

THE THEOSOPHICAL SEAL

A Study for the Student and the Non-Student

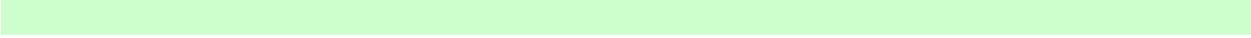
BY
ARTHUR M. COON



WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

JAMES S. PERKINS



THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO ALL SEARCHERS FOR WISDOM



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INTRODUCTION

I am happy to introduce this present volume, the contents of which originally appeared as a series of articles in *The American Theosophist*. Mr. Arthur Coon's careful analysis of the Theosophical Seal is highly recommended to the many readers who will find here a rich store of information concerning the meaning of the various components of the Seal.

Symbology is one of the ancient keys unlocking the mysteries of man and Nature. H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* refers again and again to the hidden meanings revealed in symbol to the one who possesses the keys of understanding. From time immemorial man has set his mark upon his work that thereby he might be known through his artifacts. Always that mark has revealed the person who made it, their nature, their uniqueness, and their striving after distant goals. Nations, too, have adopted "marks" symbolic of their purpose and destiny. And, however unnoticed or misunderstood they may be, the symbols remain as reminders of veiled truth to those who can see.

The human being is always subject to the intimations of its divinity, and by signs and symbols it both seeks to express its perceptions of its inner realities and is awakened to them by the outer symbols. Modern psychology is making respectable, as well as valid, these inner promptings. Symbology is again becoming acceptable as a legitimate means for interpreting the true nature of things. For a symbol, whether expressed in someone's dream, or as a trademark of a brand of soap, whether it be the Great Seal of a nation, or a form expressing the creation of a universe, is the visible representation of a reality, be it objective and external, or subjective and belonging to an inner realm of verities.

To members of the Theosophical Society, as well as to countless non-members, the Theosophical Seal with its motto, "There is no Religion Higher than Truth", is everywhere evidence of the Society's existence. It is a distinguishing badge, representative of the character of the Theosophical Society. More than just a distinguishing mark, the Seal symbolizes the truths of the Ancient Wisdom which the

Theosophical Movement was designed to promulgate in the modern world, and something of the mission and high destiny of the Society in the pure transmission of those truths.

To those students who wish to probe more deeply into the symbolism of the Seal, this book will furnish a valuable guide. For the first time in our literature material has been brought together in a single work to trace the scattered threads of meaning that lie behind all of the elements of the Seal. Mr. Coon's scholarship is thorough and painstaking, his analysis perceptive.

In launching this volume it is hoped that a more profound understanding of the Seal and of the living Reality which it represents will be engendered in those who enter into its study.

James S. Perkins

PREFACE

It is usually accepted that the first requisite in writing is a thorough knowledge of the subject. Indeed most experts on the art of writing hold that knowledge of the subject is a “must” in the list of a writer’s qualifications. He is certainly expected to speak with authority.

However, upon the completion of this series of studies on the subject of symbolism, I can make no such claim. I am somewhat in the position of a student of plant life who goes to a strange forest in search of rare floral specimens. He may wander around, apparently aimlessly, stopping here and there to dig, to examine, to photograph—he may even get lost—until the end of the day forces him to gather up his implements, his notebook and sketches and go home. He looks over the result of his labors with misgivings. What more beautiful specimens has he missed? Why hadn’t he taken other directions—other paths?

Of all the volumes that have been written, or are yet to be written, on the subject of symbolism, one must choose his material, take his own particular path, and find his own particular specimens. Many will be missed, and even those which he finds must bear the stamp of his own examination and his own point of view. He has no difficulty in finding or gathering enough material. His difficulty seems to be in trying to label or classify the maze of symbols which he finds everywhere. Take other branches of research, history, science, travel—these may be catalogued and classified under many headings. When he tries to use this method on symbolism—to tag symbols as to type, to pigeonhole them as to meanings, to catalog their sources—he enters a field difficult for the mind to follow. The reason for this is probably due to the fact that symbolism, like mysticism, deals with things intangible and illusive and which therefore seem to the mind to border upon unreality. The mind likes to deal with things and facts.

Of course there are certain broad classifications of symbols such as allegory, fable, myth, sign, figure, etc., but none of these seems to fit my purpose. The tendency is always strong to make an outline and fit the material into it. There is always something satisfying about an index, and a sense of accomplishment. You get the feeling that,

having made up a list of topics, your job is practically done. There is a feeling of security too, for if you stay on your predetermined plan, like a path through the woods, you are sure not to get lost. And yet this security, as in most fields of accomplishment, is the price of freedom. An outline can become a kind of fence or wall keeping out other ideas which may try to get in. It can also serve the purpose of keeping your own imagination from getting out. While if you keep on the path you will not get lost, you will surely miss a lot of things. So, aside from certain general headings, which serve more as guideposts than as an outline, these studies follow a rather winding path. I began my search through all available literature on the subject, reluctantly resisting the temptation to roam all over the field. Endless sorting, classifying, cutting, re-writing again and again resolved the material into some sequence of titles and subtitles.

The question which comes first to mind is, what is a symbol? A homemade definition might read: a sign, mark, figure, picture or story which brings or suggests to the mind some fact or idea other than that which appears. Webster puts this thought more concisely: "that which suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, etc." This definition allows wide latitude. A thousand people might look at the same object, and each would be reminded of something utterly different. It is as if the object were a loadstone that drew forth a mental image out of the well of each person's past experience. Take any object—a tree, for instance. The sight of a tree may invoke as many mental pictures as there are observers: a picnic in the park, Christmas morning with the children, the old homestead, a landmark, the lumber camp or the old sawmill, a nest of birds, the Garden of Eden, the family tree and the human race, *ad infinitum*. Besides the many types, sizes and species of trees, the idea "tree" becomes a composite symbol embracing or calling up endless mental images. This is a characteristic significant, as we shall see many times, of all symbols.

Discoursing upon the subject of symbolism, Manly P. Hall writes, "A symbol always means what we think it means." And again, "Symbols change their meanings according to the level of intelligence upon which the interpreter functions." ¹

¹ *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*, published in 1929, pp. 311, 315.

In a sense, we are living in a world of symbols. Everything around us is a visible manifestation of an idea which has its true home in another world. It is often difficult to draw a line between the symbol and the non-symbol. The ordinary things about us may seem real and permanent, or as changing and shifting reflections of inner and permanent realities. Quoting again from Mr. Hall's book, "When the mind comes instinctively to regard forms as the outer garments of realities, great strides have been taken in the rationalization of the entire nature. Man begins to *know*, as soon as he divests himself of the illusion that the universe is material and matter, the divine reality." And again, "By studying symbols, men learn about themselves; for they read into the figures their own hopes and aspirations, their own concepts of universal order, their own understanding of divine agency. Life itself is a symbol, and each must interpret it according to the convictions of his own soul." ²

How easily the contemplation of symbols draws us into realms of metaphysical speculation quite outside of our normal mode of thinking! Somewhere I came across this succinct statement, "Symbols are windows through which the mind looks into other worlds of reality." Manly Hall adds the touch of beauty to this thought. "Symbols," he says, "are keyholes to doors in the walls of space, and through them men peer into eternity." ³ But to get back to particulars.

Consider for a moment the realm of music. We casually think of music as something which we "hear." Yet it has its symbols (a human invention to be sure) whereby music may be written upon pages and preserved for others to reproduce. It has its own alphabet of symbols: notes, clefs, bars, sharps, flats, accents, etc., universally accepted as the language of music. A composer, with his ear attuned to a realm that may be thought of as the natural home of pure music, "hears" a symphony. He transfers what he "hears" onto paper by means of these symbols. An artist reads these symbols, and with his trained eye and fingers or voice, under the impulse of an imagination, interprets these markings, re-creating the original inspiration—its tone and tempo, its melody and harmony. This brings me to the conclusion, which must be obvious the more we think about it, that there are two general classifications of symbols. One class, by far the most

² *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312 and 328.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

easily recognized, are those invented by man himself for the purpose of more quickly or more economically conveying his thoughts to others. These are about us everywhere and occupy so common a place in our intellectual lives that we take them for granted.

Language itself, written or spoken, is made up of symbols. The first primitive characters were copied from Nature: birds, animals, rivers, trees, etc., carved upon rocks or temple walls depict a crude epic in tribal or national history. In the entire animal kingdom this articulate use of symbols is peculiar to man alone, coming into being with the advent of the mental faculty in the early dawn of the human race. The origin and derivation of words has become a specialized field of research. Some etymologists assert that the letters of certain alphabets, notably the ancient Egyptian, Hebraic and Hellenic, were shaped, both as to form and sound, to express certain ideas or concepts. For example, the sound of the letter "A" is made by the outgoing breath and therefore signifies power. Its written form is said to represent the "bull" and thus represents strength. The literature upon the origins of letters, words and languages is most intriguing, and the quest for clues reads like a detective mystery.

We could recall endless examples of this first class of symbols. Science, for instance, in its many ramifications, has invented an intricate system of codes and figures to represent its measurements and formulas. Mathematics is an easy illustration of the use of these signs. How elaborate would it be to express a problem if one had to write it out all in words? Physics, chemistry, astronomy, etc., each has a sign language of its own, without which it would require long and tedious explanations to convey the thought expressed in a single character. Characteristic of these sign symbols is that they have been invented by man to convey an exact meaning which has been pre-determined. One may "interpret" the result of a formula or an equation, but not the intent of that sign by which the result is attained.

An exception to this general principle might be found in the signs used in astronomy to designate the planets, and certain of the constellations, or "houses" of the Zodiac. This may be accounted for by the fact that the science of astronomy is a foster-child to the more ancient "science" of astrology; and of course it inherited its ancient symbols. These signs, coming from antiquity, possess the characteristics of those symbols, which

we shall place in our second classification—that is, they seem to be endowed with certain significant qualities inherent in their very shapes and their positions and arrangements in relation to one another. These signs are made up of lines, angles, curves and circles so arranged as to give the essential value or idea of each figure its particular and significant meaning by reason of this arrangement. Let me illustrate what I mean.

The Point would be thought of as origin, source or spirit. The Circle would represent the field of manifestation in time and space. What then would be more natural than that the point within the circle should represent the sun—source and origin of life within our solar system? The Cross, in contrast to the Circle, signifies the purely material side of Nature and is therefore associated with the human body and materialistic qualities. When, therefore, the cross above the circle is made to designate our own earth, we read into that sign the idea that on our planet, material considerations overshadow the spiritual. The same sign in reverse (circle above cross) is used to designate the planet Venus and would suggest the idea of spiritual values predominant. (Astrologers from antiquity have pointed to Venus as the beneficent and friendly planet.) The arc or segment of a circle is assigned to the moon. It may be thought that this figure had its inception in the crescent shape of the quarters of the moon itself. Undoubtedly, those who assigned the arc as the symbol of the moon had in mind its reflective quality; for as their astrologers claimed, the peculiar quality of the moon is to reflect or accentuate whatever planetary or stellar influence it may transit. Significantly, while the sun signifies the spirit of man, the moon is associated with his soul or psyche.

During the last half century a number of books have been written using mathematics and geometric figures to interpret the universe from the point of view of its inner sources and laws. Prominent among these were two books by Claude Bragdon, a modern Neo-Platonist, who used these figures in a maze of patterns and designs to illustrate a philosophy of idealism. He wrote *Four Dimensional Vistas* and *A Primer of Higher Space*, following Hinton's and Ouspensky's works on higher dimensional space and its relationship to life. Lines, angles and curves, forming every conceivable geometric pattern in complex combinations and arrangements are designed to show that the outer world of Nature and the inner world of Spirit are intimately and intricately

interrelated. This interrelationship between the inner and the outer—the Noumenon and the phenomena—finds its expression through geometric figures. They have called it a new symbology of the spiritual life. The idea behind this form of expression is that invisible forces—including thought and emotion—produce vibrations in the rarer media which surrounds us and which may be caught or fixed, so to speak, in a particular series of geometric figures. Music, the most ethereal or fluid of the arts, might thus be compressed or frozen within a composite figure made up of cubes, globes, tetrahedrons, pentahedrons, etc., in fantastic arrangements. The term “Architecture is frozen music” became a popular expression. This term really originated a century earlier by the German Neo-Platonic philosopher Frederick Von Schelling.⁴ The idea of interpreting the universe and life in terms of mathematics has been taken up by modern philosophers, with the benefit of the advanced science of physics, and forms an approach to the subject that has a close tie-in with science itself.

Manly P. Hall, in his “Symbolism, the Universal Language”⁵ makes some interesting observations on the meanings of lines, curves, angles, etc. Writing about caricatures, he shows that every phase and degree of human emotions and character may be portrayed by the correct usage of lines. By the convex, concave or angular lines, little idiosyncrasies of character may be emphasized out of their normal proportions, depicting personal traits otherwise unsuspected. As every artist knows, lines—horizontal, vertical, oblique, convex and concave—as applied to the human face (and figure) tell a story beyond the power of words. Today this art has a universal appeal through the medium of the cartoon. Wit, satire and criticism, through the art of suggestion, become by far more potent than direct statement—and avoid the danger of incrimination. The language of lines may be summarized briefly: straight lines and angles denote strength and are therefore masculine; curved lines and arcs express beauty and suggest the feminine.

Symbolism plays an important part in the world’s great literature, particularly Oriental literature. Myth, allegory, parable and glyph are universally recognized techniques in portraying—and preserving—spiritual or philosophic truths. Some of the

⁴ *Philosophie der Kunst*, pp. 576–593.

⁵ *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*.

most profoundly beautiful literature the world has ever known, written thousands of years before the Christian era, comes to us from India, cradle of the ancient Aryan race. The Puranas, Upanishads and Gita contain not only the supreme laws of the spiritual life and rules for attaining union with God, but also the story of cosmogenesis—of the creation and evolution of the universe and of man. All of this is told in epic form, using allegory and myth. In what better way could the sublimity of these truths have been preserved over the thousands of years of the infancy of the human race? Our own Bible is an outstanding example. Serious and sincere students agree that many of the stories of the Bible are meaningless, not to say fantastic, unless interpreted in the light of symbolism: The Serpent and the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, Jonah in the Whale's Belly, Joshua and the Walls of Jericho—to mention a few which everyone knows. To translate these remarkable stories as history is to miss completely the profound truths so thinly veiled. Symbolically, we may read in them the pilgrimage of the human soul through its rounds of manifestation, the cosmogenesis of life and form in our solar system, the way of perfection and the eventual reunion of man with God. The greatest tragedy of Christendom is the blunder of the Western world in having read its sacred scriptures only as history or geography. It seems most appropriate to insert here another quotation from Manly Hall: "Symbols are formulated to clarify truths which in their abstract form are incomprehensible. Idolatry consists in the inability of the mind to differentiate between the symbol and the abstract principle for which it stands." ⁶

A moment ago I separated symbols into two classes: those which were human-invented, and those which seemed to contain within themselves certain intrinsic values. It is to the latter that we shall now direct our attention, because it is of these that the Theosophical Seal is composed. These are the symbols made up of certain fundamental geometric figures: such as the point, the line, the triangle, the square, or cross, the circle—and of course their three dimensional counterparts, the cube, the sphere, the tetrahedron, etc.—forms and shapes which came into existence coincident with the appearance of a universe. For this reason we may call them universal. It is said that "God Geometrizes." That must mean that in the creating of His universe, all forms of life, from rock crystals, plant structures and animal prototypes have been built upon

⁶ *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*, p. 21.

(or evolved along) definite geometric patterns. Science has of course confirmed this idea in its discoveries of the geometric structure of the cell, the molecule and the atom. These elemental geometric figures have sometimes been referred to as the “playthings of the gods.” We may rightly call them a “divine alphabet,” for it is their infinite variations and combinations which make up the pattern of Creation and by which Creation may be interpreted. But who can say what these figures really mean—the point, the line, the circle, the square and so on? They seem to be as eternal as Spirit itself. By what authority do we presume to interpret their ultimate significance? In attempting to attribute definite meanings to them, we feel that we are treading upon holy ground, yet somehow instinctively we feel that each of these figures, taken separately, represents its own specific idea and is the instrument for a distinctive type of force. I realize that in saying this I seem to be stepping over into another world. It is equivalent to saying that these figures are the objectification, or crystallization in matter, of ultimate ideas. If that is so, their many combinations must conceal a wisdom that may rightly be called divine. And it is to the search for this wisdom that this volume is dedicated.

When we look upon the things about us, we normally consider them in their relationship to ourselves. Our outlook upon life may be called “ego-centric.” We are in the center of our own world and everything rotates about us. Our method of gaining knowledge of things is analytical—that is, we pick them to pieces to find out what they are made of and what makes them tick. In the study of symbols, a new method seems to be called forth. We step out of ourselves into a world which is universal. Instead of examining these symbols as we would objects in a laboratory under a microscope, we seem to identify ourselves with them and, if we may use the term, absorb their hidden wisdom. We have been so used to reasoning things out. Our new approach must be subjective rather than objective—as if these things were part of us, instead of outside. We seem now to need a new faculty—the faculty of intuition; for this new language is indeed the language of the gods.

I have frequently been asked, “Where can I find a book which tells me all about these symbols?” I wish I knew; I am still looking for that book. There are many volumes which contain mines of information, but these mines have to be worked with pick and shovel. The Theosophical Society, in its brief history, has produced a vast field of

literature embracing science, philosophy, and religion—as well as mysticism and occultism. *The Secret Doctrine* by Madame H. P. Blavatsky is an almost inexhaustible source. Besides the Theosophical Society, there are other contemporary movements which emphasize some particular phase of this universal teaching: The Christian Mystics, the Rosicrucian Fellowship, the Masonic Order, to name only a few. I have tried to express my gratitude to these many sources in my “Acknowledgments.”⁷

May I share a secret? A few moments ago I hinted that a sustained and persistent thought about an idea may sometimes act as a kind of magnet which calls forth, as from the well of our own subconscious nature, information long since forgotten. It may even attract to itself kindred thoughts, as from some universal mental reservoir. Such concentration of attention often leads, by devious paths perhaps, to the source where such information may be found. Often to “dream” about a question with sufficient patience and endurance will call to mind the title of a book, an exact page, or even a quotation which will suggest the desired answer. However, I am not at all suggesting that such “dreaming” takes the place of persistent digging.

One more thought. While acknowledging my gratitude and indebtedness to the many sources of information and to the teachings of Theosophy, I wish to emphasize the fact that certain of the interpretations based upon this information are my own. It should be made clear that the thoughts expressed in the following studies do not necessarily reflect the teachings of the Theosophical Society, except for the fact that Theosophy is a compilation of many teachings gathered from sources both ancient and modern, and that acceptance of any of its teachings is not a pre-requisite to membership. My one objective in the writing of these studies has been to avoid vagueness and ambiguity, and so far as possible to strive for clarity and definiteness. Yet in this, there is the real danger of seeming to be dogmatic. These symbols belong to the eternal; and while our thinking about them may be clear, it should not be fixed. We may be definite, but not final.

This book should not be looked upon as a textbook, in the ordinary accepted meaning of the term. Students may, and I hope *will*, follow me in their search for hidden

⁷ *Vide post*, p. 209.

meanings and new interpretations. The following pages have, as they say, only scratched the surface. At all times I have tried to take the reader with me in my searchings so that we may search together. In so doing I believe that we shall each feel the thrill of discovery, and find new windows of understanding opening before our minds. I believe too that there is a far greater power in suggestion than in a definite statement of fact; for thereby each searcher feels that he or she is opening up their own window upon a realm where ideas seem real and infinitely more exciting than are their shadows in the world of things. The Theosophical Seal may thus become for each such a window through which they may, from time to time, catch glimpses of that Theosophia—that Divine Wisdom which, as the Psalmist wrote, “mightily and sweetly ordereth all things.”

A. M. C.

BOOK 1

A DIVINE LANGUAGE

CHAPTER I

ALPHA AND OMEGA

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning
and the end, the first and the last.

Revelation 22:13

The foregoing words were put into the mouth of Deity by the author of the Book of Revelation. I do not suppose there is another book in the whole world about which so much has been written and so little understood. There is one point, however, which is quite universally accepted, and that is that the Apocalypse was written in cipher and conceals many truths hidden within a series of cryptic symbols. To read the words of this book at their face or surface value is like reading a score without hearing the music. Since the entire Book of Revelation must be looked upon as a complex cryptogram, we may conclude that this one statement has more to it than the words imply. Of course St. John wrote this occult treatise in the Greek language, and his use of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet has therefore the obvious meaning as repeated in the rest of the quotation, “the first and the last.” If St. John had written the book in Hebrew, we wonder, would he have written, “I am Aleph and Thao” or in an English translation, “I am A and Z”? Suspecting, therefore, that this statement, even as the entire book, is deeply cryptic—or shall we say esoteric?—we look beneath its surface to discover its hidden truth.

What particularly lies behind these two letters Alpha and Omega, aside from their position as being the beginning and ending of the Greek alphabet, or their English counterparts A and O? What special significance lies in the statement of the Supreme Being, “I am AO”?

In ancient times, each letter of the alphabet contained a particular meaning, and words were formed by putting these letters together in certain combinations to build up an idea or a concept. This method is entirely foreign to us, and for that reason it is difficult for the modern student of the ancient scriptures to make true interpretations. Our twenty-six English letters mean nothing in themselves, and have meaning only as

they are put together to make words —the meanings of which are usually inherited from one of several mother tongues. Modern languages grow and change with the idiom of a people. Today's slang is found in tomorrow's dictionaries. With the early languages, this was different. The Hebraic alphabet, from which the Hellenic is derived, consists of twenty-two letters, each letter possessing a meaning as expressed by its form and a power as expressed by its sound. It is said that the Hebrews brought many of their traditions and religious ideas from Egypt and Chaldea. This is true also of their language. The mysteries of Egypt and the magic of Chaldea and Persia are buried within their word formations. Each letter contained not only an idea or a concept; it also had a certain power as represented by a numerical value. The correspondence between letters and numbers was a sacred science known only to sages and "wise men."

There lived in Greece, between the years 582 and 500 B.C., a philosopher named Pythagoras, who is remembered in history particularly for his contributions to mathematics and music. Most of his teachings had to do with numbers. He was the first to teach that the earth and the planets are round and rotate about a central sun. He taught, moreover, that there exists a mathematical relationship between the radius of their orbits, their masses and their speeds, which relationship he converted into a geometrical equation. His teachings regarding the laws of mathematics embraced other dimensions of being than the three commonly accepted, and his saying, "the music of the spheres" was a phrase used to indicate an occult relationship between his planetary equation and music. Indeed it was he who discovered that musical tones have definite numerical interrelations, and his diatonic scale is still the basis of modern western music. He formulated and taught the first part of Euclidean geometry 300 years before Euclid. He taught that the world is built upon the power of numbers, that all living things have their own unique rate of vibration, and that all relationships can be expressed numerically. It was he who named God "The Great Geometrician." In his school at Crotona, he taught also the value and power of the letters of the alphabet. He claimed that the world is built upon vibration, and since vibration produces form, there exists a definite relationship between the letters of the alphabet, geometric forms and numbers. This "science" was kept alive throughout the middle ages by the Kabbalists, and has

been preserved for modern students of the mysteries through the *Book of Zohar* and the *Kaballah of Numbers*.

Tribute has been paid, and will be paid many times during the course of this series of studies, to *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, first published in the year 1888, for its inexhaustible wealth of source material. Mention must also be made of two books written during the first quarter of this century by Doctor F. Homer Curtiss, entitled *The Key to the Universe* and *The Key of Destiny*. In these two volumes, he has brought together many related ideas drawn from far and wide. His painstaking work in coordinating these ideas and elaborating upon them is a service which deserves the gratitude of every student. He wrote, "Letters, either written or spoken (form or sound) awaken certain potencies, and are avenues through which certain cosmic forces operate in the worlds of manifestation."⁸ I should like to mention too a well-documented little book written by Leonard Rosman, *Amen, the Key to the Universe*. He has drawn from many sources to make a case for the sacred word of the ancient Aryan, "Aum," and its Jewish (and Christian) counterpart, "Amen." Through his analysis and interpretation of the Hebraic and Greek letters, as they are derived from their Sanskrit and Egyptian origins, he brings interesting sidelights to the idea that each letter has its own unique and inherent meaning.

The Letters "AO"

It is quite universally agreed that the letter "A" (Hebrew "Aleph" and Greek "Alpha") represents origin, source and causative power. Phonetically the sound "A" (ahh!) is that of breath filling the mouth and going out. Some authorities claim that the shape of the letter "A" was made to represent the head of a bull in order to express the idea of domination and leadership. For this reason it has been associated with the astrological sign Taurus. In Hebrew, the "Aleph" signifies "outgoing breath" and represents God's creative power. It was the original "Word" which brought forth a universe. It was the spirit (breath) of God which "moved upon the face of the waters (primordial substance)." It is also the symbol of life, for it is recorded that "God *breathed* into his (man's) nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." Significantly the "A" is the first sound

⁸ *The Key to the Universe*, p. 68.

uttered by the new-born babe. The letter “A” sound represents God’s causative, creative power; and indeed on all levels and degrees of manifestation it implies the inner causative and creative life energies. “The letter ‘A’ represents the reality behind anything and any being. It represents the inner self of man, or the reality behind the universe; God as Causative, Essential, Potential Power, that which we call spirit.”⁹ In the Hebrew, the term “ABA” meant “Father” and was so used epithetically to refer to God. Fabre d’ Olivet, in his *Hebraic Tongue Restored*, says of Aleph that it represents “universal man, the ruling being of earth. It characterizes unity, the central point, abstract principle of a thing. As sign, it expresses power, stability, and continuity. Its number is 1.”¹⁰ The significance of this statement will be apparent presently.

The last letter of the Greek alphabet, “Omega,” is so bound up both in form and meaning with the numerical naught and the geometric circle that our complete consideration of its significance must be momentarily deferred to include those two factors. We may note that the letter “O” alludes to manifestation as opposed to pure spirit; or perhaps we should say, it implies spirit *in* manifestation. It is rather the “field” or limitations through which spirit expresses itself. If we think of “being” as spirit *and* matter, the “O” represents its negative polarity. This is not to say that the letter “O” represents strictly the material side of being, but rather spirit or life in its outgoing aspect. If “A” is causative, “O” is formative. In this sense, we may think of it as the feminine or “mother” principle of Deity—even as the letter “A” is the “father” principle. Therefore, by placing the two letters together, we have a word which signifies the union of spirit and matter, uniting the two poles of being—God as “Father-Mother.”

The temptation cannot be resisted at this point to digress for a moment to explore a most fascinating sidelight on this idea of the divine name. In many of the ancient languages, notably the Hebraic, which as we know embodied certain Egyptian characteristics, letters—and particularly the vowels—were interchangeable. This interchangeability occurs sometimes in our modern languages. For example, “V” and “W,” “I” and “J,” “TH” and “Z,” “A” and “O” frequently exchange places. A change in vowels often changes the root word from a verb to a noun, a noun to a verb, the tense,

⁹ *Amen, the Key to the Universe*, by Leonard Rosman, p. 98.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

the number, etc. For instance, the vowels o, i, a, in the root word “sng” change the noun “song” to the verb (present) “sing,” and to (past) “sang.” This practice was commonly in use in forming Hebrew words. Indeed, unless one understands this usage, it is impossible to make a true translation into English. It should not seem strange therefore to find in the Hebrew the same root word used with different vowels, and sometimes consonants, to denote varying shadings of the same fundamental idea.

Take the letters “AO,” which we saw a moment ago represented the divine name, “Father-Mother-God.” We change the “A” to “I” (the Hebrew Yod, itself being a sacred letter meaning God) and we have the word “IO”—a variation of the root “AO” which also implies the name of Deity. Again we substitute “J,” “TH” or “Z” for “I “ and we have certain root syllables which are universally recognized as names of deity or of divine sons or heroes: JO-ve, ZE-us, TH-os, DE-os, JE-ho-vah, JE-sus, JA-cob, JO-seph, etc. A further revealing sidelight may be thrown upon the suffix used in naming heroes or “sons” in the scriptural story. We are indebted to the research of Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn into Egyptian origins for the interpretation of the suffixes “saph,” “seph,” “suph” or “sus” as meaning “heir,” “prince,” or “son” as applied to their national heroes.¹¹ Remembering that the Jews absorbed much from their Egyptian captivity, we may assume that many of the names of their heroes bear the mark of this heritage, “IO-sef” becomes “Joseph” (prince of God), “Isa-lah” (prophet of God); and, most significant, we couple the divine name “AO” (changed to “IE” or “JE”) with the Egyptian suffix “sus” meaning “heir” or “son,” and we have the truly sacred name (or title) of “JE-SUS.”

The Number 10

If, as Pythagoras claimed, there exists a definite relationship between the letters of the alphabet, geometric forms and numbers, it is but natural to assume that the letter A is related to the number 1 (one) and the letter O to the number 0 (naught), and that the combined AO therefore corresponds with the number 10 (ten). That this relationship is not a mere accident is attested not only by the many references to this association, but by an analysis of the numerals themselves. The fact is that it is most difficult to talk about the numbers 1 and 0 without at the same time referring to the letters A (or I) and

¹¹ *The Lost Light.*

O, and geometrically, the point and the circle. It has been said that while the point and the circle represent the idea of the immanence of God, the two letters “AO” represent His wisdom, and the number 10 is the measure of His power. Long before the present numerical (Arabic) system was in use by mathematicians, in ancient Greece and India the number 10 was held sacred, where its origins and values were known only to priests of the temple and initiates into their mystery schools. The number 10 is the basis of our decimal system (from the Greek “deka”), without which our entire scheme of mathematics would be impossible. The number 1 is the beginning and source of all numbers, just as the point is the beginning and source of all forms. Hence it might be looked upon as “father.” The O (naught) is the end, the consummation. It is infinity, in which all numbers are contained. Their union (10) is the sign of completion—the beginning and the end united.

It is no mere coincidence that the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is “Yod,” most sacred of letters. It coincides with the Greek “iota “ and our letter “I.” In Masonic symbolism, Yod is the “All-Seeing-Eye,” the sign of God. Albert Pike, in his great work, *Morals and Dogma*, says, “The principle called Father is completed in Yod . . . the most occult of all the letters. The Supernal Wisdom is Yod; who is therefore called Father of Fathers: wherefore Yod is the beginning and end of all things.”¹² It is the “I” or Self, whether small or great. It is the center of the Blazing Star, the emblem of omniscience. To the Egyptian initiates, it was the emblem of Osiris the Creator. It is the first letter of the four-lettered Holy Name “IHVH.” Dr. F. Homer Curtiss, associating the Yod with the number ten, says, “Yod, representing the activating Principle of all life manifestations, symbolically stands for the reincarnating Ego . . . its greater cycles indicated by the addition of ciphers (100, 1000, etc.)”¹³ representing, in unending spirals, the attainment of wisdom and power, as it rises to heights of greater perfection and closer union with its ultimate Source. As Yod in the universal sense is the sign of God, in man it signifies his Spirit or Monad, the Ego, or “I.” H. P. Blavatsky, speaking of the potency of numbers, says of the number 10: “It is from this number 10, or Creative Nature, the

¹² pp. 792–3

¹³ *The Key to the Universe*, p. 356.

Mother (the occult cipher, or “0” ever procreating and multiplying in union with the unit “1” or the spirit of life) that the whole universe proceeds.”¹⁴

The famous Tetraktys of Pythagoras was another-symbol portraying this same idea. It was held sacred because its form as an equilateral triangle contained 10 “Yods”! These Yods (or points) were so arranged with four along each side of the triangle, and with each row of four numbered consecutively, that their separate sums totaled 10. This form was called the mystic Decad and was known as the number of the “Ineffable Name,” because it expressed the unity of perfection and completion in the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4. The sacredness of the number 10 is evidenced also in the Sephiroth of the Kabbalists as representing the 10 Emanations of Deity, and the perfection of a sublime wisdom.

The Point and the Circle

If we would search the whole universe for some symbol which most truly expresses the nature of God as First Cause and Father, we must choose the Point. Of God as Absolute Being there can be no likeness or similitude either on earth or in heaven. Of the Absolute nothing can be said. We may only call it THAT. It has no attributes save that it is Eternal, Changeless, and Causeless Cause. It is inherent in all things and pervades all space. It is the Root Principle from which emanate both Spirit and matter. Yet the point is the symbol which most nearly represents God as Absolute Being, for the point has neither form nor dimension, and has therefore no external existence; yet it is potentially everywhere and is the beginning of all forms and the source of all dimensions.

It is especially of God as Father (Hebrew, Kether), First Emanation of the Absolute, that the point is symbol. As the Father is Spirit or First Cause, the point is that invisible source from which proceed all forms. We may therefore rightly consider the Point as the first letter of our symbolical alphabet. What “1” is to numbers, and “A” to letters, the Point is to all geometrical forms. The point, as does the number 1, represents unity. Pythagoras called it the Monad,” the individualized spirit of man.

¹⁴ *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Edition, Vol. 1, p. 121.

“The dot,” says Manly Hall, “is the first departure from things as they eternally are. It is the first illusion of the self, the first limitation of space, even as spirit is the first limitation of self. The dot, or sacred island, is the beginning of existence, whether that of a universe or man The dot is spirit, and its symbol in the Chaldaic Hebrew is the Yod The dot symbolizes the *cause*; the line the *means*; and the circle the *end* The line therefore is the symbol of the dot in growth or motion.” Again he said, “God is the dot, the first island floating in and upon the permanent depths of unlimited existence.”¹⁵

We come now to the Circle. The circle is no number, yet it contains all numbers. It is the naught, the cipher, or sepher, from which all numbers proceed and into which they all eventually resolve. It is All, for it has neither beginning nor ending. It is the point expanded to infinity. Of all symbols, the circle is the most mystical, for it is the symbol of infinity and eternity—of boundless space and endless time.

The circle is the “ring-pass-not” which establishes the limits of manifestation, whether of a man or of a universe. Indeed, it is the symbol of that manifestation, even as the point is the symbol of THAT which has no manifestation. If the point, as we said, has no dimension, the circle contains all possible dimensions. The point ever retreats within itself, out of time and space; the circle, ever expanding into infinite time and space, embraces all things. The point symbolizes THAT which is the cause and potency of life, the circle symbolizes that primordial substance out of which all forms are created. It has been called many names: “chaos,” “void,” “waters of space,” in Sanskrit “Mulaprakriti” (undifferentiated substance), “night” or “naught.” It is Omega, the Cosmic Mother, source of all forms. When Deity uttered the mystic formula, “I am Alpha and Omega,” He might have said, “I am the Ultimate Source both of life and form; I am the universal Father-Mother.”

Pascal is reported to have said, “God is a circle whose center (point) is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere.” The union of these two symbols, the point and the circle—or the point within the circle—becomes the most potent of symbols. It is the symbol of life encased in material form; the life-germ within the seed or egg; the divine

¹⁵ *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 2, 4, 26.

spark or monad within man; God within His universe. It is the “Tree of Life” in the midst of the “Garden.” In still more ancient scriptures, it is the “Jewel in the Lotus.” In occult human anatomy, it is the symbol of the hidden force centers in the body, the “Chakras.” Astronomically, it represents our sun. It contains the secret truth of God Immanent—God the Absolute in manifestation. The point within the circle is the sign of power—Infinite Will released as a creative force.

We know of no better way to summarize what we have said than to present it in the form of a mathematical formula:

- The letters “A” and “O” united, become “AO” (or IO), the Sacred Name.
- The numbers “1” and “0” united, become “10” the Sacred Number.
- The Point and the Circle united, become \odot , the Sacred Symbol.

CHAPTER II

UNITY BECOMES DUALITY

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

With this simple and direct statement begins the world's most famous Book. Within these ten words is locked earth's greatest mystery. Here is a statement blindly accepted on faith by religion; denied and rejected by science. Did a Divine Being create a universe and all living things out of nothing; or is matter the one primordial substance from which existence has sprung? Between these two extremes of thought lies concealed the most profound Truth. I have chosen these lines as the theme of the present study for two reasons. First, because they contain a truth so rudimentary as to lie beyond the possibility either of proof or contradiction. Indeed, the simplest statement of truth is often so fundamental that it is utterly impossible to formulate one single sentence in its defense. Can it be that there is One Ultimate Truth so exalted as to be beyond the power of the intellect to comprehend, while all lesser truths are merely parts of that One Truth and therefore relative to each other? When Jesus stood before Pilate in the hall of judgment, Pilate asked Him, "What is truth?" That question has been reverberating down the centuries. It is the cry of the human intellect reaching out into the infinite for ultimate truth.

Truth and Reality

Any statement of "Truth" must be predicated by the idea of "Reality." Obviously what is true must be real, and what is unreal must be untrue. But what is reality? If there is one thing which is the object of universal search, it is reality. To the scientist, matter is the one and only reality. Only that which can be observed by the senses, aided by man's marvelous instruments, measured and tested in his laboratories—only matter, however attenuated and ethereal, is the one ultimate reality. All else is unreal. To the mystic, the devotee or the yogi, God or Spirit is the one reality. All things relative to matter and time are but temporal and eventually cease to be, and are therefore illusory

and unreal. The outer senses are limited in their capacity to discern truth. Only the inner faculties of the spirit can really penetrate the heart of reality.

This brings me to the second reason for using the opening sentence in the Bible as the key-note of this study, and that is because as we try to contemplate the full significance of its meaning there comes to the mind a whole multitude of dualities. We might even venture that from this one thought there come all possible dualities—and opposites.

Two Ultimates

For here we have the two extremes of opinion regarding reality. Between these opposing poles of thought, the scientific and the mystic, we find every range of philosophic and religious belief. We have come to think of the two ultimate realities as spirit and matter. But this conclusion fails utterly to solve the mystery. The source of being lies beyond both spirit and matter. There cannot be two First Causes. Yet it is quite impossible for the mind to conceive of Absoluteness without at the same time embracing the idea of manifestation. But it is possible to conceive of spirit and matter as emanating from this Absoluteness, this Undifferentiated Be-ness.

Matter and Motion

Yet it is not spirit and matter, which is the first pair of ultimates, but spirit and motion. If we reason for a moment we shall see that it is motion, which is the first creative act. Spirit moved! Motion precedes matter rather than being the result of matter. Science agrees with the occult teachings that matter, however dense or solid, may be reduced to motion. This reduction of all matter in the universe to motion would justify the theory held by many that matter is an “illusion” and an “unreality.” This line of thought could run in a vicious cycle, and “reason” the subjective world out of existence. Our sense of reality requires a radical adjustment.

Time and Space

Since the very first act of Deity is motion, there comes with that action the concept of space. Action predicates motion, and motion implies space. Without space the idea of movement is impossible. Movement must go somewhere. Space brings the idea of

extension which is its measure. Again, the idea of movement in space brings with it the idea of time. However swift the motion, a time element enters; and with time comes its measure duration. The idea of a divine creation brings into our minds a whole series of dual concepts: Spirit-Matter or Spirit-Motion, Motion-Space, Space-Time, Extension-Duration. Each would be unthinkable without its twin counterpart.

Time and Eternity

When we think of reality in relation to time, many problems immediately appear: for instance, past, present and future. We are living in a time-world which is ceaselessly slipping past us. Actually we live in a point which we call the present. All that we really have is this “now.” Yet the moment we think of it, that instant of “now” has become the “past” and a million new instants out of the “future” have taken its place, and as relentlessly have disappeared into the past. This “past” we have only as memory; the future exists for us only in anticipation. We have been told that only the “now” is real. But does this “now” embrace past, present and future? We are like passengers on a train moving across a vast countryside. Where we are at any given moment is “now.” In this sense, time is an illusion, because our “now” is continually slipping past us as our train moves swiftly on into the “future.” But our reason tells us that the whole countryside was there before we arrived, and that it remained there after we had gone by. The illusion was within ourselves.

And though we may recognize this illusiveness for what it is, we never for a moment think of it as an unreality. We could hardly expect reality to be conditioned by our cognizance of it. Who can say where reality begins and ends? And what is its relation to time and eternity? Is there an “eternal” outside of time? Put this question another way. Each of us has at one time asked—do we step out of time into eternity at the moment of death? Or is time but a finite segment of eternity marked off by the movement of certain heavenly bodies, much as we see objects from the window of a fast-moving train? When did time begin, and will it ever cease to be? What, after all, is eternity? Has there always been an eternity? Some hints as to the answers to these questions may appear to us as we search together for the mystery of the Line, the second symbol of our symbolical alphabet.

Ex-ist-ence

As we look at the world about us it is difficult to think of anything which does not possess a dual set of essential qualities or characteristics. The very coming of an object into existence automatically brings with it a duality. It is as if each unit of manifestation becomes split or divided by that very act. Indeed, the word “ex-ist” (Latin, ex-est) suggests “to be out of.” We may infer from this that manifestation is the objectivization of an inner or subjective reality, which is another way of saying that everything exists in the mental or spiritual world *before* its appearance in material form. This naturally brings us to our starting point—we mean this literally as well as figuratively, for the point is the most nearly perfect symbol of that First Cause or Principle from which all things proceed. “In the beginning” the point projected itself into the line. The phrase “In the beginning” refers not so much to the time sequence as the causative—one following another as cause and effect. Fabre d’ Olivet, in his *Hebraic Tongue Restored*, translates this first word in the Bible as “At-first-in-principle,” “hieroglyphically,” as he says, “represented by the point within the circle.”

Creation or Evolution

In the statement of creation quoted from Genesis, so naively accepted by millions of people and as casually rejected by the materialist, there lies, as we have intimated, a sublime truth. The “accepted” opinion implies that a Deity, wholly apart and separate from His universe, by a mere “Word,” brought forth that universe out of nothing, complete with every type of life and form. The scientist, on the other hand, rejects this theory as contrary to natural law and reason, and holds that the universe is solely the product of evolutionary processes in which an external deity has no place. He postulates an original primordial substance out of which life and form, over untold millennia have slowly evolved. It is true that he has no solution as to the origin of this “primordial substance.”¹⁶ Somewhere between these two ideas, or perhaps embracing each of them, is to be found the truth each is seeking.

