The general significance they attributed to its geometric elements, the circles and interlaced triangles, is about as related.

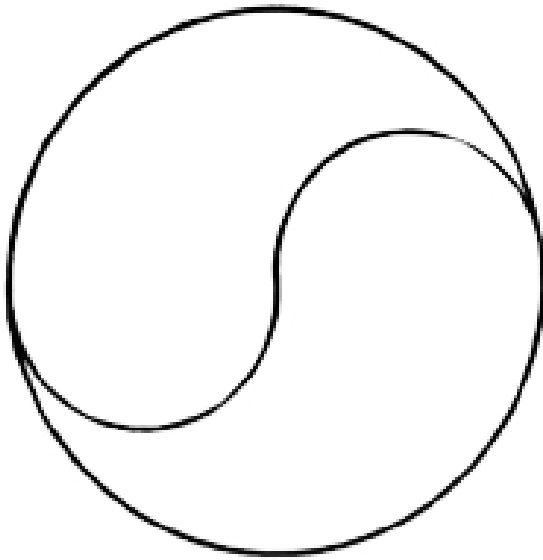


Pentacle

THE ACCOMPANYING SYMBOL is known as the Pentacle or five-pointed star and is often referred to as the Pentagram. The symbol is related to have been used as a badge by the members of the Pythagorean School, and is said to have signified health to these ancient philosophers.

Marks of this kind are also used in Northern India on utensils, particularly domestic objects. The symbol is used by the people as a protective amulet or charm to prevent scorpion stings and fever.

The Pentagram is also used by a venerated mystic order to symbolize the numeral 5, and disorder or *fall, death, disease, corruption and putrefaction.*



Rhythmic Cosmic Motion

THIS GEOMETRIC SYMBOL was used by the Egyptians and, subsequently, by other ancient peoples. There is no universal assent as to its meaning. A philosophic concept, now a tradition among certain venerated esoteric orders, is that it depicts Rhythmic Cosmic Motion, upon which the existence of all things depends. The circle represents the Cosmos or the state of being, namely, eternity without beginning or end. The sine or curved line depicts the perpetual motion of the Cosmic and the state of equilibrium which it effects. The equilibrium is denoted by the crest (upper part of curve) and the trough (lower part of the curve) equally dividing the area of the circle.

If we interlace the sine with another of the same length and curvature we have a crude form of the swastika which is still another ancient symbol which has denoted motion of the universe.

This symbol may also be said to represent life's cleavage or the simple division of the cells.



Quintessence

THE INTERLACED TRIANGLE, or pentagram, again appears as an esoteric symbol. The key to their meaning this time is the numeral 5, appearing in their center. The 5 in this relationship depicts the fifth essence (quint essential) of the alchemists. According to the Pythagoreans, there are five elements, the first four being earth, air, fire, and water, the fifth or quintessence being of a celestial nature. In fact, this fifth element was really conceived by the alchemists as the prima materia (first matter). Not only were the other elements believed to have originated in this fifth essence, but it was likewise thought to be the universal or Cosmic Mind, which directed the formation of all properties and substances. Thus it was an immortal mind force. As one translation of an archaic Rosicrucian alchemy manuscript reads, inert, "The quintessence is the power, the quality, and the virtue of each and everything in nature. "Therefore, we may consider the quintessence as constituting a fifth element within all matter. As such, it forms the foundation from which flow the four visible lower elements: fire, water, air, and earth. These four well-known elements may be regarded as being the home of the quintessence. "The quintessence is a most subtle essence, which permeates all objects, which, although it lies concealed within each and every substance, may nevertheless be made particularly discernible. Through its power and its activity, all objects are mutually attracted or repelled, in accordance with their polarities."



Sistrum

THE SISTRUM WAS an instrument used by the ancient Egyptians in the worship of the Goddess Isis. When shaken, its parts emitted a rattling sound. It became an ancient symbol of Cosmic motion. Plutarch, in referring to it, says: “The Sistrum, too, shows that things that are must be shaken and never cease from motion, but be, as it were, aroused and stirred up when they slumber . . . showing that, when corruption has tied fast and brought it to a standstill, Generation again unlooses and restores Nature by means of Motion.” Plutarch further explains the bars across the oval of the Sistrum as follows: “And as the Sistrum is circular in the upper part, the arch contains the four things that are shaken, because the part of the universe that is born and perishes is surrounded by the lunar sphere, but all things are yet in motion and changed within it by means of the four elements, fire, earth, water and air”



Macrocosm

THE UNIVERSE, A cell with a nucleus of terrific heat and gases. Around it, concentric rings of molten matter and flames. The illustration here is an early design of the universe used in the macrocosmical studies of the medieval mystics and philosophers. The theory is responsible for the simple circle being used so commonly as a symbol of the universe, even by our modern philosophers and metaphysicians. Allegorically, the circle also represents being, or the universe without beginning or end.