We begin our discussion with the assertion that God (using the term in the sense of “The Absolute”), being All, there can be nothing outside of or apart from Him. Before this

¹⁶ This problem is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 18, “The Serpent Swallowing its Tail.”

Absolute can become manifest, there must first be movement or motion, which implies extension in time and space. How can we presume to describe this creative process? We may say that Deity divides Himself, or more accurately polarizes Himself; that is, He separates Himself into two aspects or phases—one, that aspect of Himself which ever remains the One Eternal God; the other that aspect of Himself which is to become His manifestation or creation. We recall a line from the ancient Hindu poem of the Mahabharata, in which the Supreme Being is quoted as saying, “Having pervaded this whole universe with one fragment of Myself, I remain.”¹⁷

It will be noted that God first created “the heaven and the earth.” The author (of Genesis) goes on to say, “And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it *divide* the waters from the waters and God *divided* the light from the darkness.” Clearly the contrasting terms “heaven and earth,” “light and darkness” refer to this universal duality—the words “heaven” and “light” signifying the spiritual realm, while “earth” and “darkness” allude to manifestation. The line of separation—the “firmament” dividing the “waters from the waters”—is that imaginary line where the “above” meets the “below,” where spirit touches matter, where life becomes form and form embodies life. It is an axiom which defies contradiction that all manifestation is dual. Science is discovering that in every form, however “dead,” there is embodied a hidden life. It has “split” that minutest particle of matter, called the atom, and found locked therein a force and energy beyond the capacity of man to measure. These discoveries confirm the teaching of the Ancient Wisdom that within every form, however minute, there resides a fragment of the divine life.

Duality in Manifestation

The verb “created” contains a three-way concept: The One who creates, the action itself, and the object created. God, as Absolute Being, by an internal activity polarizes Himself and, in the process whereby manifestation comes into being, we find that aspect of Himself which we call Spirit acting upon that other aspect of His nature called matter; and it is out of the interaction and union of these two opposing poles of His Being that all things come into existence. The positive pole of Being is Spirit, Life,

¹⁷ The Bhagavad Gita, X, 42.

Power, Causative or Activating Principle. The negative pole of Being is Matter, Substance, Reproductivity or Formative Principle. Thus the One becomes two: God as Father or Creative Life Principle and God as Mother or Formative Principle, by whose union all living forms come into being. An honest appraisal of this dual concept of Deity in manifestation should bring religion and science closer together.

While Unity is the essential characteristic of Deity or Spirit, Duality is the very essence of manifestation. Spirit and matter, as opposite poles of the One Reality, become reflected in numberless pairs of opposites. This duality is found also in the universal law of attraction and repulsion. It is by the eternal interplay or balance of those twin forces—centrifugal and centripetal—that the universe is upheld and sustained. Should one predominate, every particle in the whole universe would break into an infinite number of separated pieces, each flying away from every other. Should the other force prevail, the entire mass would contract into a solid core of inconceivable hardness. The very existence of matter seems to depend upon the continued operation of these two laws. Man also embodies this fundamental duality. In essence he is a unity, an individuality, a Monad. In his manifestation he is twofold: on the one hand he is spirit or ego, which is the likeness of his divine Parent; and on the other he has a physical or animal nature which is his inheritance from his earth mother. St. Paul recognized this duality in our natures when he said, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly.”

Thus do religion and science find their justification and completion in each other. Each complements the other to tell the whole story of creation. Science is the approach to the one truth through the investigation and knowledge of *things* and of their infinite relationships. Religion is the attempt to comprehend and interpret the universe in terms of spirit.

The Line

Of all geometrical figures, the Line most adequately symbolizes what we have been attempting to put into words. In our preceding study, we saw that the Point was the sign of God the Father, the First Cause or Principle of Being. The Line, on the other hand, represents God in His capacity as the Creator of His universe—Deity becoming

manifest in and through His creation. It represents God in action or motion, even as the line is formed by the point in motion. If the point represents God as *Being*, the line depicts Him as *Becoming*. It is the symbol of the first act of creation.

From what has been said, as well as from evidences yet to be presented, the line may rightly be called the *second letter* of our symbolical alphabet. The line has one dimension, extension. Dr. Annie Besant writes, “The Point, speaking symbolically, vibrates between centre and circumference, thus making the Line which marks the drawing apart of Spirit and Matter,”¹⁸ to which Dr. Arundale adds, “the two poles between which is spun the web of a universe.”¹⁹ “The Line,” he adds, “is one of the most marvelous of symbols.” Pythagoras is quoted as saying that, “as the point corresponds to unity, the line corresponds to the number two or duality, because it was produced by the first motion of indivisible nature, and formed the juncture between two points.”²⁰ “The Line,” writes Manly Hall, “is the symbol of the dot in motion. . . . It is the bridge connecting cause with effect . . . it is the outpouring of cause into effect.”²¹

The line is the “Word” which was “in the beginning.” “Thus is beginning to be born the finite from the infinite; from the undifferentiated infinity, manifestation. In the beginning is the Line which is the Word of the evolutionary process.”²² The line is the rule or gauge by which all things are measured. Dr. Arundale brings this thought to life. “The Line is the Divine Measure, the Yard-Stick of descent and ascent of the Life-to-be.” He continues, “Naught is outside of it. All is governed by it. All conforms to it. Everything is measured by it.”²³

The Vertical Line

Let us look at the Vertical Line and the Horizontal Line. The vertical line is the symbol of God descending to earth. It is equally the symbol of man ascending to heaven. It is at once the path up which man’s hopes and aspirations ascend to God, and the path over which God’s power and blessing descend to man—man’s aspiration

¹⁸ *A Study in Consciousness*, p. 6.

¹⁹ *The Lotus Fire*, p. 177.

²⁰ *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Edition, Vol. 1, p. 675.

²¹ *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 4, 20, 48.

²² *The Lotus Fire*, p. 179.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

and God's benediction. The vertical line is the sign of the Divine Incarnation, of the "Word made flesh," of God becoming man. It is also the symbol of human ascension, of man becoming divine. Over this line flow the life currents whereby man is nourished and sustained. We quote again from *The Lotus Fire* . . . "The vertical Line is the line of Vitalization, Vivification. The horizontal Line is the line of Manifestation, Fecundation." Again he writes, "The vertical Line *vitalizes*, the horizontal Line *equilibrates*." ²⁴ "The vertical Line would seem to be the channel of force for God the Father, while the horizontal Line is the channel of force for God the Mother." ²⁵

Polarity

As there is polarity in a bar of steel, so do we visualize polarity in this vertical line. Its upper end reaching heavenward is positive; its lower end resting upon earth is negative. It is the north and south pole upon which the earth rotates. Man, in his physical aspect, fits this symbolism. His spinal column is his vertical line. The north pole is the *head* reaching toward heaven; his south pole is the *feet* planted firmly upon earth. Dr. Arundale says, "The spinal column . . . is the outward and visible symbol of the Line. . . . This is the spine of the universe-to-be—the Line which pulsates from North to South." ²⁶

The Divine Covenant

The vertical line thus becomes the "link" between the "heaven above" and the "earth beneath"—between spirit and matter. In man, it is what occultists call the *Antahkarana*, that invisible link or "silver cord" between the higher and the lower selves. It has been poetically called the "Divine Covenant" which links man eternally with God. It is indeed the "Path" upon which the disciple may meet his Master, and upon which he must travel to his own Divine Self—the Eternal Monad. It is the path of evolution and of initiation. Its purpose is fulfilled in the statement of Jesus, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." And when man shall have come to his Father, or when the disciple shall have found union with his Master, or the lower self shall have become one with his Higher, then shall the "Path," the line, have disappeared, and only the point, the Self remain.

²⁴ *The Lotus Fire*, pp. 218–9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 253–4.

“The [vertical] Line reveals to us God in His glorious limitation as Man . . . He descends into a heaven, and builds an earth that Man may climb to Him in heaven. The Line reveals the Beginning, the Way and the End.”²⁷

The Horizontal Line

If the vertical line is the symbol of man’s relation to God, the horizontal line is the symbol of man’s relation with man. By the first there is established the Fatherhood of God, by the second is affirmed the Brotherhood of man. As one is the link between man and God, the other is the eternal bond between man and man; and if by the former we ascend to God, by the latter we reach outward in service and sacrifice to all creatures. The horizontal line is thus the sign of balance and equality. It encircles the earth; it stretches to the outermost limits of the universe.

It is by the interplay of these two sets of lines, the vertical and the horizontal, that all forms are wrought, as if an Invisible Weaver, sitting at His loom, by the swift handling of His shuttles, weaves an ever-changing pattern of infinite complexity and beauty. In the Web of Life, these two lines, the vertical and the horizontal, may be looked upon as representing respectively time and space—duration and extension—the warp and woof in the intricate pattern of conscious existence. Dr. Arundale certainly penetrated the heart of this mystery of the lines. He wrote, “The vertical Line descends into the horizontal Line as an infinite soul enters a limited body. The Cross is thus [a symbol of the] incarnated soul.” “The vertical Line symbolizes Infinitude. The Horizontal Line typifies Limitation.”²⁸

The Cross

We shift for the moment our perspective. It may be said that these two lines become man’s ageless creed. Uniting to form the Cross, they declare his relationship both to God and to his fellow man. Therein is affirmed his sonship and his brotherhood. In another sense we may say that the vertical line, as his link with the Spiritual, represents the Father; while the horizontal line, as his bond of union with his brothers, represents the Mother. These two unite to form the cross, the oldest symbol known to man—sign of

²⁷ *The Lotus Fire*, p. 506.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 281.

Spirit enshrined in matter—portraying the Divine Sacrifice whereby all living things come into being. The simple act performed by millions of Christians in making this sign of the cross, knowingly or unknowingly, affirms its timeless creed and invokes its hidden power and wisdom.

Virtues of the Point and Line

At the risk of unduly prolonging this discussion I feel impelled to inject a final concept. It is this. Each figure in our symbolic alphabet embodies, as we have seen, a definite idea and a degree of power. Each possesses and suggests, in a mystical sense, a series of special virtues. On the idea and the power inherent in the point and in the line we have dwelt at some length. For the following thoughts as to their respective virtues we are again indebted to Dr. Arundale. The virtues of the Point, he says, are “Silence, Reserve, Quietude, Will, Peace, Poise, Grace, Dignity, Self-Restraint, Attentiveness. The Spirit of Creation, Glory of Infinity, Unity of Life.” The virtues of the Line are: “Aspiration, Steadfastness, Perseverance, Poise, Balance, Order, Virility, Will-Incarnate, Kingship.”²⁹

The Letter “B”

We turn our attention to the letter “B” (Greek “Beta,” Hebrew “Beth”). The association of the letter “B” with the line and number 2 is not at first-hand so obvious as is that of the letter “A” with the point and the number 1. Yet we shall see that there is a very definite correspondence. Let us look first to its shape or form. The letter “B” is made by drawing a straight vertical line and then affixing two circles, one above the other, to the right of this line. This is most significant. The upper circle would represent the “heaven above,” the lower the “earth beneath.” “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” And the vertical line is the “covenant” which joins heaven and earth, the upper with the lower, spirit with soul, macrocosm and microcosm, man with God. In his book *The Key to the Universe*, Dr. F. Homer Curtiss quotes Eliphas Lévi as saying, “The (letter) Beth represents hieroglyphically the heaven and the earth. It represents the Spirit of God born upon the waters and the fecundation of matter by

²⁹ *The Lotus Fire*, p. 324.

spirit.”³⁰ The form of the letter “B” thus represents the idea of duality in the manifested universe. Referring to the Hebrew “Beth,” Dr. Curtiss continues, “Hieroglyphically Beth stands for the mouth of man and is referred to Wisdom. . . . Its radical meaning is ‘house’ or birthplace.”³¹ Universally it represents the womb of nature, the secret sanctuary of God, from which there comes into manifestation every creative thought of the Divine Mind.

Leonard Rosman, in his little book, *Amen, the Key to the Universe*, has expressed some interesting observations. “The letter ‘B’ is the sound-symbol of that which is internally developed (but) not expressed or sent forth It is a sound of internal activity, a development within an enclosed space The letter Beth, literally ‘house’ (represents) that in which there is some kind of internal activity, and from which something or somebody is expected to come forth There is the idea of innerness, of internal development, that which goes on within something as if preparing to come forth.”³²

This expresses most significantly the inner meaning of the letter “B” both as to its form and sound. The Hebrew letter “Beth” means literally “house” or “dwelling”—an enclosed space within which there dwells spirit, life or potential activity. Familiar examples may be found in such word-combinations as “Beth-David,” house of David; “Beth-le-hem,” house of bread; “Beth-el,” house of God, etc. d’Olivet gives it an additional meaning as signifying “mouth,” the organ of sound or speech. We may even relate “Beth” to the human body in which dwells the spirit or life—the word “body” being derived from the root “bod,” meaning abode or dwelling.

The real correspondence (between the line and the letter “B”) lies in its phonetic or sound value. We saw that the sound of the letter “A” was that of outgoing breath. АНН! became the first creative sound. We saw that there was a direct relationship between “breath” and spirit. These, like the point, are undefined and unlimited. The sound of the letter “B” is made in two steps. First the lips are lightly closed while a pressure of air is built up within the mouth. There is yet no sound. Then suddenly the mouth and lips are

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 67–74.

opened and the built-up internal pressure of air is ejected with a slight explosive force. The first creative force has taken shape, the first sound has become a word. This is exactly what the symbol of the line has meant—the bringing down of the creative force, the “Word made flesh.”

Vowel and Consonant

This brings to light a most significant thought. We suggest that the relationship between the point and the line finds a correspondence in the relationship between vowel and consonant. In a sense vowels are like the point—they are sound only, without measure or limit. The point finds its definiteness, its meaning, its manifestation even, in the line. The sound of the vowel may correspond with force, energy or even life; but until that force or life is limited and measured by the consonant, it is still inarticulate as regards meaning, definition, or form. The consonant thus becomes the line, which establishes or fixes the limits or boundaries to the sound, and words come into being. Words are formed by the limitation of sound—measuring, shaping, and coloring sound to produce an idea. The power of sound becomes the wisdom of form. Sound must be, as it were, cut off into lengths and shaped in order to express meaning and wisdom. Sounds become articulate as they are hemmed in by consonants. The consonants of the alphabet are the limits or boundaries, actually the mold into which the force or life, as expressed through the vowels, can be poured. As life must be expressed through form, so sound, to become articulate, requires the union of consonant and vowel. We think of the vowel as Spirit or Life represented by the Point; while the consonant suggests to us matter or form as measured by the Line.

To epitomize our study of the Line symbol:

- God is within, as well as beyond His universe; for there is nothing outside of Him.
- The Point in motion, becoming the Line, is the symbol of Spirit becoming matter.
- Matter and Motion are essentially one.
- Time and Space are only those fragments of Eternity and Infinity which the Line can measure.
- Vowels to be articulate must be limited by consonants. Life to be cognized must be embodied in form.

- God created a universe by limiting His essential nature.
- A fragment of the Infinite descends from “heaven” that an immortal soul may be born on “earth.”

CHAPTER III

THREE: THE SACRED NUMBER

While a discussion of the number Three naturally preludes a study of the Interlaced Triangles, we feel that it cannot be entirely omitted from its natural sequence of position in the Divine Alphabet. For this reason this chapter will contain only those ideas necessary to preserve this continuity. The student is therefore referred to the chapter under the heading of “The Interlaced Triangles”³³ for a more complete study. It will be impossible also to avoid certain repetitions of thoughts which seem equally necessary for the clarity of the subject under the headings of “A Divine Language” and “The Interlaced Triangles.”

In all Nature the word “finale” has no place. The end of a day, a season, a year is only the pause before the entrance of a new day, season or year. And yet the “new” day or year is not new except in the sense of being another segment in the procession of time. There are no new causes, which do not have their roots in yesterday’s events. Cause and effect operate continuously on all levels from the mental to the physical. Each day is not a new bead, separate from others on an endless thread. Nature’s books are not closed with the ending of each season. The countless seeds and dormant things only await the returning warmth to continue their halted careers. Each morning brings with it yesterday’s problems—solved or unsolved. We merely turn the page of our book; the plot is unbroken. We play our parts in a never-ending drama whose gamut spans the extremes of tragedy and comedy. Life has no final curtain. The causes set in motion yesterday become today’s happenings; and today’s decisions become tomorrow’s directions—whether tomorrow be a day or an incarnation. Someone once remarked that if the final curtain at the conclusion of a tragedy were to be raised again, the audience would witness a comedy—and *vice versa*.

These observations on the continuity of life and Nature are called forth by the realization that the foregoing chapter of this book is in itself utterly incomplete; and this is because of the fact that the conclusions expressed therein are only half true. In that

³³ Book V. *post*

chapter nothing is settled, and the whole argument is left dangling in the air. It is as if in a play we rang down the final curtain on the second act instead of the third. This second act (chapter) presented merely the various threads of the plot (problem), not their solution. The intent of the present chapter will be to gather up these various loose threads and to indicate a direction and a purpose.

The statement that all manifestation is dual is only half the story. Duality is a truism only as it is a process which leads to a third state. The first state is unity or being; the second is duality, which is becoming; the third state of triplicity is fulfillment or completion. I think it may truly be said that everything in the manifested universe, from our highest concept of Deity to a grain of sand, follows a threefold pattern. The geometrical figure which represents this truth is the triangle; and we may conclude that the triangle is the sign which is the third letter of our symbolical alphabet. We shall expect, therefore, to find a definite relationship between the triangle and the number three, and also, we may suggest, with the letter C (or G—Greek “Gamma,” Hebrew “Gimel”).

Before continuing our search for these associations and relationships, we shall first pause to consider certain problems left unanswered in our previous discussion. We said that “In the beginning” God in His act of creation, divided (or polarized) His nature into spirit-matter. The One becomes two. As a result of that separation (in the truest mystical sense, the Divine Sacrifice) manifestation comes into being; and with that manifestation there appears on all levels an infinite host of dualities. And yet, all of these dualities, from the original duality “spirit-matter,” are incomplete in themselves. If we examine these dualities we shall see that they are also triplicities; for on every level of manifestation we can think of no duality which does not possess a third quality or characteristic. Let us start with that first fundamental duality—so easy to talk about, so difficult to comprehend—spirit-matter. By the term matter we mean that primordial substance, which the scientist calls “aether” or “source material,” distributed everywhere throughout space. The ancient Aryans called it *Mulaprakriti* (Sanskrit), meaning “the root principle of matter.” By the term spirit we mean that ultimate reality or life principle which we may only call “God.”

The human mind can conceive of neither spirit nor matter as not possessing some kind of form or shape, however etherial that may be. Between these two poles of being there exists every conceivable type of living forms. It must be accepted that every form is the product of this union of spirit and matter, and without such union form could not exist. Occult science has taught, and modern science now confirms, that there is no *form*, however minute or dense, that does not contain some degree of spirit, in the form of energy or force. On the other hand, we can hardly think of *life* except that life be embodied in some form.

If we go through the entire gamut of dualities we find that each is complete only as it is seen as a triplicity. Take the dual concept of *matter-motion*. Each would be inconceivable without the third idea of *space*. And again, *space-matter* brings with it the idea of *time*. Again uniting the twin concepts *space-time* we have the relationship of *measure*. And the measure of *time-motion* must be expressed by a threefold definition as *distance-direction-duration*. We mentioned a while back that the duality, spirit-matter, becomes the triplicity *spirit-matter-form*. We have suggested that the union of *spirit-matter*, produces *life*. Now we have another duality, *life-form*. It is true that we cannot recognize or know life unless that life manifests through some form. It is only through the union of *life* and *form* that growth and evolution are possible. It is by the constant interplay of matter and energy or matter and spirit, that all substances become known to man. On the lower levels of manifestation the union of *matter* and *energy* produces *awareness*; on the higher levels the union of life and form produces the triplicity: *life-form-consciousness*.

The phenomenon of *electricity* illustrates this principle, requiring the union of its positive and negative polarities for its manifestation. Or again, the twin forces of attraction and repulsion or contraction and expansion result in equilibrium or law throughout the physical universe. In a later chapter, many of the triplicities both in Nature and in the spiritual realm are catalogued. The threefold pattern is repeated in the realm of consciousness. We say, "I am I," or "I am the Self"; and we see that world outside of us, which we know as the "not-Self." Between the "Self" and the "not-Self," there is a continuous relationship, which is "consciousness."

If we extend this idea to the realm of religion, we find that our highest concept of God fulfils this threefold pattern. The Trinity concept of Deity is as old as man's thoughts. However, since this idea will be the subject of a detailed study in a later chapter, we shall pass it by for the moment with the observation that when the Creator put down fragments of Himself into this world of manifestation to become the seeds of a future humanity, there was inherent within each of those "fragments" the desire or urge to re-unite with its parental Source. In the early ages of the race this urge was but dimly felt and was expressed, in primitive religious rites. In time this urge, this desire to unite with God, became an absorbing passion and the theme of every religion. The word "religion" itself (re-ligare) means to "bind back," and suggests the connotation that religion, in its highest sense is a relationship or covenant between man and God—thus completing another triangle: *God-man-religion*.

In every age and in every race the number three has been held sacred, associated always with the concept of Deity, spirit or life. References in the Bible to the number three are too numerous to be coincidental. The most obvious of these are the allusions to Jesus being "three days in the tomb." He Himself referred prophetically to His three days' burial as a sign or symbol. "There shall no sign be given [to this generation] but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights "in the heart of the earth." (Matt. 12: 39, 40) Again He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2: 19) What Jesus really meant by these remarks (aside from a purely historical implication) has been the subject of endless conjecture. Among other things, may we suggest a reference to the three great stages of evolution of life upon our planet *before* that life emerged as man?

The life of God descending to earth enters first the mineral kingdom. Then for three long days and nights it lies literally buried in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. Then on the fourth day (age), the life of God is "resurrected" in human form as the true divine image. Or again we might consider this "sign" of the three days of burial in a mystical sense as referring to the birth or resurrection of spiritual consciousness. During the infancy of the race, consciousness lies buried in man's physical nature. During the adolescence of the race, consciousness is associated with

the emotions. As the race approaches maturity, consciousness is identified with the mind. Then on the fourth day, consciousness rises to its own realm, the awareness of its own spiritual nature. Like most symbols, this allusion to three days and three nights may contain other and more exalted interpretations. We may note in passing that according to the Biblical record, Jesus was only two nights in the tomb, His resurrection occurring on the morning of the third day, celebrated as Easter.

Other references to the number three in the Bible will readily be recalled. Jesus was 30 years old (3 x 10) when He began His ministry which lasted 3 years. There were 3 sons of Judah who stood unharmed in the “Fiery Furnace.” Three “Wise Men” sought the Christ Child. The three disciples with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration said, “Let us build three [3] Tabernacles.” The 3 Christian virtues are listed as “faith, hope and charity.”

We have referred to the fact that ancient philosophers and mystics have taught an association between numbers and letters of the alphabet as well as with geometric figures. We saw that the number 1, the letter A and the point are related. Also we have presented evidence to show an association between the number 2, the letter B and the line. We shall not be surprised then to find evidences garnered from ancient sources to indicate that this series of relationships also follows with the number 3, the triangle and with the third letter of the alphabet. We may point out that this very association between numbers, letters and geometric figures repeats our threefold pattern: its number expresses its power; its letter suggests its idea or wisdom; its form reveals its measure.

Since the triangle is one of the integral parts of the Theosophical Seal, we shall for the moment defer our study of this symbol until we consider the interlaced triangles.³⁴ Let us take a look at the third letter of the alphabet, “C” (Greek “Gamma,” Hebrew “Gimel”) and examine its relation to the first two letters “A” and “B.” If, as we have seen, Aleph represents spirit or activating principle, and Beth suggests form or generative principle, we may conclude that Gimel is the relationship between the two—the magnetic link which unites them. We may think of it not only as the force, which unites the two, but also the result of their union. In Nature it is the adhesive principle. It is the

³⁴ Book V, *post*.

form or mold in which spirit and matter are united. It is equally the infinitude of living forms, which proceed from this union. If we may use a single word to express the intrinsic meaning of this letter it is "link" or "union." Using the human family as the living example of this concept, it is the "love" principle which unites father and mother; and it is also the child or product of this union. Expanding this idea, we may say that it is the link between personality and soul, between animal body and divine spirit. In a later study we shall follow these many relationships into the cosmic or divine realms where they reveal a universal pattern whose symbol is the triangle.

CHAPTER IV

THE SQUARE AND THE NUMBER FOUR

“And the city lieth foursquare.”

Rev. 21: 16

The first impression we get, when we come to consider the Square and the number 4 is that we have stepped down into another world. I say “stepped down,” for our minds have been dwelling in imagination upon a high plane of spiritual speculation. The symbol of the *point*, the *line* and of the *triangle* dealt with the world of spirit, that which Plato called the Noumena. Those thoughts relative to divine things lifted our attention to a world of law and causation above and beyond the physical. But when we come to consider the square (or the three dimensional cube) we come down into the world of things and events round about us. We get a similar impression of down-to-earth stability when we think of the number 4. The *square* and the number 4 have been linked together in ancient symbolism; and together or separately, always have reference to mundane, in contrast to spiritual, matters. This is not to say that the number 4 and the square refer to physical things only, to the exclusion of non-physical or spiritual ideas. If the emphasis is upon the physical world, there is yet a definite though subtle suggestion or allusion to a noumenal or ideal world. This relationship is something akin to that of a solid object to its image in a mirror. The reflection may not be a reality; but it is the image of a reality. One is reminded of Plato’s cave allegory in which the shadows upon the wall seemed real to those who cast them so long as they kept their eyes upon them—yet were discovered to be unreal the moment they turned their eyes to the light which came through the cave’s opening.

In general we may conclude that the symbol of the Square (or the Cube) and its numerical sign, the number 4, alludes to the realm of manifestation rather than to those causes and forces behind manifestation. They refer to the form or body rather than to the indwelling life. They symbolize the *universe*, not in a physical sense only, but as relating to its laws and activities—rather than to an indwelling spirit or an overshadowing Creator. And yet we see implied in this symbol a state of being, which is surely beyond

the physical, a state which has its reality in the subjective rather than in the objective world. We sense in the square a kind of mental or spiritual prototype towards which the present and imperfect state of things is evolving. There is thus implied in this symbol an objective world (in which is included man and his entire social and political structure) that is in the process of evolving toward or of approaching an ideal or subjective state of being, which is perfect and permanent. In connection with this idea we recognize the phrase "Utopia" or "the New Jerusalem" or even "the Kingdom of Heaven."

Students of Masonry will recognize the recurring allusions to the square in the teaching and rituals of its degrees as referring to that state of perfection, which is the ideal of human character and of society as a whole. We perceive in the Masonic apron of white lambskin with its triangle over the square the thought of man's spirit as being above and in control of his physical nature. We are reminded that his soul is master of his personality. Here the square represents the pattern of purity and rectitude, of justice, and brotherhood, which is the sign of the ideal man, the true Master Mason.

The Four Beasts

Biblical allegory abounds in references to the square and the number 4. The one which appeals most forcibly to the imagination is the reference to four beasts which appears in the Books of Ezekiel and Daniel and in the Apocalypse. These beasts are variously described as having *four sides*, *four faces*, *four wings*, etc., and with such similarities as necessitate a common interpretation. In the Book of Ezekiel (Chapter 1) we read that out of the midst of the whirlwind, the cloud and the fire came the likeness of four living creatures. "And every one had four faces and four wings . . . As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; and they four had also the face of an eagle." The account in the Book of Daniel varies somewhat in its imagery: "Four great beasts came up from the sea . . . The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings . . . a second, like to a bear . . . and another like a leopard, which had . . . four wings [and] four heads . . . a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly"(Daniel 7). In the Book of Revelation we read: "In the midst of the throne and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the

first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle”(Rev. 4: 6–7). We note that the four beasts of Revelation are identical with those in the Book of Ezekiel.

What mysteries these symbols conceal, only a seer or a prophet might fully understand. It is with extreme humility that we attempt even to suggest an interpretation; but what we do suggest has significant bearing upon our immediate study. Some Bible students have interpreted these “four beasts” as the four writers of the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is possible that this idea may have been the inspiration behind the architecture in many churches where the likeness of a bull, a lion, an eagle and a man appear at the four corners of the altar or sanctuary. While this theory could conceivably explain the four beasts in the vision of St. John in Revelation, it could hardly be true of the Ezekiel story, which occurred some five hundred years before the four gospels were written. So we must look elsewhere for their real interpretation.

The Four “Signs”

Half buried in the sands of Egypt lies a strange monster made of stone. For how many centuries this creature has kept silent watch before the great Pyramid of Gizeh, only the imagination can fathom. This “beast” in stone has the body and paws of a lion and the bust and face of a man. The purpose of this famous Sphinx is one of the enigmas of the ages. Obviously its destiny is linked with that of the Great Pyramid itself, which was built as the tomb, not of Khufu or Cheops as was formerly supposed, but of Osiris, Lord of the celestial world. It is now known to have been a temple for the ancient Egyptian mysteries. Its *four* triangular sides rise from a *square* base and it was known as “The Temple of Light.”³⁵ Sphinx-like animals have been uncovered by archeologists in Greece, Assyria and Phoenecia. These were usually carved on walls or at the entrance of temples, suggesting some religious significance.

Astronomers have divided the sidereal universe into four quarters, with the zodiacal signs of Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn at the corners or cardinal points. Early

³⁵ Many valuable works have been written on the Great Pyramid. The interested reader is referred to two small volumes for instructive and easy reading: *Miracle of the Ages* by Worth Smith, and *The Secret of Ancient Egypt* by Ernest G. Palmer.

Egyptian and Chaldean astronomers, however, placed on their calendars the constellations of Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius as occupying these cardinal positions. It is an astronomical fact that due to the gradual shifting of the earth's pole, the equinoxes change 30 degrees in approximately every 2,150 years. The following quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, places the date of the change above mentioned at about 3100 B.C. "When the Accadian calendar was arranged and the Accadian months were named, the sun . . . was not, as now . . . in Aries, but in Taurus. The rate of the precession of the equinoxes being known, we learn that at the vernal equinox the sun was in Taurus." ³⁶ And again we read in the same work, ". . . four beautiful stars [constellations] were placed as guardians at the four corners of the world." ³⁷ These four stars were of course the four constellations: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius. It will be noted that in many of the older zodiacs the sign Scorpio was replaced by Aquila (Latin for Eagle), so we have here represented in the heavens at the four angles the bull, the lion, the eagle and a man!

The Four Angels

We can hardly assume, however, that the writers of these Biblical allegories merely had in mind subtle allusions to astronomical constellations. Surely in their references to "four beasts," "four horns," "four wheels full of eyes," etc., there was hidden a more profound significance. For some hints as to the meaning of this mystery we must turn to the ancient esoteric records as gathered and interpreted by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*. We find many allusions to "four Regents of the four corners of earth," to "the Rulers of the North, South, East and West," and to "four winds or forces of earth." These "Rulers" or "Regents," we are told, are four great Angels or Devas who act as Agents of God, and not only manipulate great cosmic forces, but also carry out His laws of justice in the minutest detail in the races of men. In eastern esoteric philosophy they have been called the "Lords of Karma," who administer the laws of cause and effect, of action and reaction, on every human level. They are the "Four beasts before the throne" in the Book of Revelation, "full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night." The Church refers to them as the "Recording Angels" who record the thoughts and deeds of

³⁶ *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 732.

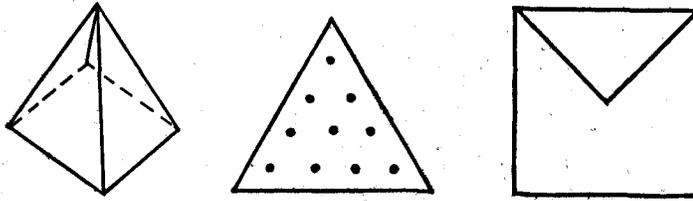
³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 726.

men and of nations in the “Book of Life.” This description of course implies that nothing is too great or too small or yet too hidden to escape their eternal vigilance.

The thing which is significant to this study, whether we consider these “four beasts” as the four cardinal signs of the Zodiac or as the “four Regents” of the earth, is that they are quite definitely associated with the universe in its external manifestation, with the physical world and its laws, and with the actions and relationships of its inhabitants. We may therefore draw two conclusions: first, that 4 is the number which is the sign of all mundane things, that is, pertaining to earth or matter; and second, that the Square, symbol of stability and solidarity, as well as being earth’s geometrical counterpart, is its goal and symbol of perfection. They are number and symbol of man as an outer manifestation of an inner and spiritual reality.

The Tetraktyis of Pythagoras

We call to mind a few of the many witnesses to the idea that both Nature and man are essentially fourfold. There are four seasons of the solar year, four quarters of the day, hour and minute. There are four cardinal points of the compass. The circle is divided into four segments of 90 degrees each. The early Greek philosophers taught that there are four elements: earth, water, air and fire. Science classifies the matter of the physical world into four states: solids, liquids, gases and ethers. In Nature there are the four kingdoms: mineral, vegetable, animal and human. Man as a personality may be looked upon as fourfold: the physical body, the etheric double, the emotional body and the mental body. Pythagoras expressed this same idea in his famous Tetraktys. This is a triangle in which were placed ten points (yods) or numbers from 1 to 10, so arranged that there were four along each of the three sides within the triangle and one in the center. On whichever side the triangle stands, there are four points at the base, representing man’s The Tetraktys of Pythagoras lower Quaternary, while the rows of three, two, and one above type his threefold spiritual nature. We may easily see that the Pyramid of Gizeh, the Tetraktys of Pythagoras, and the Masonic apron are adaptations of the same symbol of the Three and the Four or the Triangle and the Square.



A few thoughts, in passing, on the formation of the number 4 and the square. With pencil and paper we make a simple experiment. Upon the *diameter* of a circle (representing manifestation) we construct a *triangle* (representing spirit). Next, in the lower half of the circle, with the diameter as base, we construct with dotted lines an inverted triangle as representing the reflection of spirit in matter—and we have a *square*. Dr. F. Homer Curtiss writes, “The Square is generated not only by the reflection of the Trinity in matter, but also by uniting the four ends of the cosmic cross. Geometrically the figure 4 is formed by joining the right arm of the cross with the upper apex.”³⁸

The Fourth Letter

We turn our attention now to the fourth letter of the alphabet, “D” (Hebrew “Daleth,” Greek “Delta”). It is not at first too evident just what is the association between this letter and the number 4 and the square. In shape, it might be imagined that the capital “D” resembles a square. But this, it would seem, is a superficial likeness. To discover the real association between letter and sign, we enter the realm of metaphysics. In the illustration above we saw the lower triangle in the circle as being a reflection or objectification of the upper triangle. This idea (of the lower being a reflection of the higher) is definitely suggested in the Hebrew “Daleth.” “Daleth” contains two thoughts: one of division, the other of nourishment. We see all manifestation as in a process of continuous division; and, as part of this dividing process, there is the idea of an inner replenishment or nourishment, as from an inner and inexhaustible source. Hence this symbol “Daleth” has been sometimes referred to as the “Cosmic breast.”

Fabre d’Olivet, in his great work, *The Hebraic Tongue Restored*, says of “Daleth”: “It

³⁸ *Key to the Universe*, pp. 136–7.

appears that in its hieroglyphic acceptance it was the symbol of the universal quaternary; that is to say, of the source of all physical existence. As symbolic image it represents the breast, and every nourishment and abundant object. As grammatical sign it expresses in general abundance born of division: it is the sign of divisible and divided nature . . . every idea of abundance and division, of propagation, effusion and influence. Its arithmetical number is 4.”³⁹

On first thought it would hardly seem that the Greek letter “Delta,” aside from being the fourth letter, contributes anything of value to our subject. Yet a little meditation reveals that it adds color and tone to the same theme. Named after, and shaped like, the delta of a river, it connotes that precise point where the river “divides,” and through that division its waters flow into the sea. We may see in this natural phenomenon the symbol of that mystic point or channel through which the “River of Life” flows outward from its inexhaustible and invisible source to nourish and replenish the whole manifested world. Students of the occult anatomy of man will readily recognize an association with the centers or chakras (wheels) within the body whereby the inner forces flow outward to give life and growth and powers to the human instrument. We may note this symbol on every level of expression as typing that instrument of transition whereby the inner reality becomes an external manifestation. We may see it as the written page or as the spoken word, which translates wisdom into knowledge and understanding for all mankind. It is the instrumentality of art whereby the hidden divine glory is transformed into harmony and beauty in the form of music, painting, sculpture, etc. We are reminded of a most significant fact in connection with the “Rays,” that it is the fourth which is the ray of the artist who sees (or hears) beauty and harmony upon the inner or divine realms and expresses what his inner senses perceive in the worlds of form. Again we may recognize this “delta” symbol in Nature in the root, stem and branch upon which grows flower and fruit for the enrichment and nourishment of all life. May we not therefore affirm that God or Spirit in manifestation—whether it be in the sidereal universe, upon our earth, in the kingdoms of Nature, or in man himself—is known by the sign of the square and the number 4? In the mind of the Creator, all manifestation exists as an ideal or “state-of-perfection-to-be” in an archetypal world, towards which state all

³⁹ *Op. Cit.*, p. 318.

creation is ever moving. It must have been this ideal world, the vision of the “world-that-is-to-be,” that St. John saw as “the city that lieth four square.”

CHAPTER V

THE CROSS

Everything which we said about the Square could as truly be said about the Cross, although with certain significant differences. Like the square, the numerical value of the cross is 4. The cross divides the circle into four equal segments, the day into four parts and the year into four seasons. It marks off sidereal space into four cardinal points: North, East, South and West. Like the square it is definitely linked with the physical universe and in that sense with time and space. It also types man as a personality within a physical body as distinct from soul or spirit. However, the underlying difference in the philosophy of the Square and the Cross, it seems to me, lies in the distinction between the static and the dynamic, between finality and infinity.

The Philosophy of the Cross

The square types a universe that is evolving towards a state of perfection, a state, however, which is fixed and final. It represents a creation that is ever in the process of becoming or moving towards a far-off ideal. Religion envisages a goal towards which each one of us, and humanity as a whole, is traveling. Its prophets and seers envision a perfect society which will one day appear on earth, and such expressions as a “new heaven and a new earth,” the “New Jerusalem,” etc., have caught the imagination of poet and preacher. This idea of existence is, unless one be an out and out materialist, the rational view of things. Even the most pessimistic among us must accept evolution as a progressive movement towards a newer state, although he may deny a goal or a direction. Some perplexing questions puzzle the open mind: Is this goal the end? Is this state of perfection final? Does this Utopia, once realized, remain throughout eternity as a blissful state in which struggle, change, or progress is unknown? Does evolution reach a goal, however distant, and then cease forever?

We visualize the square as the symbol of an ideal manhood, which is the ultimate goal of the human race. And yet this ideal or prototype, far ahead as it is, contains a sense of finality. Once it is attained, it is finished, complete. The history of the human

race becomes a series of tableaux in life's natural museum, each tableau a little nearer to the idea of perfection, which in the progression of time will ultimately be attained. The square, as the symbol of this ideal of perfection, is both its measure and its limitation. Nothing can be beyond perfection, unless by some metamorphosis the nature of the thing be changed, and a new idea of perfection be established. The concept of perfection implies an end or completion.

Like the square, the cross is the symbol of the universe; but of a universe in which God is immanent in every star and every atom. It is the symbol of man, both collectively as humanity and individually as a personality; yet of man within whose body is buried a fragment of Deity. The cross is particularly the symbol of the *form* side of Nature, but it is also the symbol of the *life* imprisoned within that form. This distinction can be graphically illustrated by making a simple little drawing. First we draw a square. Now assuming this square to be a cube, we proceed to open it up as one would a cardboard box. We draw a square above the first one to represent the top of the box. Then we trace a square on each side of the original one. These will be the sides opened out. Finally we spread out the front and the bottom by placing two squares beneath the central one. What we now have is the cube *unfolded* in the form of a Latin Cross—symbol of the form unfolded to release the imprisoned life, symbol also of man unfolding his inherent divine nature.

Here is the distinctive philosophy of the symbol of the cross. It represents a universe which is dynamic, continually expanding under the pressure of the life force within it. It types not only an ideal or goal of perfection towards which man and the universe is evolving, but an ideal or goal which is itself ever expanding, ever moving in unending spirals throughout infinity. This idea of endless continuity of life is as difficult for the finite mind to grasp as it is to conceive of the known universe to be in a state of infinite expansion throughout an eternity of time. In this thought we approach the very heart and source of being. That an eternal process of motion or of evolution and unfoldment is taking place in man, in the race and in the universe is a philosophy which must fill the mind with awe and wonder. We grasp at an ultimate goal; but where is an ultimate and fixed goal in a universe which is infinite? For every goal which the mind can conceive is but the starting place from which we look to a new goal. It is said that

“we are becoming what we are,” yet that very state of “being” which is “what we are” is also “becoming” something infinitely more than our highest conception of what we shall be.

For this reason the cross is a dual symbol of *Sacrifice* and *Death*, for it embodies the idea of life or spirit as imprisoned or buried in the tomb of matter. It is the symbol of the Divine Incarnation, of God descending to earth and becoming man. It is no less the symbol of *Hope* and *Life*, for it is the symbol of the resurrection of life from its material bondage. It suggests humanity being raised to divinity. Through it, spirit is ever expanding, ever “becoming” free. From its center of being, as typed by the rose in the cross, life flows out along its four arms into infinity.

There are of course many types of the cross. The Greek or Hermetic Cross with its four equal arms is perhaps the most ancient. Primitive peoples, observing the sun as it ascends from the winter solstice crossing the equator to its northernmost point at the summer solstice, then retracing its path, saw that it formed in the heavens a cosmic cross, its four arms marking off the four quarters of the known universe, its vertical line reaching north and south, its horizontal line stretching east and west to the far-flung limits of the universe. A variant of this is the St. Andrew’s Cross with arms crossing diagonally. It is the union of these two crosses placed one upon the other which forms the British Union Jack. It is interesting also to note that these two crosses are used in mathematics as the addition and the multiplication signs.

Several variants of the cross have been used in heraldry, and in ecclesiastical insignia, the Patte Cross (a) is formed as within a circle something like the meridians and parallels upon the earth. Akin to this is the Maltese Cross (b) which consists of four triangles set with points together forming a square. Perhaps the cross most commonly used in this connection is the Cross Fleury, or Fleur de Lis (c), so called from the fact



that each arm is divided at the end into three pointed segments resembling the petals of a flower. This Cross refers especially to the Third Logos (in Christian nomenclature the Holy Ghost or the Third Person) and represents the *threefold* power of Spirit flowing out into a *fourfold* universe. This particular cross is most commonly found embroidered upon tapestries and ecclesiastical vestments, carvings upon church furniture, interior and window decorations and over cathedral doors. This form of the cross calls to mind its universal that is, catholic or cosmic significance. Other forms of the cross are the Swastika (d) and the Tan (e), each of which carries a message distinctively its own; and since each of these crosses forms an integral part of the Theosophical Seal, they will be the subject of special studies. The form of the cross with which the Christian world is



(d)



(e)



(f)

most familiar is the Latin Cross (f) in which the lower section is twice the length of the upper section or the arms.

A Religious Symbol

The Cross, in the minds of most of us, is associated with the Christian religion. Nevertheless history has proven that it was not originally a Christian symbol. Carvings upon rocks and walls of caves are evidence that as a religious symbol it is vastly older than Christianity. We may correctly assume therefore that Christianity appropriated the cross and made it her own particular symbol. That is to say, the idea of the Cross as a Christian symbol of hope and victory had its origins ages before the crucifixion of Jesus. We say this, not in any sense of irreverence, but with a deep conviction that due to the essential nature of the cross, the death of the Christos, following the pattern of the Divine Sacrifice throughout all ages, could *only* have taken place upon a cross.

For Christianity was given to mankind as the latest in the line of mystery religions, a fact lost sight of after the disappearance of the Gnosis. Like all mystery religions, she veiled her truths under the guise of allegory and symbol. That men have mistaken the symbol for the reality is the greatest tragedy of the age. We may truly say that

Christianity dramatized, historically in the life of Jesus, and continuously through her rituals, the great cosmic or universal truths which are embodied in the symbol of the Cross. For the critic to deny the historic reality of the Christian drama and its *dramatis personae* because he learns that it fits into the mold of a universal or cosmic pattern is as illogical as it would be for the scientist, beholding in the atom under his microscope a miniature solar universe, to deny the existence of that atom on the grounds that it “copies” the larger pattern. Indeed, of no other religion upon our planet, at least in the memory of man, can it be said that it presents its philosophy and its theology (I use this word in a universal sense) in the pattern of a divine or sacred drama—a pattern which loses nothing of truth or uniqueness because it is a replica (in time) of that drama of creation whereby worlds and all living forms come into being.

However, the “descent” of spirit into manifestation, the “Incarnation” or “the Word made flesh”—these words express only half the story of the Cross. We have suggested that the cross is a dual symbol. It represents God descending to earth, the “Divine Sacrifice.” It also represents man ascending to God, the eternal “Resurrection.” So the other half of the story of the cross pictures the *way of the return*. The “Way of the Cross” is not only the way to Calvary. It is the way whereby the Spirit (Son) of God, having descended to earth to become man, through definite “stages” or initiations (expansions of consciousness) ascends again to become divine. This is the heart of every true religion; Christianity has dramatized this in the life of Jesus. We might truly say it is her complete and only story.

We only have to look into the world about us to see how the hieroglyph of the cross types Nature in so many of her phases. The earth rotating upon its axis divides the day into four quarters, and the sun rising in the east, crossing the meridian, and setting in the west, forms what we might call the Mundane Cross—its arms extending outward in time and space. Again, the rotation of the earth around the sun, passing as it does through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, draws a circle or ecliptic within which is inscribed another cross. The horizontal line of this cross extends from Aries to Libra, its vertical line from Cancer to Capricorn, into unthinkable distances, and they form in the heavens the Sidereal or Celestial Cross. Combine with this the annual motion of the earth by the inclination of its axis forming the twelve months and four seasons of the solar year and

we have what might be called the Cosmic Cross extending outward in time as well as space. We may trace a series of correspondences between the Mundane and the Cosmic Crosses. For instance, the 2 x 12 hours of the day and the 12 months of the year, the four quarters of the day and the four seasons of the year find many close relationships: morning and springtime, noonday and summer, afternoon and autumn, midnight and winter. Poets often have related the ages of man with the quarters of the day and the seasons of the year; youth with morning and spring, maturity with noontime and summer, middle age with afternoon and autumn, old age with midnight and winter.

Like many of the older religions, Christianity has not hesitated to fit the critical points of its drama upon this cosmic cross. At the winter solstice, the sun reaches his most southern point. He stands still. Darkness covers the land and grips it in its icy hand. Fear and hopelessness paralyze the primitive mind. The sun is dead, and with his death all life has departed from the earth. After three days (December 25th) he begins his northward journey. He is re-born. Then as he rises again into the heavens, the whole earth begins to respond to his life-giving rays. At the spring equinox he crosses the earth's equator and days and nights are equal; and at the summer solstice he reaches his most northerly point, hesitates for a moment to begin to retrace his path southward. At the autumnal equinox he gathers in the harvest and prepares again for his death and burial. The religions of all peoples, from the most primitive to our own, have fixed these cardinal points of the solar cross as the times of their most sacred festivals. And should we be surprised to learn that Christianity has chosen the points from which start the vertical and the horizontal lines of the solar cross in setting the dates of its two major festivals—Christmas and Easter? It is said that Plato, contemplating this solar cross exclaimed, "The world soul is crucified!"

The Cross and the Crucifix

When one thinks of the Cross, particularly the Latin Cross, he thinks instinctively of Christianity, so closely identified are they in the public mind. And yet it is a matter of historical record that in the early centuries of the Christian Church, the cross was not universally its symbol and did not become so until the fourth century when, under the decree of the Emperor Constantine, it became the official symbol of the church.

According to legend it was on the eve of the great battle, which was to decide the fate of the Roman Empire in the west, that there appeared in the heavens a flaming cross and above it the words, "In Hoc Signo Vincas." The following day Constantine's army was victorious, and believing that the God of the Christians was on his side, he became a champion of the new religion and established the Cross as its official emblem.

The Crucifix, however, now universally used by the Roman branch of the Church, did not appear until three centuries later. Relics from the early churches and from the catacombs reveal a Latin Cross *without* a figure upon it. The following is quoted from Gerald Massy's *The Natural Genesis*:

The value of the Cross as a Christian symbol is supposed to date from the time when Jesus was crucified. And yet in the Christian iconography of the catacombs no figure of a man appears upon the Cross during the first six or seven centuries. There are all forms of the Cross (except the crucifix)—the alleged starting point of the new religion. During some six centuries after the Christian era, the foundation of the Christian religion in a crucified Redeemer is entirely absent from Christian art! The earliest known form of the human figure on the cross is a crucifix presented by Pope Gregory the Great to the Queen of Lombardy, whilst no image of the Crucified is found in the catacombs of Rome earlier than the seventh or eighth century. There is no Christ and no Crucified; the Cross is the Christ. The Cross, not the Crucified, is the primary symbol of the Christian Church. The Cross, not the Crucified, is the essential object of representation in its art, and of adoration in its religion. And that Cross is pre-Christian, is pagan and heathen, in half a dozen different shapes. During these centuries the Cross stood for the Christ, and was addressed as if it were a living being. It was divinized at first and humanized at last. ⁴⁰

Yet for thirteen centuries the Crucifix has held, and still holds a sacred place in the hearts of millions of devotees to whom it is a revered symbol of the Christian faith. What does this imply? We recall that the Gnosis disappeared from the Church about the same time that the Crucifix replaced the plain Cross. We must assume that as the Christian teaching began to appeal more and more to the masses of the people, the esoteric or mystery teachings were gradually lost sight of by the Church Fathers and emphasis was more and more placed on the historical and materialistic aspect. The Crucifix fulfilled this new emphasis in that it appealed to the emotional part of man rather than to the intellectual. The Crucifix graphically keeps before the mind the dramatic rather than the philosophic aspect of the Cross.

⁴⁰ *The Natural Genesis*, I, 427. Quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, II, p. 620, Third Edition.

Two questions come to our minds. If it is true that Christianity presents its religious truths through the life story of Jesus in the form of a Divine Drama, should not the Cross with the corpus affixed be considered its true symbol? On the other hand may we not assume that, when the day comes when the Gnosis or the inner mysteries will be restored to their rightful place in the Christian teachings, the plain or Latin Cross will return as the Church's rightful symbol? The answers to these questions may lie in the thought that the Christian Drama itself is the symbol of a universal or Cosmic Drama whereby, through the Eternal Sacrifice of God, the universe and all living things come into being.

These questions bring to mind a most interesting experiment made a number of years ago by a group of investigators under the guidance of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. Whoever has read any of Mr. Leadbeater's many books on the subject of the Ancient Wisdom and of Christianity will know of his accomplishments as a Seer and Occultist and of his numerous contributions to a deeper understanding of the many truths concealed within its sacred scriptures. They will know too that during many years, perhaps many lives, through determined and persistent effort he had developed certain inner or psychic faculties enabling him to extend his consciousness backward in time to contact ideas and events long since past.⁴¹ Pondering upon the relative significance of the Cross and the Crucifix in Christian symbology, this group determined to learn which of these two held first place in the realm of causations. It is said that Mr. Leadbeater had expected to find the figure disappear leaving only the plain cross. However, and to his great astonishment, the cross itself faded away leaving the figure of a God with arms outstretched—not in agony of dying but—in blessing.

Yet a little thought will convince us that in the ultimate, the cross is the symbol, and man, son of heaven and earth, is the reality. However, before the eyes are able to behold that reality in its completeness, they must look, as through a glass, upon the symbol. When man emerges from the darkness of ignorance into the light of wisdom, and his eyes become accustomed to the reality rather than the shadow, the symbol fades and he alone remains. "It is by no means unnatural," writes C. W. Leadbeater,

⁴¹ Read *The Science of Seership* by Geoffrey Hodson.

“that the descent of the Divine Man into matter should be symbolized by the binding of the body to the cross.”⁴²

The Sign of the Cross

Any study of the cross would be incomplete without considering its purpose and value as a “sign” of devotion and prayer so universally used by millions of worshippers throughout the Christian world. We have been thinking of the cross as a symbol made of wood, stone or metal, printed or carved—that is as something fixed and inanimate. We wish now to consider it as an action or movement made by the hand over the self or over another person or over an object.

Made over the self, this “sign” signifies an act of blessing or a prayer for help and protection in some difficulty. When made over another person it is supposed to invoke protection or healing. In certain religious rites such as baptism, confirmation, unction, etc., it is used over another person to invoke Divine forgiveness, purification, stimulation, or some definite intent in the mind of the officiant. When the “sign” is made over certain objects, particularly in the performance of liturgical acts, it is considered to impress upon such objects certain benevolent influences, or to bring upon the possessor protection or good fortune. Here we leave the plane of philosophy and enter the realm of the occult. We are forced to recognize either one of two points of view. This act of making the “Sign of the Cross” is purely a carry-over from a past superstition and its effect upon us is merely psychological; or there are certain mental or spiritual forces engendered or released through the performance of this action, not otherwise present in ordinary movements of the hands. In other words, is the “Sign of the Cross” a religious gesture as an act of recollection or belief; or is it an act of magic quite outside the realm of normal experience? We have been looking upon the cross objectively as something outside of ourselves. We now consider it subjectively as a power or force within one’s self capable of accomplishing certain objective results.

The attitude of the Christian world is divided upon this subject. There are those who feel that all ritualism is useless and valueless and that man’s contact with God is to be found directly through his own heart. On the other hand there are those who feel that

⁴² *The Christian Creed* by C. W. Leadbeater, pp. 90–3.

the way to God and the claim upon His blessing is more readily realized through orderly and co-operative rituals. The purpose and value of ritualism in religious worship is a subject that cannot be discussed at this point.⁴³ The obvious intent of ceremonialism is to still the mind and the emotions that they may become attuned and therefore receptive to spiritual influences. If, as we may suppose, the efficacy of this gesture is enhanced by the intent and the earnestness of the one who makes it, we may rightly wonder if without such strong intent the value of the action diminishes to a vanishing point. In other words, is there virtue in the action itself apart from the will or desire of the one who performs the action? We shall consider this problem from as impartial and unprejudiced a point of view as we can. In the first place we feel that the millions who make the sign of the cross neither know nor suspect a *modus operandi* behind their action. The thing is done with the spontaneous automatism of breathing. The gesture is associated vaguely, especially if accompanied with a prayer formula or rubric, with the "Trinity."

Our approach to an understanding of the problem must be predicated by an assumption that behind this act there is a sincerity of intent and a reverent devotion on the part of the worshipper. In his mind there exists, consciously or unconsciously, a certain idea, which repeated again and again, becomes for him a miniature creed. We look to the fundamental philosophy behind the lines which comprise the cross. The vertical line represents God the Father, not in a far-off Heaven, but descending to earth. It is the Life Principle or Spirit impregnating matter. It is God Incarnate as "The Son," the "Word made flesh." The horizontal line represents the matter of the Universe, (Latin *Mater*) the Mother as the receptive or generative aspect of Deity. The union of these two lines is the sign of Man, who in his spiritual nature is the *Son of God*, while in his form aspect is the *son of earth*. Thus the vertical line descends and crosses the horizontal line and an infinite soul enters a finite body. In the movement of the hand upward, touching the left shoulder and the right, the son of man rises again into his spiritual estate as Son of God.

Of course, the one who makes this "sign" over himself thinks of none of these things. He thinks of God as Father sending down His blessing on behalf of His Son who

⁴³ The student is referred to *The Science of the Sacraments* by C. W. Leadbeater.

having descended to earth gave Himself as the sacrifice whereby we may also rise with Him to glory. These and kindred thoughts are packed together in this sign as a kind of miniature creed. There is also the idea of being linked with God or with our own higher Self, the sign itself being the sign of union or addition, as exemplified in the mathematical “plus.” Usually the “sign” is made, whether over the self or another, together with repetition of the “Words of Power.” We say, audibly or silently, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” In the association of the gesture with the words of this *mantram* lies the key to its power; and a study of the correspondences implied gives us an understanding of the validity of its source and the method of its operation. Indeed it might be said without exaggeration that an understanding of the correspondences between God and Nature and between God and man is the ABC of occult wisdom.⁴⁴ Briefly stated, the head, typifying the seat of the intelligence or will, is related to the “Father” aspect of God, the Divine Will. The physical heart is the seat of man’s purest love and is therefore associated with the love aspect of God or the “Son.” Universally the heart is the symbol of love. Similarly the arms and shoulders alluding to man in his manifold activities types God in His Activity or Creative aspect, known in Christian terminology as “the Holy Ghost.”

When therefore while touching the forehead with the fingers of the right hand we say, “In the Name of the Father,” then bringing the hand to the heart (or the solar plexus) we say “and of the Son,” then finally touching the left and right shoulders we conclude with “and of the Holy Ghost,” there is created an interlocking mechanism whereby, through the similitude of his own threefold spiritual nature, man invokes the threefold power of God. We think of a key which opens a lock by the exactness of its corresponding contours, for man’s Spirit is the very image of God whose Will, Love-Wisdom and Creative Activity find their corresponding “image and likeness” reflected in his own personal nature—putting in his hands the key wherewith he may unlock the Infinite.

Evidence that the sign of the cross is more than Christian may be found in two quotations from H. P. Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*. She writes:

⁴⁴ A detailed study of these relationships is made in Book V under the heading “Interlaced Triangles.”

Long before the cross or its sign were adopted as symbols of Christianity, the sign of the cross was used as a mark of recognition among Adepts and Neophytes, the latter being called Chrests—from Chrestos.

She then quotes Eliphas Lévi, the French Kabalist, as saying that Initiates into that order use the sign thus:

Carrying his hand to his forehead, said, *To Thee*; then he added, *belong*; and continued, carrying the hand to the breast, *the Kingdom*; then to the left shoulder, *justice*; to the right shoulder, and *mercy*; then he joined the two hands, adding *throughout the generating cycles*.⁴⁵

In the same volume (p. 588) speaking of the Tau Cross, she refers to the use of the sign of the cross made by the Prophet Ezekiel “over the men of Judah who feared the Lord” (Ezekiel 9: 4). “The Lord said, Go through the city [Jerusalem] and set a *mark* upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” In the Vulgate Bible this “Mark” was translated “Signum Thau” (sign of the Egyptian Cross).

Finally, may we express a few thoughts on the rationale of this action and suggest some answers to the questions, what? whence? and how? I say suggest, for who can really know—much less describe—the true nature of the reality behind phenomena? First there is the power of tradition. Tradition, whether we are aware of it or not, exerts an influence upon our lives. Long continued and oft-repeated thoughts have their effect upon the mental atmosphere about us. We have only to enter the quiet hall of an old college to feel our own thoughts stirred by the profundity of wisdom that seems to exude from its very walls. Who has strolled through the silent corridors of an ancient cathedral and has not come under the spell of an influence which automatically turns his thoughts to meditation and his heart to prayer? In much the same way though perhaps infinitely more subtle may we conceive a kind of psychic or spiritual reservoir built up and sustained by countless millions of acts of devotion and worship over the centuries. Such a reservoir of spiritual power is, we are assured by occultists, a very real thing. Through the laws of affinity and attraction every fervent prayer and sincere aspiration,

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, Volume II, p. 593 (Third Edition).

accompanied by this traditional sign of the cross, reaches up to tap this reservoir of spiritual and mental power.

Since the fundamental idea of the cross is spirit descending into matter, it is therefore the sign of the "Incarnation" and is particularly associated with the "Son" aspect of God. If we follow this logic from the highest spiritual level down to earth we may realize that, aside from historical association of Jesus and the cross, there is this timeless association of the cross with the Universal Christ who is the very embodiment of the "Son" aspect of God upon our planet. When therefore the Christian Church, through its rituals and symbols uses the "Sign of the Cross," it is thereby both expressing and recollecting this ancient and inner linkage with its true spiritual Head. For if it is granted that spiritual values have a place in the world and throughout the universe, we must admit the rationality and the reality of this power of the cross.

It may rightly be claimed therefore that the Cross is the Christ's own particular "Sign," and that as Lord of Wisdom as well as of Love, His consciousness is ever aware of each occasion when it is made with true sincerity and devotion. The "Sign" therefore becomes a key to unlock His own great reservoir of spiritual power. Indeed it puts one in temporary rapport with Him and exerts a claim upon His blessing. It is a silent invocation, which becomes both an instrument and a channel for the calling down and the distribution of this Christ force. It may be said, in all reverence, that he who with true sincerity makes this "sign" over another person or over an object does so in the momentary capacity as His representative. Again students of the occult anatomy of man know that man's body is surrounded (and interpenetrated) by an etheric counterpart or "double" which acts as the medium of contact and assimilation of the invisible and spiritual forces. They know too that in this etheric double there exist certain chakras or force centers: one at the top of the head, one at the brow, one at the throat, one at the heart, etc. These chakras differentiate this force to the particular function of the ductless glands as the physical recipient and agent of its use in the body. When therefore an officiant or ordained priest makes the sign of the cross over the head, the brow, the throat and the heart (as in baptism, confirmation, unction, etc.,) he is thereby exercising

a particular impetus to the specific type of force represented by that center⁴⁶

How may one measure the power of the Cross or enter into the heart of its mystery? Shall we say that if its essential significance is sacrifice, its meaning is limitation, loss, death? In this word is implied something infinitely more. Surely when we unite these two Latin words “sacre-facio” (make sacred) we are therein asserting that the very life of God comes down to man in order that it may thereby lift man up to God.

⁴⁶ The student is referred to C. W. Leadbeater's *The Chakras* and *The Science of the Sacraments* for further information on this subject.

BOOK 2

THE TAU



CHAPTER VI

THE PHILOSOPHIC CROSS

The Tau is the central figure of the Theosophical Seal and the heart of its message. In this symbol is contained the purpose of life and the assurance of the ultimate victory of life over death. Before entering upon this new study, however, we wish to bring into closer focus two aspects of the Cross, which were touched upon but lightly in the preceding chapters—the Philosophic Cross and the Mystic Cross, to form a more adequate backdrop against which to view the message of the Tau. In dealing with these two subjects it may seem difficult to separate in our minds those thoughts whose source is external to ourselves from those which have their origin within our own consciousness. Instead of talking about something outside of ourselves, we find that we are meditating upon certain concepts of reality, which seem fundamental to an understanding of our very existence. For who can know the mystery of being, much less tell it to another? Each must turn his gaze into the depths of his own being if he would find the truth of Being which is universal.

There is a remark in the Preface to this book to the effect that no man can ever know ultimate truth, for the reason that ultimate truth, being infinite, can never be fully cognized by the finite mind. This thought may at first seem to be a contradiction of the Bible statement, “Ye shall know the truth.” And yet a little thought will reveal that the “truth” which we can know must be relative, based upon human concepts and changing relationships. Ultimate truth must ever be outside of the realm of manifestation and compared to nothing outside of itself. Jesus said, “No man hath seen God at any time” (John 1: 18). He again said, “No man knoweth the Father” (Matt. 11: 27). It must be obvious that no one can really know the Absolute. Only the Absolute can truly know Itself. And yet religion would be a barren futility if man had no hope of ever knowing God. But the God which he can know, even as the truth which he can know, is that part of Deity which he can see through the lens of his own personality—to him no less real and true. We in the West, for instance, know God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or to

translate: Divine Will, Love, and Creative Intelligence, or Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer—terms which the mind of man can comprehend.

In like manner the Cross as a symbol is beyond the capacity of the finite mind to fully understand. We think of it as applying to a specific idea and so limit its interpretation. In previous chapters we considered the cross as a symbol both of the material universe, its extension in time and space, and of man as a physical personality. Our present study will be that aspect of the Cross which symbolizes the relationship of the external universe to the very source of its being. We ask ourselves the question, “What is the source and reality behind the physical universe?” Science answers, “Evolution.” Religion answers, “Creation.” Somewhere between these two answers—perhaps embodying something of each—lies the truth. We shall begin by considering a few concepts taken from an ancient scripture, concepts so fundamental as to defy contradiction either by science or religion.

Unknown ages before the Book of Genesis was written there appeared among the peoples of Central Asia a “book” so ancient that no one today knows its origin or its author. It is called the *Book of Dzyan* (“Dzyan” meaning “divine wisdom”). This “book” consists of palm leaves, treated with a secret preservative, upon which were inscribed in “Senzar” (a secret sacerdotal tongue known only to Initiates) a treatise on cosmic evolution, the origins of man and of the human race.⁴⁷ Tradition has it that this book is so ancient that the sacred books of all civilizations—Hindu, Egyptian, Hebrew, Chaldean, etc.—were taken from it. As one reads, he is carried backwards, or inwards, in imagination until he seems to touch the consciousness of the Creator. He senses as in a dream universes yet unborn, and seems to envision things to be before they are conceived in the womb of time. For time itself has not yet come into being. We read: “The Eternal Parent, wrapped in her ever invisible robes, had slumbered once again for seven eternities.” Note here the suggestion of a recurrence of manifestation and non-manifestation. Note also that the “Parent” is referred to as “her.” It is only as the Absolute or Pure Being is expressed as a duality, “Father-Mother,” can Being become Manifestation and therefore knowable. To continue: “Time was not, for it lay asleep in

⁴⁷ The Seven Stanzas of this work called “Cosmogogenesis” became the basis for *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky.

the infinite bosom of duration Darkness alone filled the boundless all.” In our own scriptures we read, “And the earth [universe] was without form and void; and darkness [night] was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. 1: 2).

We cannot help but note the points of similarity in these two ancient formulas of creation: one Hebraic, the other from the earliest Aryan peoples in Central Asia. The Stanzas continue, “Naught was Alone the one form of existence stretched boundless, infinite, causeless, in dreamless sleep There was neither silence nor sound, naught save ceaseless eternal breath.” “Naught” is the circle of infinity within which all-that-is-to-be exists potentially. Manifestation had not come into being. Symbolically “naught” is synonymous with “night” of Genesis. “Breath” is the indication of potential motion or sound and the first act of creation. This “breath” is not yet vibration, but the source of vibration. It is the “Word which was in the beginning.” The Genesis account covers the next stage in one brief sentence: “And the Spirit (breath) of God moved upon the face of the waters.” And from the “Stanzas,” we read: “Vibration . . . thrills through infinitude . . . sweeps along, touching with its swift wing the whole universe, and the Germ that dwelleth in darkness: the darkness that breathes over the slumbering waters” “This “germ” is the “seed” of Genesis, the divine “idea” of Plato, which was implanted in this primordial sea, this “virgin” substance called by the ancients *Mulaprakriti*.

Here in all the beauty of imagery is pictured the first act of creation. Could any statement of Jeans, Bergson, or Einstein so thrill the imagination or so accurately state the process of creative-evolution in the coming to birth of a universe? What other words could so describe that state of primordial substance out of which all forms were to appear as, “the Deep,” “the Waters,” “the Sea”? This is truly the “universal mother,” the “virgin matter,” the “eternal parent,” symbolically expressed by the horizontal line of the Cross.

The time has come to awaken the slumbering “virgin” from her sleep. That which philosophers call energy or life-principle—Father or Spirit—moves. “Vibration thrills through infinitude.” “The spirit [breath] of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Truly and reverently, we may think of this in a universal sense as the “Immaculate

Conception”; and the phrase “born of the Virgin Mary,” so dear to Christians everywhere, has cosmic as well as creedal significance. In a philosophical sense thus we interpret Mary (Latin—*Mare*, meaning the Sea) as the Universal Mother of all living forms, beautifully dramatized in many religions as the Virgin Mother. This movement or descent into matter has been referred to as the “Eternal Sacrifice” of God whereby life and form come into being. God Transcendent has become God Immanent. Thus the vertical line cutting across the horizontal line forms the cross, the cross of sacrifice whereby all things become truly sacred. To record this “descent” of spirit into matter in all its ramifications would fill many volumes. Here we cut swiftly across aeons of time. The universe had already gone through its periods of condensation and solidification forming in the process seven worlds or planes of Nature consisting of denser and denser matter, down to the very lowest or densest. This is our physical universe. The process took unknown ages of time beyond the possibility of measure. We might think of spirit or life as becoming more and more clothed in the matter of the planes, until upon reaching the densest, the lowest physical, it lies buried or entombed in rock and crystal. We might also envisage the “images” or “germs” (in the above quotations) as being clothed in ever denser material, becoming on the higher mental levels the archetypes of all things-that-are-to-be, finally to be buried as “seeds” within dense physical matter.

We know that the first chapter of Genesis was not written as history or as a biography of our first parents. Rather was it an ancient formula of a cosmic creative-evolutionary process, a process so vast that its “days” or ages must be measured in billions of years. The fire-mist forming into great whirling clouds of gaseous vapors became in turn dense fogs obscuring the face of a planet coming to birth, condensing gradually into boundless oceans, from which vast continents were eventually thrown up by belching volcanoes. “And He called the dry land earth and the gathering of the waters seas.” Where are now those divine ideas, images of all living things that-are-to-be which took shape so freely in those rarer, more spiritual realms? Those living emanations of the Creative Mind now lie imbedded in rock, earth and water, to all appearances, dead. Spirit truly has died, symbolically crucified upon the cross of matter.

The foremost minds today accept as truth the idea that matter and energy have a common origin, they are the positive and negative poles of a single, though unknown, substance. They see a dual process taking place: energy or force solidifying and becoming matter, and matter in turn being converted into energy. The most logical step must be the discovery that the whole universe as we see it is the condensation of a substance so rare that it must be considered pure spirit. Moreover, it must be recognized that this rarer medium is endowed with form-creating and life-giving power. Religion has all but forgotten this formula and has substituted the idea of “creation” out of nothing. On the one hand we have the Bible story of creation as interpreted by many exponents of religion to mean that all things came into being by divine fiat or “word.” On the other hand we have the theory of evolution as the origin and source of all living forms from matter only. Between these two orthodoxies there is, or seems to be, an impassable chasm. When science discovers and religion remembers this *involutionary* process, there shall be built a bridge between religion and science, and *creation* and *evolution* shall be recognized as two phases of the one process.

Deeply significant therefore become the words of Genesis 2: 4–5, “The Lord God made . . . every plant of the field *before it was in the earth*, and every herb of the field *before it grew*.” Herein lies the secret overlooked by both religion and science, namely, that in order for living forms to *evolve*, that is, to progressively move toward a higher type or form, these same forms of life must first have been implanted as divine ideas, that is, to have *involved* into matter. We attach new significance to that statement of Jesus, “No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven” (John 3: 13). How easy then for both religion and science to accept as truth the idea that every living form contains buried within it the image of that which it is one day to become. As the seed buried in the earth, true to the urge of its locked-in image, awakens to become its fulfilment, so the seed or “germ” implanted in every living form follows the divine urge to become the expressed fulfilment of that divine image. The processes of Nature and the experiences of earth existence are the forces which awaken the slumbering life and stir it to awareness and eventual consciousness. Thus the dual process of Involution and Evolution, of life descending and forms ascending, completes our Philosophic Cross.

CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTIC CROSS

Philosophy is concerned chiefly with speculations as to the origins of things, the nature of life, its purpose and goal. It is not so much interested in the individual life as life in the abstract. It talks of man in the sense of humanity, rather than in the sense of you and me. Yet each one of us is particularly interested in the question, "What about me? Where do I fit into the scheme of things? When or where did I begin as a separated individual and what is my own individual goal? Will this self which I know as 'I' one day cease to exist and become merged in the universal—lost as an individual, as a drop is lost in the ocean? Does that point which is 'I' eventually become absorbed in the circle of infinity?" It will be our purpose in this study to probe into the origin, purpose, and end of life in its individual aspect, rather than its universal. The answers to these questions would seem to bring us into the realm of religion. Our contemplation upon this matter will take the form symbolically of the Mystic Cross.

Two events measure the span of every human life, birth and death. One is the door through which man enters this earth life, the other is the door through which he makes his exit. Everyone is familiar with those lines from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances . . .

At birth he enters upon this stage under the play name of John Smith. When the curtain falls, his *part* as John Smith ends. It is quite obvious to everyone that the actor existed under his own name before he became John Smith in the play, and that he will not cease to exist as an actor after the final curtain has fallen. It is also true that he has played many parts before, and that he will continue to play many other parts under as many different names in the future. Throughout these many parts he, the actor, exists as an individuality and lives a life of his own "off the stage." When he assumes the role of a character in the play, his own true nature is for the time being set aside; and when the play is ended the character ceases to be and his own life as an actor continues.

This is an excellent illustration of what happens in actual life. The “I” (soul or ego) is the actor, this earth life is the stage, the personality is the character in the play. When the “I” is born into this world as a personality, the “I” is, so far as the play is concerned, completely absorbed by the personality; and when the personality dies, the “I” continues (off stage) his own life. The vast majority of people are so engrossed in this “play” of life that the falling of the final curtain seems death. Their attitude toward the subject of life and death is inverted. The personality appears to be the self and it seemingly is born and dies. If one might say that the self dies, it is when he assumes the mask of a personality and enters the stage door of this earth life.

This all seems very simple and easy to understand so far as the personality is concerned. But what about the “I,” the true self or ego? How and when does he enter into the picture? And if he has a beginning, may he not therefore also one day cease to be? What is his purpose and goal? If the “I” is the actor who steps upon the stage again and again to play his parts, may we assume that he—the true self (the actor)—is himself but a character in a greater drama in which his many earth lives are but brief scenes in some larger play? We may well ask the question: whence did he, the true self come, and into what realm will he make his final exit? As there are two events which mark his beginning and ending as a personality in each earth life, so in a larger way may we envision two corresponding events of greater magnitude which mark his entrance and exit as a soul or ego in a drama in which the “I” as a divine actor plays his part. In other words, the personality is born and dies many times while the soul or ego remains. Would it therefore follow that in a larger cycle, the soul would have its beginning (birth) and its ending (death)?

Here again, orthodox religion and material science seem to be in stubborn conflict. One teaches that the “I” or soul was created by God at the time of its birth in a physical body. After its one brief span it departs to an after-life, which may be one of eternal misery or eternal bliss according to its beliefs or compliance with certain prescribed rites while in the body. The other teaches that the soul or consciousness is a product of evolution and has existence only in the physical brain. For our true answer we turn to the Ancient Wisdom, taught by sages and mystics throughout the ages in mystery

schools and in the world's sacred scriptures, and now for the first time in history presented openly to all peoples of the world under the name of Theosophy.

In the preceding chapter, with the aid of the world's most ancient writings, including our own scripture, we attempted to understand something of the vast creative processes whereby the universe with its teeming forms of life came into being. We saw that by the action (movement) of spirit upon primordial substance (*mulaprakriti* or the "void") the matter of our universe, plane by plane from the rarest spiritual down to densest physical, came into being. The next stage in the process was the descent of the Logos ("Word") into that matter, impregnating it with His life in order that all living forms might come into existence. We saw too that by the power of this Word ideas or seeds of all things-to-be were impressed upon the matter of the highest or divine realm. These seeds, descending into the lower worlds of consciousness, became the images or prototypes of all future forms of life. This creative process was called *involution*. Then slowly those life-germs, slumbering in densest matter, by the stimulus of outer forces began to awaken; and in obedience to the urge from within, expressed themselves in ever increasingly responsive forms. This is the process called *evolution* whereby these living forms, following the pattern of the thought-images, ascended through Nature's many kingdoms, until finally, crowning her work of untold ages, anthropoidal man appeared. It was at this point that the first of the two events, mentioned a moment ago, took place. Up to now there had appeared no living creature about which it could be said that it was "made in the image of God." When this wave of evolving life-forms had reached a height beyond which it could not rise by its own power alone, an important event happened—the most important up to this time upon our planet. This event was the coming of what the ancient scriptures call the "Shining Ones," the "Sons of God." These Beings have been called by many names: "Sparks of the Divine Flame," "Fragments of God," "Emanations of Ain-Soph" or "Monads." They have sometimes been referred to as the "fallen angels." Some scholars of the Ancient Wisdom see in this event the real truth behind the legend of the "Fall of Man." This is the true Spirit of man, the Divine Ego or Soul. This is the Immortal Self of whom the sages wrote:

Never the spirit was born:

The spirit shall cease to be never;

Birthless and deathless and changeless
Remaineth the spirit forever. ⁴⁸

This is the divine actor who steps upon the stage of life, his acts being countless incarnations. In this idea may be found another bridge upon which the material scientist and the orthodox religionist may meet. For on the one hand we have the evolution of forms whereby a suitable body is prepared; and on the other hand we have an immortal soul “descended,” not, from an ape, but from God. The nature of the soul and the manner of its appearing will be discussed in Book V under the heading “The Interlaced Triangles.”

The coming (descent) of these divine sons, and their sojourn in the lower regions (“Hades” of the Greeks, “Amenti” of the Egyptians) has been the subject of myth and legend of all peoples since the beginning of time. This is a theme which has been immortalized by sage and poet. We may see it in the Hebraic legend of the Children of Israel wandering “forty years in the wilderness.” It is quite obviously the meaning behind the parable of the “Prodigal Son” who left his father’s home and traveled “into a far country.” We recall the Egyptian myth of Osiris as having been slain and his body dismembered, and the pieces scattered over the land. These pieces or “fragments” of Deity were the Monads, spirits of men which later were to be gathered together (re-membered) through the efforts of his son, Horus. Jesus’ mission on earth was to “gather up the fragments that nothing be lost.” Something of this idea may be seen in the ritual of the Eucharist wherein the Host (Body of God) is broken and a “fragment” dropped into the chalice, symbol of the soul of man.

The cynic might be tempted to ask, “What is the purpose of this pilgrimage? What is its destination? If the soul be divine why not remain in that original state of bliss?” Our answer must be found in Nature. Take the seed. Unless the seed fall into the earth and be buried, “it abideth alone but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12: 24). The analogy of course is obvious. This earth life is the ground. Unless this divine seed which is man’s spirit fall into the earth and be buried (in a physical body) “it abideth alone” and remains forever unconscious of its own nature and purpose. But if it descends into this

⁴⁸ *The Song Celestial* interpreted from the Bhagavad Gita by Sir Edwin Arnold.

world where struggle and sorrow are intensified by the necessity and the will to overcome the obstacles and difficulties, it thereby develops its own inherent faculties, now latent and dormant, into active powers. After many lives, during which he is gradually awakened to the purpose of life and to his own inner divine nature, like the prodigal son he says, "I will arise and go to my Father."

This recognition of his own true nature and of his purpose is the turning point in his journey. He learns for the first time that he is not only something more than this personality, but something infinitely more than a soul. He is a Spark of the Divine Flame, a Son of God, as St. John said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." He realizes that he has a great work to perform. He begins to see, indistinctly at first, a path lying before him. That work must be done upon himself, and the path upon which he must travel lies within himself. He cannot see the goal, but he knows that there is a goal, and from this moment forward he knows no other purpose than the attainment of that goal. He learns that he lives not for himself but for all creatures, for the divine life which he discovers in himself dwells equally in every other. He accepts the command of the Master, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This is his challenge. He now takes his destiny into his own hands. He knows that this perfection is not attained by wishing, that the vision is not the goal. There must be many labors, many conflicts within himself, many failures. Yet he never loses sight of the direction of his path. Oft-times upon some higher ground he seems to catch faint glimpses of his goal. Tremendous steps lie before him. The attainment of selfless love, the balancing of compassion and dispassion, the purifying of all desires, the consciousness of unity and inner relationship with all that lives, the training of his mind that it may become an instrument of the Self: these are but a few of the steps ahead of him. Over many hills and valleys the path stretches until far in the distance he sees the outline of a cross, and he knows that one day he too must make the supreme sacrifice, that by the power of the Christ within him he must renounce even the individual self that he may become one with that Greater Self of which he is a part. And with that renunciation will come the realization that although his own individual self has expanded to become one with the Supreme Self, he has lost nothing but gained All. In the infinite circle of being there is always his own individual center of consciousness. This is the

Mystic Cross whose base rests within his heart and whose upper bar is lost in clouds of glory.

CHAPTER VIII

VICTORY

Since the Tau is a variant of the Cross, much that has been said about the one is therefore applicable to the other. And yet, in many ways, the Tau has a heritage uniquely its own. We usually think of the Tau as coming to us from ancient Egypt, but, as we shall see, its origins were rather cosmopolitan—or should we say international. At the outset, however, we shall take a quick review of the individual letters that go to make up this symbol. First we take the point, sign of God as Absolute, Potential Being. The point expanded becomes the circle, sign of infinity and eternity. It is That which is all-inclusive and all-pervading Spirit. The horizontal line is the point in motion forming the material aspect of being. The vertical line represents Spirit or Life as descending into manifestation. Briefly, the two lines crossing signify the manifested universe as distinct from pure Spirit. Put these signs together in a certain order and we have the most mystic of all symbols, the ancient and sacred Tau.

Much may be learned about a figure or a symbol by studying its form and shape, its phonetic and articulate values as sound, as well as its ancestral and traditional usages. Strictly speaking, the Tau is a figure like our capital “T,” or the Latin Cross without the upper bar. Actually the “T” with the circle above it was called in Egyptian the “Ankh” or the “Crux Ansata,” that is, the Cross with a handle. Webster’s International Dictionary says of the Ankh that it is a “Tau Cross with a loop at the top, used as an attribute or sacred emblem symbolizing generation or enduring life.” First then, we will consider the Tau proper or the “T” part of the symbol. The term “Tau” as used in this chapter will signify this capital “T.” Indeed the word “Tau” is the Greek name for the letter “Tee.” In the Hebrew, the “T” is written “Thao.”

The “Thao” significantly is the 22nd letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This very fact throws a most interesting sidelight upon this letter. Philologists recognize the Hebraic as being one of the most cryptic of all languages. Every letter had an exact meaning, or more correctly a group of related meanings; and words were built up of letters placed in such an order as to represent an entire phrase or a combination of ideas. The initial

letter of the word gave its keynote and was therefore the most important. Each Hebrew letter also had a numerical value; that is, each letter not only represented an idea but was also associated with a number which represented its work or power. The Kabbalah cryptically calls these 22 letters the “signature of God.” When, therefore, the “T” (Thao) was placed at the end or as the 22nd letter of the Hebrew alphabet, it was done to embody a certain idea or truth. According to the science of numbers, recognized and taught by many of the mystery schools, 22 is the number of completion and perfection. It is the number of the Master, even as 11 is the number of the Disciple.

Albert Pike, in his great work on Masonic symbolism *Morals and Dogma*, gives an interesting viewpoint. “The letter ‘T’,” he says, “as the last letter of the sacred alphabet represents the end and perfection of the ‘Great Work’.” Again he writes, “In ancient times the mark of the Tau was set upon those who had been acquitted by their judges, as the sign of innocence” (p. 504). He recognized the Tau or the Thao therefore as the sign of mastery and of a work completed.

It is significant also to note that the Book of Revelation, most mystical of all Christian writings, has 22 chapters, and that in the 22nd and final chapter there is given the vision of New Jerusalem, the City of Eternal Peace. Thus 22 is not only the number of the Master, or one who has attained perfection, but also of that realm or state of being, whether a far-off paradise or within the human heart, where peace forever dwells. And he who has found this peace shall have engraved upon his forehead and in his heart the Thao or Tau, the sign of victory, even as the Lord had commanded Ezekiel (Ezek. 9: 4, Vulgate Trans.) to go through the streets of Jerusalem and mark the Signum Tau upon the foreheads of the faithful.