The Germ of Life

THE EGG HAS often been used in past times as a symbol of the germ of life. The transition from germ to living form was most conspicuously apparent in the egg, and was the source of study by ancient alchemists and philosophers. Early chemists attempted to compound artificially the chemical ingredients of the egg, hoping by this means to discover the Cosmic formula of life itself. The egg has been used in the ornamentation of ecclesiastical furniture and paraphernalia, and can be seen used in this manner in the great cathedrals of Europe.



Friendship

THE SYMBOL SHOWN here is a compound one. The clasped hands allude to friendship, brotherhood, fraternalism—and are used as a symbol having this same significance by societies and fraternities today. The flames, seen rising from the chalice, depict the holy fire of purification, the temptations and trials of life, which we must go through. The combined symbol represents friends who together have passed through such fires, and have had their minds purged of any jealousy and envy of each other. It also means that their friendship has been molded by the flames through which they have passed.



The Rock and the Sprig

THERE ARE CERTAIN things in nature which, by their very form or substance, lend themselves to adoption as symbols. Thus, the rock has for centuries been the symbol of determination, unperturbability, staunchness and durability. The sprig, on the other hand, has often been used as a sign of new life, or to depict the struggle that the comparatively weak life force has against the elements and environment. The combination of the rock and the sprig as shown here alludes to a life of strong character and noble sentiments—the sprig being life, and the rock the foundation on which it rests, or in other words, character and noble sentiments.



The Conquest of Ignorance

THIS ALLEGORICAL ILLUSTRATION might well be termed “Man’s Conquest of Ignorance and Superstition.” Hideously formed beasts were meant to depict the vicious nature of superstition and ignorance. Most times, as here, they are shown dwelling in caves or dark places, representing the fact that ignorance and superstition can exist only in darkness. The figure of the man pulling the beast from his cave, alludes to those courageous individuals who spread knowledge and conquer ignorance by exposing it to scrutiny and investigation. This is another woodcut from a several-centuries-old Rosicrucian book in the archives of the Rosicrucian Order.



Abuse of Knowledge

THIS ILLUSTRATION IS an allegory alluding to the intoxication that comes from an excess of knowledge which is acquired without proper mental digestion; that is, cogitation and reflection. The tree with the trunk in the form of a woman alludes to temporal or sensual knowledge. The fruit of this tree can be eaten with benefit by man if digested and used for the purpose for which it exists. But if man indulges too freely, the fruit soon intoxicates him, robs him of his reason and normal powers. This state of intoxication is indicated by the reclining male figures. Briefly, the lesson taught is that man should acquire knowledge only to the degree of his ability to master and direct it, or else it gains control of him.



The Altar of Lust

HERE WE HAVE another composite symbol consisting mainly of the Altar and the Serpent. In this instance, the serpent represents wickedness, or immorality. The altar depicts those things which man venerates by his devotion to them.

The allegorical illustration in its entirety alludes to the destruction that awaits a civilization which gives itself over to an incontinent life, or that countenances the depraved conduct of its people. In the distance are seen the ruins of a city, and, immediately behind the altar, the remorseful humans.



Pillars of Learning

IM THIS SMALL allegorical illustration is contained a wealth of philosophical truth. In the upper left-hand corner are two columns which form a portal. The columns allude to wisdom and the stability of knowledge. All who wish to live a greater and higher life must pass through this portal, or, in other words, acquire knowledge. On the right may be seen the ruins of a structure, representing decaying civilization. In the foreground is a wild beast devouring refuse; the beast depicts a degenerate people looking for bits of happiness in the debris of society. The man in the center-foreground is exhorting the beast—the fallen people—to look upward and to enter the portal of wisdom and thus find the greater pleasures of mind.



Dual Being

NOT ONLY DOES our common law consider marriage as uniting two individuals into a single entity, but the early Canon or Ecclesiastical law did as well. The mystical principle behind the church law was that man and woman were originally one being of dual sex, and thereafter became separate beings, each with but one polarity of life, or sex, and this condition marriage strove to correct.