Those who are familiar with the formation of words know that by the deletion, addition or substitution of certain letters, the meaning of a word may be altered and yet retain its basic root idea. Take our letter “T” pronounced Tee. If we insert the letter “R” after “T” we have the word “Tree,” in all mystery languages, the symbol of Life and Wisdom. (Note: The Tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden.) The Tree significantly has been used synonymously with the Cross. The writer of the *Acts of the Apostles* wrote, “Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree” (Acts. 5: 30). Again, by inserting the letter

“H” between “T,” and “R” we have the sacred number Three, sign of the divine Trinity. Now if we delete “R” we have the pronoun Thee, used only in a special form of address, as an ascription to Deity. Then again by substituting “OU” for “EE” we have the pronoun Thou, used universally as a form of address to God. Now if we take the Hebrew letter spelt Thao and by substituting “E” for “A” and adding the masculine “S” we have the word Theos meaning God. The same transformation could be made with the particle “The.” One might add scores of instances of the use of this “Thao” in words having an allusion to Deity.

We are tempted to call attention to one more instance of the usage of the double “TH” in forming the name of Deity. This comes from Fabre d’Olivet’s *Hebraic Tongue Restored* (p. 465) and refers to the Hierophant or Initiator in the ancient Egyptian mystery ritual, Thoth Hermes, God of Wisdom. He says, “The ancient Egyptians, in consecrating the letter ‘TH’ to TH-O-TH Hermes, held it as the symbol of Universal Mind.”

Turning for a moment to the form of the Tau as the letter “T,” H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* gives an interesting study. She says, “the letter ‘T’ is a double, formed of two figures. The one on the right side is the form of the Greek letter ‘gamma’ (r), meaning ‘earth life’ (Gaia meaning earth). It is said that initiates into the Greek mysteries called the Tau, ‘Gainios’, meaning ‘son of Gaia.’ The figure on the left side forms the number ‘7,’ symbol of eternal or divine life. Thus we have in this double glyph ‘T’ the union of these two ideas, ‘son of earth’ and ‘divine life’ as sign of the perfected man in whom the higher and the lower aspects are in perfect balance.”⁴⁹

However, the most fascinating of all studies on the form of the Tau (that is, the Ankh), and the study which reveals its truest meaning is to be found in the relative positions of the Tau (T) and the circle (O). In the science of etymology, when two or more letters or root syllables are conjoined, we have a new word whose connotation is something more than a combination of their separate meanings. Similarly, when we place two or more numbers together, we produce something more than the value of the sum of the several digits. We have a new number whose value is determined by

⁴⁹ 3rd Edition, Vol. II, p. 625.

the position of the digits in relation to each other. For example, if we change the position of the digits .01 to 10, we have multiplied its original value by 1,000. The same reasoning holds true in combining two or more geometrical figures or symbols. Here we have a symbol composed of the letters “T” and “O,” or more correctly the tau (T) and the circle (O). Thinking back upon the individual meanings of these two signs, if we should place the cross above the circle, we have a sign, which would signify a state in which material considerations predominate over the spiritual. The circle upon the cross would be a crucifixion. The cross within the circle would suggest a state in which the material and the spiritual were in conflict, or at least in balance. In this connection it is interesting to note that astronomically this is the symbol of our earth, while the cross placed obliquely over the circle in the form of a spear is the sign of the war planet Mars. The sign for Venus, planet of love and beauty, is the circle above the cross signifying a state in which spirit predominates over matter. Interpreting the essential meaning of the tau with the circle (O) of infinity over the (T) of life in manifestation, we have the sign of the regeneration and purification of the personality, the victory of the spirit over the lower nature and the attainment of Masterhood or Godliness. Albert Pike, in his book *Morals and Dogma* so frequently quoted, writes that “as the symbol of the Tau (T) represents life, so when the Circle (O) symbol of eternity is added, it represents Eternal Life.” (p. 505)

Our case for the profundity and sanctity of the Tau symbol would be incomplete if we failed at this point to call in as witness the numerical values of one (1) and the naught (0).⁵⁰ We say that numerically their union as ten (10) is the divine number of perfection, signifying the completion of a cycle of manifestation. Combined as letters “I” and “O” we have the root syllable which in the Hebrew and Egyptian means divine son or heir, (as in IO-seph and IE-SUS). Geometrically, their union forms the sacred symbol which is the sign of victory and triumph—the victory of Spirit over matter, the triumph of Life over death. It is the sign of the resurrection of the Christ principle out of the tomb of the animal nature. It tells the story of man’s triumph over sin and of his spiritual regeneration. It is the “Signum Tau,” placed upon the forehead of the disciple, as a sign that he has entered the “Path.”

⁵⁰ See *Alpha and Omega*, Book I, Chapter I.

CHAPTER IX

THE PATH

“Hast thou not entered the Tau?”

One of the characteristics of all sacred scriptures is that much of their teachings are written in code. That is to say that the author, by the use of certain “key” words or phrases, often conceals a meaning not intended for the casual reader. Such words are, as we said, “keys” and are intended to suggest to one initiated into this method of concealing truths too sacred for the many to understand, ideas entirely unrelated to the literal context. The Bible, as everyone knows, contains much of allegory, poetry, parable, figure of speech, etc. Many of its stories, if taken as actual history or literal biography, become unintelligible and unnatural. These same stories, if read symbolically, contain metaphysical and occult teachings. Aside from, or in addition to allegory, parable, etc., there are certain expressions that are more than figures of speech, which the student of esotericism may recognize as having special and significant reference to some phase of the inner or spiritual life. As an illustration of this, take such words as *door*, *gate*, *threshold*, *portal*, *way* and *path*, to name a few, which fall into this category. We may recognize other expressions such as *kingdom*, *babe*, *mount*, etc., as having an additional meaning for the disciple, beyond the literal or even the allegorical implication. The phrases, “Path of Holiness,” “Path of Perfection,” “Path to God,” “Way of the Cross,” so often heard are common expressions, recognized by everyone as designating a certain way of life. As an example we read, “Open ye the gates that the righteous nation may enter in,” “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors.” These are of course figurative expressions to suggest entrance into a kingdom or state of perfection. Jesus often referred to Himself as “The Way.” Once He said, “I am the door.” Note another significant statement, “Enter ye in at the strait gate; . . . because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.” As figures of speech such statements are unmatched for their beauty and clarity. Their symbolical or allegorical meanings are recognized by everyone.

And yet all of these terms—door, gate, portal, threshold, way, path—are expressions which contain special importance to students of the inner mysteries. For it is known that every one of the great religions on our earth has had its mystery schools wherein the inner or esoteric truths were taught to the few who were ready to receive them. Christianity, even at its inception, had an inner body of truths which were not given to the public. Jesus said to His disciples, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without . . . in parables.” One of these esoteric teachings is that there exists under God in the celestial sphere a hierarchy of Spiritual Beings who act as agents of His will to carry on the vast infinitude of His operations in a living, evolving universe. Many of the world religions recognize such a spiritual hierarchy of divine or semi-divine Beings and have given to them various names and descriptions. The Bible variously refers to them as Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim, sometimes giving the Archangels names such as Gabriel, Michael, Uriel, etc. A companion to this thought is the teaching that upon our planet earth there exists a “body of just men made perfect,” an assembly or “communion of saints,” who constitute a “spiritual brotherhood” of those of our humanity who have attained perfection so far as this world is concerned, and who live henceforth as guides and teachers of mankind. As in Revelation, “these are they which . . . have washed their robes and made them white,” and who stand ever in the presence or consciousness of God. This “Brotherhood” is in a broad sense an organization known in the occult world as “The Great White Lodge.” Its members are known as “Masters of the Wisdom,” and are affectionately called “Elder Brothers,” because of the fact that They once stood where we now stand, and through many lives of selfless service to humanity and by the perfecting of Their own inner natures, have arrived at that point in evolution where They can best serve God by helping others to travel this “Path.”

In esoteric parlance, the term “Path” is used in a specific sense to designate the particular steps or stages which the candidate or disciple must pass in order to attain this state of masterhood. These “stages” are called “Initiations” and are indications that he has fulfilled certain inner requirements in the spiritual life. There are four of these great Initiations, and one’s final passing indicates that he has risen as St. Paul puts it to

the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”⁵¹ These four stages are variously caned “doors” or “gates” and one approaching is said to be “on the threshold” or “at the portal” and when he has been officially accepted, he is said to be “on the Path.” There are of course many steps leading up to the first “gate,” as there are many steps between each of these stages.

The Bible abounds in subtle references to this path, and the steps and stages which lead to this “kingdom of heaven.” Indeed Jesus’s whole life, from birth to ascension, became in a very real sense, a mystery drama depicting this “Way of the Cross.” His birth in a manger depicts the first Initiation, wherein the initiate is called a “babe.” This is sometimes referred to as the “second birth” and is said to be heralded by a “Star in the East.” The passing of the second stage is dramatically represented in Jesus’s life by the Baptism and signifies the overcoming of all worldly temptations. The third stage in the drama is called the Transfiguration, in which he becomes conscious that he is one with the Supreme, or as the Hindus call it, “one with Brahman.” The fourth stage is the Great Renunciation, wherein the little self is forever destroyed. It is the Crucifixion of everything worldly. The disciple or candidate stands utterly alone. In that one terrible moment of darkness, not only the world, but God Himself seems to have deserted him. The temple veil is rent in twain. Nothing is now hidden from him. His consciousness takes in the world, the universe. He knows the secrets of every man’s heart, and he takes upon himself every man’s burden. Finally he cries, “It is finished.” He is taken down from the Cross and buried. Then after three days in the “tomb” follows the Resurrection. He is no longer bound by earthly fetters. He is master over life and death. He is now a “Master of the Wisdom.” Although he has passed from earth, he yet remains upon or within it as a helper and saviour of men. Forgoing heaven he has made the “Great Renunciation.”⁵²

These stages are known in all religions under other names and with a difference of emphasis, yet with enough similarity to lead one to believe that they follow a common pattern. About the year 600 B.C. in China a man named Lao-Tze brought forth a philosophy which he called “Tao Te Ching” which was the way of universal harmony, or

⁵¹ There are other Initiations, but these lead to realms and work beyond our earth.

⁵² The student is referred to Annie Besant’s *Esoteric Christianity*.

the way of the good life. He who follows this Tao (Way) would not only experience peace and happiness in this life but reach a heaven of eternal bliss and harmony. Taoism became a powerful influence upon Chinese thought and character, an influence which has persisted through many changes of religious beliefs.

In Hinduism, the oldest of earth's great living religions, there are still being taught many systems of yoga, whereby the yogi or devotee may through meditation and contemplation attempt to attain "liberation" and union with Brahman. In the ancient *Book of Dzyan*⁵³ there appear a series of precepts to neophytes upon entering and following the "Path." These instructions were translated into English by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Voice of the Silence*. Fragment I ends as follows: "Hast thou not entered Tau, the path that leads to knowledge—the fourth truth?"

These four truths have been adapted by Buddhism as the "four modes of truth" which lead to the Path. They are listed as:

- Truth No. 1 KU — Assembling of misery, walking in darkness.
- " No. 2 TU — Assembling of temptation, calling down past karma.
- " No. 3 MU — The destruction of temptation, wiping out karmic debts.
- " No. 4 TAU — Consciously entered upon the Path.

Behold! thou hast become the light, thou hast become the sound, thou art thy Master and thy God.⁵⁴

When we look to ancient Egypt, recognized by many to have been the home both of the mysteries and of symbolic ritualism, we find there that the Tau or the Ankh, was definitely used in its secret ceremonies as a symbol of this Path and particularly associated with the fourth great Initiation. That ancient and mysterious *Book of the Dead*, for many centuries thought to be a treatise on "the after-life," is now known to be an exposition of the life of the soul (Khu) in its journey through the underworld of "Amenti," which is really this earth-life. Moreover, modern students of Egyptology and of the Great Pyramid have furnished proof that the book is in fact a secret ritual or rubric of

⁵³ See Chapter VI, "The Philosophic Cross."

⁵⁴ The whole subject of the "Path" from the point of view of Hindu philosophy is dealt with in a fascinating way by Annie Besant in her book, *The Path of Discipleship*.

a mystery drama of initiation wherein in an elaborate and secret ceremonial the candidate passes through the several doors or portals which lead him eventually to the fourth and final stage in which he is “raised” from the dead and “passes” into the realm of eternal Light.⁵⁵

The following description of this initiation ceremony is based upon Manly P. Hall’s *Lost Keys of Masonry*.⁵⁶ Certain similarities between this ceremony and the life and crucifixion of Jesus cannot be overlooked, although antedating it by hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. Here the candidate is pictured as being crucified upon a cross, hands and feet tied to its bars, and the cross placed above an open tomb. Then later the candidate was buried and remained within the tomb for “three days and three nights.” Upon the morning of the fourth day, with the rising of the sun, he was figuratively raised from the dead. The hierophant who raised him from the tomb held in his hand the symbol of the Tau and wore upon his shoulders a lion’s head. Other descriptions of this ceremony picture it as taking place in the King’s Chamber of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, called the “Temple of Light.” Here the candidate’s “lifeless” body lay sealed in the stone sarcophagus for “three days and three nights.” Before the hour of dawn of the fourth day, the still entranced body was carried to the entrance of the temple where the rays of the rising sun shone upon his face. Upon either side of him stood two initiators: one assuming the role of the god Osiris, wearing as a mask the hawk’s head, symbol of the sun; the other wearing the mask of the ibis-headed Thoth-Hermes, god of wisdom. And upon the candidate’s breast lay the sacred Tau.

Here and there throughout the Bible we find hints too pointed as to leave any doubt as to their hidden allusion to this event of the mystic crucifixion. In the *Book of Joshua* (8: 29) there appears this cryptic statement: “The King of Ai he crucified upon a tree.” The Septuagint rendering of this passage reads, “. . . He suspended upon a double cross.” Again in Numbers (25: 4), Vulgate translation, appear these words, “Crucify

⁵⁵ Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn, in his book, *The Lost Light*, has made an exhaustive study of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* as well as of many parallel quotations from the Bible. As a result of these studies he has confirmed the conclusion of other scholars that both the *Book of the Dead* and the Great Pyramid of Gizeh were associated with a sacred ritual of initiation, the purpose of which was to lead the candidate on a mystical journey through the darkness of earth to the Light of Eternal Spirit.

⁵⁶ Hall Publishing Co., Third Revised Edition, 1929.

them before the Lord against the Sun.”⁵⁷ Such phrases and many others in the Bible appear meaningless unless it be assumed that they contain hidden allusions to some metaphysical event. It will be remembered that the tree is quite universally the symbol of life and wisdom and as such is synonymous with the cross or the tau. We remember too the event in the “wilderness” when Moses raised the golden serpent upon the “tree” or tau, and that this symbol thereby became a healing power to the Children of Israel who gazed upon it. Here is unmistakably a glyph representing the crucified Saviour-God upon the tree who becomes for all peoples the Great Healer.

Knowing that Moses spent the early years of his life in the court of the Pharaoh of Egypt, it is natural to assume that he was familiar with the teachings of its sacred temples, and may even have been an initiate into its mysteries. It would therefore follow that he would have brought much of these teachings with him and taught them to his people in the form of allegory and symbol. It should not be surprising therefore to find that the Hebrew mystery schools should follow the same fundamental pattern in their initiation ceremonials. It is extremely significant to students of the mysteries that Jesus should have fulfilled in his three years of public life, even in its historical details, this universal pattern of initiation, established by the spiritual hierarchy of our planet. When the rulers of Israel asked Jesus for a “sign” of His masterhood He said, “there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12: 39–40). No less than twenty-one times in the New Testament was it said of Him, “that it might be *fulfilled* which was spoken by the prophet. . . .” These statements are deeply significant as referring to the fulfillment and completion of a Universal Drama.

⁵⁷ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Ed., Vol. II, pp. 588–9.

Beside an ancient shore a primitive stands with his back to the setting sun. He gazes intently at his own shadow upon the white sand before him.

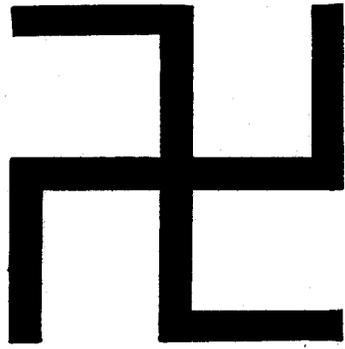
Presently he stoops and with his finger traces a figure in the sand. It is a figure like the "T" Cross with a circle above it. For a few moments he stands gazing at this figure which he has drawn, as though a revelation were about to burst upon his mind. Then stretching out both arms, he observes his own shadow in the form of a cross extending along the shore; and to his amazement he sees that the figure which he has traced with his finger in the sand is the symbol of his own shadow.

* * * *

Within the seclusion of a shaded grove a mystic sits in silent meditation. He contemplates the Way of the Cross and union with God. He envisions the Path stretching on before him, its steps and stages leading upward to disappear in mists of infinity. Somewhere beyond lies the goal. As he meditates, there comes the realization that this Path is really within his own consciousness. Its steps and stages are the trials and victories over his own lower nature. This drama of initiation is enacted within his own heart. He and the Path are ONE.

BOOK 3

THE SWASTIKA



CHAPTER X

ANTIQUITY

The Swastika occupies a position in the Theosophical Seal within the small circle at the top where the serpent swallows its tail. Upon a blue background it presents at first sight an appearance of serene tranquility; yet after a few moments' contemplation upon its form and implied motion, it is found to be the center and source of ceaseless and untiring activity. Of all of the symbols; comprising the Seal, the swastika is the only one whose special characteristic is motion. Others express states of being: the relationship between spirit and matter; the nature of man and his relationship with God; the soul and its path to perfection; God as Eternal, Infinite Spirit; God in manifestation as the "Word made flesh." The swastika is the sign of God as the Divine Creative Fire in the universe.

Before, however, becoming involved in the philosophy of the swastika—to attempt to discover something of its hidden or esoteric meaning—we shall look to its antiquity and place in history. Whether from the point of view of time or history the cross or the swastika is the more ancient, we may never know. Both are known to have come down to us from earliest evidences of civilization. Specimens of the swastika on pottery and stones have been found in caves and tombs in every part of the globe, not only in the old world (so-called), but also throughout the western hemisphere. Ancient China, India, and Egypt held it as a sacred symbol and placed it in the tombs of initiates or "great souls." Following the trade routes between Asia and Europe, it found its way through the Middle East, by caravan or conquering armies to Greece and Rome. Many evidences in the catacombs of Rome indicate that in the early days of the Church, it was held as a Christian symbol. From Rome it found its way northward into Austria and Germany.

The following from *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky gives further evidence of its age and universality. "So ancient is the symbol [of the swastika] and so sacred, that there is hardly an excavation made on the sites of old cities without its being found. A number of such terra-cotta discs . . . were found by Dr. Schliemann under the ruins of

ancient Troy . . . proof that the ancient Trojans and their ancestors were pure Aryans.”⁵⁸
“It is found on the heart of the images and statues of Buddha, in Tibet and Mongolia . . .
One finds it with the old Peruvians, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, as well as on the walls of
the old-world Cyclopean buildings; in the catacombs . . . at Rome where—because the
first Christians are supposed to have concealed themselves and their religion—it was
called *Crux Dissimulata*. ‘According to De Rossi, the swastika from an early period was
a favorite form of the cross employed with an occult signification which shows the secret
was not that of the Christian cross. One swastika in the catacombs is the sign of an
inscription which reads [in Greek] *Vitalis Vitalia* or life of life’.”⁵⁹

Again H. P. Blavatsky writes, “The swastika is found heading the religious symbols
of every old nation. It is the ‘Worker’s Hammer’ in the Chaldean *Book of Numbers*,
‘which striketh sparks from the flint’ (Space), those sparks becoming Worlds. It is Thor’s
Hammer, the magic weapon forged by the Dwarfs against the Giants—the *pre-cosmic*
Titanic Forces of Nature.”⁶⁰ She further explains that this Divine Hammer has been
“degraded into the mallet or gavel” of Masonry where its power is even there “sufficient
to dissipate the darkness.”

Frank C. Higgins, F.R.N.S.,⁶¹ in an excellently illustrated booklet, *The Cross of the
Magi* published in 1912 (Roger Brothers, New York), has made an extensive collection
of coins and documentary evidence to prove that the swastika has been a sacred
symbol not only in ancient China, India, Persia, Chaldea, as well as Europe and Africa,
but also among the original “Indian” natives of Mexico, Central and South America.
Engraved on coins, carved on stones, baked on clay tablets, woven in bead patterns, it
symbolized the sun and the solar system—evidence that in the Americas unknown
centuries before the coming of the white man, there existed civilizations in which know-
ledge of the rotation of the planets about the sun was universally known.

In our own day we have seen this ancient and revered symbol degraded into an
emblem of hate and selfish lust and a banner of tyranny and torture in the hands of the

⁵⁸ Third Edition, Vol. II, p. 106.

⁵⁹ *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Ed., Vol. II, pp. 619–20. Quoted from Gerald Massey’s *The Natural Genesis*,
1, p. 427.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁶¹ Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society, London.

Nazis. It is true that the form of the swastika chosen by Hitler as his special emblem in his mad try for world conquest was the left-handed variety. Many ancient and primitive peoples have considered the swastika as a talisman or lucky charm—that is the right-hand kind. Tradition has it that people believed the left-handed or backward rotating swastika to be an evil or unlucky charm, while the forward or clockwise rotating emblem was an influence for good.

Since the swastika is closely linked with evolution, it may well be that the forward motion means progress toward a goal, while the backward motion signifies retrogression. However that may be, it can be stated with certainty that the memory of the use of the swastika, as an emblem of Nazism, will in future ages have faded into oblivion; while its true meaning as a symbol of the hidden “fire” or “spirit” within all manifestation, from the atom to a solar universe, will become increasingly revealed to humanity as it climbs painfully toward its goal.

CHAPTER XI

THE WHIRLING CROSS

The Swastika is a variant of the Cross; but when we try to express its meaning, its particular philosophy, we come upon something illusive and intangible. And yet the swastika is said to be the most comprehensive of all symbols. It is the least mysterious because it is a whirling cross and represents action, force, energy. At the same time it is the most mystical of symbols because its power belongs rather to spirit than to form. This paradox may be explained, at least intellectually, by saying that the swastika partakes of the nature of the circle and of the cross. If we should inscribe a cross within a circle and then should erase a section of the circumference on one side of each of the arms, there would remain a swastika. Dr. Arundale, has described this relationship in his book, *The Lotus Fire*: “The Swastika cannot be separated from the Cross. Neither can it be separated from the Circle, for it takes upon itself the properties of each, and combines the two into one symbol.” We might suggest that the swastika born of the circle and the cross, forms a symbolic trinity.

Our first step therefore in attempting to fathom its mystery must be to trace its ancestry from these two parents. Briefly, the circle with its invisible center represents the Father or Spirit; and the cross, universally the symbol of form, expresses the Mother aspect of being. But when we contemplate the swastika, we see the form aspect gradually fade and disappear and in its stead we come to that which is the source of form. It is as though the swastika were the creator of form, instead of form in itself.

In trying to penetrate any symbol in order to discover its inherent or hidden characteristic, attention must be paid to its shape and the relationship of its parts. Consider for a moment the plain or Greek Cross. We recall that the symbol of the square signified form—whether of a universe, a world or man. We saw that this “form” had an implied motion, that is, as approaching an ideal or prototype which contained within it the idea of finality or perfection—an end which was fixed and static. Then we saw that the cross, formed by the intersection of the vertical and horizontal lines, also

typified the form side of being, but of form as extending and expanding along its four lines into infinity. In the swastika, however, we find an implied motion, not as an extension from a center outward in a line, but as in a circle around its own center. Dr. Arundale called it the “Wheel of Law, of Sound, Fire and Life, of Creation and Evolution”.⁶²

Like the cross, the swastika is intimately related to the manifested universe. Rotating about its center, it represents a world revolving around a central sun, its four arms forming four quarters of that circle in space, and indicating the four points of the compass—north, south, east and west. Similarly, in a time-space sense, as the earth swings through the sidereal heavens, its arms measure the year into its four seasons reaching out to the four cardinal signs of the Zodiac. Ancient symbology linked these four signs with the famous “four beasts” of Ezekiel and Revelation, and also to the various forms of the sphinx found in ancient temples and on the sands of Ghizeh. (In a previous study we found that these “signs” and “beasts” were related occultly to the “Four Silent Watchers” or “Four Recording Angels,” sometimes called the “Four Regents of the North, South, East, and West.”) In yet another sense they are related to the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water.

Unlike the cross, or rather in addition to the characteristics of the cross, the swastika intensifies these characteristics and brings them to life. Quoting again from *The Lotus Fire* by Dr. Arundale: “In this symbol of the Swastika is revealed the marvelous activity of Life, of Man becoming God . . . a revolving [fiery] Cross . . . The Swastika whirls because God has set in motion the Wheel of the Law. I see, therefore, as substance of this whirling Swastika, a Law-Light-Life . . . which gives a very special appearance of restlessness to the movement of the Swastika” (pp. 224, 225, 267).

Dr. Arundale makes another interesting comparison between the characteristics of the cross and the swastika. The cross expresses the characteristics of Sacrifice, Truth, Law, Righteousness, Experience, Balance, and Stability. The swastika expresses Courage, Daring, Venturesomeness, Lawfulness, Salvation and Well-being (p. 324).

⁶² *The Lotus Fire*, p. 324.

H. P. Blavatsky says that: “The swastika is the most philosophically scientific of all the symbols, as also the most comprehensible. It is the summary in a few lines of the whole work of ‘creation,’ or evolution Verily many are its meanings! In the *macro-cosmic* work, the ‘HAMMER OF CREATION,’ with its four arms bent at right angles, refers to the continual *motion* and revolution of the invisible Kosmos of Forces. In that of the manifested Cosmos and our Earth, it points to the rotation in the Cycles of Time of the world’s axes and their equatorial belts; the two lines forming the Swastika, meaning Spirit and Matter, the four hooks suggesting the motion in the revolving cycles.”⁶³ In Teutonic legends, the swastika is called “Thor’s Hammer,” symbol of Nature’s creative forces. It is also referred to as the “Hermetic Cross.”

As a symbol of creation and evolution, Dr. Arundale has this to say in *The Lotus Fire*, “The vertical Line descends into the horizontal Line as an infinite soul enters a limited body. The Cross is thus the incarnated soul, and in the Swastika we have the symbol of its growth” (p. 281). “. . . the vertical Line would seem to be the channel of force for God the Father, while the horizontal Line is the channel of force for God the Mother, so that the Cross itself symbolizes that union of Father-spirit with Mother-spirit which, as it were, gives birth to the Swastika—the spirit of the Son, who whirls His way through the evolutionary process, is the evolutionary process” (p. 223). He quotes from *Pranava-Vada*: “The *chakra*, or whirling disc, is the swastika, the cross of fire, which in rapid rotation has each an arm blown backwards; . . . also as a symbol of creative fire, the ‘electric cross’ or wheel. . . . the swastika [represents] creation in time, the whirling arms signifying succession” (p. 651).

Whether we think of those whirling vortices of force which make up the microscopic atom; the seven force centers (called Chakras) of the physical body which control its marvelous processes of growth and evolution; or macrocosmic revolutions of planets around a central sun (the “wheels within wheels” of Ezekiel and Revelation), the Swastika or Whirling Cross is a universal symbol.

⁶³ *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Ed., Vol. II, pp. 103, 104.

CHAPTER XII

CREATIVE FIRE

Perhaps the most revealing discovery in our study of these symbols is that there exists a relationship between them and the “Persons” or “Aspects” of the Deific Trinity. The idea of Deity manifesting as a Trinity is a fundamental concept with many of the world’s great religions, past and present, and need not be pursued here.⁶⁴ We think of the Point in the center of the Circle as typifying the first aspect of God as Father. His characteristic is Will or Spirit. The Cross is universally associated with the idea of sacrifice. Outwardly it implies suffering and sorrow, repentance and contemplation. It is the sign both of death and resurrection. Esoterically it embodies the idea of the “descent” of God or Spirit, and His embodiment in form. It is therefore the “sign” of the Second Aspect of God, which in Christianity is called “the Son”—the Second Logos or the Second Person of the Trinity.

The Swastika on the other hand, for reasons to be brought out in this study, is associated with the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost. In other religions this aspect of Deity appears variously as Brahma the Creator of the universe; Thor, whose “Hammer striketh sparks in space”; Vulcan, creator of earth’s elements; Fohat, a Tibetan term designating the universal vital force manifesting as electric energy. These are but names to personify that most elusive yet everywhere present phase of God’s nature as “the Creator.” The function (we should say one of the functions) of the Third Logos—the Third Person of the Trinity—we are told in the ancient scriptures, is the creation of the elements, the atoms of primordial matter and the impregnating of this matter with His Life and Energy, giving it the properties of becoming living organisms and forms.

The swastika is the symbol of this creative process. Quoting again from *The Lotus Fire*, by Dr. Arundale: The Swastika is symbol of the Creative Fire of the Third Logos, the Holy Ghost or Brahma” (p. 635). “Within the heart of each atom is to be seen a flaming cross” (p. 645). “Few world symbols,” writes H. P. Blavatsky, “are more

⁶⁴ See Book V under the title “The Interlaced Triangles” for a detailed study of God as a Trinity.

pregnant with real occult meaning than the Swastika. . . . It is the emblem of the activity of Fohat, of the continual revolution of the 'wheels' and of the four elements, the 'Sacred Four,' in their mystical, and not alone in their cosmical meaning; further, its four arms bent at right angles, are intimately related to the Pythagorean and Hermetic scales. One initiated into the mysteries of the meaning of the Swastika can trace on it with mathematical precision the evolution of Kosmos. . . . Also the relation of the seen to the unseen and the first pro-creation of man and species.”⁶⁵

Like the cross, the vertical line of the swastika represents the vitalization aspect of life, while the horizontal line expresses life in manifestation. In our time-space universe, the one is related to time, the other to space. These two principles are the “woof and warp” in the loom of the Creator as He weaves the intricate and ever changing tapestry of life. In a mystical—yet truly reverent—sense the vertical line might be said to typify God the Father, who descending crosses the horizontal line, symbol of the universal Mother, forming the cross, symbol of “the Son,” that is to say, of all living organisms.

Dr. Annie Besant carries this idea to a point where it sheds some light on that mystical statement in the Christian Creed.⁶⁶ She writes, “Then the Point, with the Line revolving with it, vibrates at right angles to the former vibration, and thus is formed the Cross, still within the Circle, the Cross which thus ‘proceedeth from the Father and the Son,’ the symbol of the Third Logos, the Creative Mind, the divine Activity now ready to manifest as Creator. Then He manifests Himself as the active Cross, or Swastika.”⁶⁷

The swastika therefore is the symbol of a living, moving, evolving unit of life, be that unit an atom or a solar system. It is that creative fire within all living things, which breaks through every barrier and limitation to build anew and nearer to the likeness of its destined goal. In the mind of man it is the fire which makes him a creator in art, in literature, in music, mechanics, healing, and indeed every phase of human activity. It is the fire within his own being which urges and torments him to become a god.

⁶⁵ *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Ed., Vol. II, p. 621.

⁶⁶ The Nicene Creed reads in part, “the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son.”

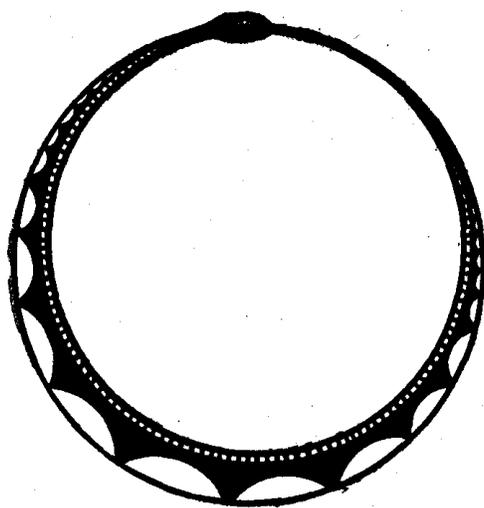
⁶⁷ *A Study in Consciousness*, Introduction, p. 7.

A new understanding is shed upon the creative process as told in the first chapter of Genesis. The phrase "In the beginning" refers not so much to the time element as to the sequence of causation; for the process of creation is continuous and refers to the coming into manifestation of things already existing as "seeds" in an archetypal world, or to put it in other words, as ideas in the Divine Mind. This entire process is so poetically stated in a single sentence, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be Light."

Throughout this "void" or "darkness" there appear innumerable points of light, like holes in the enveloping night. These whirling centers of fire fill or press back the emptiness of space. Down from the highest or dimensionless levels, these revolving points of light become whirling vortices of light, more and more complex, until upon reaching the atomic level in the world we know they become the physical atoms known to science. It is obvious that these microscopic units of such tremendous energy are not units of solid matter as we think of it, but charges of electric fire whirling at inconceivable velocities. And it is out of the infinite variety of combinations of these vortices of fire or light that the whole matter of our physical world is formed. "And there was light." This creative-evolutionary process is a continual process, and through all ages the swastika has been its symbol. The bursting of the bomb at Hiroshima flashed upon the eyes of the world the inconceivable power locked up in those ultra-microscopic units of force. What has not been learned is that these atoms are as electrodes in this material world, connected by intangible and invisible wires to that Divine Source, of All Power, whose name is Spirit.

BOOK 4

THE SERPENT



CHAPTER XIII

MYTH AND SACRED SCRIPTURE

The Serpent swallowing its tail surrounds and encloses all the other symbols in the Theosophical Seal. It is perhaps the most mysterious and illusive of all the figures which make up the Seal. We shall agree, I think as we go on, that this is true. There are two distinctly separate aspects to this serpent symbol. One is the serpent itself: mysterious, illusive, “subtil,” provocative, challenging. The other idea arises from its form or shape on the Seal—coiled in a circle and in the act of swallowing its own tail. An impossibility! And yet it happens, and has happened continuously as we shall see, throughout the universe of time and space. This aspect will be held for the final chapter. Meanwhile we shall attempt to follow the serpent in its many fascinating ramifications.

All the individual figures which go to make up the Theosophical Seal, with the one exception of the serpent, seem to be endowed with, or at least to express certain definite deific attributes or universal qualities. Each represents, if we may recapitulate for a moment, a certain aspect of Deity, some phase of God in manifestation. The Point, which has no dimension, represents God as Spirit, the Father or the First Logos. The Line—both the horizontal and the vertical—would indicate the dual aspect of God in manifestation: Spirit-Matter, Life-Form, Father-Mother. This is portrayed in the Cross as the Divine Sacrifice, God incarnate, the “Word made flesh,” the Son or the Second Logos. The Tau is the symbol of man’s path of return to God. The Swastika is the whirling fire of Spirit in His creative aspect as the Holy Ghost, or the Third Logos. In the interlaced Triangles is typed God as a Triune Being and man in His image and likeness.

The serpent symbol descends from this high realm of divine contemplation. Instead of pointing to those deific qualities, whether human or universal, it brings to mind just the reverse. From a classic heaven of law, order and harmony we have descended into a world of confusion, struggle, chaos. A new element has crept into the sublime atmosphere of the gods, the element of enquiry and doubt—enquiry after the sources of truth and doubt concerning all authority. With the entrance of the serpent, order and beauty have given way to human passions: desires, greeds, ambitions, selfish loves

and hates. The simple laws of being have become complex and complicated problems; and man has invented strange theologies to attempt to solve and to escape from them. Such words as sin, evil, punishment, hell, redemption, and salvation have entered into the human vocabulary to bind men's hearts and minds in fear and ignorance.

And yet, in the face of this anti-spiritual influence, which through the ages has been attributed to the serpent, we shall find that it holds a very definite and important place in mankind's evolution—in the whole universe for that matter. In spite of the blame and recriminations which have been heaped upon it for everything which is wrong with humanity and the world, and in spite of all the evil that has popularly been believed about it since the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden, there is evidence, we believe, to prove that the serpent as a symbol contains allusions to truth so deeply occult as to deserve our profoundest study.

By what incredible perversion of human logic has man succeeded in devising a doctrine which purports to place the cause of his original "fall" and the entire blame for his subsequent propensity for evil-doing upon this creature which crawls in the dust! Around it have been woven more myth and fable and in our own "enlightened" age more religious dogmas than about any other symbol. The serpent is nevertheless of all figures invented by the fathers of our race the one most appropriate for preserving for posterity the deeper meanings of the eternal struggles going on within the human mind between his lower and higher natures. Of all symbols, this is said to be the most mystical, and like Satan who is regarded as its personification, the least understood.

The serpent winds its way through myth and sacred scriptures of all peoples and of all ages. Throughout, the serpent and the dragon seem to have been used interchangeably; where one word is used, the other could be substituted in many instances without altering the meaning. Our thoughts naturally turn to classic literature, to the myths of Greece, Rome, Egypt, Chaldea, India, and China for the many examples which come to mind. We have read stories in high school textbooks without realizing that they weave a story fundamental to man's physical and spiritual evolution. With no thought of any inner or esoteric meaning, these "myths" become meaningless fairy tales. We instinctively think that way back in time, before history began, there were

those “Wise Men,” Elders of our race who devised these Nature symbols and allegories in order to teach subtly infant humanity the truths of man’s own physical and spiritual nature. The more so is this thought impressed upon our minds when we find the sameness of pattern in the myths of all peoples—including among them the Hebraic legends recorded in the Old and New Testaments, often mistakenly regarded as history.

Perhaps the most outstanding example of this similarity may be found in the cases of the golden apples of Hesperides and of the “fruit” from the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden. The former were guarded by a hundred-headed dragon. The story is recounted as the “Eleventh Labor of Hercules.” It seems that Hercules (born of a divine father and an earthly mother) must slay this dragon before he could possess the golden apples of divinity. The sacred garden, the forbidden fruit, the serpent or dragon placed in the garden as guardian over the coveted fruit, the theft of the fruit by a mortal having a divine father—these are some of the paralleling aspects of the two stories, fairly soliciting an impartial and comparative study of their subtler meanings.

Another of the myths of Grecian origin, which expresses the guardian idea, was that of the sleepless dragon which watched over the Golden Fleece. It was necessary for Jason to subdue this dragon before he could procure the Golden Fleece. We are reminded of the slayings of dragons by the Knights of King Arthur in their search for the Holy Grail, or of the heroes Siegmund, Boewulf, Sigurd, etc., in northern mythology. The dragon would seem to type man’s lower animal nature, while the Golden Fleece, Holy Grail, etc., would symbolize his soul or divine nature. The story is told of the infant Hercules and his twin brother Iphikles. It seems that Amphitryon’s wife had twins—one was his own, and the other the son of Zeus. Amphitryon was jealous and wished to learn which of the boys was his own and which had a divine father, so he placed two serpents in the crib. Iphikles fled. Hercules strangled the two serpents. The student will find a situation here paralleling the Bible story of Jacob and Esau. These latter were twins. Esau was his father’s “first born,” while Jacob typed the divine lineage. Jacob acquired the birthright of his brother Esau and his father’s blessing. We might see in one the physical vehicle (body), while in the other the reincarnating soul, the divine Ego. One is born of an earthly mother, the other of a divine Father.

It is only the divine nature that can conquer and control the lower serpent forces. Early in the history of the earth, the great python came up out of the mire and swamp and spread evil and pestilence over the land. Apollo, son of Zeus, came down to earth and slew the serpent, restoring light and health to mortals. He is known as god of the sun. In the Egyptian version of this hieroglyph, Typhon slew Osiris, god of the sun and cut his body into fourteen pieces and scattered them over the land. Horus, Osiris' son, came to earth and slew the serpent Typhon, and after restoring his father's body, became the god of the sun. The parallelism between these myths and certain aspects of Christian theology can hardly be overlooked. Jesus, the divine Son, came to earth to destroy the power of the dragon.

One could go on indefinitely through these ancient "myths" to find the serpent or dragon as typing the forces of evil and obstruction. And yet there are other aspects of this serpent glyph, which suggest many layers of interpretation. Albert Pike, in his book on Masonic symbolism, *Morals and Dogma*, gives considerable evidence, which shows that the serpent held a significant place in the Mystery Schools of the ancient world. Pluto, god of the underworld was represented as seated on a serpent, as was Serapis of Egypt. The sacred basilisk was the royal ensign of the Pharaohs. In the temple of Osiris there is a tablet on which is represented a basilisk erect with horns on its head and between the horns a disc. The serpent in connection with a disc or globe is found upon monuments of many nations. Aesculapius, son of Apollo, was the god of medicine and healing. He is pictured as carrying a club-like staff with a serpent (symbol of renovation) coiled around it.⁶⁸ Serpent figured prominently in the Mysteries of Bacchus and of Eleusis. In Egypt the serpent used in its mysteries, when extended, meant Divine Wisdom, with its tail in its mouth signified Eternity. The Celtic Druids built their temples of huge stones arranged in the form of a serpent. These temples were originally called Circs or Kerks (meaning circles), the word being forerunner of the Kirk (church). In the Zodiac of the heavens, the serpent holds a prominent place among the circle of animals. The northern constellation of Draco, like a river winding through the wintry Bear, girdles the universe, even as in Egyptian hieroglyphics the serpent encircles the

⁶⁸ See Chapter XVI, "Symbol of the Divine Healer."

mundane egg. In Hindu mythology the king of evil demons was called Naga, king of serpents. We may trace in this word the Hebrew word *nachash*, meaning serpent.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* adds corroboration to these evidences from many sources. It claims that “the similarity of the Northern (European) and the Oriental Snake myths seems to point to some common origin in an antiquity too remote to be explored.” The dragon has been for unknown ages the national symbol of the Chinese people and plays an important part in Chinese art. These unusual dragon symbols represent powers of the air and type the deified forces of Nature of the Taoist religion. The serpent in folklore arises from every corner of the globe, from the New World as well as the Old and it is often difficult for scholars to separate superstition from myth, the latter being built around pure symbolism. The serpent tradition flows out of every type and class of people—in its arts, its religion, its superstitions and its magic rites. Familiar in custom and legend are the healing powers of the serpent; and in many countries—especially in Greece and Egypt—the serpent has been a symbol of the healing art.

We are particularly interested in the serpent lore which we find in our own scriptures. In referring to certain of the Bible stories as myths, there is intended no irreverence to the sacredness of their source; for while a myth may have no basis in history, its very nature and purpose is to reveal to man truths too profound for him to grasp in their naked purity. Jesus Himself used this method in teaching His many followers. It is said that “without a parable spake he not unto them.” In the Bible the serpent makes his appearance on the scene at the beginning of the third chapter of *Genesis* immediately following the story of creation. His manner of entrance has been one of the stumbling blocks in the way of the rational thinker in accepting Christian theology based upon the fall of man; for the idea of a serpent holding conversation with our first parents upon the consequences of eating the fruit forbidden by their Maker strikes all rationalists as being so ridiculous as to brand the rest of the creation story as equally fantastic. It is, however, the opinion of many scholars that the entire creation story, including the snake episode, was not original with Moses, but was a revision of much earlier traditions handed down from Babylonian sources, being themselves

repetitions of more ancient Sumerian traditions.⁶⁹ Mystic and occult scholars hold that the whole story is a glyph wherein is portrayed a cosmic formula of creation. Be that as it may, the rationalists are quick to admit that the serpent expressed a subtle bit of wisdom when he said, “God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Wise old serpent!

When Moses was preparing to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, the Lord gave him and his brother Aaron a magic trick with which to convince the Pharaoh that the God of Moses was the true God. Aaron was to cast his rod upon the ground and it would instantly become a serpent. The Pharaoh, not wishing to be outdone, called his magicians and commanded them to do the same, which they did, and the magicians’ rods became serpents also. But, behold, Aaron’s rod swallowed up the magicians’ rods. Then there is the amazing account of the serpent of brass, which Moses placed upon a pole for the people who had been bitten by snakes to look at. It is said that those who did look were healed of their poison.⁷⁰

The exit of the serpent from the pages of the Bible is as dramatic, if not as romantic, as its entrance. Let the words of the author of the Revelation tell of its tragic ending: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads And there was a war in heaven And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and to make war with the remnant of her seed And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan,

⁶⁹ Mr. Leonard Rosman has written an interesting analysis of this subject in his little book, *The Book of Genesis Unveiled*, The Dharma Press, London.

⁷⁰ See Chapter XVI, “Symbol of the Divine Healer,” for details on this story.

and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit” It would seem that the “woman” had finally caught up with the serpent of Eden.

CHAPTER XIV

SYMBOL OF EVIL

With very few exceptions, the serpent, both in mythology and in sacred scriptures, brings to mind the idea of adversity, pestilence, famine, sin, sorrow, suffering, and death. The serpent itself is supposed to be crafty, sly, cunning, subtle, enticing, deceitful, and poisonous; and has been termed the tempter, the obstructor, the destroyer, the “angel of death” and of the bottomless pit. From him there exudes an influence which is noxious, noisome, harmful, unwholesome, corrupt, and pernicious. In other words, he is the epitome of evil.

While it is not our purpose to pass over lightly the subject of evil, or to make apologies to the serpent for that matter for his association with evil, we do want to try to apply some straight thinking both to the serpent and the evil of which he is the symbol. We see the results of evil all around us: misery, unhappiness, poverty, fear, hate, wretchedness, and ugliness in its many forms. But what is evil in itself, and what is its cause? Are good and evil relative terms, or is evil fixed and non-variable and not affected by time, place or circumstance? Is its presence in the world the responsibility of an Evil One variously called the Devil and Satan? Is sin inherited by the human race like some dread disease, from our first parents? Is it true that mankind is under a “curse” from which there is no escape save by some form of blood sacrifice? In our endeavor to bring some clear thought to these problems, we wish to avoid involvement in any of the theologies regarding sin, condemnation, repentance, forgiveness, and salvation. These problems are the province of religions. Our role is strictly that of an investigator, a searcher for truth. In presuming to furnish answers to these questions we feel that we are somewhat in the position of those individuals of dubious mentality who “rush in where angels fear to tread.” The problem of evil has been the subject of ecclesiastical debate for centuries. Philosophies, psychologies, and theologies have been built around it. The answers to the question “What is evil?” have been legion. St. Paul, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Mary Baker Eddy and countless others have grappled with it. He would be egotistical indeed who thought to cover in a few paragraphs what prophets

and poets from Moses and Job to Dante and Milton have written volumes about, and upon which annually millions of sermons are preached in churches and synagogues throughout the world.

Another point must be touched on before entering into a discussion of so controversial a subject as the “problem of evil.” It should be made clear that, although the subject matter grows out of a consideration of the serpent which forms part of the Theosophical Seal, the opinions expressed herein are those of the author and are in no way to be considered as doctrines of the Theosophical Society. The Society has many teachings but only one creed—if we may use that term—the creed of Universal Brotherhood. Yet, while accepting full responsibility for the conclusions arrived at, humble acknowledgment is given to those sages and teachers whose writings have been a storehouse of source material.

We have suggested that as a symbol the serpent refers to our human rather than to our divine qualities. In a sense then man partakes of the “curse” placed upon the serpent, for his divine part or Spirit, identifying itself with that part of him which is “of the earth” is thus “condemned” to live in an animal body and share its laws and conflicts. It would seem therefore at first glance, that evil made its appearance in the world as a result of this conflict between the laws of the Spirit and those of the flesh. Indeed, our earliest record of primitive peoples establishes the fact that their idea of evil had its roots in a belief, common to all, in the duality in Nature. Primitive man saw everywhere about him a conflict to the death between two opposing forces. One was benevolent, good: warmth, sunshine, spring, summer, gentle rain, food, shelter, health, etc. The other force was malefic, evil: cold, darkness, winter, storm, flood, famine, disease, war, and death. He saw himself as the victim caught between these two forces, and his heart was filled with a dread fear of the unknown. Not knowing their source, he personified these forces as good and evil spirits, and sought by rites, sacrifices and gifts to propitiate the one and appease the other.

The idea of two opposing principles or causes in Nature, having different natures and opposite in their effects, one producing light and good and the other darkness and evil, is seen as one of the principal bases of every religion. There has thus been

established the dogma of two opposing principles in Nature, which contrary to each other produce in man the mixture of good and evil. Out of this tradition of two opposing forces in the universe there has naturally arisen the idea of two opposing Beings of equal or nearly equal power, one benevolent and the other malevolent. To what extent this tradition has filtered into and has become part of our current religious beliefs requires no proof. True, we recite our creed declaring our belief in the One God, the "Maker of heaven and earth," but then with a definite reservation we modify this Omnipotence and force Him to relinquish part of His power and authority to a rival, whose avowed purpose is the obstructing and undoing of His work. Yet, were we to deny the existence of this rival who has usurped part of the divine omnipotence, would we not feel a sense of irreverence as though our faith were challenged? Such a denial would be an admission that we are not only suffering from the greatest hoax perpetrated upon the human race, but that we ourselves have actually created this "Evil One," and have endowed him with the power to harm and destroy us. And after all have we not, perhaps unwittingly, created a convenient scapegoat for our misdeeds and failings by putting upon an imaginary demon the load of blame for our ignorance and shortcomings?

What is the answer to this seeming paradox? If God is all-powerful and all-wise, how is it that He permits this evil (or its personification, the Devil) to hold such power over men's lives? It is true that we live in a universe in which duality is an established fact. In all manifestation there are pairs of opposites: spirit-matter, life-form, mind-body, positive-negative, male-female, higher-lower, heaven-earth, even good and evil. The list could be extended indefinitely. These opposites are fundamental to the very existence of being. Man, as a part of this universe, partakes of this duality. The sin, if sin there be, comes, it seems to me, in calling one good and the other evil. On this point we must agree with our Christian Science friends who declare that "all is good." Robert Browning wrote,

God's in his heaven;
All's right with the world.

The world has come to maturity since then! It looks upon such pronouncements as "naive," and out of tune with the "facts of life." What Browning saw was a heaven and

earth in which fundamentally everything was good. It is written: “God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” If we admit that God is the source and author of both spirit and matter, it is presumptuous on our part to call one good and the other evil; or to say that life is of God, while the body (flesh) is of the devil. For if the body is the temple of the indwelling life or spirit, it cannot of itself be evil. Into this error have fallen those who see in the flesh an enemy, and so mortify and punish the body in order thereby to attain spirituality!

If we need proof that there is no basis for the belief that the body is in itself naturally evil or the source of evil, we may look to the animal kingdom. Animals live wholly, or almost so in the bodily or physical consciousness, and follow the laws of the flesh; and yet we hardly go so far as to say that an animal has committed a “sin.” When an animal follows his own group’s instincts in his relations with other animals, including humans, it is following the normal laws of its kind. There is no thought of morality or sin. Yet if a man were to follow those same instincts, the sense of morality, guilt and sin enters the picture. The difference would seem to lie in the fact that man, even the lowest savage, has something which the animal does not. That is the intellectual faculty or the mind-principle which enables him to reason, analyze, and discriminate—the faculty, in other words, of knowing “good and evil.” May we not conclude therefore that “evil” comes into being with the advent of the mind; and that “sin” is solely the product of man’s wrong thinking, feeling, and desiring. There are indeed certain modern schools of thought which hold that evil, and everything which that word might imply, is unreal, save only as it is temporarily brought into existence by man’s own erroneous thinking. We might quote from Shakespeare in corroboration of this idea from *Hamlet*:

There is nothing either good or bad,
But thinking makes it so.

And in Proverbs we read, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” This seems to lift our problem out of the physical realm into the mental.

St. Paul, writing to the Romans, comes to grips with the problem of sin. “What shall we say then?” he asks, “Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law For without the law, sin was dead.” We might restate this sentence, “For without the law, there is no sin”—a most significant statement, as we shall see

presently. St. Paul goes on, “For . . . the law is spiritual: but I am carnal” (that is, a union of spiritual and physical). “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me . . . But I see another law in my members [of the body], warring against the law of my mind [spirit], bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members [body]” (Rom. 7: 7, 8, 14, 21, 23). What is this “law” without which “sin is dead”—this law which is “in my members” constantly warring against my “mind”?

There is one law which is beyond and inclusive of all other laws—at least all laws of life and morality—and that is the law of evolution, the law of unceasing progress towards some end towards which all creation moves. This goal can be none other than that of perfection, or completeness—of becoming divine. This implies a purpose and a direction.

And this I think brings us to the key to the problem of evil. In order to get a long-range view of this problem of evil we must look back to the beginnings of the human race. According to the esoteric teachings, the earliest races were non-physical. That is, they were ethereal in their nature and had not yet come down into physical manifestation. Of these races there is left no trace. The emergence of the first physical man upon our planet occurred unknown millions of years ago. We have reconstructed his likeness from relics found in caves and rock strata. The primary purpose or urge behind this infant humanity was the building of a physical body able to survive the tremendous struggles with his environment. In order to accomplish this it was necessary for him to develop the qualities of self-preservation. In his struggle for self-preservation and the other primitive urges it was necessary for him to fight for himself at the expense of all others. It was by putting his strength and cunning and savagery against others that he could not only survive but gain personal power and supremacy. All the crimes known to man were put to his use to accomplish his own ends. Everything which contributed to that end was to him necessary, and therefore good. Should he fail to use these primal instincts he would cease to exist.

Slowly, out of these struggles against the elements of Nature and for his survival and supremacy over his own kind, the qualities of feeling and emotion were gradually developed. At first animalistic, the feelings of passion, hate, jealousy, fear, etc.,

gradually took on mental qualities of cunning, deceit, avarice, selfishness, pride, etc., qualities which even today are building up a keen mind and a strong personality. The trend up to now has been diversity, a going outward from a center, the building of strong and powerful individuality. The point which I want to make is that in the early days of the human race, in fact until comparatively recently, the direction of its evolution has been toward matter, that is, away from spirit. Man has used every energy and force at his command to build up a strong, rugged body and personality. This outward or downward motion is involution or involvement in matter, and the laws therefore which produce and aid that involvement are beneficial. The whole process might be likened to a circle. When it has reached its lowest or midmost point it reverses its direction and begins to climb upward. That which was in accordance with the divine purpose on the downward arc is opposed to it on the upward arc; and that which is in line with the divine will on the upward arc was opposed to it on the downward. Having reached its lowest or densest enfoldment in matter, humanity now starts its upward climb. Man's direction is now reversed.

Until now his law was separateness, self-centeredness, self-assertion, self-possession. A new law comes into being, the law of love and sacrifice, of unity and brotherhood. The direction is now away from matter, toward spirit. What was good for him on his downward journey, is now harmful or evil. Hence the "warring," as St. Paul said, "within my members." To yield to these downward forces now would be to him a "sin." The law of growth is the overcoming of obstructions. This is true in the physical world and it is equally true in the spiritual world. The athlete struggles with equipment in a gymnasium to develop a strong physical body. Life is like a gymnasium in which every man struggles against the (so-called) forces of evil, and it is by resisting them, wrestling with them, overcoming them, that he gains spiritual powers. Because spirituality may be gained only by the overcoming of its opposite, materiality, who shall say that these downward pulling forces are in themselves evil? As we contemplate the scheme of God in its entirety, may we not find that what we thought was evil, is in the end good—good because it fulfills its purpose of forwarding our evolution?

Good and evil must then be considered as relative terms, a matter really of polarity or direction. What was once beneficial to man's growth and evolution, later becomes for

him an obstacle and “evil.” His “sin” would be in yielding to those forces which tend to pull him downward or backward. For his direction is now upward or spiritward. For him, toward matter is evil, toward spirit is good.

The whole story, however, is not so simply stated. Several sets of problems arise and our study of the symbol of evil would be remiss if we failed at least to mention one or two. In its attitude toward religion, and therefore toward “evil,” the world seems to be divided roughly into two camps. On the one hand there are those to whom religion is an outward-going thing. Their highest worship is service, and devotion is expressed in acts of mercy. These people regard evil as something to be dealt with. Something must be done about it. The world must be changed. The conditions which breed and nourish evil must be removed. There must be organizations to eradicate evil by the building of institutions of learning, healing, material well-being, etc. There must also be institutions for reclaiming the evil-doer or meeting out justice and mercy. We cannot escape the world and its responsibilities, the world’s problems are our problems, we are our brother’s keeper.

Then there are those, and their number is legion, to whom religion is an individual thing and evil is strictly an individual problem, which can be found and rooted out only by searching within the self. The world being material is inherently evil, and to them the body itself is continually at war with their highest aspirations. Man needs must spend so much time and energy trying to overcome the influences of the world and of the flesh that the most desirable state would seem to be that which is free from the world, its problems and responsibilities. His method is to retreat ever within, physically and mentally and to escape from the demands of the world about him, to find peace and shelter in seclusion and inner communion. For spirit only is the good and the real. Matter is the negation of spirit and is therefore unreal or an illusion and an enemy to good. Therefore to deny the body, mortify the flesh, disregard its demands, seek the good by prayer, meditation, fasting, he escapes from earth’s prison, and finds freedom of pure spirit. His supreme joy comes from detachment from all earthly things and union only with the Self; for whatever separates, detracts or hinders the realization of this union is evil. His feeling for others is toward detachment; compassion changes to dispassion. He shuts his eyes to others’ hardships, and his ears to their cries for

sympathy. Inwardly he says, "Let each learn his own lessons and find his own way. Am I my brother's keeper?"

By purposely exaggerating these two attitudes, we have emphasized their directions. We know of course that each has much of good. One looks outward toward the circumference. The other looks only toward the center. Surely there is a middle ground which embraces both the attitudes. Humanity must realize that it shares the nature of the world even as it shares the nature of spirit. One is its Mother even as the other is its Father. Who can say that he has no responsibility for the world's evils? Every ugliness is an open challenge to every man. A great sage once wrote, "Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin."⁷¹

Detachment must be balanced by the idea of unity; dispassion must be tempered by compassion. On the other hand, the recognition of the evil in the world outside of us must point to the fact that its source and origin lies within our own minds. Each must seek out and destroy the evil in his own consciousness, if he would eradicate the evil from the world. In the final analysis the world problem becomes the individual problem. The one must be identified with the other—the circle absorbed by the point. This realization must ultimately fulfill the design and intent of the symbol of the serpent swallowing its tail.

⁷¹ From the *Book of the Golden Precepts*, originally written in Senzar unknown centuries before Christ. Translated by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Voice of the Silence*.

CHAPTER XV

SATAN, LUCIFER AND THE DEVIL

These three words have terrified the superstitious for ages, or at least since the beginning of the Christian Era. Are they names given to an Evil One? Or are there three Evil Ones? If so, what is their distinction? Many appellations have been given to him (or them) in sacred scriptures: the Adversary, the Destroyer, the Accuser, the Tempter, the Prince of this world, the Prince of Darkness, the Angel of the Bottomless Pit, the Fallen Angel, and of course Serpent and Dragon. At one time Jesus referred to the evil one as Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Today he is familiarly referred to as the “Old Boy” or the “Old Nick.” I suppose that Dante and Milton had a great deal to do in popularizing this arch-enemy of man, God, and religion. At any rate this individual, be he angel or demon, has played and continues to play a conspicuous part in much of our Christian theology. We certainly have cause to question the purpose and function of this evil one in the scheme of things upon our planet. Does “he” rank next in power to—in actual practice wielding more power than—the Almighty? It is our hope in the present study to clear up, or at least to throw some light on this personage of evil.

Other world religions, it is true, besides Christianity and Judaism had their “evil” deities. Ancient Greece had Pluto, god of the underworld. His Roman counterpart was Hades, after whom the infernal region was named. In ancient Egypt Set (or Seth) was the principle of darkness, night or evil. We may see in the word “set” the root stem used later by the Hebrews in the word “sat-an.” In the Scandinavian myths, Loki was the personification of evil and the enemy of Odin. Ahriman, head of evil spirits (daivas) in Zoroastrianism, was the arch-enemy of Ahura Mazda. This list could be extended indefinitely. Of course each of these “gods” was a member of a complex pantheon and was delegated only such powers as related to his particular province or responsibility. The Hebraic Satan, on the other hand, seems to have stepped into the world after the supreme God had created it, and for the purpose of obstructing and destroying His work. God seems to have been forced to yield or to share part of His power. It is interesting to note that the word “devil” did not appear in the Old Testament, and

“Satan” was not even mentioned until the time of King David (1 Chron. 21: 1). It may come as a surprise to many Christians that neither the Devil nor Satan was mentioned in connection with the temptation of Eve by the Serpent. The first time that Satan appeared prominently in the Bible was in the Book of Job. It seems that God wanted to “prove” the loyalty of this good man, so He called Satan from his “going to and fro in the earth” and challenged him to do his worst up to (but not including) the taking of his life, to try to make Job deny God.⁷² This strange event is recorded in Job. 1: 6, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.” Later on Luke puts the following words into the mouth of Jesus: “. . . I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10: 18). Throughout the New Testament the words Satan and Devil seem to be used interchangeably. For instance in Luke 4: 5 it is written that the Devil took Jesus up into a high mountain: and after he had been tempted Jesus answered him “Get thee behind me Satan.” And Revelation, Chapters 12 and 20, speaks of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan.

Before we can make much headway in trying to understand the problem, it is necessary to clarify the terms, Satan, Devil and Lucifer, and to disentangle, so far as possible, some of the erroneous implications which have clung to these words out of the dark past. The effort of the early churchmen to popularize the teachings of the Bible by throwing out the Gnostics and much of the esoteric teachings which they could not understand, resulted in robbing it of its true inner meanings leaving in many cases merely the allegory or parable in which these teachings had been clothed. Such a spotlight of glamour has been flooded upon this “Evil One” that he has become the gangster-type hero—a kind of super-world-enemy number one. The fact that sin is, after many centuries, still rampant in the world, though often disguised by the mask of refinement, is due in part at least to the comfortable human tendency of placing the blame for the world’s evils upon a mythical “evil one” instead of where it belongs—in the thoughts of man himself.

⁷² The student of symbolism will recognize a parallel case in the “Labors of Hercules.”

SATAN

Let us consider this appellation of “Satan.” It is inconceivable that God, who is Omnipotent and the Source of all life and being, should be placed in a position where he relinquishes part of His power to another Entity who in turn uses that usurped power to destroy His work and to obstruct His plan. Who then is this Satan and what is his place in the scheme of things?

We search the sacred scriptures of past ages, the Ancient Wisdom; and there we find significant passages, half-veiled statements suggestive of truths so deeply intermingled with the occult as to defy the mind to translate into concise thought patterns. We can only piece together fragments of ideas to build some basic conclusions. First of all we find that life has one purpose, one law, and that is evolution. This means a continual progress of the individual toward a state of perfection—a continual movement and change toward a far-off goal. This presupposes the immortality of the individual self, although it may express or manifest itself in successions of bodies or personalities. It is by means of the ceaseless struggle of the self within the personality to conquer and to rebuild its environment that it grows into an understanding of its purpose and nature. This evolution is ordinarily a slow process, because the human race learns its lessons reluctantly and only after many errors. However, there are here and there those who stand out from the multitude, like giant trees above the forest, who through special efforts over many lives, have achieved a greater measure of perfection. True greatness is not an accident of birth, nor is it inherited from human parents. It is a possession earned by the self in many lives and which it brings with it at each new birth. It seems to be the universal law that this progress toward perfection is gained only by the surmounting of obstacles and of solving the problems in each earth life.

There is a quotation, familiar to everyone, most applicable here: “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth” (Heb. 12: 6). If we apply this thought to the story of Job might we not find it to be within the realm of reason to suppose that a Supreme Intelligence, recognizing in this man the potentialities of a great soul, would in His great wisdom and love place difficulties and obstacles in his way as a challenge to him to achieve that greatness? But what about justice and the idea that sinners are punished and the

righteous rewarded? There is no idea here of punishment or reward. It is the giant tree that bears the brunt of wind and storm. We are assured that though Satan hurl a mountain in the path of a truly righteous man, God has placed within him the courage and strength to subdue it. So we may conceive that in the great plan of God for man's perfecting, Satan plays a purposeful part. Marie Corelli glimpsed something of this profound truth in her book, *The Sorrows of Satan*. In that remarkable story Satan, although he always tried to lead men astray, nevertheless rejoiced whenever he failed.

Albert Pike, in his work on Masonry, calls Satan the "genius of matter alone. Satan, apparently the 'tempter' to evil, ultimately becomes the 'tester' of man's strength, and therefore the great initiator."⁷³ H. P. Blavatsky confirms this thought. She writes, "As an 'adversary,' the opposing Power required by the equilibrium and harmony of things in Nature, as Shadow is required to make still brighter the Light, as Night to bring into greater *relief* the Day, and as Cold to make one appreciate the more the comfort of Heat, so has Satan ever existed. . . . as [an offshoot] from the same trunk of the Tree of Being. . . ."⁷⁴ Again in *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike says, "The Ancients postulated two causes or principles of different natures and opposite in their effects, one shedding Light and Good and the other Darkness and Evil. This was admitted in all theologies, and formed one of the principal bases of all religions." (p. 661)

In trying to contemplate divine things it is often a help to draw analogies from Nature and circumstances about us. Consider an earthly government. We see a single head: a president, king or premier. Under him there are ministers and a cabinet, ambassadors, representatives, administrators of law and justice and many others. So we may conceive something of the divine hierarchy. The ancient Hermetic slogan, "As above, so below," could here be reversed to read, "as below, so above." The Christian Church as well as Judaism has always recognized spiritual or semi-divine beings called angels, archangels, etc. There are in the Bible the Elohim (a plural word meaning "gods") as well as the "seven angels before the throne." The Kabbalah speaks of the "Seven Sephiroth." Then we read in *Job* that the "sons of God" came before Him to report on their work and "Satan came also among them." Esoteric tradition confirms the idea of a

⁷³ *Morals and Dogma*, p. 565, Southern Jurisdiction of the United States.

⁷⁴ *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Ed., Vol. I, p. 443.

graded hierarchy of spiritual or non-physical beings ranging from the lowliest nature spirit up to a Solar Logos. These creatures, high and low, acting under the law of the one absolute God as His agents, carry out the supreme will in its multiform activities throughout His universe. This ancient teaching, known heretofore only to initiates of the Mystery Schools, has in our day been given to the world under the name of Theosophy.

From the ancient records we may deduce the following: Satan is a name, or rather a title, given to one of these “agents.” In the early dawn of human evolution it became his unpleasant duty to leave his high estate and to descend to earth in order to bring to infant humanity the light of reason. To do this it became necessary for him to assume the role of “Adversary,” putting before man difficulties, problems and “temptations” with which he must wrestle in order to gain strength and wisdom in overcoming them. This is the “fall” spoken of in many of the world’s scriptures. Quoting from the ancient Puranas, H. P. Blavatsky writes, “The gods who had ‘fallen into generation,’ whose mission it was to complete divine man, are later on represented as Demons, Evil Spirits and Fiends at war with God.”⁷⁵ The phrase “fallen into generation” used in these ancient scriptures would imply a coming down into incarnation in order to bring to the infant race, or to awaken in it, the mind-principle, the principle of reason and discrimination. Recall that Satan, in the guise of the serpent, said to Adam and Eve, “Ye shall be as Gods knowing good and evil.”

The idea of one of the “sons of God” bringing down the Light or Fire from heaven is a very ancient tradition. The Greeks gave this “son” (of Zeus) the name Prometheus, literally Forethinker. H. P. Blavatsky again writes, “Hence the allegory of Prometheus, who steals the Divine Fire so as to allow men to proceed consciously on the path of Spiritual Evolution, thus transforming the most perfect of *animals* on Earth into a potential God. . . . Hence also the *curse* pronounced by Zeus against Prometheus, and by Jehovah [Jove], his ‘rebellious son,’ against Satan.”⁷⁶ The curse being that this “angel of light” be “chained” to the “rock” of materiality . . . buried in human or mortal form in sacrifice (punishment?) for his action.

⁷⁵ *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Ed., Vol. I, p. 242

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 255.

Dr. F. Homer Curtiss, in his book *The Message of Aquaria*⁷⁷ elaborates this theme. “Satan or Saturn is referred to in Job as one of the sons of God (archangels) who, because of his office becomes the Tester, the Adversary, the Accuser, and the Initiator.” Identifying Satan with Saturn, he writes, “Some day man will learn that Saturn is one of the ‘sons of God,’ one of the dragons (serpents) of wisdom, and that only through his testings and provings can the Light of Mind become the Light of Wisdom.” There are many instances also in *The Secret Doctrine* where Satan and Saturn are identified as one and the same being.⁷⁸ The ancient Hindu scriptures say that the universe is composed of three realities, or rather three aspects or expressions of One Reality—Sat, Chit and Ananda. Ananda is interpreted as Bliss, the Supreme Self or Life; Chit as Universal Consciousness; while Sat is the world of manifestation. It can hardly be a coincidence therefore that the root syllable in both *Sat*-an and *Sat*-urn is the ancient root word representing the “World of Things,” or the matter side of being. We will recall too that the Egyptian Set (or Seth) was the god of the underworld, that is, of the dense physical world. Jesus called Satan the “prince of this world” (John 12: 31); and St. Paul refers to him as the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4: 4).

LUCIFER

The true meaning of Satan is perhaps best expressed in the title “Lucifer.” This name appears but once in the Bible, and significantly alludes to his “fall” from heaven. “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isa. 14: 12) Albert Pike has this comment, Lucifer, the ‘light-bearer’! Strange and mysterious name given to the spirit of darkness, Lucifer, Son of Morning! It is he who bears the light!”⁷⁹ Dr. Homer Curtiss, in his *The Voice of Isis* writing of Lucifer makes this distinction: “Satan (Saturn) is the obstruction, the Tester, the Initiator; while Lucifer is that aspect of the same force which confers the crown of victory to those who conquer and the gift of immortality.”⁸⁰ The very name “Lucifer” meaning “light-bearer” fires the imagination. He has been called “Star of the Morning” (Venus), the “Day Star,” the “Shining One.” He

⁷⁷ The Curtiss Philosophic Book Co., 1938, Washington, D. C.

⁷⁸ The term “Saturn” used here does not refer to the planet of that name, but to the “influence” or obstructive force associated with it.

⁷⁹ *Morals and Dogma*, p. 321.

⁸⁰ *The Voice of Isis*, p. 247, 1933, The Philosophic Book Co., Washington, D. C.

could have been none other than one of the Elohim, an archangel or messenger of God who brought to earth the “fire of heaven,” the “light of the mind,” the “creative fire of kundalini.”

Before leaving this tenet of Satan, which H. P. Blavatsky called the “most profoundly philosophical conception of ancient thought,” we cannot resist the temptation to quote briefly from the appendix “The Secret of Satan” in Dr. Anna Kingsford’s book, *The Perfect Way*,⁸¹

And on the seventh day . . . there went forth from the presence of God a *mighty Angel*, . . . and God gave him dominion over the outermost sphere [the dense physical world] . . . Many names hath God given him (Satan), names of mystery, secret and terrible. . . . The Adversary because Matter opposeth Spirit . . . For Satan is the magistrate of the Justice of God. . . upon him (Satan) only is the *shame of generation*. . . he hath entered into bondage [to matter] . . . The glory of Satan is the shadow of the Lord (God in the manifested world).

This reminds us of a most significant phrase often quoted in occult works, *Deus est Demon Inversus*.

In the great spiritual drama in which Jesus played the principal part, as well as in the drama of Job and other Old Testament “heroes,” it was Satan who played the role of the great Tester or Initiator, and the command “Get thee behind me Satan” are passwords of victory. Needless to add that these words are as potent today as then.

THE DEVIL

The “Devil” is perhaps the most popular appellation for “his Satanic Majesty”; and to all intents and purposes these two are one and the same being. As we have said, the expression “the Devil” did not appear in the Old Testament, while it is also true that in the New Testament the terms seem to be synonymous and used interchangeably. However, in spite of this seeming identity, there may be found evidence and reason to persuade us that there is a basic difference. Our preceding study on “the problem of evil” gives us a clue. Throughout the entire universe, as in all Nature, there is found a duality or pairs of opposing laws and forces, equalizing and balancing each other. In the

⁸¹ Quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*, 3rd Ed., Vol. I, pp. 243–9.

moral sphere, these opposing forces are recognized as “good” and “evil.” One is the urge or force which leads towards spirit, progress and evolution; the other is the force which pulls toward matter, which retards and obstructs evolution. Not only, as we said sometime back, were the forces of destruction and evil deified by the early primitives, but, throughout the Christian era and down to our own day, have those primitive, driving and destructive emotional forces such as fear, terror, superstition, hatred, lust, greed, etc., been attributed to some evil genius. Acts of violence and outrage have easily been blamed upon the Devil. We need not go too far back in history to find evidences of this terrible superstition in which men’s minds and emotions have been whipped to a frenzy in the belief that an evil spirit or demon has cast a spell upon, or obsessed, an innocent victim. The Christian Church has not been free of this guilt. It has not only given evil a name, but a crown and sceptre of majesty. Indeed evil has been de-ified to the extent that “Evil” has become “D-evil,” the Super Demon or genius of all that is bad in the world.

It is only in recent times that we have recognized the cumulative power of human thought. Psychologists acknowledge mass emotionalism as a powerful agent for good or evil. The passion of a mob has swept men to commit such crimes as would be abhorrent and unthinkable to him as an individual. Conversely he has risen to heights of courage and self-sacrifice on waves of mass hysteria and religious emotionalism. Added to this recognized law of mob psychology, there is another most significant phenomenon of the mental world, known for ages to occultists and students of the ancient wisdom, but only recently acknowledged by a few experimental psychologists: that is, that every thought produces a definite effect in the mental atmosphere of the world. This effect expresses itself in two ways. One is a direct force which goes to its objective like an arrow bringing good or evil. The other is the creation of a form or shape made of the subtler matter of the mental world. This “thought form” persists to be discharged into the mind of a congruous recipient or is destroyed by the thought form of a definitely opposite nature. Without going into the dynamics of this mental phenomenon, we might say that every cruel, vicious and hateful thought and emotion which originates in the mind of man goes out into the mental atmosphere to create a cloud of potential evil. As like attracts like, these thought forms accumulating for

incalculable ages over the entire world have generated vast concentrations of evil influence. It is a possibility therefore that the congenital and the moron (as well as many normally “good” individuals) have but to open their thoughts to dwell upon the pleasurable aspect of some evil act, or the desire to experience it, much as one would “tune in” to a radio set, and an overpowering flood of evil tendencies would pour into the victim’s mind sweeping him on to uncontrollable actions.⁸² Since man has created this Frankenstein monster of evil, he needs must give it a name; hence the “devil” has become the generic term for all that is evil in the world. We must hasten to add, however, that we have shown only one side of the picture. True and noble thoughts are equally as powerful in creating in the mental world a reservoir of good which serves as a bulwark against the encroaching evil. Surely the light of understanding and the practice of universal Brotherhood will one day dissipate this cloud of evil and with it its fraudulent impersonator, the Devil.⁸³

“POWERS OF DARKNESS”

Before closing this chapter it seems necessary to consider for a moment another phase of this subject of Satan and the Devil. We find the above expression “Powers of Darkness” frequently used, particularly in occult and meta-physical writings, to refer to the powers of evil which retard evolution and, somewhat vaguely, to any personages connected therewith. The expression has this advantage, that it embraces a more universal idea of evil and avoids any suggestion of an anthropomorphic “Evil One.” And too, the terms “Satan” and “Devil” carry a load of religious superstitions. The very utterance of these names brings the odor of brimstone—or at least sulphur. The term “Powers of Darkness” or “The Dark Forces” seems to lift the idea of evil and its causation out of the realm of old world superstitions and of the supernatural onto a level where it can be considered rationally and philosophically. Indeed in the light of a more mature understanding, the “Powers of Darkness” should not be considered to be either evil or bad. Whether we think of these “Forces” as representing certain beings under a great hierarchy, or in a more psychological aspect as being a kind of vast reservoir

⁸² See *The Hidden Side of Things* by C. W. Leadbeater, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India.

⁸³ We have purposely avoided reference to the religious aspects of this problem, for one could easily become involved in the many theological angles, requiring many volumes.

made up of man's evil thoughts, as was considered under the subheading "The Devil," they certainly have to do with humanity's evolution.

When we think of the two sides of Nature, we must also accept the view that they are both divine, for both grow out of the One True Existence. As we suggested, evolution resembles a circle, and as it reaches its nadir or midmost downward point it reverses its direction, climbing upward. Those forces which expressed the divine will on the downward arc are opposed to it on the upward, even as those which were seemingly opposed to it on the downward arc, are working with it on the upward. What we call the "Dark Powers" are they who worked *with* the law of evolution on its downward arc, but work *against* its upward climb. The "forces" which are now constructive or on the side of spirit or life are called "white"; while the "forces" which obstruct and disintegrate are classed as "dark." It is the universal law of evolution that progress is made only by opposing and overcoming obstacles. Looked at from this point of view, the "Powers of Darkness," forcing evolution by their very opposition, are in the overall process carrying out the Divine Will.

Occult tradition says that what is called the *dark* side of Nature consists of great hierarchies of beings. The highest of these are of stupendous intelligence, working with a full and complete consciousness of the divine plan, exercising their destructive and materializing powers, thus "aiding" the divine purpose by seeming to thwart it. In this sense the phrase "Dark Forces" might seem to be synonymous with Satan and his angels. In this connection, all that we said under the subheading "Satan" would apply here. However, there is another idea embraced within the meaning of "Powers of Darkness" not at all covered by the words "Satan" and "Devil." This has reference to certain human individuals, whether deceased or in incarnation, who in this earth life or during many past earth lives have definitely lined themselves on the side of evil. The term "Brothers of the Shadow" is often applied to those individuals who have allied themselves with the destructive forces of the world. Many such individuals have worked to develop certain inner or occult faculties for their own personal power and for the furtherance of their own selfish purposes. They are said to be on the "Left hand path." However, it is said that they pay little or no attention to ordinary people of the world only as these people may be affected and harmed by those calamities and disasters brought

about by their evil plottings. The world's history of wars and tyrants recounts the names of many of these "Brothers of the Shadow." We are told that, with a few terrible exceptions, the time eventually comes when these people begin to realize that the divine law of progress and unity cannot forever be opposed, and so after enduring great suffering to expiate their evil purposes and deeds, join the ranks of those on the upward or right hand path. A noted instance of such an individual is found in the Bible in The Acts. The leader of a gang of murderers of the early apostles was one day blinded by a flash of light and a voice was heard to say, "Why persecuteth thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." That man became Christ's greatest apostle. Then there was Judas called Iscariot, who went and hanged himself upon a tree.

These "Brothers of the Shadow" have in truth carried a great part of the burden of the world's evolution, making by the very tragedy of the work they do and their great sorrow, the expiation which the evil has demanded. Certainly the crucifixion of Jesus could not have taken place, nor could the great Christian Drama have reached its climax without a Judas.

CHAPTER XVI

SYMBOL OF THE DIVINE HEALER

We hardly think of the serpent as a symbol of healing; and yet it is the one type of the serpent symbol which has come down to our own day. Legend has it that Aesculapius, the great healer, son of Apollo, used as his symbol the serpent entwined upon a staff. It is said that in the sixteenth century this symbol of the healing art was changed to the Caduceus, staff of Hermes (Mercury), which consisted of two serpents entwined around a rod surmounted by a pair of wings. To this day, the Caduceus is the symbol of modern medicine.

The serpent has been so much associated with sin and evil that we are scarcely aware of its more beneficent aspects. We readily accept the idea of a duality in manifestation, that there are two sides to Nature and in every conceivable aspect of the universe. So are there two aspects of the serpent symbol; and Satan and evil give way to its more positive aspect as the Divine Healer.

One of the high spots in the story of the Children of Israel during their forty years of wandering in the "Wilderness" was that of the healing of a general epidemic of snake bites by means of a "brazen serpent" placed upon a pole. Whether we look upon this story as a historical happening or as purely allegorical makes no difference so far as the intent of this study is concerned. The account of the event reads as follows: "And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Numbers 21: 9). The ordinary and apparent lesson of this story is the power of faith to heal. Besides this surface connotation there are several implications in this brief statement which require deeper enquiry. The first significant thing which challenges our attention is the fact that the serpent was "lifted" above the heads of the people. The serpents, which bit the people and caused them to die, crawled upon the ground. The serpent, which was "lifted up," gave health and life. The occult significance of this will be considered presently.

In his book *The Truth about Evolution and the Bible*, Dr. F. Homer Curtiss has a chapter on “The Serpent Power.”⁸⁴ In it he points out a number of significant things. He writes, “The serpent is the symbol of the Cosmic Creative force. It finds its expression on all levels of manifestation. On the physical level it manifests as the procreative or sex-force. It is the perversion of this force, which leads to degradation and death. On the spiritual level it is the Christ-force—that vivifying, fructifying power through whose action all things are brought into manifestation; that penetrating Love-Wisdom which is the great unifier and healer of all living things. This force is the great creative power in Nature and the most potent factor in man’s evolution.”

Another point of special significance is the statement that the serpent was lifted upon a “pole.” This term could as easily be interpreted symbolically as “rod,” “staff,” “tree,” or even “cross.”

In a deeper spiritual sense this rod or staff is the Rod of Power, symbol in all religions and myths of God’s power descending to earth. In man’s hand it is that regenerating power which can change the face of a planet or transform man into a god.⁸⁵ The serpent upon the pole in the wilderness is a foreshadowing of the cross upon which hung the crucified Saviour, the Great Healer of mankind. Its prophetic implications can hardly be doubted in the light of that cryptic statement of Jesus (John 3: 14): “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up”; and its sequence of hope for all mankind, (John 12: 32): “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” This great symbol will be considered presently in its mystic or occult sense as referring to a power hidden in every man.

There is yet another aspect to this serpent in the “Wilderness” which has a subtle significance, that is, that it was said to be a *brazen* serpent which was lifted upon a pole. The particular significance of this qualification is not evident until we analyze the original Hebrew word here translated “serpent.” This word is *nachash*, translated many times in the Bible as “brass.” Quoting again from Dr. Curtiss’ book, *Evolution and the Bible*, “The Hebrew word *Nachash* translated in this one instance as serpent is the same word that

⁸⁴ The Curtiss Philosophic Book Co., Washington, D.C., 1932.

⁸⁵ See Chapter II, “Symbol of the Vertical Line.”

is translated many times afterwards as brass. The root meaning of the word *Nachash* is 'divine experience'. Moreover the word translated 'beguile' in the Eden story is *nasha* whose root meaning is 'to lift up'." Weave these two thoughts into the text of Moses' story and we might restate the sentence, "And every man who looked (upon the serpent of brass) was 'lifted up' into a 'Divine Experience'."

It requires no imagination to see the similarity between Moses' serpent of brass upon a pole and the staff of the god of healing Aesculapius with its serpent entwined. It is significant too that in comparatively modern times this symbol of the healing art was changed to the Staff of Hermes (Mercury) with its two serpents entwined. Before we can fully understand the depth of meaning which lies hidden within this winged "Staff" known as the Caduceus, as well as the Serpent of Moses, it is necessary to consider certain phases of the occult anatomy of our own bodies. Modern occult research has confirmed the teachings of the ancient philosophers that within the human body there are seven "force centers" composed of etheric matter. These "centers" are not only adjacent to certain nerve ganglia, but in some way, not yet known to physiology, are closely associated with the ductless glands. In the ancient writings these "centers" were called *chakras*, a Sanskrit word meaning rotating wheels.⁸⁶

Within recent years medical science has discovered the ductless glands and is gradually learning the value and function of these organs in the human anatomy. What the anatomists have not yet learned is that each chakra has a definite functional relationship with a particular gland. This function seems to be to take the force from sunlight and the air (called by the ancient *Prana*) and to transform this energy into body vitality, then to pass it on through the glands over the nervous system and the blood stream. Each chakra forms a link of etheric matter between man's inner and his outer vehicles—that is, between his mental and astral bodies and the physical. Through this linkage certain types of force flow from his subtler bodies into the physical. This force, coming from within himself, affects the body in various ways through the glands and the nervous system. It might be stated that the chakras specialize the type of force flowing through for a particular function in the growth, health and development of man's body

⁸⁶ The following exposition of this subject is based upon C. W. Leadbeater's book, *The Chakras*.

and in a higher sense affecting the evolution of his own consciousness. This activity is stimulated and accentuated by yet another and altogether different type of force which flows up the spinal column. Although this subtle force was known by the ancients and its “awakening” recognized as producing certain effects upon the psyche and spiritual nature, it remains as yet unknown to modern science. I say “yet,” for medical science will one day discover a new and tremendously important value connected with the human spinal column.