The allegory above depicts these ancient principles. To the right of the two sweethearts is Cupid, a well-known symbol. Above them is a two-headed figure alluding to the state of marriage, wherein persons may have separate minds, yet can return to the original condition of man—the duality of sex and one being. (Reproduced from an early Rosicrucian volume—dated 1687 A.D.— in the archives of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC.)



The Two Selves

IN THIS ILLUSTRATION of archaeological symbolism we see the idea of the duality of our natures represented by two creatures at war. Throughout our earthly lives, there is a constant contest between the soul and the animal body. In this symbolism we see the soul represented by the winged creature, capable of walking the earth and flying through space, but we see it being attacked by the strong creature of the earth plane who wants to argue against every opportunity of dominance given to the soul. It wants to be the pre-eminent and overpowering mind and force in our daily thinking and activities.

One or the other of these two natures in man must win eventually. The future happiness and progress of man depend upon the eventual supremacy of the soul. It is man's duty to learn of ways and means of giving the inner self and divine nature of man every opportunity to assert its magnificent mastership.



The Zodiac

NEARLY ALL OF the symbols used by the mystics of the Middle Ages contained astrological or astronomical signs and chemical signs. In the symbol shown herewith the Zodiac of twelve divisions with the twelve signs is shown in the outer circle, representing the twelve classes of human beings and the twelve primary qualities or conditions in life. Inside the circle at the four sides of the square are shown the Latin words for fire, air, earth, and water, representing the four principal elements in the manifestation of nature's laws. In the center is shown a star with the various astronomical and chemical emblems indicating nature's products. The relationship of all these things to man and his life and interests was the basis for the metaphysical science of astrology and not the modern form of fortunetelling.



Oldest Rosicrucian Allegory

THIS SYMBOLIC ILLUSTRATION is the most revered of all Rosicrucian ones for it depicts the fundamental tenets of the Order's philosophy. The large circle is emblematic of the macrocosm, the universe as a whole, being complete without beginning or end. Within the circle is the triangle, the symbol of perfection representing the law of duality, the binary forces of nature combining to produce all creation.

The smaller circle with the human figures within it alludes to the microcosm, the small world of which mankind is a part, and which is governed by the same laws as the macrocosm, of which it is a part.

The square symbolizes stability and indicates that all human conduct, in accord with the principles of the macrocosmic and microcosmic worlds, is proper and will lead to a life of security.

In the allegorical scene are also shown numerous geometrical symbols, which are to teach us that the laws of the universe are orderly truths and as dependable as the axioms of mathematics, one of the sciences based upon these universal laws.

This illustration is taken from a very rare Rosicrucian book of the 17th Century, now in the archives of the Order.



The Crocodile

MAN IN THE early days of his struggle for spiritual light attributed to the beasts, birds and reptiles certain supernatural powers. This belief arose from observing the superior physical attributes they possessed. Man's imagination ran riot. He conceived mythical animals having the combined forms and characteristics of these beings with which he was familiar. One of these was the dragon, resembling a crocodile. The dragon was conceived as the symbol of evil, deception and foreboding, the god of destruction. In this illustration, taken from a rare book of Rosicrucian symbology, we see the dragon about to devour his own tail. The allegory implies that evil eventually destroys itself and cannot endure.