This subtle force is known to occult science as an elementary force beginning at the Root Chakra at the base of the spine. There it seems to become divided or polarized into two types which might be characterized as masculine-feminine or positive-negative. It is interesting to note that this polarity is reversed in male and female bodies. These two forces—called in Sanskrit *Ida* and *Pingala* or feminine and masculine—follow the spinal column in a kind of twisting motion, one beginning on the right side and the other on the left, touching in turn each of the seven chakras in their ascent, to form a series of curves not unlike the entwining of two serpents. The second crossing is at the Spleen Chakra where it acts upon the *Prana*, the vitality which comes from the sun. The third crossing is at the solar plexus or the Naval Chakra, closely associated with the feelings and emotions. The fourth crossing is at the Heart Chakra where the power of universal love is stimulated. The fifth, the Throat Chakra, awakens the power of clairaudience and a certain degree of creative imagination. The sixth Chakra at the Brow arouses conscious clairvoyance, and awakens the intuitive faculty. The seventh and highest center is the Crown Chakra at the top of the head (the inner significance of the halo pictured over the heads of saints). This is the center of the spiritualized will and the power to leave the body at will and in full consciousness. It should be understood that these chakras are dormant in every human being. In the natural course of evolution, this awakening is a slow process requiring many incarnations to accomplish. However, when a man reaches a certain stage in his evolution he may, by special training in self-discipline and meditation and with the aid of his Master, accomplish this result in a few, or even a single lifetime. In this case, the force rises up the spine in a single stream, awakening these divine powers one by one on its ascent.

This spiritualizing force which ascends in man from the base of the spine to the top of the head has been given by the ancients the name *Kundalini* or the Serpent Fire. By the lifting up of this force within the body, man develops his own latent god-like qualities, fulfilling the prophecy of the Serpent in Eden, "Ye shall be as gods." This is the brazen serpent which Moses (the Inner Ruler) lifts up in the Wilderness (the human personality). What more fitting symbol than the Caduceus of Mercury, messenger of the gods, could be devised by man to depict this sacred truth. Here the two serpents entwine themselves about a staff surmounted by a globe from which extend a pair of wings. The significance of this symbol can hardly be missed. The staff or rod is the spinal column, sometimes referred to as the "ladder of life," its 33 segments or vertebrae being 33 rungs or steps. We may see here an association with the 33 degrees in Masonry or with the 33 years in the life of Jesus. The ancient Hindus referred to the spinal column as *Brahmadanda* or the "stick of Brahma." The globe at the top of the staff is the universal symbol of spirituality. (We may compare this globe with the circle at the top of the letter T in the Tau.) The outspread wings represent the liberated Self or Spirit.

Such is the mystery of the Brazen Serpent, symbol of the Christ lifted upon the cross to become for all men the power of regeneration and resurrection—the Divine Healer.

(Author's note: Special acknowledgment is accorded *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky for many of the thoughts presented in this study, too numerous to note individually.)

CHAPTER XVII

SYMBOL OF WISDOM

When Jesus bade His disciples to be “wise as serpents” (Matt. 10: 16), it is incredible that He could have suggested that they be cunning, wily and deceitful! In ancient India, *Naga* was the serpent of wisdom. In *The Secret Doctrine* wise men or adepts are frequently referred to as *nagas*. The term is a kind of nickname or title and was intended to express reverence and great respect. In China, Chaldea and ancient Egypt the *nagas* (serpents) were worshipped as incarnations of wisdom. Evidence of this reverence is found also in records of Central and South America.

The very first encounter with the serpent in the Bible certainly portrays him as a creature of considerable wisdom. We read, “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman . . . Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof [the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden], then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3: 1–5).

In his book, *The Key to the Universe*, Dr. F. Homer Curtiss writes,⁸⁷ “Many students do not observe the proper distinction between the words *subtil* which is used to describe the serpent (in Eden), and *subtle* which has quite a different meaning. According to the Standard Dictionary *subtil* means ‘having fine structure, not gross or dense; rarified, refined; attenuated; ethereal, hence penetrating as a subtil perfume,’ while ‘*subtle* is used as an attribute of mind in the derogatory sense of crafty.’ We see therefore that the serpent is not represented (here) as crafty and enticing but as an ethereal force.” (p. 31)

Not only must the serpent be “lifted up,” but our minds also must be lifted up to a new comprehension of the mysteries embodied in this aspect of the serpent symbol. It is an idea which eludes definition or verification. One can at best only feel that it is true. H. P. Blavatsky hints at this interpretation scores of times in *The Secret Doctrine*.

Solomon, in a beautiful word poem on wisdom, tried to define it. He wrote:

⁸⁷ The Curtiss Philosophic Book Co., Washington, D. C.

For Wisdom is more moving than any motion;
She passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness.
For she is the breath and power of God,
And a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty;
Therefore can no defiled thing flow into her.
For she is the brightness of the everlasting light,
The unspotted mirror of the power of God.
And the image of His goodness.
For she is more beautiful than the sun,
And above all the order of the stars.
He that loveth wisdom loveth life,
And they that seek her early shall be filled with joy.
He that holdeth her fast shall inherit glory;
And wheresoever she entereth, the Lord will bless.⁸⁸

For what is this wisdom, this subtil serpent force? It is inherent in all things, yet is contained by none; extending in all dimensions, yet having of itself no dimension. Like spirit it exists in all forms, all states of being, influencing, changing, refining, beautifying, perfecting all forms and all action; yet in itself it is affected neither by form nor action. It abideth through all space, yet is neither limited nor conditioned by space; it exists throughout all eternity, yet time has neither effect upon it nor power over it. Wisdom is of the essence of the Eternal. Like love, its other self, it maketh all things new. How is wisdom attainable, now wooed and made one's own? By the analyzing of every experience with dispassion and humility; by testing all knowledge whether it be true or false; and by discerning the difference between pure action which is of the will and reaction, which is purely reciprocal. It is the essence of all experience, all action and all knowledge; and all experience, action and knowledge are in turn sanctified by it. Entering into every motive and purpose, it has power to melt every difficulty and to solve every problem. It is a regenerating, transforming, recreating and purifying agency, thereby placing the stamp of nobility upon him who embraces it. It is the highest title given to man upon our planet, a "Master of the Wisdom."

We may remember that in our preceding study we saw that the Hebrew word *nachash*, translated "Serpent" both in the Eden story and in the Wilderness story,

⁸⁸ *The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon*, Chapter 7.

esoterically means a “Divine Experience,” while the Hebrew *nasha* interpreted “beguiled” means “to lift up.” In the light of this translation, a new understanding is born in our minds. We see here a symbol of a transformation taking place in our own natures—the distillation of the experiences of life until they become for us a “divine experience.” There is no magic in man’s regeneration save the magic of the hourly, daily, yearly sublimation of his own experiences in the body, until their essence is converted into wisdom. Man develops his innate divine qualities, much as a seed develops into the pattern of the tree, only by digesting, assimilating and absorbing the experiences of earth until they become purified, transformed, elevated into spiritual wisdom. Wisdom is not a gift of the gods; but something which each must earn by the continual lifting up of the essence of his experience extracted through pain and labor, hope, and disappointment, sorrow and happiness until his own finite wisdom rises to meet God’s infinite Wisdom.

Every man may thus become a priest before the altar of his own consciousness, whereon every earthly experience, touched by the fire of spirit, may be transformed through the miracle of transubstantiation into pure wisdom. In this Eucharist of daily living, the wine of experience, poured into the chalice of our hearts, may be transmuted into the sacred blood of Love-Wisdom. Each may become an alchemist in the laboratory of his own life transmuting the base metal of his lower nature into the gold of spiritual powers. The lead of his earthly nature is being daily transformed in the crucible of living into the gold of Divine Wisdom.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SERPENT SWALLOWING ITS TAIL

We leave the Serpent in its symbolic aspect of evil and sin, Satan and the Devil, and in its more occult sense as the Divine Healer and Divine Wisdom; and we approach an entirely new phase expressed in the symbol of the serpent swallowing its own tail. Up to now the serpent has been very personal in his relations with man. He has entered the field of religion, of morality, of the spiritualization of man's own inner nature, and the Healer and Bringer of Divine Wisdom. There is nothing personal or religious in this new symbol, except only as man and religion may be interested in the Eternal and the Infinite. We enter a realm of purely speculative philosophy. If we would try to describe the meaning of the serpent in the act of swallowing its own tail, we would use these two words, Eternity and Infinity. These two words, however, require certain definitive qualifications. What can the human mind know of eternity and infinity except that one embodies a very long time and the other extends to, and beyond, the limits of our comprehension? Many great minds have wrestled with this idea of eternity and infinity and their relations with time and space; and it would be folly to presume to do more than what has already been so adequately done. For these two ideas, unending time and immeasurable space, present many problems to our minds, not immediately apparent. To say that time and space are illusions and eternity and infinity are realities does not solve the problem. In fact, except for those mystics who dream of escaping from this objective world, this idea only adds confusion to our thinking. For if time and space are illusions, then the whole manifested universe has neither reality nor purpose. Indeed we might say that time and space came into being with manifestation. (We are thinking here of physical manifestation, for there must be other dimensions of being requiring new codes of measurement.)

First of all, we consider this symbol of the serpent swallowing its tail as a circle. A circle immediately establishes in our minds something fixed and limited. However extended the circumference, it is something which the mind can comprehend. It becomes the boundary of a universe, the "Ring-pass-not" beyond which that universe

may not extend or the time cycle setting the limits of the endurance of a universe. The Hindus called this time cycle a *Manvantara* or a *Maha-Manvantara*. The circle limits or sets aside a certain field in the Cosmos in which a Solar Logos may bring forth and evolve His particular universe. Vast as that universe may be, so long as the human mind conceives of it in terms of space and time, it must have its limits—its circumference. It must also be true that, however long the Manvantara (or Maha--Manvantara—great cycle), there must come a time of dissolution, which the Hindus term *Pralaya* or period of rest and cessation of Cosmic activity. We shall consider this idea of recurring cycles of manifestation presently. Certainly space and time, as represented by the circle, are measurable and therefore limited.

TIME

The serpent-swallowing-its-own-tail symbol presents an entirely different concept. There is the idea of the finite being “swallowed” by the Infinite, of time being “swallowed” by the Eternal. This brings to mind a story from ancient mythology. Cronos, god of time, son of Uranos and Gaea (heaven and earth), is said to have swallowed his children. Saturn, his Latin counterpart, was known as “father time.” We are aware, of course, that all things which have their origin in time are thus eventually swallowed by their own father. And yet the question might be asked, “If time came into being with manifestation, how can it cease to be so long as manifestation exists?” The answer must be that time is an aspect of manifestation. If in God’s omniscience, the beginning and end (“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending”) are perceived as one, then to any lesser consciousness, this Whole would be seen only in part, and part succeeding part, unrolling in time, as the unwinding of a film in a cinema. Time is the sequence whereby whatever exists in the Eternal—that is, as potential ideation—emerges into objectivity. The Eternal, by its very nature never began and can never end, else its name is a contradiction. Time must be a segment of the Eternal; and if one be given the status of reality, the other imposes upon that reality merely its own limitations. Man might be said to be living in two worlds at once. He lives in the Eternal Now containing within him the image of what he shall be. He lives also in the world of time, becoming and evolving into the fulfillment of that image. When the serpent shall have swallowed its tail, the Circle of “becoming” shall have disappeared into the Point of “being.”

Space and Time are always spoken of in the same breath; and in fact one is inconceivable without the other. We can hardly think of distance without at the same time thinking of duration, and duration implies speed, which brings us back again to the idea of time. Space is in a sense more readily understandable than time—at least time in the abstract—because it deals with physical things. It is that unknown substance which theoretically exists everywhere between objects regardless of distance, and in which all objects exist. A dweller in the ocean might conceive of the water in which he swims as space, yet that space is an infinitesimal part of the great sea, which extends for incalculable distances. It is difficult to think of space as extending into infinity without at the same time conceiving the probability of heavenly bodies as occupying limitless distances in it. Science today visualizes a universe which is in rapid motion, ever expanding, every particle small or great moving progressively outward along countless radii toward circumferences which are themselves expanding into infinity. The term “our expanding universe” has become a popularly accepted idea. Sir James Jeans suggests that all of the nebulae are receding from us at tremendous speeds. Yet he is inclined to think that they are not moving *through* space but *with* space, and expresses the concept of space as everywhere expanding uniformly. He asserts: “Not only is space almost inconceivably large, but is continually becoming larger.”⁸⁹ Mr. Fred Hoyle several years later, in trying to explain how space can be infinitely expanding forever, makes this momentous statement, “I find myself forced to assume that the nature of the universe required continuous creation—the perpetual bringing into being of new background material.”⁹⁰ In other words, he says that new space (or matter) is continuously being created. Coming from an exponent of the most modern scientific thought, this statement is most significant. However, he leaves unanswered the question, where does this “background material” come from, and by what agency is it “created”?

Science now recognizes the fact that the matter of our universe is not fixed and static, but that there is a continuous flow (we should say “ebb and flow”) of what we think of as force into matter, and *vice versa*. Let us consider this thought for a moment. We know that what is commonly called matter is made up of incalculable numbers of

⁸⁹ *Through Space and Time*, Macmillan Co., 1934.

⁹⁰ *The Nature of the Universe*, Harper and Brother, N.Y., 1950.

atoms which are themselves composed of swiftly revolving lines of some kind of force or energy. We are told that an atom resembles a miniature solar system with its protons and electrons in rapid rotation in relatively astronomical orbits. There is nothing “solid” in the old sense of the word. The borderline between matter and energy is certainly a variable one. In the light of this accepted fact, it is but an easy step towards the conclusion that matter and energy (or spirit) have a common origin, that they are the opposite poles of one Reality. We may say that “spirit” is in a continuous process of becoming “matter,” and that “matter” reciprocally flows back into “spirit.” The door of exit and entrance from either state of existence to the other must be a point so minute that it can be recognized only mathematically. Figuratively it might be said that the objective world is literally being swallowed by the point—symbolically expressed as the serpent swallowing its tail. We push our enquiry beyond the limitations of scientific knowledge and we enter a field in which the measure of the truth or reality of our findings must be the degree in which they are co-related with the highest reaches of our thinking. Our search leads us out of the objective world of sense perceptions into the subjective realm of consciousness where the intuition must replace the outer senses in making appraisal of the rationality of our judgments. This is a realm, too, in which judgment must be limited by the intellectual background and capacity of each individual mind.

The problems of truth and reality at once present themselves. What is reality? We perceive that what is real to one may not be real to another; and what is real at one time may be unreal at another. The whole universe, including ourselves, is constantly changing. Is evolution a movement from unreality toward a goal of reality? Can the human mind know truth, or can truth be realized only when one has attained ultimate reality? Philosophy and religion have wrestled with these problems and have presented many conflicting answers. The true, or let us say the “truest,” answer must be that which integrates the known “facts” of the objective world with our highest concepts in the world of consciousness, an understanding of which must resolve most of our problems. And, as is usually the case, the answers to many of man’s most puzzling problems are often so simple as to be overlooked entirely.

Let us put this idea to the test. An answer so simple as to dissolve all complexities might be stated: all things come from God who is the ultimate source of every phase of

existence. Could any statement be simpler? It is almost naive, childish. Let us analyze it.

It would be inconceivable to think of anything in the universe without a causation. Yet, if we push an effect back to its cause and backwards through an ever-receding series of causes, we must ultimately come to that Causeless Cause. We postulate THAT which is behind all manifestation. Wanting a better name, we call it ABSOLUTE BEING. To this Being (Be-ness would be a better word) there can be no attribute, description or name. No adjective can modify or qualify it. The ancients called it THAT. Having neither form nor shape it exists everywhere and throughout all eternity. Dwelling alone upon the divine plane there is contained within it the potency and measure of all conceivable forms. Dwelling equally on all planes below its own, it endows all forms with potency and life. Pervading and penetrating all things, it is both Immanent and Transcendent. Infinite and Eternal, it is the source and origin of both time and space. And yet it is far from us neither in time nor space, for it pervades every particle of our being and consciousness. Having neither beginning nor ending, every moment of our life is part of its eternity.

No particle of matter is too dense or too ethereal but that it has its very existence in this Absoluteness. Could any concept be more simple or yet more profound? The poet Derzhavin, attempting to express this concept of God, writes in part:

Being above all beings!
Whom none can comprehend, and none explore;
Who fillest existence with THYSELF alone!
Embracing all—supporting—ruling o'er
Being whom we call God and know no more! ⁹¹

Out of this Absoluteness, manifestation comes into being. The Absolute veils Himself with a gossamer veil of spirit-matter, for the very act of becoming polarizes His nature and for the first time there appear spirit *and* matter. There can be no manifestation, however rarified and “spiritual,” without these two poles, positive and negative, of Eternal Being. From the highest divine level to what appears to be the densest physical, God clothes His Being in ever-denser garments, woven from the woof

⁹¹ From *Ode to God* by G. R. Derzhavin, Poet-Laureate to Catherine II of Russia.

and warp of this dual essence of Himself. Reality becomes more and more obscure, and ultimate Truth becomes broken into many fragments. With this concept in mind, who can say where Reality ends and unreality begins? If spirit and matter are thus dual aspects of Deity, then it must be conceded that each shares His reality, for each comes into existence simultaneously. The degree of our claim to distinguish the unreal from the real must be contingent upon our recognition of this basic truth, namely the polarity of all manifestation.

Where now are those who see in this world of objectivity only illusion or those who would relegate everything below spirit to unreality? Spirit itself, to come into existence at all, must set itself off from the Ultimate by a separating film of attenuated matter.

We are inclined to think of reality as toward unity, and unreality toward separateness. Unity and separateness must be a matter of the direction of our vision: unity looks inward toward ultimate being; diversity or separateness looks outward along the radii of manifestation. Reality embraces both directions. The illusion, if such there be, is in the inadequacy of our own minds to evaluate properly objects and events of the objective world and to distinguish them from our own fancies and hallucinations. Moreover the human senses, being limited by their own vibratory capacities, see objects very incompletely, thus creating images in our minds which are far from reality. Illusion would seem to arise from the tendency to confuse our own imperfect thought forms with those "images" created by the Divine Intelligence. Truth is that concept which lines up with reality on any level of manifestation. We can only know truth in the degree of our ability to perceive reality.

All truth below Absolute or Ultimate Truth can be only partial truth. We may go so far as to say that any truth which our minds can know is relative truth; nor must we allow our minds to fall into the error of assuming that partial or incomplete truth is untruth. Surely in the fullness of time, as the finite is swallowed up in the Infinite, partial and relative truths will be swallowed up in ultimate Truth. Time and Space will disappear into Eternity and Infinity. Manifestation returns to Absolute Being. So the serpent swallows its tail.

BEING AND BECOMING

We now look at our problem along another radius and consider the relationship between the idea of Being and of Becoming. Being would seem to suggest a state of existence in which there is always tranquility, bliss, and perfection. Becoming suggests movement, effort, and growth. One would assume a goal of life which is fixed and final; the other a progress toward that goal. Yet if we assume that Being is the goal of humanity and Becoming a movement toward it, then we must think of humanity as having “fallen” from Being. Being is changeless and eternal; Becoming is of the essence of time and motion. Becoming is the evolutionary process toward Being. Postulating a “fall” from Being, and that descent taking the form of an arc, Becoming is the ascent toward the apex of Being, an unfoldment of what we are into what we shall be. Symbolically, Being is a Point, the potentiality of infinite possibility; Becoming is the Line or radius extending toward infinite attainment.

The statement is often heard, “We are becoming what we are.” This statement is not actually true. If it were, we should be standing still, or at least going around in a circle and returning to our starting point. Where then would be our progress? The actual meaning would seem to be, “We are becoming actually what we are potentially.” Life seems to be a series of goals. As soon as one goal is attained it disappears and another looms, as if the state of “Being” which is our goal of “Becoming” is itself progressing toward a new state of “Being.” We complete our cycle to a new goal, but a goal, which has itself moved to a more exalted position—an endless spiral of “Becoming.”

HEAVEN

An acceptance of this idea should expand our idea of the goal of life and remove the thought of finality. Surely one of the sources of criticism against Christian doctrine is its teaching that mankind will one day (after death) reach a state wherein progress as we understand it comes to a standstill forever. Every man will have reached a goal, varying according to his particular state of moral, intellectual and spiritual development, which state is fixed and final. There is postulated a “place” (heaven or hell) in which the soul basks in a state of eternal bliss or is damned to torment and torture forever. Could

we envision the goal of humanity as a state in which every individual will reach only a partial degree of perfection and thereafter be condemned to remain in *status quo* throughout all eternity? Surely after a few million years, even of heavenly bliss, some ungrateful souls would become restless and long for a chance to work, struggle and even suffer again to evolve within themselves additional powers of perfection. This very idea of eternal stagnation must be abhorrent to the human mind where not even the motion of time could relieve the monotony of eternal changelessness. What a spectacle of unfinished hopes and purposes!

We envision then a concept of the universe, which should be acceptable both to science and to theology; for the physical universe will be seen as God in manifestation. And when we realize that manifestation is dual embracing spirit and matter as opposite poles of one Reality, we shall understand that everything that exists is made up of a union of these two essential elements of reality—life and form. To Deity looking outward upon His manifestation, the universe must be seen as the positive idea and spirit the negative; while to man looking upward, spirit must seem positive and the objective world negative—each in itself good. For “God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1: 31). This brings us to a thought which must be the underlying basis of all philosophy; and that is that God or Life alternately brings Himself (or Itself) out of the state of non-manifestation into manifestation, nonexistence going out from itself into existence. Here pure Being or non-existence is the negative aspect while existence or Becoming is the positive. Yet the change from one state to the other brings no change in its essential reality. We might think of this outward or downward flow of God’s life as Involution, wherein the divine ideation becomes more and more buried in denser and denser matter. Then upon reaching the nadir of its outgoing arc, the direction of its flow is reversed, and the return motion begins. This new direction of life is Evolution. In this process Life builds form after form, moving ever nearer to the Divine Image.

Mankind, in this process of becoming, moves from matter toward spirit, spirit being the direction and the doorway through which the individual returns to his source, and through which all manifestation returns to pure Being. The great cycle of manifestation has ended. There follows a period of non-manifestation, wherein all objectivity is

withdrawn into a state of pure Being in preparation for the outgoing of a new and more glorious cycle of Becoming.⁹²

We may find a visual exemplification of this sublime idea in the movements of the heavenly bodies, wherein planets revolve about suns, suns about stars and entire universes of stars revolving about some unknown center; and beyond this our own stellar universe or galaxy may be found countless millions of galaxies, some in the process of being born, others on the way to disintegration and extinction.⁹³ What symbol could so appropriately embody so sublime a conception of our universe in its cyclic period of manifestation as the Serpent swallowing its tail!

We see this cyclic pattern repeated on lower levels. The year with its four seasons: spring sees the outpouring of universal life forces, and all dormant seeds and forms spring to life. At midsummer they flower into maturity, at autumn ripen into fruit and seed. Winter brings a withdrawal of the vital forces, a slowing down of growth, a storing up of food and energy for a new cycle of growth and a period of dormancy, and rest. The day follows the cyclic period at briefer intervals. Man's life on earth repeats the same pattern. He comes out of the invisible into incarnation as a babe (as a seed planted in an earthly body). The morning (spring time) of life brings forth the vital energies of growth; noonday (summer) develops the inherent pattern of beauty in flower and bloom in physical and mental characteristics. Afternoon (autumn) brings the harvest of personal perfections. His inherent characteristics and latent powers have matured (evolved) into active mental and spiritual maturity—understanding, sympathy, wisdom and judgment. The night (winter) of life withdraws his vital powers. There comes the departure of the personality (manifestation) through the process called death into the invisible world. Then follows a period of gestation and assimilation of the experience of

⁹² The ancients termed this entire process of the ebb and flow of the divine life a *Manvantara* or a "Day of Brahma." The period of non-manifestation or the withdrawal of life was called *Pralaya* or the "Night of Brahma." The estimated length of this period, according to the ancient records, in solar years ran into ten figures (*The Secret Doctrine*).

⁹³ Some idea of the expanse of the known universe may be gathered from the following: The distance from our sun to the nearest galaxy beyond our own "Milky Way" is estimated to be 700,000 light years, while the faintest nebula which can be photographed in the Mt. Wilson hundred inch telescope is so distant that its light takes 140,000,000 years to reach us. *Vide* Sir James Jeans' *Through Space and Time*.

life, and the preparation for a new incarnation, and a new cycle of life's activities. We may view the cycle of earth life as part of a still greater cycle of the divine Spirit.

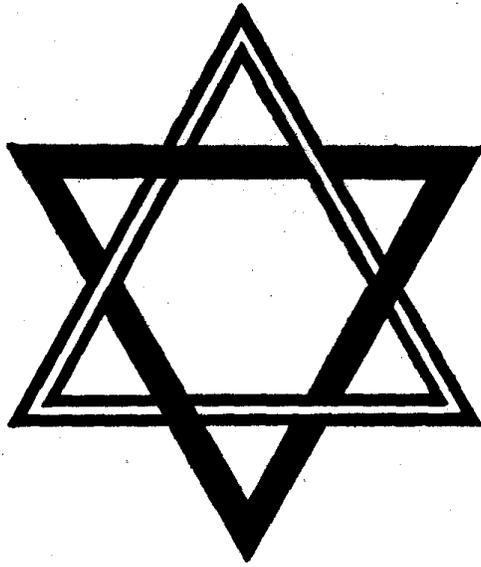
We have followed the cycle of the personal life from birth to death. We now follow the course of the larger cycle of the soul or ego, that inner or true Self which persists through countless manifestations or incarnations in a series of personalities. Without getting involved in the processes, we may say that the soul of man (hereinafter called the "Ego") as the individualized Spirit, descends directly from the Spiritual World ⁹⁴ to begin his long pilgrimage in the worlds of matter and consciousness. The reason and purpose of this pilgrimage through the worlds of manifestation is that he may, through his contact with and conquest of his environment, develop his inherent characteristics into conscious powers. For many incarnations during which his entire attention is directed to the development of a strong and rugged personality, he has completely lost sight of his spiritual origin, and even of life's purpose and his own destiny. After countless incarnations he gradually awakens to the realization that he is essentially a spiritual being inhabiting a body of flesh, for the sole purpose of growing into the likeness of his Father. With this awareness comes an expansion of his own consciousness and a growing understanding of life and his relationship with others. More and more he begins to identify himself with his Ego. He begins to recognize his inner unity with others and with that sense of unity a growing realization of [brotherhood, until his world expands to take in all living things. From within his being a great compassion and impersonal love surges up, uniting him with life on all levels. He begins to lose his sense of separateness; and yet with the realization of unity with all, his own individual center becomes more definitely and divinely real.

Here again these cycles within cycles, incarnations swallowed up in Spiritual Being, exemplify the symbol of the serpent swallowing its tail.

⁹⁴ See *The Nature of the Soul* for a description in detail of this process. Published by The Theosophical Society in America, Wheaton, Illinois.

BOOK 5

THE INTERLACED TRIANGLES



CHAPTER XIX

THE PATTERN

The study of the interlaced triangles has purposely been placed at the end of this book. Not that we think that the interlaced triangle is more important than the other figures of the Theosophical Seal, but we feel that in it is contained the synthesis and the summation of the Seal as a whole. Each of the symbols comprising the Seal presents its own particular message. The Egyptian Tau, which is a variant of the Cross, represents the resurrection of Spirit over matter, the triumph of Life over death, and the Path of Perfection and Discipleship. The Circle is the sign of divinity and spirit or manifestation and the universe. The Swastika within the Circle is the whirling fiery Cross, symbol of the Divine Fire, the creative power in an atom, in man and in the universe. The Serpent swallowing its tail and encircling all the others is the symbol of Eternity and Infinity. If the Seal were a temple, these are its outer court. The interlaced triangles are the innermost shrine, the holy of holies wherein is concealed the very nature of Being and man's relationship with God. Where shall we begin? What shall we say as to the nature of God, of the universe and of man? How can we describe the infinitely complex system of inter-relationships, which exist between God, the universe, and humanity? With what gauge can we measure or compare man's kinship with Deity?

The answer to these questions is to be found in the figure of the intertwined triangles. Here is the key, which (as we shall try to prove) unlocks the mystery of Being and Manifestation. We see in the triangle a pattern or mould into which all things, whether in heaven or on earth, may be (symbolically) cast. It is the common denominator (numerically) of every aspect of manifestation. It is the figure by which every facet of reality may be evaluated and related. It is the measure of all things visible and invisible, and at the same time the gauge of the relationship of one with the other.

I suppose the most fundamental concept of Deity of which the human mind is capable is that He is one. Yet when the idea of Deity is expressed in terms of His attributes, that is, His relation to a universe, the One becomes Three; and we find universally the concept of God as a Trinity. This is true of all the great religions of the

world, with possibly one exception, Islam. Even the Hebrew, of all religions monotheistic, in its secret writings taught that the one God, through His Emanations, becomes first three, then seven and ten—the Sacred Sephiroth. The following statement from the Kabbalah is pertinent to the subject: “The Deity is one, because it is infinite. It is triple, because it is ever manifesting.”

To the Christian, He is Father, Son, Holy Ghost; to the Hindu, He is Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva or Creator, Preserver, Destroyer. In the ancient Egyptian Trinity, the relationship was definitely on the family pattern, Osiris, Isis, Horus, or Father, Mother, Son. Many other appellations, perhaps less personal, have been given to the Supreme. The ancient Greeks called him First Logos, Second Logos and Third Logos (Logos meaning Word). The Masonic Brotherhood knows Him as the Good, the Beautiful and the True. Universally He is recognized as the Omnipotent, the Omniscient and the Omnipresent.

We observe this same pattern in its philosophical application. There is first the objective world about us—the world of things. Second there is the Knower or the Self; and third there is an awareness or consciousness of the Self of his environment, the world of thought. The ancient Hindus called these three worlds *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ananda*. (We shall refer to these terms in a following chapter.) Fitting our pattern to more modern thought we have the triangle of Spirit-Life-Matter or Life-Consciousness-Form. In the purely physical world, we find that matter is known by its three qualifications, stability-mobility-rhythm or inertia-energy-law.

Space does not permit the cataloguing of all of the triplicities found in Nature. Here are a few of the more obvious. Light is broken up into three primary colors—red, yellow and blue. Philosophers see the universe as limited by Time and Space, and Measure as the relation between them. We may even say that “Measure” is three dimensional, namely—Distance, Duration and Direction. “Time” itself falls into the threefold category of Past, Present and Future. Vibration is translated to us in three modes—motion, sound and color. Our physical world is made up of three elements—gases, liquids and solids; and the infinite variety of forms resulting from their combinations are mineral, vegetable and animal. What we call electricity is a power resulting from the union of a

positive and a negative current. Looking over the whole field of manifestation, we find the triangle as the geometrical pattern, with the number three as the numerical measure or gauge of its manifold phenomena.

Finally we come to consider man himself. When we attempt to apply the rule of the triangle to him, we come upon a most significant discovery—albeit a secret known to initiates of the Mystery Schools of all ages—that man is a microcosm, a little universe. In him is contained in miniature the vast macrocosm. Made in the “image of God,” his spiritual nature is an emanation of the threefold nature of God. This “likeness” to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a triad of three principles, expressed as Will, Love-Wisdom and Creative Intelligence. The ancient Hindu term for this human triad is Atma, Buddhi, Manas. St. Paul recognized man as a threefold being when he said that he is a “Spirit, Soul and Body.” The personality, which is the Soul or Ego expressed or incarnated in the three lower worlds of mental, astral and physical matter, is also a triad composed of mind, emotions and physical body.

How intricate is humanity’s relation with the universe, and how intimate is its relationship with God, will be the subject of future studies. What could more truly express this relationship, with its infinite correspondences of parts, culminating in identification and eventual union, than the symbol of the intertwining triangles?

TABULATION OF TRIPLICITIES

Divine Trinities— <i>Greek</i>	1st Logos	2nd Logos	3rd Logos
„ „ <i>Egyptian</i>	Osiris	Isis	Horus*
„ „ <i>Hebrew-Kabalah</i>	Kether	Chokmah	Binah
„ „ <i>Universal</i>	Omnipotence	Omniscience	Omnipresence
	or		
„ „ „	Creator	Preserver	Destroyer*
„ „ <i>Hindu</i>	Brahma	Vishnu	Shiva*
„ „ <i>Christian</i>	Father	Son	Holy Ghost
„ „ <i>Masonic</i>	The Good	The Beautiful	The True*
Divine Characteristics	Strength	Wisdom	Beauty
	or		
„ „ „	Will	Love-Wisdom	Intelligence
„ „ <i>Hindu</i>	Ichha	Jnana	Kriya
„ Manifestation	Spirit	Life	Matter
	or		
„ „ „	Life	Consciousness	Form
„ „ <i>Hindu</i>	Ananda	Chit	Sat
„ „ <i>Philosophy</i>	The Self	Consciousness	Environment
Man— <i>St. Paul</i>	Spirit	Soul	Body
Personality	Body	Emotions	Mind
Soul— <i>Hindu</i>	Atma	Buddhi	Manas
Matter	Stability	Mobility	Rhythm
	or		
„ „ <i>(Hindu) Sat</i>	Inertia	Energy	Law
	Tamas	Rajas	Sattva
3 Worlds of Manifestation	Physical	Astral	Mental
Elements of Nature	Solids	Liquids	Gases*
Forms in Nature	Mineral	Vegetable	Animal*
Universal Concepts	Time	Space	Measure*
Measure	Duration	Distance	Direction
Time	Past	Present	Future*
Vibration	Motion	Sound	Color*
Primary Colors—Light	Red	Yellow	Blue*

* These triplicities are not necessarily placed in corresponding order in the columns—rather in the order known.

CHAPTER XX

THE NUMBER THREE

One who listens with appreciative enjoyment to the playing of a symphony must be aware of a definite plan in its structure and composition. There is first of all the underlying central theme, the overall mood which the composer intended to convey and which gives to the whole a certain color or tone. He is aware too that the entire composition is divided into parts or “movements,” each having its own particular theme. In turn, each of these parts is made up of various minor themes or voices, giving a richness of variety and color to the “movement.” Again and again repeated, in swiftly changing combinations and “keys,” weaving a pattern of mood or idea, the “movement” reaches its climax. Finally, woven and united into one dominate theme, these varied voices rise in a crescendo of beauty and harmony, giving the composition its one distinctive motif or tone—the one theme which stands out clear and triumphant in a grand finale.

The Theosophical Seal is such a musical symphony—a symphony of ideas. First one note, then another and another, repeated again and again in varied combinations or patterns, now in one key and now in another until, like an unforgettable refrain, one idea emerges, unmistakable and clear. The symbol of the intertwined triangles is a “movement” in this symphony, and the number three is its particular note or theme. One can hardly think of the triangle without associating it with the number three.

Throughout all ages, three has ever been held as a sacred number, associated always with some concept of Deity. To the ancient philosophers all numbers were sacred, each possessing its unique value and power. They held that numbers were also associated with letters of the alphabet as well as with geometric figures. This category of the association of letters with both numbers and geometrical forms repeats our threefold pattern: *its number reveals its power; the letter defines its thought or idea; its form gives it body or measure.* We instinctively look to the ancient Hebrews who excelled in attributing to numbers and to the letters of the alphabet with which they were associated definite philosophical or religious ideas. Yet Fabre d’Olivet, in his masterful

work *The Hebraic Tongue Restored*, asserts that the Hebraic sources of arcane wisdom antedated the historic Jews by many centuries; and scholars assure us that the cradle of all knowledge and culture can be traced to the early Aryans of India. The fact remains that the science of numbers and the philosophy of letters came to us through the secret Mystery Schools of ancient eastern civilizations.

This whole idea was brought to its highest point of perfection, both as a philosophy and as a science by Pythagoras, renowned for his contribution to mathematics and music. He is known to have been an initiate of the Mystery Schools of Greece and Egypt and probably of India, besides having a knowledge of occult science. He taught that “numbers are symbols of divine realities, eternal verities which express themselves periodically in the world of objectivity.” “The world is built upon the power of numbers,” he said. Again he is reported as saying, “Cosmos was produced by geometry, following the proportion of numbers.” He claimed that “the doctrine of numbers had been revealed to man by the Celestial Deities,” and that “the world had been called forth out of chaos by sound or harmony, and constructed according to the principles of musical proportion.”⁹⁵ It was Pythagoras also who gave to the world the chromatic scale in music. He taught that the relationship between music and numbers extends to the distances and orbits of the heavenly bodies; and the statement “music of the spheres stems from this revelation.

We shall recapitulate briefly a few of the points made in this connection in the early chapters of this book. For instance, we saw that the number 1 is closely associated with the letter “A” (Aleph), and represents unity. In the Kabalah, it is called the first Emanation or Crown (Kether). Its geometric figure is the Point, which having no dimension, is yet the source of all forms. Aleph is considered the active principle of Deity, the Spirit or Father. It is significant that phonetically, “A” is the sound of exhaling breath, (aahh!) and “breath” is universally the symbol of life.

The number 2 naturally signifies duality. It is the “1” polarized. Obviously it must be associated with the letter “B” (Beth). The Hebraic character Beth signifies “house” or “body,” hence it is the “abode” or vehicle for spirit. As Aleph signifies the active principle,

⁹⁵ *The Key to the Universe* by F. Homer Curtiss, Chapter I.

Beth is associated with the passive or generative principle of being. It represents the universe of matter, the Mother aspect of Deity. The Point in motion becomes the Line, which must be the natural symbol of this duality.

When we turn to the number 3, our exposition of its significance cannot be stated so simply. It quite naturally follows that it bears an association with the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet G or Gimel. It need hardly be repeated that the triangle is universally the symbol for the number 3. So our task is to find the relationship which must exist between the number 3, the letter G, and the triangle. It should be prefaced here that what we say in this connection must be purely speculative, and its rationality judged more by the intuition than the mind. Consider the triangle with its three sides. The two sides or lines emanating from the apex or point of unity represent duality. The third line, uniting the two to form the triangle, implies a union and a relationship.

Enlarging upon this idea in reference to the letters: if we assume that Aleph is the spirit or active principle, and Beth the form or generative principle, Gimel must therefore be the relationship between these two, the magnetic link which unites spirit and form. It might therefore be likened to the life force generated by the union of the two. In this sense Gimel (and, of course, the number 3) may be said to be the "link" between the Father and the Mother, hence the Son. Carrying this idea a little further, it may be considered the link between the personality and the soul, between spirit and matter, between the animal body and the divine spirit.

Some students have associated the letter Gimel with the camel, not so much for phonetic reasons, but because that animal was, in ancient days, the carrier of life," and hence the actual link between centers of civilization. This explanation may or may not be superficial. At any rate, it was considered by the ancients as the "hook" or "link" uniting two ideas.

Referring to man, it would not be difficult to relate this letter to *Manas*, the principle of abstract thought, which is in a sense his link between his higher and lower principles. (*Manas* is the third principle, starting from above.) In this sense, it has been associated physically with the throat, the center of articulate speech, the center which changes sound into words and transforms power into intelligence. It is the power which lifts man

from an animal to divinity—the power of the creative mind. Since Aleph is associated with “breath,” and Beth with the “mouth” through which breath flows, it is but a step further to think of Gimel as associated with the “throat,” the organism or principle which transforms breath or sound into articulate speech.

It takes but a little imagination to lift this series of relationships between the number 3 and the letter G into “the divine realm and to co-relate it with the Third Principle or Person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost. For as the “Father” is Spirit, (*Atma*), the “Son” is life-form (*Buddhi*), so may we conceive of the “Holy Ghost” as Creative Intelligence (*Manas*). In Masonic symbolism the letter “G” is considered sacred as the sign of God, the Great Geometrician of the universe. None other but that Exalted Being who is the Third Aspect of God, the Holy Ghost, can fill that title. For it is He who is the Divine Creator, the “Great Geometrician,” by whose design and measure the universe is builded. The root “Geo” comes from the Greek “Gea” meaning “the earth,” and the “geometrician” is one who “measures the world.”

It is said that the triangle is the first geometric figure, for three is the fewest number of straight lines that can enclose a figure. The triangle not only is the measuring gauge of the earth, but of the heavens also. In a literal sense, the triangle is the means by which vast distances, both in time and in space may be accurately measured. From two points on its base, the distance of the farthest star may be ascertained.

The pattern or the theme stands out clear and unmistakable. The Triangle (or the Number Three) becomes universally the measure of man and of the universe about him. And what is infinitely more important, when two triangles become super-imposed one upon another to form the intertwined triangles of the Theosophical Seal, they become not only the measure but also the symbol of a relationship between spirit and matter, between life and form, finally becoming the perfect sign of the union of soul with spirit—of man with God.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIANGLE

There are two methods by which any subject may be studied, the deductive and the inductive. One begins with the universal and descends to particulars; the other takes the parts one by one and reconstructs the whole. By the deductive method, we premise a knowledge, at least a theoretical knowledge of the whole, and then proceed from general principles to “deduce” certain specific truths. The inductive method, on the other hand, takes things as we find them, puts them together and from the parts builds the whole. Universals thus become the sum of all the particulars. The first method might be called the philosophic, because it begins with the premise of certain conclusions, considered as self-evident. The other belongs to the modern scientific method, because it takes nothing for granted which cannot stand the test of proof.

In a study of symbols such as we are making, we find ourselves using first one method and then the other. Or, perhaps, because of the more or less speculative nature of the subject, the two methods of approach may at times seem to merge. In our immediate study we shall copy perhaps more closely the scientific approach, in that we shall begin with the detail and proceed from that to an overall conclusion. At the same time we might be accused of bending our lines of thought a little to fit a premise already assumed. That is a risk we shall have to take.

Consider the triangle, or any conceivable form for that matter. If we reduce it to its minutest detail, we come to the “Point.” The point, having no dimension, has a mathematical existence only. And since it has no physical existence, its figure must be purely hypothetical. Yet all dimensions start with the point, and all forms are extensions of it. It is, therefore, the most appropriate symbol which the mind can conceive as representing the First Cause. Since it fills all space and permeates all things, it is the one “figure” which suggests Infinity or Absolute Being.

The very first act in the process of creation or manifestation is motion. Call it vibration, sound, or the “word”—it is motion. The “Point” of Absolute Being moves to

become Manifestation. This movement produces the Line. Thus, another factor appears simultaneously with this act of motion—the factor of “duality.” A few examples of known phenomena will establish this statement, at least as a working theory. Take matter itself. The scientist tells us that the minutest particle of matter is dual in respect of its properties. That is, it has form or shape and it contains locked within it a force or energy. Consider that familiar phenomenon called electricity. It comes into manifestation as a force only when that mysterious substance becomes divided into two modes of expression called “positive and negative.”

Every schoolboy knows that the earth is held in its orbit around the sun by the action of two forces working opposite to each other—the force of attraction and the force of repulsion. So far as the scientist can determine, these twin forces operate throughout the known universe, and are responsible for its equilibrium and stability. One force rushes outward from a center, and without an opposing force to restrain it, all objects would perpetually fly apart. The other is a cohesive force. It is the force of attraction or gravitation by which all objects in the universe, however minute or distant, are drawn toward each other. Without the counteraction of the opposing force of repulsion, all things in the universe would be crushed toward a common center.

These simple illustrations could be multiplied a thousandfold; but they serve to point out a truth which must be self-evident, namely, that whenever manifestation comes into being, whether of a thing or of an idea, that manifestation appears as a duality. But this is only half of the truth. The other half is that with the coming into being of this “duality,” there appears simultaneously a third factor, which is the law or relationship between the two. The whole truth is that manifestation is always and everywhere triple. That this is a law universally inherent in every “thing” whether physical, mental or spiritual, we shall attempt to suggest through the illustrations already presented.

We know that electric current requires two wires, one positive and the other negative. Either one without contact with the other is impotent and harmless. It is only when the two currents are united by means of a switch that power comes into being in the form of light, heat or energy. The positive and negative currents remain inactive until a “flow” is made possible by their union.

This example illustrates a fundamental law, which is operative at all levels. Take life—life in the abstract sense is unthinkable. We cannot recognize or know life unless that life manifests through some form. There must be something which is alive. It is only through the union of life and form in whatever degree that growth or evolution is possible. It is in the constant interplay of matter and energy, or matter and spirit, that all substances become known to man. On the higher levels, it is in the union and interaction of life or spirit with matter or form that consciousness comes into being.

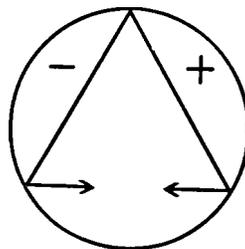
We mentioned above two laws or forces, which so far as science knows, exist throughout the whole universe—the twin laws of attraction and repulsion, sometimes called centripetal and centrifugal force. Either of these forces without the compensating action of the other would bring immediately chaos. By their union and proper balance a state of equilibrium and law comes into being. It is because of the union of these two opposing forces that the exact position of the moon and earth and all of the planets in relation to the sun can be foretold for thousands of years. The mind can conceive of no object, circumstance or idea which does not fall into this triple category. If we think of the twin concept of Time-Space, the very conception includes a third element, a relationship which is their “measure”—whether we call it duration, distance or direction. When we think of our objective world as resting upon those twin pillars, Matter and Energy, we cannot shut from our mind the thought of a Law by which the two are inexorably joined. Again, as we think of our world as peopled by the countless types of living creatures, we find a law of polarity into male-female which is the guarantee of the preservation of the species. Throughout the infinite variety of living forms there is found this perpetuating trinity: father—mother—offspring.

Who is there that cannot say in his heart, “I am I,” or “I am the Self,” thus identifying himself by this statement with the very root of being? He looks out upon the universe about him and says, “That is not I.” As in his long evolution he dissociates himself more and more from his environment, he comes to the time when he looks upon his body, his emotions and even his mind as the “not-Self,” himself remaining ever that which is “within.” With an ever-increasing realization of this distinction, there evolves within his innermost being an increasing awareness of his true relationship with the world outside

him. The triangle, thus, becomes the measure of this relationship between the “Self” and the “not-Self” in terms of an expanding consciousness.

Expand this idea to embrace the infinite. When God, the Universal Father, wills to send forth into a world, already prepared through aeons of geologic evolution, Fragments of Himself to become the Seeds of a future humanity, there was inherent within each Fragment the desire or urge towards an eventual re-union with its Source. For long ages, through the lower grades of life, this urge was but dimly felt, so deeply buried was it within the struggles for primitive existence. Gradually this urge began to assert itself in feeble gropings after the “unknown” and in faint glimmerings of a “beyond” and of a “hereafter.” The first primitive religious instinct grew out of these gropings. Down through the ages as mankind evolved, this instinctive desire to search for his origins and to find a destined goal grew into an absorbing passion. The Fragment which came forth from the Father, like a seed, contained within itself the promise of an ultimate fulfillment. As a spring of hope welling up eternally from within the heart of man, this urge of the self to unite or to be “bound back” to its Source is the hidden theme of every religion. Herein is revealed another triangle of relationship: God—man—religion.

From this a plan evolves which is universal. It is inherent in all things. It takes shape in the objective world and within our own consciousness. It is the pattern by which all things come into being, both subjectively and in the world outside of us. It is the method of creation, whether in the mind of Deity or of man. Even our most abstract thought



follows the lines of this threefold pattern, for there must be the thinker, the thought, then the thing thought about. This is the eternal Triangle. We visualize the One Life or Spirit as a Point of Being entering the Circle of Manifestation. We visualize also this line of motion as taking two directions as it enters the circle, to form the apex of a triangle. However far these two diverging lines may travel within the circle of manifestation, there

exists a definite law of relationship between them. Each line will represent the two aspects of being: positive and negative, spirit and matter, or force and matter, etc. From this division of the one into two there comes the urge to re-unite. This urge or law would form the third side or base of our triangle. Thus our first geometric figure becomes the universal gauge or measure of every creative act, whether that act pertains to the world of things or the world of consciousness.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HINDU TRIMURTI

The religion of the people of India, more than that of any other race or nation, ancient or modern, is closely identified with its philosophy. Basically, it may be stated, their religion was and is their philosophy, and *vice-versa*. While it is true that on its lower levels, the many, and to us, strange gods of their religion, present to the western mind a confusion and complexity, nevertheless, it must never be forgotten that, even to the lowest caste Hindu, every deity not only personifies certain elements of Nature and principles of being, but are symbols, in its many phases of manifestation, of an ultimate reality.

For the religion of India, whether Hinduism, Buddhism or Jainism, is in its truest sense monotheistic. Ask any Hindu who God is, and his answer will be something like this: "The Unknowable Cause, the One Absolute Principle, the Ultimate Reality behind all manifestation," or simply "THAT." No scientist, however materialistic, could quarrel with that definition. Despite his gods, many and strange, the Hindu sees them as phases or aspects of the One Reality; and, though he may worship and reverence Deity under many names and guises, he recognizes in each a mode of expression of Absolute Being.

However, upon this simple statement of belief, there rests a complex superstructure of what seems to the occidental mind to be nothing less than superstition and idolatry. In order, therefore, to properly evaluate this religion-philosophy, particularly in its relation to our subject, we shall try to classify or correlate certain of the deities with states or stages of manifestation, and to indicate ways in which they fulfill, or shall we say, prove the universality of the pattern of the interlaced triangles.

It would be useless, not to say confusing at this time, to attempt to enumerate the many names attributed to Deity—names handed down through ancient Vedas and Puranas, and often hardly distinguishable from names given to the Avataras and Sages. From among the names or titles of Deity, three stand out quite distinctly as being the

three representative aspects of the ONE, namely, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Shiva. The first of these names, while the most widely known in the west as in the east, is the most difficult to describe adequately. The root from which Brahm or Brahma is derived signifies growth or expansion. Hence it could include the ideas of emanation and evolution.

Indeed, the term *Brahma* has two interpretations, which are quite distinct from each other. If we transcend all manifestation and try to find the root of existence, the Causeless Cause of action and the source of all that is, and is to be, we come to “THAT” which has neither beginning nor ending, and is beyond both time and space. It is the Substance behind or within all manifestation, and the Being (Be-ness) beneath all substance. It (He) is the ONE, Uncreated, the Unborn, whom the Hindu calls Brahman or Brahma (always written in this sense in the neuter with a short final “a”). From this Brahma, the Absolute, there appear three: Brahmā, Vishnu, and Shiva, often referred to as the “Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer” of the universe.

BRAHMĀ

Here we have the term *Brahmā*, with the long final “ā” signifying the masculine, as representing the Creative Aspect of Deity, as distinct from Brahma (neuter) as expressing Pure Being. Henceforth, in this study, it will be Brahmā (masculine), the Creator, who will be meant in references to that title. As Creator, Brahmā is the divine Thinker, from whose mind is projected the images or prototypes of all things that are to be. (Compare Genesis 2: 5: “The Lord God made . . . every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.”) He is the Great Artificer, and Architect of the universe. He is the Divine Alchemist, building in His laboratory the atoms of the elements and establishing the laws of their activity and relationships. The ancient Greeks called this process the “Forge of Vulcan.” He is moreover the force behind the evolutionary process in Nature; and on a higher level the intelligent principle in all forms of life, the divine fire of creative thought. While the work of Brahmā is particularly associated with the laws and relationships of things in the physical universe, in the higher realms His power is manifested in the relationship between minds, as Intelligence or Understanding.

VISHNU

Much of the culture of the early Aryan race has been lost to us; and what has reached us has been by way of some of the most profoundly beautiful poetry the world has known, the Vedas and Puranas.

For ages handed down by word of mouth these hymns to the gods were finally committed to writing centuries before the Christian era. As sublime a philosophy as the human mind has been able to conceive has, through these ages, lain hidden beneath an intricate maze of symbol and allegory. One of these ancient hymns was dedicated to the God Vishnu and was called the *Vishnu Purana*. Its colorful language describes the God as having incarnated under many names and forms. Significantly, one of the forms by which He is portrayed is the “fish.”

H. P. Blavatsky, writing in *The Secret Doctrine*, says that the Brahmanas connect their “Messiah,” the eternal Avatara Vishnu, with the sign of the Fish and of the Deluge. The Great Deluge, according to her, shows humanity alone on “Earth in the Ark of salvation towed by Vishnu in the shape of a monstrous fish.”⁹⁶ This symbol should not seem too strange to the western world, since the Bible contains many allusions to the sign of the “fish” and the “sea.” Significantly, this symbol enters frequently in the life story of Jesus. The esoteric student will find in the story of the feeding of the multitude with “fishes” a deeper meaning than appears on the surface. The story of Jonah being swallowed by a “big fish” is obviously symbolical. Joshua, a prototype of Jesus, was the son of Nun, the word meaning a “fish.” It is recorded that the early Christians in the catacombs of Rome were known to each other by the sign of the “fish”; and to this day the bishop’s mitre has the shape of a “fish’s head.”

In some of the stories in the Puranas, Vishnu is pictured as riding upon a seven-headed Serpent or Dragon, which carries Him through a “manvantara” from “pralaya” to “pralaya.” The serpent or dragon universally is the symbol of Wisdom. Again the Purana relates that Vishnu “strides through seven spheres of the universe in three strides.” H.P. Blavatsky goes on to suggest that the seven spheres are seven rounds, seven aeons, or seven planes; the “three strides” represents the falling of the Logos as a ray of light,

⁹⁶ *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, 3rd Ed., Vol. II, pp. 326–7.

first into the spirit, then into the soul, and then into the physical form. Or perhaps in a more esoteric sense, the “three strides” may hint at the “Unknowable becoming the One, the One becoming many, and the many again becoming One.” The ancient Aryans regarded the triangle with its apex pointing down as the symbol of Vishnu, or God in incarnation.

The name Vishnu comes from the root *vish*, meaning “to pervade” or “to enter into the nature of the essence.”⁹⁷ Hence Vishnu is the God incarnate—both in Nature and in human form. He is the Divine Spirit, both as an abstract principle and as the Preserver and Generator of Life. He is thus associated with the “Son” or the “Second Person” of the Christian Trinity.

SHIVA

Shiva represents Deity in its purest spiritual nature. It is He who sends forth into the world of manifestation Fragments of Himself, as seeds bearing within themselves in embryo the pattern of His likeness and the essence of His nature. In the Puranas He is called “The Great Destroyer.” In *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky writes, “Shiva, the Destroyer, is the Creator and the Saviour of Spiritual Man, as he is the good gardener of Nature. He weeds out the plants, human and cosmic, and kills the passions of the physical, to call to life . . . the spiritual man.”⁹⁸ He destroys things under one form, to recall them to life under another more perfect type.

In the great cycle of “outbreathing” and “in-breathing,” with the passing of a “manvantara” or “day of Brahma,” Shiva withdraws His life from the world of manifestation, and all forms “die.” Hence He is known as “The Great Destroyer.” In a lesser cycle, at the close of an incarnation, the spirit withdraws from its vehicle, and the body “dies.” In this sense, the spirit in man may also be called his destroyer.”

Brahmā—Vishnu—Shiva thus represent the supreme triangle of Hindu trilogy, with Brahma, the Unknowable or Absolute, as the central invisible point. In comparing this Hindu Trinity with the Christian Trinity, we note that in the Hindu the order is reversed: that is, the usual listing of the Christian Trinity is “Father, Son and Holy Ghost” or “First,

⁹⁷ *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, 3rd Ed., Vol. I, p. 37.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 495.

Second and Third Persons,” but the order of the Hindu Trinity would be “Brahmā, Vishnu, Shiva.” This is most significant, for as we shall see later in the Work of the Trinity, it is Brahmā or the Holy Ghost, whose action as the “Creator” comes *first* in the divine order of manifestation.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE THREEFOLD UNIVERSE

It must not be thought that the Hindu remains perpetually in the clouds of speculative and theoretical philosophy as expressed through the media of strange deities veiled in allegory. His knowledge of psychology, embracing as it does the nature of the universe and of man—the universe as a manifestation of spiritual principles, and man as an individualized fragment of those same principles—dwarfs our modern gropings into the unknown. The great handicap for modern scholars is their difficulty in getting behind the meanings of Sanskrit terms, plus an inability through ignorance or unwillingness to penetrate what seems to him a maze of superstition and allegory. When we remember that the Puranas and the Upanishads in which this knowledge is buried were ancient before the beginnings of our recorded history, we pause in wonder that wisdom so profound could have been lost to the human race for so many centuries.

Continuing our studies on the Indian Triangles, we descend from the realm of the “gods” to consider the universal order. Here we find that the threefold pattern of classification extends throughout all manifestation down to its densest state. We also discover that there exists a very definite and real correspondence between the divine Trinity and these mundane triplicities on denser levels. However, on these lower levels there is no idea of deification. Incalculable ages before the Christian era, the ancient Aryans had a conception of the universe transcending our present-day accepted theories. They also had a knowledge of psychology not yet attained in our age. They pictured the universe as divided into three states or worlds, the world of *Sat*, the world of *Chit*, and the world of *Ananda*. Moreover, they identified each of these worlds or states of manifestation, with one of the three phases of Deity: *Sat*, the world of Things, they associated with *Brahmā*; *Chit*, the world of Consciousness, they identified with *Vishnu*; and *Ananda*, the world or state of Bliss they related intimately with *Shiva*. This association or relationship between the divine world of causes and the phenomenal world of effects is aptly symbolized by the intertwined triangles. The upper triangle,

symbol of the Divine Trinity, Brahmā, Vishnu, Shiva, is reflected in the lower triangle of manifestation, Sat, Chit, Ananda. Ages later, Greece, at the peak of her culture, visualized the universe as consisting of two halves: a divine world of causes, sometimes called the “Noumenon,” and the nether world of effects, called “Phenomena.” And within or above the two there was the “Nous,” the Self or Pure Being.

SAT

Consider Sat, the material universe. In a previous study we saw that science recognizes three qualities or characteristics in matter, namely: stability, mobility and rhythm or inertia, energy and law. The Hindu equivalents are: Tamas, Rajas and Sattva. In the early Sanskrit writings, these three characteristics of matter were called the *Gunas*. Let us look at these terms more specifically. The term *gunas* and the Sanskrit names of the three qualities contain a more comprehensive meaning than what their English equivalents imply. For instance, Tamas represents the lowest of the three characteristics of Sat. It is matter’s densest quality, hence it implies hardness, darkness, obstruction or resistance. Therefore, while in its purely physical aspect it expresses stability and inertia, on higher levels of consciousness these qualities are recognized as: sloth, apathy, stubbornness, stagnation—the negation of will.

The second “guna” or characteristic of Sat is Rajas. Here again, the term for that quality which modern science calls mobility or energy contains a more comprehensive meaning. On the physical level it is the force or energy inherent in every form, whether living or “dead.” Science claims that there is no such thing as “dead matter.” It is the force that resides in the atom. It is the power within every form capable of producing motion and change. Without this power there could be neither growth nor evolution. On the level of consciousness, rajas may be expressed as restlessness, discontent, ambition and the urge to action or change.

The third of the “gunas” is Sattva. Just as modern science sees in every particle of matter two opposing forces, inertia and energy and between them a relationship or balance which it calls rhythm or law, so we have the triangle which is Sat, formed on one side by tamas and on the other by rajas, completed by sattva, as balance, rhythm or law. “Nowhere in all the world,” says Professor Ernest Wood in *The Seven Rays*,

“can matter or energy be found without the exhibition of some law which determines the body’s activity and its relation with other bodies Every object,” he continues, “contains all of the three gunas, but one predominates and gives it its outstanding quality.” At the human level, sattva is the quality which gives balance to restraint and action, often expressed as patience and endurance. It may be recognized as self-restraint, controlled emotions, mental alertness, poise or taste.

CHIT

The diamond pattern continues to unfold before us. In the universal triangle of Sat—Chit—Ananda, we have Sat, the lowest of the three orders, which in turn, as we have shown, is itself a triangle whose three sides are tamas—rajas—sattva. We should, therefore, also expect to find Chit, the second universal principle, as finding its expression through three modes or phases. Chit is a generic term implying consciousness. Modern students find it hard to disassociate consciousness from the brain. The ancients recognized a thought-world as distinct and real as the world of matter. Plato taught his pupils that an archetypal world anteceded the mundane world in the creative process. For lack of more original choice of words, we may think of Chit as “Universal Consciousness.”

We are used to thinking of consciousness as a negative or passive quality. That is, we think of it as an awareness or realization within the mind of something which exists outside the mind. The ancients saw in consciousness an activating power as well as an act of perception. There is a sending out as well as the reception of something coming in. Consciousness, they taught, was a creative power as well as an act of cognition. It is perhaps not so easy to see this in its universal aspect, as it appears patently when operating through an individual mind.

However, the truth of this claim becomes evident when we consider Chit in its three modes of expression, called by the early Aryans *Ichha*, *Jnana* and *Kriya*. Consciousness in its highest mode of expression is *Ichha*, which is interpreted as will. *Jnana* is Wisdom. Its lowest mode of expression is *Kriya*, interpreted as Activity, or more accurately, Creative Thought. While these three modes refer to consciousness, each also possesses a power peculiar to itself. Thus *Ichha*, turning inward, is conscious of the

Self; turning outward, it is the power of Will. Its characteristic is bliss. Jnana as wisdom is conscious of others. Its characteristic is sympathy, and its outgoing power is Love. Kriya interpreted as Activity is, in its passive aspect, a consciousness of the external world with its laws and relationships. Its characteristic is understanding. In its dynamic aspect it is the power of Creative Thought—the power to change not only the self but the whole external world.

We have here set up a series of trinities or triangles, interlaced and interpenetrating, from which there appear definite correspondences creating an almost endless series of interrelationships. Thus Iccha (will) through Ananda (the self) is related to Shiva; Jnana (wisdom) through Chit (consciousness) is related to Vishnu; and Kriya (activity) through Sat (matter) is related to Brahma.

SHIVA

And yet the lines of relationships reach beyond this simple statement. Shiva on His highest plane of manifestation becomes Ananda, which is Bliss. Expressed through Chit (consciousness), while He is particularly at home on its highest level, as Iccha or pure Will, yet on the lower levels of consciousness He becomes decision and desire. Working through Sat, the external world, Shiva appears as motion or action, that is to say, action with purpose or direction. Hence on the physical plane, ritualism, which is ordered action, becomes especially an instrument of Iccha, Will.

VISHNU AND BRAHMA

Vishnu, finding His natural expression through Chit, the world of consciousness, becomes Love-Wisdom, which is the very essence of Jnana. That same power, coming down into the world of Sat, finds its expression as compassion and philanthropy. Similarly the power of Brahmā, expressing itself through Chit as Kriya, is seen as thought-power or creative intelligence. The same power turned outwardly through the world of Sat, becomes knowledge and understanding.

It is through the union and intricate combinations of the three aspects of consciousness in infinite degrees of relationships with the three qualities of matter that the innumerable forms of life upon our planet are differentiated. It will be understood,

too, that in the human realm, the interplay of the three phases of consciousness (will, love, intellect) upon and through the physical instrument, conditioned by the varying influences of the three qualities of matter become a determining force in shaping and moulding our personalities. If we think in terms of the universal, we visualize the Trinity, Brahmā—Vishnu—Shiva reflected in or expressed through a lower trinity of Sat—Chit—Ananda. We see two triangles super-imposed, one pointing upward and the other downward. Again, in terms of the mundane or objective world, we visualize an upper triangle Iccha—Jnana—Kriya (will—wisdom —activity) super-imposed upon the downward pointing triangle Tamas—Rajas—Sattva (stability—energy—rhythm) to form a six-pointed star. In each case, this double triangle tells the story not only of their many correspondences, but also of their union. For within the upward pointing triangle there is an invisible center, uniting and permeating the whole, synthesizing and coordinating its parts. This center is Brahma, Absolute Non-differentiated Being. Within the downward pointing triangle there is an invisible center which is Ananda, the Supreme Self. The six is thus drawn into or synthesized in the seven, furnishing the key to the seven-fold pattern in the universe and in man.

Relationships, however, are infinitely more involved than those which can be so simply catalogued. Every conceivable degree and type of thinking, feeling and acting are the result of various combinations of interrelationships of these factors. It should be remembered, too, that each of the modes of consciousness as well as the qualities of matter is dual: that is, they may be expressed positively or negatively. For instance, the quality of stability or inertia as expressed physically implies hardness, darkness, obstruction, etc., may be seen mentally as sloth, apathy, stubbornness, stagnation (the negation of will), or in a positive way as determination, patience, steadfastness, intransigence, etc.

The tabulation shown on the following page may help in keeping these triplicities and their interrelationships clear:

TABULATION

GENERAL

The Divine:	Brahmā	Vishnu	Shiva
Universal Principle:	Sat	Chit	Ananda
World of:	Matter	Consciousness	Self

CHIT (WORLD OF CONSCIOUSNESS)

Modes of :	Kriya	Jnana	Iccha
Expressed as:	Thought	Wisdom	Will
Creative Power of :	Thought	Love	Will
Conscious of :	Things	Others	Self
Characteristic:	Understanding	Sympathy	Bliss
Related to:	Brahmā	Vishnu	Shiva

SAT (WORLD OF MATTER)

The Gunas:	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
Qualities of:	Law (balance)	Energy	Inertia
(or)	Rhythm	Mobility	Stability

CHAPTER XXIV

“THE HOLY TRINITY”

In approaching the subject of “The Holy Trinity,” one does so with a feeling of awe and humility. With awe, because the imagination staggers at the immensity of the concept. With humility, because the human mind can only leap upward in search of the Infinite, and like the waves of the sea, fall back again upon itself. Yet there is no greater glory which the mind can achieve than thus to leap upward in flights of imagination into the great unknown, if only to return to its own level of “proven fact.” It is only by this reaching outward, upward or inward into the unknown and unproven that new truths are discovered; and it is thus that the frontiers of knowledge keep ever expanding.

Upon such a subject as a “Divine Trinity,” we can in reality know nothing. We may only theorize, using a faculty higher than the mind. Yet how easy to crystalize such sublime conceptions into frozen dogmas. The human mind is prone to catalogue every idea that comes to it, and it does not hesitate to classify and define the Infinite. The great danger is that it builds a wall of finality around itself. The believer wants his “credo” wrapped up and labeled, “This is so-and-so.” The unbeliever rejects *in toto* everything that cannot pass the laboratory test. Both shut themselves smugly within walls of their own building. The imagination must be kept free to scale this barrier of dogma and established “fact” and to ascend into realms of infinitely increasing glory. The true seeker must, with increasing effort, keep from erecting fences around even his most spiritual concept, in order that the intuitive faculty may be free to discover new vistas of unspeakable grandeur and beauty. In the presentation of our subject, this thought must motivate all that is said, else the wonder of the conception of the Infinite become nailed upon a cross of words.

Our first conception of Deity must be predicated by the fact, or let us say idea, that *God is one*. Any thought of the Ultimate as having a partner or rival sharing or competing for dominion is untenable. Lesser deities or manifestations of Deity there

may be, but behind all manifestations, or as the Kabalists say “Emanations,” there must be the ONE UNMANIFEST, Absolute Being or Principle.

When we turn our thoughts to the subject of the Trinity, we come up against the problem of orthodoxy. The history of Christianity bears evidence to the blurring and clouding of the pure teachings of its Founder. Many and bitter have been the controversies of the Church’s theologians over the subject of the “Three Persons”; and the misunderstanding concerning the Christian Creed has resulted in intolerance and bigotry.

So we approach the idea of the Trinity or “Three Persons in one God” with an “open mind and an eager intellect.” One thing, which must strike the student of comparative religions as the outstanding characteristic of Christianity, is the idea of “Personality” as regards its concept of Deity. This does not mean that Christianity, through its purest teachings, portrays an anthropomorphic God—although this may not be said of many of its more zealous exponents. Some wit once said that “God created man in His own image, and man has been returning the compliment ever since.” And of course, in a real sense, that is all that he can do. To each person, God can be no more than that individual’s highest concept of Him. A fuller expansion of that conception opens to his awareness a realm of glory wherein God becomes the One Life, Infinite Mind or Universal Principle. Beyond this high concept, description of Deity awaits humanity’s further expansion of consciousness.

To say that Christianity is unique in its portrayal of God as a personality is not to infer that other great religions are lacking in the personal aspect of their deities. On the contrary, mythology is replete with the stories of gods and demi-gods who have assumed human form and took upon themselves human characteristics. Ancient India had her Avataras, and Incarnations of her Gods, Vishnu and Shiva. However, it remained for Christianity to give to the world its particular emphasis on the personal aspect of Deity. God became a loving Father, vitally interested in the affairs of His children, and taking an active participation in influencing and guiding their destinies. “Not a sparrow falleth” and “closer than hands and feet” are phrases that are indicative of this new personal attitude towards Deity. Jesus continually referred to God as “My

Father,” and gave to the world the prayer which is universally known as “Our Father.” His own relationship with God was as intimate as life itself. He said, “I and my Father are one.” In contrast, we find no such identification with Deity in the older religions. When we consider the many gods of the Greek pantheon, there is no doubt in anyone’s mind that these figures are purely allegorical. In ancient Egypt, Osiris, Horus, and Isis were looked upon as symbols of great cosmic processes and universal laws rather than as beings, in an individual sense.

The idea of God as a Trinity was not originally a part of the Christian doctrine. Certainly it was not prominent in the teachings of Jesus. While He made continual reference to God as Father, it was not until His farewell discourse to His disciples in the Upper Room did He speak of the “Comforter . . . even the Spirit of Truth . . . which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send . . . [who will] abide with you forever.” Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His disciples to “go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” St. Paul, in his Epistles, while not mentioning the word “Trinity,” developed the idea of the three members of the Godhead. Some scholars assert that much of St. Paul’s writings show influence of the Neo-Platonic school, in which he is said to have been an initiate. It was not until the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, during the development of that document of principles known as the *Nicene Creed*, that the idea of the “Trinity” or “Three Persons in One God” became definitely established as a Christian doctrine. Today it is universally accepted by the church, both Catholic and Protestant.

In order to rationalize the idea of “three Gods in One” so as to better meet the limitations of our understanding, and at the same time keep within the limits of this brief study, we shall consider the subject of the “Persons” of the Trinity from two points of view: first, the nature of their being; and second, their function or work in a field of manifestation—our universe.

It is significant that the very first reference to God in the Book of Genesis is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. “In the beginning Elohim brought into manifestation. . . .” It is most significant, and a fact entirely unknown, or else ignored by translators, that the word

Elohim is plural, and plural in Hebraic means *more than two*. Moreover, the word is both masculine and feminine. What can that mean? Surely it means that at the point or level at which Creation begins, the One Unmanifested Deity or Principle behind and beyond all manifestation appears as a plurality, and is neither male nor female, but rather contains within “Himself” the qualities or potencies of both. Occult tradition tells us that the “Elohim” represents a hierarchy of lesser deities, that is Logoi or Archangels, having to do with Cosmic creative processes.

In the Athanasian Creed, which is a later and more detailed edition of the Nicene document, there is the statement, “In this Trinity, none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another, but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.” Although this absolute equality of the “Three Persons” must be accepted as a truism, it is equally true that they present a vast difference in their nature and relationship with man. Likewise that part of the statement which says, “none is afore or after other” needs some qualification, for as we shall see later, with regard to the work of the Trinity in the creation and building of a universe, the element of time and sequence makes an appearance.

THE FATHER

The Father aspect of Deity most nearly represents pure Being. We can best describe His nature as “Spirit” and His expression as “Will.” He is the Kabbalist’s “Kether,” because He is the first emanation or differentiation from the Absolute. He is the Supreme, truly the Father, in that from Him, and from Him alone, emanate the “Divine Sons,” sometimes referred to as sparks from the Eternal Flame. These are the imperishable spirits which go forth from the Father’s home and take their journey “into a far country”—the incarnate souls which are earth’s humanity. There are no words in the English language which can adequately describe these fragments of God. The Greek word “Monad” comes nearest to expressing the full significance of these units of divinity. In the most realistic sense, all creatures are His children, for within each resides this “Spark” or “Seed,” which partakes of His very nature and essence. It is this divine “Will” within each individual self which is the inherent urge to grow, to progress, to evolve. This aspect of God is sometimes referred to as the “Destroyer,” for in the fullness of

time all forms are eventually resolved into their native elements, and these Monads, which in the highest sense are humanity, find ultimate reunion with the Father.

THE SON

The Second “Person” of the Trinity is usually referred to as “The Son.” He is, as the Nicene Creed states, “The only-begotten Son of God.” This particular phrasing has been responsible for much misunderstanding concerning the true state of His being. Charles W. Leadbeater in *The Christian Creed* interprets the original Greek as “the begotten only,” or “the alone-born,” which lifts it out of the realm of secular controversy. What can one say of Him whom untold millions worship, and by whom He is known as “The Christ?” In this Name lies the greatest mystery known to man; for the word *Christos* (Greek; meaning “the Anointed”) is in reality a title rather than a name, title of a great office in the Spiritual Hierarchy of the world. To understand this fully, is to understand the meaning of the Incarnation, of the “Word which was in the beginning . . . and was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Since He is God incarnate in human form, He thereby becomes Mediator between man and God. In His divine aspect, we describe Him as Life and Love—Life that permeates and sustains all forms; Love that unites all creatures, great and small, into one brotherhood. As the Father functions as Will on the Atmic or spiritual level, in like manner does the Son function as Love-Wisdom at the Buddhic or intuitional level. Whether we think of Him in His Cosmic aspect as the Second Logos, “by whose eternal sacrifice the universe is nourished and sustained,” or as that essence of God embodied in every human soul—if we hold in our mind His image as the “Word” Incarnate, the Lord of Love—we touch the mystery whereby the several layers, or shall we say phases, of His manifestation become so unified and interlocked as to be truly One Christ.

THE HOLY GHOST

When we come to describe the nature of the Third Person of the Trinity, we find ourselves at a loss for words. He is not so readily thought of as a “Person” as are the Father and the Son. We are inclined to think of Him vaguely as a kind of force or influence emanating from the Father. References to Him in both the Old and New Testaments as the “Spirit of the Lord,” the “Spirit of Truth,” the “Comforter,” etc., leave

our ideas indefinite. Certain physical phenomena are attributed to Him: the spirit of God upon the tongues of the prophets, the spirit descending as a dove at the baptism of Jesus, the “rush of a mighty wind,” and the “cloven tongues like as of fire “which” sat upon the disciples “at the day of Pentacost, followed by the speaking and understanding of strange languages. These are poetic and symbolic attempts at description, where realistic prose falters. And yet, by the use of that faculty which transcends the intellect, we may discover certain less obvious guideposts which clearly indicate that it is actually the Third Person of the Trinity which, both in His nature and in His function comes closer to mankind in a personal way than appears on the surface.

As the Father has to do with the Self or Spirit in the human being, and the Son, through the mystery of the Incarnation, reveals our relationship with God, it would not be difficult to accept the conclusion that the Holy Ghost, as the spirit of truth and understanding, is most intimately associated with our relationship with humanity and the world around us. In this connection it is significant to note that, while the Father aspect expresses itself primarily on the Atmic, (spiritual) level, the Son at the Buddhic (intuitional) level, the work of the Holy Ghost finds its channel through the third descending plane, the Manasic (higher mental) level, the world of abstract thought and pure reason. We recall that most abstruse statement in the above-mentioned Nicene Creed that though the Son was “begotten only of his Father before all worlds,” the Holy Ghost as the “Lord and Giver of Life, proceedeth from the Father and the Son.” Could it be that the framers of that famous document had some realization that the Three Persons of the Trinity revealed themselves respectively through three descending worlds of manifestation, and that the Third “Person” operated through the lowest of these planes—the one most intimately, and intricately, affecting humanity?

We carry our analogy to the point where it affects man humanity. The Father, we have seen, is the spirit in man and appears as will. The Son is the principle of the intuition and is expressed as love and wisdom. The Holy Ghost, especially associated with the Manasic principle, works through our mental faculties, anciently referred to as the “Fire of the Mind.” He is that phase of Deity which is often referred to as the “Divine Mind.” The world scene is His field of activity, and His method of influencing world affairs and guiding civilizations is through His creative images emanating from His own

plane of activity, the archetypal world. Our own higher mind, reaching upward into this world of ideas and ideals, brings these images down into the world of daily affairs. Thus does the influence of the Holy Ghost extend into every sphere of human activity: science, philosophy, art, literature, philanthropy, sociology—and even world politics. Surely no aspect of Deity could be closer to our personal lives.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ These separate aspects of the Trinity, in their relationship with man, will be considered more in detail in Chapter XXVI, “The Divine Image.”

CHAPTER XXV

THE WORK OF THE TRINITY

When we come to consider the work of the Trinity in its relation to the universe and its function in the process of creation and evolution, there appears the element of time or sequence. It is difficult for us to conceive of activity without time, and if to the Infinite the creative processes may occur as one simultaneous act, to us down here they must appear to follow in sequence. Our idea of time in relation to the work of Deity at such high levels must be due to the fact that our consciousness is limited by time. We see a series of events as though flashed upon a screen by a cinema projector. What to us seems motion in time is in reality a series of stills flashed consecutively upon the screen. Yet these pictures were on the roll of film, both before and after being projected on the screen. This illustration should not be carried too far, however, or we get ourselves entangled in the controversial doctrine of pre-destination. Fascinating as that problem is, it has no place in the present study.

The point to be stressed is that, while the "Eternal Now," at the divine level, may include past, present and future, to us the creative process necessarily appears as a succession of events. When we consider God as Absolute Being, we conceive of the Eternal without beginning or ending. However, when we consider His work as a Trinity, in its function in the creating of a universe, this work must be described as three distinct acts or "outpourings," referred to in Theosophical literature as the "three life waves." It is significant that, in the order of Their work in this creative process, the Third Person of the Trinity appears first.

WORK OF THE THIRD LOGOS

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." With this simple statement, opens the Book of Genesis, and the story of the origin of our solar universe and of life upon this planet. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In this cryptic statement is expressed the formula for the first act in the universal process of creation. It would be impossible to do more than suggest in brief outline this

tremendous process. Care must also be exercised in order that the mechanics of the procedure does not completely overshadow the living spirit which moves it. To those who are scientifically minded, however, a study of the details of the creative processes is most important to an understanding of the work of the Triple Logos in the universe. It would, moreover, help to remove any thought of conflict between our highest scientific discoveries and the broadest interpretation of religion. It will be helpful also in some instances to bring in certain Sanskrit terms where modern words seem inadequate.

In the above quotation, the word *waters* is used neither in a literal nor a poetic sense, but symbolically to represent that universal substance which fills all space. The Sanskrit word for this substance is *Mulaprakriti*, meaning “root matter.” Could the mind conceive a substance so utterly attenuated as to be free of vibration or motion, no more descriptive word could be coined than the *void*—“and the earth was without form and void.” Scientists have called this substance the “ether of space.” In occult writings, the term *virgin matter* or *virgin sea* has been symbolically applied, meaning that this substance has not yet been impregnated with the life-giving germ or spirit.

In his *First Principles of Theosophy*, C. Jinarājadāsa wrote: “Before the Logos began the work of the system, He created on the ‘plane of the Divine Mind,’ the system as it was to be from the commencement to the end . . . all the ‘archetypes’ of forces and forms.” His first act was motion or vibration. The Holy Ghost “moved” upon this root matter—this *mulaprakriti*—and there appeared first what may be described as whirling vortices of force. These are literally “holes in space.” These whirling centers of force become more and more complex. It is said that each vortex or spiral is formed of “positive and negative lines of energy,” and that these spirals combine in definite mathematical ratios to form “spirals of spirals.” Thus descending, or condensing, these “spirillae” form the six lower planes of Nature, becoming upon reaching the lowest level, what are today known as “atoms,” the “fundamental units of physical matter.”

Thus were seven great planes of Nature, each with its seven subplanes, created out of combinations of vortices of force—these force centers being actually “points of consciousness” of the Third Logos. This action, on the lowest level, created what

Science calls the chemical elements. This entire process of the “descent” of the Holy Ghost (Third Logos) is called the “First Outpouring.”¹⁰⁰

In *The Christian Creed*, C. W. Leadbeater wrote: “The result of the first great outpouring is the quickening of that wonderful and glorious vitality which pervades all matter (though it may seem inert to our eyes) so that the atoms of the various planes develop, when electrified by it, all sorts of previously latent attractions and repulsions, and enter into combinations of all kinds, thus by degrees bringing into existence all of the lower subdivisions of each level, until we have before us in full action the marvellous complexity of the seven times seven or forty-nine subplanes. So is the Holy Ghost so beautifully described in the Nicene Creed as ‘the Lord and giver of Life’.”

The work of the Holy Ghost in His creative activity is a never-ending, continuous process. Thus the very matter of our universe is constantly evolving to become ever more responsive to the Divine Will, more sensitive to His thought-emotional currents, more capable of forming finer bodies for the indwelling Life.

WORK OF THE SECOND LOGOS

The Second Person of the Trinity is so closely associated in the minds of Christians everywhere with His earthly manifestation as Jesus the Christ that it is difficult to think of Him as separate from this personal aspect. And yet what we know of Him in His life in Palestine, wonderful as that concept is, is quite infinitesimal in relation to His great work in the universal scheme of things. For aside from His work for mankind as Mediator, Healer, Saviour, etc., He has a work to do in the whole universe of which we can only speculate. Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work,” and again He said, “Verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” These statements, put into the mouth of Jesus by the disciple John, infer an identity between Jesus as a person and the Cosmic or Universal Christ. Indeed the entire Gospel of St. John is written in the light of this mystic relationship. This Gospel opens with that profound utterance, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him. . . . In Him was life. . . .” Behind this cryptic statement there lies a sublime truth. It is indeed a statement of the work of the Second Aspect of God, the

¹⁰⁰ *First Principles of Theosophy* by C. Jinarājādāsa, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar.

Second Logos or “Word.” In this simple statement is contained the entire process of involution and evolution—of life descending into matter, and again, completing the arc at its lowest level, ascending out of matter on its return to God. In it is contained also the mystery of the Divine Incarnation—of God becoming man in order that man may become divine.

We begin our detailed sketch of this descent of the “Word,” at the point where we left off our description of the work of the Third Logos. The “ether of space” has, by the action of the Holy Ghost, been made into living matter; that is, atoms and elements out of which are to be evolved the bodies of all living things. There follows the “Second Outpouring” or the “second life wave.”

The life of the Second Logos, as it descends through the first four higher planes, giving to the matter of those planes His own life, is called in Theosophical literature, “Monadic Essence.” Into this Essence He implants the images or prototypes of all living things which are in the course of time to emerge as forms of life in the physical world. We recall again that statement in Genesis that “the Lord God created every plant of the field *before* it was in the earth.” As this life wave, in its downward sweep, reaches the higher mental world, it is called the “first elemental essence.” It is here that the thought forms of things-to-be begin to become differentiated. The life wave continues its descent. When it reaches the lower mental world of concrete thought it is called the “second elemental essence,” and on the astral level the “third elemental essence.” Upon reaching the densest physical level, this living “essence” is found to be buried deep within rock and mineral. Here is reached the nadir or turning point of the great arc. This downward sweep of the life wave is the involutory process. It is a law of the occult world that without involution there could be no evolution.

Thus the living image of every form which is later to be “evolved” lies buried as a seed in the densest matter. We recall the words of Jesus (John 12: 24), “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Had Charles Darwin known something of the vast scope of this downward sweep of the life of God in this involutory process, he would have seen that here indeed is the “origin of the species.” So it is in a universal way that the “Word” or “Son descended

into earth, in order that, by “His Eternal Sacrifice,” all creatures may have life. From His burial and resurrection came the world of living things. In this sense truly He dies that we might live. We may say without irreverence, and in a way applicable to all Nature, that His resurrection is the process that we call evolution. For observe what happens. The life of the Second Logos, descending into the physical elements, gives to them the power to combine in an infinite variety of organisms and forms, “after the pattern in the mount.” From these combinations came what we know as physical matter, with its infinite productive capacities. First crystals are formed in rock with mathematical precision, following definite geometrical patterns. Thus life lies dormant in the mineral—buried so deeply within matter that it truly seems to be dead.