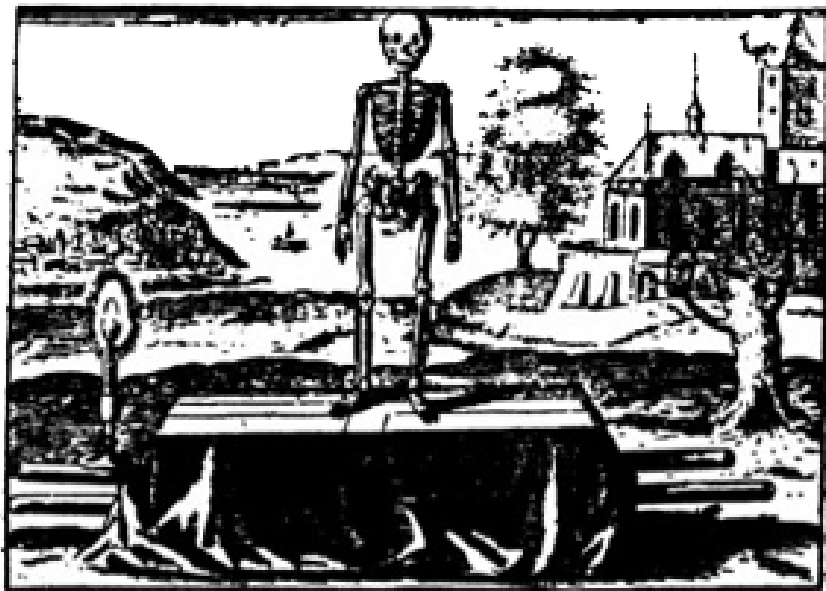


Justice

MANY WILL RECOGNIZE in this illustration age old geometrical symbols, and their arrangement will recall their mystical meaning. The circle represents the universe without beginning or end. Within the circle is the square, representing stability and dependability. Within the square is shown the equilateral triangle with point upward, alluding to nature's manifestations on the material plane.

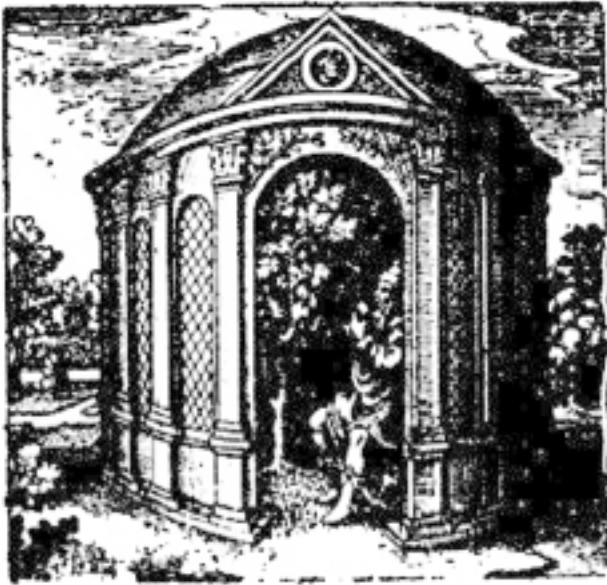
Written in Latin about the circle are the names of the seasons. Behind all is humanity represented by the figure, attempting to render justice as is indicated by the scales and the sword which he holds.

Since an understanding of justice will come from a careful study of nature and her laws, it is noticed that the figure is shown scrutinizing the symbols of nature before him. This is another combination of mystical symbols reproduced from a Rosicrucian book dated 1618 A.D.—the original book being in the archives of AMORC.



Life and Death

THE SKELETON STANDING above the casket and the broken trunk of a tree in the middle distance signify that notwithstanding the fact that we build churches and cathedrals in which to worship God and place the proper value upon spiritual things, we still look upon the physical, material side of life, even in its broken and lifeless state, as being important. By the position of the skeleton above the casket the idea is symbolized, with the cross embroidered on the cover of the casket and the candle still burning, that even after death we have in mind throughout mourning the loss of the physical and give little consideration to the spiritual side of man. The opposite symbol, revealing what is proper, would be the spirit of the soul rising from the casket to the heavens.



The Temple of Life

THE CIRCULAR STRUCTURE, somewhat like a temple, represents the period of man's life from birth to death. Always in his presence is the tree of knowledge, with its fruit of wisdom. If man partakes of this fruit, he may look beyond the narrow confines of the structure, or his daily life, and see the magnificent vista of the universe, depicted by the landscape which surrounds the structure. The open doorway alludes to the portal through which man will learn to look when he has eaten of the fruit of the tree.

This impressive and beautiful symbolism is from a Rosicrucian manuscript, centuries old, in the repository of the Order.



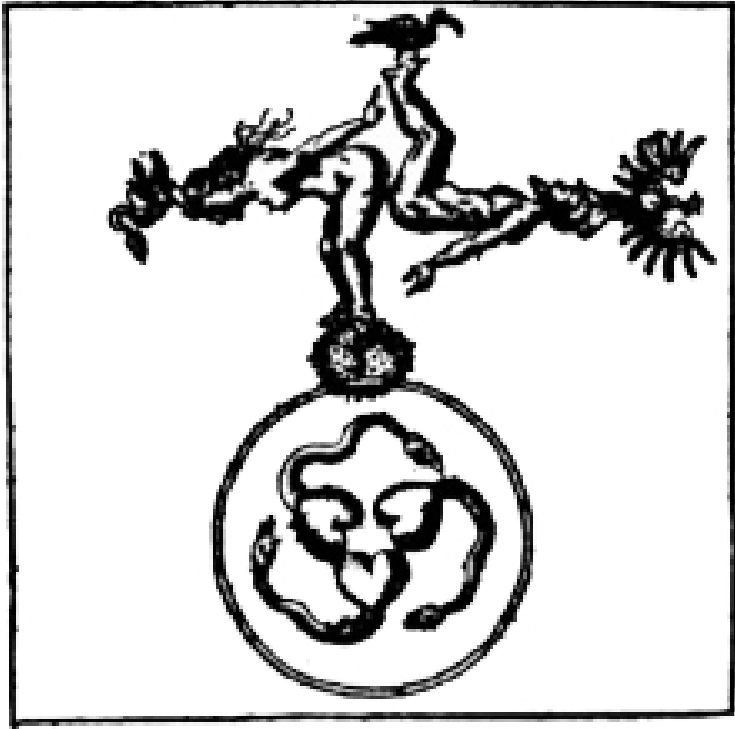
The Dragon's Tail

THIS ALLEGORICAL ILLUSTRATION, like many symbols and allegories, can be interpreted in various ways. The common interpretation of this very, very old allegory is that before the arts and sciences can be established in any new land or community, there must be driven from that land all of the superstitions, fears, and the misbeliefs of the people. The coast land in the illustration represents it to be a new country. The figures of humans with various symbols above their heads depict the different arts and sciences, culture and learning. They are shown driving from the land demons, serpents, and monsters, which allude to the misbeliefs and superstitions that dwell there. This is another illustration from one of the rare Rosicrucian books in the private archives of AMORC.



The Stream of Life

THIS CENTURIES-OLD ALLEGORY contains some profound principles of mysticism and metaphysics, and was used to illustrate a rare Rosicrucian manuscript. The stream in the foreground alludes to the flow of the years of man's life. In the center of it are found small bushes and shrubs representing the opportunities for the growth of one's better nature if they are cultivated. The wise man, instead of standing idly on the banks of the stream of life, letting years flow by, is seeking to make the best of these opportunities. He is reaching out to bring to the surface these partly hidden growths. In the distance, in the bright sunlight, is seen the city of attainment toward which life flows. Just before the stream reaches the sunlight, it is crossed by a bridge which depicts the end of life for those who have not prepared themselves to carry on in the face of obstacles. The obstacles are depicted by the face in the skies blowing a gust of wind toward the earth.



The Swastika Cross

THIS STRANGE LOOKING symbol becomes easily identified when one's attention is called to the fact that it is the basis of the swastika cross symbol. The lower section of the symbol composed of a circle containing three hearts is the mystical interpretation of the trinity. Remember that the snake in ancient symbolism was a sacred representation of the world.

This old symbol had a religious, a philosophical, and an alchemical significance according to how it was used and what principles of activity were associated with it.



The Mystic

THIS IS ANOTHER reproduction of an old woodcut illustration taken from one of the rare Rosicrucian books in the archives of the Order. It may be rightly termed the mystic, for it depicts the ancient alchemist employing in a mystical manner the laws of nature to manifest its phenomena. Note the lion representing the power of justice, devouring the serpent which depicts the satanic influence of evil. On the wall beneath the window is shown the symbol of the planet Mercury—☿—of great esoteric significance to the alchemists.



Flight of Time and Certainty of Death

THE HOURGLASS SYMBOLIZES time; the scythe, death.

“Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” Matthew XXV:13.

“Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?”

“What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?” Psalm LXXXIX:47, 48.

This symbol is another composite symbol. The hourglass, of course, has been symbolic of the passing of time for several centuries. The scythe has been the symbol of the grim reaper of death, taking the toll of life without exception to any man of any class of society. The wings indicate the flight of time. Time moves on inevitably and cannot be checked by money, power or influence of any kind. Therefore, man should prepare for the eventuality of death and give thought as to immortality and the result of transition from this life to another.

THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

Purpose and Work of the Order

The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is a philosophical and initiatic tradition. As students progress in their studies, they are initiated into the next level or degree.

Rosicrucians are men and women around the world who study the laws of nature in order to live in harmony with them. Individuals study the Rosicrucian lessons in the privacy of their own homes on subjects such as the nature of the soul, developing intuition, classical Greek philosophy, energy centers in the body, and self-healing techniques.

The Rosicrucian tradition encourages each student to discover the wisdom, compassion, strength, and peace that already reside within each of us.

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