Then over a period of time, measured by geological ages (actually in occult measurement a “Round”) vegetation appears. The number and variety of forms or species now begin to multiply rapidly. Faintly at first, but becoming more discernible in higher forms of plant structure, the slumbering life, dreaming deeply, sends out faint thrillings in response to environmental stimuli. Another age or “round” passes, and the life rises into another form more suitable for continued progress, the animal. Here the sleeping consciousness begins to awaken as desire, and we find the rudimentary instincts of hunger, fear and self-preservation, appearing in higher animals as loyalty, devotion and self-sacrifice. Finally the intellect, awakened by these rising emotions, pushes outward against the limitations of the form in an effort to give expression to the surging life within. Feelings, emotions and thoughts clamor for articulation. Then the great miracle occurs.

WORK OF THE FIRST LOGOS

How can one describe this third great act in the divine drama of creation? It has been called the “Third Outpouring” or the “third life wave.” But these terms seem matter of fact and leave us unmoved. Actually it is the coming of the “Sons” of God. Into the bodies, which have as indicated above already been prepared by the work of the second life wave to be fit dwellings for the divine Spirit, there now enter these emanations of God’s own nature. Poets, philosophers and occultists of all ages have attempted to picture this tremendous event. These are the “Sparks from the Eternal

Flame,” which smolder in every human breast, one day to burst into living fire. These are the “Fragments” of the Father, which in the fullness of time will be gathered together, and re-united with Him. The Holy Eucharist hints at this great mystery in the breaking of the Bread, and in the repeating of the declaration “in remembrance of Me.” For since by this ritual He has been symbolically dismembered, that is “broken,” we therefore, by the act of communion, cause those “broken” fragments to be re-united or re-membered.

Again, these are the “Prodigal Sons” who left the Father’s home to travel “into a far country.” This act of the coming of these Sons is the fulfilment of the statement in the first chapter of Genesis, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.” This is the true Self in every man, the Monad which abideth forever. The Bhagavad Gītā calls these Monads the “Shining Ones, . . . indestructible, unborn, perpetual, ancient . . . birthless and deathless and changeless.”

An earnest contemplation of this mystery brings to light many ideas which our intuitive faculties readily recognize as truths. For instance, from the foregoing, the doctrine of the “Immanence of God” follows naturally from the conclusion that His life is in the atom, as it is to an infinitely greater extent in every human being.

Again, this descent of the life of the First Logos brings to mind the realization that by this act, a tremendous step is taken in the evolving life. That conscious life which came up in the highest animal form as a “group-soul” steps from the animal kingdom into the human. That is, the “group-soul,” comprising fewer and fewer individual units, comes to the point where further advancement by its own effort is impossible. It is then that the hovering Divine Spirit enters the animal “group-soul,” which now consists of a single unit—and an individual soul is born. Symbolically, the soul has been likened to the chalice, into which is dropped the divine fragment or “Host.” This is the “Holy Grail” of “Round Table” fame. Occultly, this is the process of individualization, referred to as the “first birth”—the “second birth” being that great event at the other end of his long pilgrimage when, after certain degrees of spiritual perfection, man enters a new world, the world of Adepts or Saints.

This is another truth of which Darwin did not dream—that man, the true self, is a “fragment” or “seed” of Divinity implanted in an animal body, prepared for this event through its long period of evolution. This knowledge would have established forever the source of man’s real origin, and dissolved as a fallacy, the theory of a “missing link.” Here truly is a concept worthy of the glory of man’s eventual goal.

One final thought emerges from our contemplation of this mystery. The Second Person of the Trinity is, as we are told in the Christian Creed, the “Son, begotten only of the Father, before all ages.” In like manner, though infinitely lesser in degree, are these fragments or monads “begotten only of the Father,” establishing as true the statement (accepted popularly only in a mystical sense) that He (Christ) is indeed our “Elder Brother.”

Our consideration of God as a Trinity could remain in the realm of pure speculation until we establish a relationship between man and God. This relationship once accepted, at least in theory, opens up a vast new field of research into man’s own inner being, and the nature of the faculties and powers inherent within him. This will be the field of our research in the next chapter of the Triangles.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DIVINE IMAGE

And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Genesis 1: 26

We have heard or read this statement so many times that its full impact leaves us untouched. Even students and theologians give it only a poetic or figurative interpretation. And yet no statement in the Bible can have a more thrilling or intimately personal meaning to us. That we are made in the image and likeness of God can dawn upon our consciousness only gradually and by oft-repeated meditations and intense inner searchings. For here is suggested a relationship between man and God which transcends every human definition, that man is like God, His own image! Could he live in the constant realization of that truth, man would re-create this earth into something infinitely more beautiful and good; and it is the consummation of this realization, which is the purpose and essence of every religion.

It is quite obvious that the above quotation does not refer to man as we see him—that is, as a personality consisting of a physical body, having sensations, emotions, and a mind. For if man is an image of God, that image must give some hint as to the nature of God. Tennyson's lines come to mind:

Little flower—if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

The trouble lies in the fact that we are trying to learn what man is only with the aid of a scalpel and microscope. St. Paul hints at the truth of the matter in I Cor. 15: 44. He says, "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." This suggests the idea that man is not his body, that indeed he has two bodies, one through which he functions on the physical level, and one through which he functions on the spiritual level. Elsewhere St. Paul says that man is a "spirit, soul and body." (I Thes. 5: 23) Obviously he meant that man is a being like unto spirit, manifesting in the higher realms as a soul, which in

turn expresses itself in the physical world through a body. This conclusion, so simple in statement, requires certain amplifications.

If we turn to the psychologist or the psychiatrist for an answer to the question, "What is man?" we find ourselves bogged down in the realm of the subconscious, from which there seems to be no escape. Or, if we take all of the qualifications, characteristics and powers as catalogued by those sciences, and add them together, their total does not fulfill our definition of man. It is true that scientists are making wonderful strides in understanding the human body and its intricate mechanisms. They can switch off his thinking process and substitute that of another. They can dominate his will, catch his thought without the aid of physical accessories; yet the source of his life, the mainspring of will, of love and of inspiration eludes them.¹⁰¹ If here and there they succeed in penetrating the final curtain, which separates the seen from the unseen, it is only to find a void which defies even the most sensitive instrument to measure.

If, however, we start with our opening quotation as a premise, then our highest concept of God must be reflected in our definition of man. It will be our purpose in this study to state, or at least to suggest, certain characteristics which may be common to God and man, in the hope that the discovery of such relationships will help us to learn "what man and God is."

In preceding studies in this series we affirmed that God, though essentially One, appears as a Trinity, known in the Christian world as Father-Son-Holy Ghost. We saw, moreover, that this threefold pattern is universal and may be observed throughout all manifestation, from the subjective world to the densest physical. It should naturally follow that this same pattern (of One in essence, Three in manifestation) holds true also in the human kingdom. The problem before us seems to be to find those characteristics in man as a threefold creature, which correspond with, or bear definite relationships to, God and His universe.

Our first task is to establish clearly what we mean by saying that man is a "spirit, soul and body." There seems to be no clear distinction between the terms "soul" and

¹⁰¹ Auto-suggestion and hypnosis have long been recognized as a means of probing man's sub-conscious state and of substituting, at least temporarily, the thought and will of the "agent" for that of the "subject."

“spirit.” Throughout the Bible the words “soul” and “spirit” are used interchangeably to mean that inner part of man which links him to his Creator. This is due, in part at least, to the translator’s use of the Hebrew words “Nepesh” and “Rauch.” “Nepesh,” usually translated “soul,” means “breath of life.” The symbolism in Genesis 2: 7 becomes clear: “The Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [nepesh]; and man became a living soul.” The word “Rauch,” however, is variously translated as soul and spirit. d’Olivet suggests that “Rauch” leans more to the “fundamental principle” of being. While “Nepesh” is associated with breath or air, “Rauch” suggests fire or the root of energy.¹⁰² This distinction will be evident as we go on.

Modern Christian teachings, in spite of St. Paul’s concise definition, are not too clear on this point. Perhaps the reason for this is that the distinction between spirit and soul is not specifically emphasized. While the church refers to the soul as that part of man which survives death and thereafter lives in some state of bliss or torment, it refers to the spirit more vaguely as a “gift of God.” St. Paul further made a clear distinction between these two words “soul” and “spirit,” when he said, “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last man Adam was made a quickening spirit” (I Cor. 15: 45). In the Hebrew, Adam is a generic term meaning man. In its material application it means literally, “red earth”; in its highest application it signifies the prototype of perfected manhood. Into the dense physical body there came the “breath” of God; and man became a “living soul,” *i.e.*, an intelligent articulate individuality. In the course of time, through the crucible of experience and the tremendous effort of the self to reach the highest, man becomes a “quickenning spirit,” *i.e.*, the spark of divinity is enkindled into a consuming flame. St. Paul called this realization the “second birth,” and the “second Adam” he identified with the Christos. As Jesus said “I and my Father are one,” so the soul of man becomes one with the eternal spirit.

The writings of the early Aryans in ancient India were very explicit in their description of the soul, and the distinction between it and the spirit of man becomes clear. To those ancient teachings we owe much for their clarification of the inner constitution of man. They held the “spirit” to be a fragment or ray of Eternal Being,

¹⁰² *Hebraic Tongue Restored*, translated by Nayan Louise Redfield.

whom we call the “Father.” This spirit contains within itself in embryo the qualities and potentialities of God, much as an acorn contains within its shell the pattern of the tree it is to become. This spirit (or Monad) is of the very essence of God having His potentialities as a threefold being. He is the true *son* of the Father—an emanation would be a more accurate term—His “image and likeness.”

This spirit, which for the sake of definiteness we shall during the balance of this chapter call “the Monad,” puts down three fragments or rays of himself into the planes immediately below his own natural home. We use the terms “above” and “below” figuratively to mean inner and outer, or rarer and denser. These three fragments of the Monad are referred to as “permanent atoms,” although infinitely rarer than the physical atom of science. It should be remembered that each of these three atoms expresses and embodies respectively the three principles of the Monad, which correspond in turn to the three aspects of the Deity.

The first atom, corresponding to the Father aspect, gathers about itself matter of the atomic or spiritual plane to form a body or vehicle for the principle called Atma or Will. The second atom, corresponding to the Son aspect, following the same process on the buddhic level, forms the vehicle for the principle of Buddhi, often referred to as intuition, or love-wisdom. Again the third atom, corresponding to the third aspect or the Holy Ghost forms a body on the higher mental level for the principle of Manas, or creative abstract thought. Thus these three vehicles, united into one, becomes the body for the triple spirit, technically called “Atma-Buddhi-Manas.” This body is referred to as the “Causal Body,” because it is the seat of all causation affecting the personality from within. It is what St. Paul termed the “spiritual body.”

This “spiritual body” with its indwelling triple spirit is the soul. It is sometimes referred to as the “higher self” while the personality is called the “lower self.” We call the soul of man the “Ego,” because its consciousness and its power are so far above the personality that we think of it as the “self.” And yet, in an ultimate sense, the soul is not the real Ego. The real Ego, the true “Self” is as far beyond the soul as the soul is above the personality. The true Self, the “I” is the Monad, the divine Spirit. All else are vehicles for his contact and work in the denser worlds of manifestation. He has gone out into

these lower worlds in order that his latent capabilities and powers may become fully developed, and that his consciousness may become awakened to his own divine nature. The only way to God is through the “Self.”

It is the soul or Ego which, in turn, comes down into physical incarnation, and a personality is born. This personality, likewise threefold, made up of mind, emotions and a physical body, becomes the vehicle or instrument of the soul in the objective world. Its consciousness becomes limited by this personality, through which it functions on the three lowest planes of Nature. Again and again, following the laws of karma and heredity, the soul is reborn in a new personality. The purpose, of course, of these many incarnations, is to awaken into activity his own latent potentialities through his contacts in the physical world. These manifold experiences of the personality, through the crucible of suffering and pain, become transmuted into the gold of wisdom and power; and the soul grows “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

To recapitulate: The Spirit is the Self, the eternal “I am,” the divine Spark. The soul is the vessel or body through which the Spirit, in his threefold nature, functions in the world of consciousness. The personality is in turn the body or vehicle of the soul in the objective world. What symbol could more appropriately express this “Divine Image” than the intertwining of the triangles—the upward pointing triangle representing the divine Trinity, the downward pointing triangle being the sign of the human triad as Spirit-Soul-Body. In the next chapter “As above, so below,” we shall endeavor further to unfold the pattern of the threefold nature of the soul itself and its relationship both to a Triune God and to His threefold universe. The Greek philosophers recognized this relationship, for they called man the microcosm or little cosmos, being a likeness in miniature of the macrocosm or great cosmos.

THE HOST AND THE CHALICE

However, before concluding this section dealing with divine and human relationships, it might be interesting to consider briefly the symbolism of the elements and vessels used in the ceremony of the Mass. We have the Host, the wine and water, the chalice and the paten. The Host is the divine Spirit, the Monad. The chalice is the

soul or causal body and the paten the physical body. In another sense, the Host is the Father. The wine (blood) is the life of the Son, the Second Logos, “by whose eternal sacrifice the universe is nourished and sustained.” Water, universally the symbol of manifestation, represents here the Holy Ghost. Wine and water “mingled together” in the chalice would typify the life of the Son and the energy of the Holy Ghost combined, within the human soul. Later in the ceremony, the breaking of the Host and dropping of a “fragment” into the chalice would be the symbol of the descent of the divine spark or Monad into the soul. Many other significant relationships may be recognized by one who broods meditatively upon this living symbol of the Holy Eucharist. Here too, the double triangle is the most apt symbol of a supreme mystery.

CHAPTER XXVII

“AS ABOVE, SO BELOW”

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

I John 5:7-8

It is said that architecture is frozen music. It might as truly be said that geometrical symbols are frozen ideas. In the lines quoted above, certainly the purity of their thought and the beauty of their expression is caught and held within the symbol of the interlaced triangles. Although the lines and angles which make up this figure may be fixed and rigid, through them, as a living theme, flow those ideas so sublime and so profound as to be instantly recognized as divine truth.

We now approach the supreme significance of the entwined triangles; ¹⁰³ for herein is contained the synthesis of relationships between God, man and the universe, and an unmistakable indication that they are essentially one. As the mind sees in this symbol and in its individual parts a series of correspondences and relationships, it comes to the realization that the whole is reflected within each part, even as each part is contained within the whole—that life and form are two aspects of the one Reality.

DIVINITY AND MANIFESTATION

We postulate, first of all, one Absolute Being or Principle behind all existence, expressing Himself as a Trinity of Three Persons or Aspects. Then we find this triplicity of causation reflected or imaged in a threefold universe. And we envision these two trinities, the above and the below, as bound together by a covenant of correspondences. It will be seen that the three aspects of Deity are directly associated with the three phases of the manifested universe, of which man is an integral part. We moderns think of our

¹⁰³ In the present study it will be necessary to make certain repetitions in order to establish clearly in our minds the many interrelationships. It is suggested that, if the reader would like to experience the satisfaction of seeing these correspondences fall into place, he draw two triangles superimposed, one pointing up and the other down, and place as many of the triplicities as he can on their respective angles.

universe from a strictly materialistic point of view. The early Aryan philosophers knew that manifestation embraced not only the physical, including the rarest matter of outer space, but also the innermost dimensions of consciousness. These sages visualized the entire universe as an emanation of Deity, and following the divine pattern, as falling into three overall classifications. First there was the Supreme Self, "Ananda," bearing the characteristics of God the Father and expressing the Divine Will. Then the world of Consciousness, "Chit," reflected or embodied the second aspect of God, the Logos or Word, and expressed the principle of Wisdom. And finally the objective world, known as "Sat," was associated with the third aspect of Deity, the Holy Ghost, and expressed the Divine Creative Activity.

MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM

In our preceding study under the title "The Divine Image," we considered man as a threefold being consisting of spirit, soul and body. Again and again we have affirmed that the statement "God made man in His own image" refers solely to the human spirit. The ancients called man the Microcosm (little cosmos), while the universe was the Macrocosm (great cosmos). If we accept the theory that there exists a definite relationship between God and His universe, should it seem strange to think of this relationship as extending between man and the universe of which he is a part, and that between the threefold nature of the one and the threefold nature of the other there exists a very definite and intimate linkage? The more deeply the consciousness penetrates the core of things, the greater the realization of this underlying unity.

GOD, THE UNIVERSE AND MAN

It will be our purpose in the present study to discover certain interrelationships which may suggest a basis for this unity. In the human spirit, the Monad, which is a fragment of God the Father, we see also a reflection of the universal Self, Ananda. We see the ego or soul of man as linked with the universal soul, the world of consciousness, called Chit; and both the individual and the universal as related to the second aspect of Deity. The most obvious linkage is that of the personality with the world of Sat, because each pertains to the objective world with which the third aspect of God is particularly associated.

This brief statement of relationships between God, man and the universe suggests to the mind that familiar mathematical formula, which we may state as follows: two propositions which are equal (related) to a third, are related correspondingly to each other. A little thought will show how revealing this formula of equation is as applied to our subject. For if we take our divine Trinity as our central proposition, we have its relationship to man on the one hand and its relationship to the universe on the other. The conclusion about these two sets of relationships is simple. Man as a trinity of spirit, soul, and body is intimately and correspondingly related to a universe which is also a trinity of Self, consciousness, and things.

THE UNIVERSE AND THE SOUL

This equation, though we may consider it the pattern, is but one of many to be discovered in the symbol of the interlaced triangles. We have seen that the soul or ego is a triad known as “Atma-Buddhi-Manas,” which is the true image of the divine Trinity, Father-Son-Holy Ghost. Again we have seen that the same three attributes of God find their expression through the three modes of consciousness—Iccha, Jnana, and Kriya. We may therefore with true sincerity paraphrase our opening quotation as follows: There are three that bear record in the world of consciousness, Iccha (Will), Jnana (Wisdom), and Kriya (Creative Intelligence); and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in the human soul: the principle of Atma (Will), Buddhi (Wisdom), and Manas (Creative Intelligence); and these three agree in one.

THE SOUL AND THE PERSONALITY

That the “heavenly man” is mirrored in the “earthly,” or that the inner world of consciousness is reflected in the outer world of things and of events has been the theme of poets and philosophers of all ages. It is the law of Nature that all reflections are inverted. In a similar sense this law holds good in the reflection of the higher in the lower. In the case of man, the highest principle of the ego, Atma or Will, while active in the mental and emotional vehicles, finds its particular field of expression in the physical body through its many phases of activity. The term “ordered service” is often applied to the perfect expression of the inner principle of Will. Similarly the principle of Buddhi

finds its natural channel of expression through the emotional body, while Maim's functions directly through the mind.

THE PERSONALITY AND THE "GUNAS"

When we attempt to catalog the correspondences between the personality and the objective world, the problem is not so simple. The difficulty is due to the fact that the three qualities (gunas) of Sat are usually associated, in the mind of the modern physicist, with the three characteristics of matter, and pertain therefore only to the physical body. The Sanskrit words for the "gunas" have a more universal application, and apply to all states of manifestation. To the ancient Aryan philosophers of India the gunas were more than qualities of matter; they were modes of expression in the objective world, which includes the worlds of thought and of emotions as well as of physical matter. For it must be remembered that the entire objective world, extending to the highest mental levels, is yet matter. As previously stated, the three gunas are known as Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva and correspond respectively with the modern categories—stability, energy, and rhythm. While it must be accepted that each of the three qualities affect and are expressed through the mind, the emotions and the physical body, each nevertheless functions most naturally through one or other of the vehicles of the personality.

TAMAS AND THE PERSONALITY

For instance Tamas, whether interpreted as inertia or stability, is easily associated with the physical body, because its resistance to change and motion and being prone to follow grooves of habit is its most natural medium. And as the physical body with its activities is the special channel for the expression of Atma, Tamas could be thought of as the opposite polarity of Will. While stability or inertia is that force which tends to inaction, it is equally the force that tends to keep a body, once set in motion, going in a straight line. It is momentum, which resists the cessation of motion as much as it is the force which resists the starting of motion. A little thought will perceive these same qualities operative on the mental level. Evident as slothfulness and stubbornness, it is also seen in its positive aspect as determination and doggedness, which follows a course against all obstacles. It could represent a fixity of purpose which cannot be

thwarted or turned aside. It is therefore not difficult to associate this quality with the principle of Atma.

RAJAS AND THE PERSONALITY

Rajas is the opposite of Tamas; and represents internal energy which produces motion. It is an inner unrest which results in change. It is the urge towards perfection and the force behind evolution. In a definite sense, this force is particularly associated with the astral body. We know that the emotional level is fluidic and is the natural medium of unrest and change. It has been likened to the ocean in its eternal restlessness and its unrestrained energies—although distinction must be made between this inner positive energy pushing outward and the negative quality of the emotions stirred into activity by outside stimulus—as the waves of the sea are lashed into activity by the winds. Continuing this metaphor of the elements, the wind is an apt symbol of human thought; and the mind coupled with desire is equally the instrument of Rajas. E-motion means motion from within, and Rajas is that internal restlessness, that inner discontent and desire for growth and expansion. In the astral body the forces of repulsion and attraction find free expression. Yet the Will, with its silent energy operating through the mind and in turn through the physical actions, is an instrument of Rajas. Inherent in every particle of matter, it is the power recognized in explosion and expansion. It is the outgoing energy in the laws of growth operating in every living form. Rajas, as its name implies, is kingly. In a spiritual sense, we may associate Rajas with the outpouring power of God, which is the power of growth in all living things.

SATTVA AND THE PERSONALITY

Sattva, the third member of this lower trinity; represents law, rhythm, and balance. Like the other gunas, it operates through the whole personality. It is the balancing of the twin forces of inertia and energy. It is the principle which directs and gives purpose and direction to energy. We may assume that law finds its particular field of operation through the intellect, for law is an intelligent thing and operates on the level of human understanding. We might therefore conclude that Sattva is most closely related to man's mental faculty, which in turn is a reflection of Manas. And Manas, which is the soul quality of understanding is the balance wheel of rhythm and harmony in every field of

human expression. And yet, Sattva as stated above is operative on all levels. On the physical level it is the unseen law maintaining atoms and planets in their circuits and orbits. It is the balancing of the twin forces called centrifugal and centripetal which maintain the universe in equilibrium. On the higher spiritual levels it is seen as the synthesizing quality of wisdom and the unifying attribute of love.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

That there is a kinship between man and Nature has been the theme of poets from Virgil to Whitman. Indeed Nature has ever been affectionately referred to as Mother, even as spirit holds place in our thoughts as Father. It is from the union of these two Parents, that man is born. If it is held that man in his spiritual nature bears the image of his Father, should it seem unnatural that in his physical or outer nature he should also bear resemblance to his Mother? St. Paul certainly recognized this dual relationship when he said (I Cor. 15: 49), "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Truly the profundity and the sublimity of the many truths locked up in the symbol of the interlaced triangles surpass human understanding, and I suppose it is only through the faculty called the Intuition that we may discover and recognize them.

"There are three that bear record in heaven
There are three that bear witness in earth
And these three are one."

CHAPTER XXVIII

KING SOLOMON'S SEAL

The symbol of the interlaced triangles, known as “King Solomon’s Seal,” and popularly associated with Jewish commercialistic usages, extends the roots of its origins into antiquity. Anciently, it was the key to the most sacred, and secret, of mysteries, and the search for its lineage leads backward through fascinating and alluring by-paths.

As its name would indicate, King Solomon’s Seal, sometimes called the “Shield of David,” is intimately associated with Hebraic traditions—traditions, many of which as a heritage have been passed on to Christianity, and have been absorbed into its doctrines. The Old Testament, therefore, furnishes a common field of investigation into the sources of these traditions. We find that beneath the many allegories and symbols there exists an inner teaching, which significantly follows the pattern of the esoteric doctrine of all ages. The key to this discovery and interpretation may be found in this ancient symbol.

Early in the nineteenth century Fabre d’Olivet gave to the world his *Hebraic Tongue Restored*. Through his translation of the original Hebraic manuscripts of the first chapters of the Book of Genesis, he brought to light his astounding discovery that the “book” is not so much an account of the creation of our world and of the human race, as it is a formula of cosmic creation and evolution. This work became the incentive to many of the later critics of the Bible. Within the next century and a half there appeared here and there among the more intellectual churchmen those who added volumes of constructive criticism against a literal interpretation of the Old Testament. This trend was of course in line with the discoveries of modern science.

It is not our purpose, even if we had the space, to go into this phase of the subject. We may pause for a moment, however, to quote a sentence from Leonard Bossman’s *The Book of Genesis Unveiled*.¹⁰⁴ In this illuminating and well-documented book, he sums up the conclusions of many writers. He says, “The Old Testament stories are, in

¹⁰⁴ The Dharma Press, London.

many cases, myths containing truths relating mainly to creative periods of which the science of geology has as yet no knowledge. The first ten chapters of Genesis, as understood in the original Hebrew, is a symbolically written narrative—enshrining cosmic history and deep metaphysical truths.” The conclusion is that the books of the Old Testament were written in a cryptic language, most of them in allegory, some as poetry, some as codes of law, and a small percentage as actual history.

Probably the most extremely outspoken of modern Biblical students is Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn. His exhaustive research into ancient oriental religious origins and traditions led him to the conclusion that the Old Testament stories were in many instances literally copied from Egyptian, Chaldean, and Babylonian sources. He goes farther than his contemporaries by stating that, instead of geographical places and historical events having been used by these writers as a framework upon which to hand spiritual realities, exactly the reverse is true. He maintains that “the names of kings, heroes, cities, rivers, mountains, etc.,” and events pertaining thereto, “were on the uranograph long before they appeared on material maps” or Biblical history. “They were,” he says, “later transferred from the uranograph to the map” or were dramatized as factual history. The uranograph thus became a mold or pattern, and the “natural configuration” and historical events “reflect and fulfil the heavenly model.”¹⁰⁵

All of this may seem at first glance to be a digression from our theme. On the contrary it bears record to the corroboration of holy writ to our repeated assertion that the “pattern in the heavens” becomes reflected, or perhaps we should say projected, in the earth beneath. In Exodus 25: 40, and in Hebrews 8: 5, we find this significant statement, “See that thou make all things after the pattern shown thee in the mount.” The word “mount” unquestionably refers to a state of high spiritual exaltation. Again in Genesis 2: 5, we read this cryptic statement, “The Lord God made . . . every plant or the field *before it was in the earth.*”¹⁰⁶

We touch here the very secret of the creative process. Every objective thing was first an image in the mind of God. As stated in the ancient maxim, “as above, so below,”

¹⁰⁵ *The Lost Light* by Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn, The Academy Press, Elizabeth N. J., 1940.

¹⁰⁶ Italics: author's.

noumenon is reflected in phenomena. The macrocosm, great universe, is copied in miniature in the microcosm. The reality of the divine world may be seen only as shadows upon the background of the world of material. Every tangible thing has its counterpart or prototype in an archetypal world. More correctly we should say that the prototype or image in the archetypal world is projected as a pattern into the objective world, to become crystalized as “thing” or “action.”

Among the Hebraic mystery schools, the double intertwined triangle was the sign of this sacred truth. One such school was the order of the Essenes. Among them, the “Seal of Solomon” was a sacred symbol, to whom the word “Solomon” was more than the name of a king in Israel. It was the “personification or symbol of esoteric wisdom.” Hence, to the Essenes, the seal which bears the name of “Solomon” was in reality the “Seal of Wisdom.”¹⁰⁷ Ages before, in India, the early Aryan peoples, in the Puranas, called this symbol the “Sign of Vishnu,” who was the God of Wisdom.

To the average person today who lives in one of the larger cities, the idea of two triangles intertwined is not unfamiliar. He sees it above the door of school and synagogue. More frequently he sees it painted on shop and store windows in the Hebrew quarters. If he thinks of it at all, this sign simply spells “Kosher,” and is an advertisement that the shop is operated by an orthodox Jew. To the Jewish people, however, the sign has other meanings. It tells them that through certain ritualistic observances—dating from the days of Moses—the products to be sold over the counter have been cleansed of certain impurities.

The practice of blessing or of exorcising objects by means of invocations or prayers combined with prescribed physical rituals is as old as religion itself, and needs no vindication. The student of the inner side of things recognizes that every object, animate or inanimate, has an etheric counterpart. The function of this etheric “field” is to be a channel or conveyor for certain types of force; and it is through this “field” that the ritual of exorcism or blessing operates. The point to be emphasized here is that the Seal of Solomon among the Hebrews has a deeply religious significance.

¹⁰⁷ *The Key to the Universe* by Dr. F. Homer Curtiss, The Curtiss Philosophic Book Co., Washington D.C., 1931.

In our day, the sign of the intertwined triangles has appeared upon the flag of the newly born state of Israel. Born, or reborn we should say, out of tragedy and conflict, the future alone holds in its hands the destiny of this new-old nation. The “Shield of David,” as its chosen emblem, becomes the link between the heritage of its traditions and the hope of future glory.

Like every other great faith, the Hebrew religion had its exoteric teachings for the many and its esoteric teachings for the few. Its popular teachings, based upon the laws of Moses and the “Ten Commandments,” are expressed through codes of morals, unequalled in the history of religions, for their purity and strictness. The one dominant note, repeated again and again, is that there is One God, and only One. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” But behind this simple statement, there lies a body of secret teachings, markedly akin to the esoteric wisdom of the past. During the dark ages in Europe, these traditions were studied and preserved by a group of esoteric scholars, both Christian and Jew, who became known as Kabalists. Some time later, although the dates of their authorship is widely speculative, these doctrines appeared in such arcane works as the *Zohar* and *Sepher-Yetzirah*.

The great obstacle confronting the modern student of ancient Hebraic traditions is the difficulty in correctly translating the characters of the alphabet. As d’Olivet points out in his *Hebraic Tongue Restored*, these characters differ from the letters of all modern languages in that each letter represents an idea in itself, perhaps several, according to its usage. A Hebrew word may be a composite of related ideas, requiring a sentence, often a treatise for its full elucidation.

As stated above, the very essence of the Hebrew religion is monotheistic. So sacred has been this belief that it has been held as a truism that no man has ever seen God’s face and none can pronounce His name. He is known as AIN SOPH, the “Limitless” ever-expanding or “emanating” Deity. “Ain” meaning “nothing,” He is “No-Thing,” “Nameless Being.” The Sanskrit word for Him is “Parabrahm,” that is, “beyond Brahmā.” The ancient Aryans called Him the “Absolute” or “Universal, Nameless Principle,” sometimes interpreted as THAT which is behind even the First Principle of

Being. He (or It) is the unmanifest, even in the highest spiritual sense, and yet contains within Himself the potentialities of all being and all manifestation.¹⁰⁸

Ain Soph, being Naught, contains all numbers. It is the invisible and omnipresent Point from which all forms proceed; and it is the infinite circle within which all forms exist. It is, if the finite mind can conceive the term, the Causeless Cause. It is the Infinite Source of all manifestation—or as the Kabalists would prefer to express it—of all “Emanations.” The mind gropes for words with which to describe It.

From Ain Soph proceeds Kether, the first emanation or principle of being. Kether literally means “Crown” and represents divine Will. He (or It) is the highest of the Ten Sephiroth and forms the first supernal triad. From Kether the creative process is set in motion. Kether, which on its own level is pure spirit, appears in a descending order as two, Chokmah and Binah. The One is “differentiated,” as it were, into Two. Chokmah is the positive principle and represents “divine intellection,” or the “active potency of Deity.” Binah, on the other hand, is passive and represents the generative principle or “intellectual producing capacity.” Here is projected the first Trinity, Kether—Chokmah—Binah; or to restate it in modern form—Divine Will, Divine Wisdom and Divine Mind or Understanding, forming the Supreme Triangle—still on a heavenly or cosmic level.

These Hebraic terms are not to be interpreted as Deities or Gods so much as Potentialities or Emanations of Deity. However, when we say that from Naught there emanates the One, and that the One differentiating into Two becomes Three, it must not be understood that this process is accomplished in steps, one following another, as we would think of it, in time; but rather as a simultaneous “becoming.” Moreover, it must be emphasized that the Kabalistic idea of the universe is not that it came into being through a creative process as we usually understand the term, that is, in the sense that God produces something out of nothing, or something outside of Himself; but that His creation is an emanation of Himself, a crystalization, as it were, of a certain aspect of His own being.

To the Kabalists, the lower worlds did not come into being through mechanical processes. Creation is a generative process by which the higher or more spiritual

¹⁰⁸ See *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky.

“begets” or “projects” the lower or more material. The divine order is not reflected in the lower as though they were two separate and unconnected things. The lower or denser is an emanation of the higher or spiritual, a projection of it in time and space. And so from the supreme Trinity, Kether—Chokmah—Binah, there emanate, in a descending order, seven Creative Hierarchies. These seven together with the Three become the sacred Sephiroth.

What figure known to man can so adequately express the profound implications of this process, or the many relationships proceeding from them, as the Seal of Solomon? Besides these relationships, there is contained within the “Seal” the idea of a complete and ultimate union. For as the One becomes the many, the many are contained within it, and they eventually restore that unity. The intertwined triangles thus become an inexhaustible symbol not only of an eternal process, but also of an unchanging state of ultimate being. The eye of the imagination might visualize a series of triangles thus intertwined and super-imposed, one upon another, expressing this interrelationship of principles and powers.

Picture then our supreme triangle with Kether at its apex and Chokmah and Binah forming its base. From the union of these two latter principles there appears a new principle which is given the name Daath, and is interpreted as “divine intellection or Truth.” Daath, therefore, becomes the nadir of this second triangle and the apex of a third; for Daath (or truth) is in turn differentiated, split as it were into the two qualities called Geburah, which is justice, and Gedulah, which is benignity. These two qualities or principles become the base of this third triangle. The process is again repeated. As in the case of Chokmah and Binah above, Geburah and Gedulah unite, and from their union proceeds Tephareth, which is interpreted as “Beauty or Universal Harmony.”

Once more there follows a differentiation in the one becoming two. From Tephareth descends, or rather proceeds, Hod and Netsach. Universal Harmony appears as Glory on the one hand and Victory on the other. Hod and Netsach, Glory and Victory, are united to form the final triad with Yesod as the point of union. Yesod is described as Foundation and Stability, representing the quality of Permanency in Manifestation.

The tenth Sephiroth is Malkuth, which may be interpreted as “the Kingdom.” If we could represent these triads as planes in a Cosmic scheme, the first would be the “Divine Plane of Formless Spirit,” next the “Archetypal World,” then the “Intellectual or Creative World,” fourth the “Substantial or Formative World,” and finally the “Physical or Material World.”

Malkuth is by some scholars associated with this; the lowest world. In another sense, Malkuth is called the “Shekinah,” the “Veil of Ain Soph,” the “Veil of earthly things,” which completely hides the Absolute.¹⁰⁹

We have scarcely touched the hem of the garment of Kabalistic Mysteries. King Solomon’s Seal, or the Seal of Wisdom, like the Hebraic language, is universal. Out of this sign, as out of the “Word,” come many shades of meaning, many interpretations.. It is an inexhaustible fountain of knowledge. The purpose of these all too sketchy paragraphs will have been accomplished if it will have served to lift, ever so slightly, the veil which conceals the Wisdom of the Ages.

¹⁰⁹ This Kabalistic pattern is worked out by Albert Pike in *Morals and Dogma* and H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

CHAPTER XXIX

SIXES AND SEVENS

For in the six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Exodus 20: 11

It will be recalled that in an earlier study on the Interlaced Triangles we likened this symbol to a symphony of ideas. It is fitting that in this concluding study, the several strains or themes which make up that symphony be brought together in a “grand finale”—united into a single concept. To accomplish this, we shall briefly bring again into focus some of the thoughts previously considered. In this final study we may discover that one predominant truth which lies buried within the very heart of this symbol. We have analyzed its structure and the meaning of its parts; but so far have only prepared the way for the discovery of its innermost secret.

Somewhere (or sometime) in the vast infinitude of Absoluteness there must appear the Point or Center from which all manifestation springs. The Point is therefore the ultimate source of all Being. It is the opposite pole of non-Being, for in it all being is concentrated. Mathematically the point has no position or existence unless circumscribed by the circle. Together they constitute the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of Being in manifestation. Most potent of symbols, the Point represents the eternal Father, for out of it all things must ultimately be resolved. On the human level it is the sign of man’s innermost Spirit, the supreme Atma. Numerically it is the number 1, whose nature is unity and whose power is will.

The first creative act is motion. The Point in motion produces the Line. The Line, cleaving the Circle, produces duality. The point becomes polarized, the one becomes two and we find everywhere duality in manifestation: spirit-matter, life-form, male-female, etc. It is the sign of the second aspect of God whose nature is sacrifice and whose power is love. But duality cannot exist alone. Polarity begets a relationship. In every duality—life-form, matter-energy, etc.—there enters a third factor which is consciousness or law. The Line becomes a Triangle: two becomes three in the eternal

balancing of the opposite poles of manifestation. The triangle and the number 3 are ever the symbol of divinity in manifestation, whether in the universe or in man. Its characteristic is understanding.

The square with its four sides or the cross with its four segments is universally the symbol of Nature and of the physical universe: four cardinal points, four seasons, four elements, etc. It is likewise the sign of man in the sense that he is a personality. As a human being he consists of four bodies—physical, etheric, astral and lower mental—operating upon the four corresponding planes of Nature. As the divine life is limited or imprisoned within these lower vehicles, the cross signifies sorrow and sacrifice.

If a man stands with feet spread apart and arms extended, he forms the figure of a five-pointed star, a figure which represents humanity's present place in evolution. For the star with its five points is both the sign and number of the fifth or Aryan root race.

It represents the age of scientific achievement in which the mental faculties are developed. Counting from the lowest human level, 5 is the number of Manas, the principle of abstract thinking. While the star is the measure of man's intellectual and spiritual growth, it is also the symbol of his hopes and aspirations, beckoning him onward to higher attainment. For ages it has been the seal over the "door" of his initiation into the order of the spiritual Brotherhood and the sign of his acceptance.

If the number 5 is the signature of humanity's present state, the number 6 is the sign of tomorrow's stage of development. Its influence awakens man to the realization of his own incompleteness. He has long felt that the development of his mind was the aim and end of his existence. He now comes to the realization that the mind is but an instrument for the attainment of a higher state of consciousness. He is troubled with a sense of unrest and a persistent yearning for something, which he feels to be beyond his reason, but is yet attainable. The fundamental power of this number as expressed through the interlaced triangles is this urge towards perfection. It represents man's ceaseless struggles to attain a goal. It is the sign of his trials, his testings, and his labors. "For six days God labored."

We recall the "twelve labors of Hercules." This famous hero is the symbol of every aspirant to the higher life. His 12 (2 x 6) labors are the testings of the candidate's

strength and the proof of his worthiness. This combination of the double 6 appears many times throughout the Bible, as it does in legend, barely concealing its allusion to the neophyte or the disciple. The 12 knights of King Arthur, the 12 tribes of Israel, the 12 disciples of Jesus stand out, amongst many others, as examples of the universality of this symbol.

If one should speculate upon the purely mathematical aspect of this number, he cannot help but sense a significance in the part it plays as a gauge or measure in Nature. Every circle is measured by 10×62 or 360 degrees. The solar year is divided into 12 months. The day into 2×12 hours, the hour into 60 minutes and the minute into 60 seconds. The sidereal year is measured by 12 signs of the celestial Zodiac. And if he will consider one of the unexplained mysteries of Nature he must wonder why or how she always makes her crystals of snow in the form of 6-pointed stars or crosses with exactly 6 or multiples of 6 arms—countless billions of tiny symbols of man's aspiration towards perfection and his eternal faith in his divine nature. H. P. Blavatsky, in *The Secret Doctrine*, (Vol. II, p. 629) writes, "The stellate crystals of snow, viewed under a microscope, are all and each of them a double or a treble six-pointed star, with the central nucleus, like a miniature star within the larger one." The interlaced triangles form the figure of a six-pointed star, and if the intersections of its lines be added to its points, their total is 12.¹¹⁰

Dr. F. Homer Curtiss, in his interesting book *The Key to the Universe*, contemplating the form of the number 6 observes that it is made up of a line rising out of a circle. The circle would represent the universe as macrocosm or man as microcosm. Into this circle there descends the divine life. The vertical line would equally represent man's aspiration for God and his inherent desire for perfection. The number 6 is the Christ force, both in Nature and in man. It is the spiritual power back of the universal urge towards perfection. Counting from the lowest or physical level, it is the number of the Buddhic

¹¹⁰ If we find that the number 6 is incomplete until it becomes 7, so we shall find the number 12 incomplete until it becomes 13. For within the circle of manifestation represented by the circle with its 12-fold division, there is always the center making the 13. The solar Zodiac of 12 signs (houses) is completed by the sun in the center as 13. King Arthur's Round Table with its 12 knights is complete only with the King in the center. The 12 tribes of Israel become 13 with their patriarchal center. And Jesus with His 12 disciples becomes 13. Most significantly the Great American Seal has as its dominant theme the number 13.

plane, the level of Christ consciousness. It is also the number of man's sixth principle, the intuition, sometimes referred to as the "sixth sense." We can readily associate the development of this faculty with the particular work of the 6th root race—even as it was the work of the 5th race to develop the intellectual principle. H. P. Blavatsky called the "oversoul the sixth universal principle."¹¹¹

In a previous study we made an experiment by taking a cube, which is symbol of the personality, and unfolding it, as one would a cardboard box. Its six sides, unfolded, take the form of the Latin cross. This unfolding of his six sides reveals his Christ-like nature. Again, if one will draw lines from each of the outstretched hands to the feet, as if from the nails in the crucified Christ, he will form a triangle superimposed upon the cross, sign of Spirit within the personality. The same symbol of 3 over 4 is seen in the Masonic apron.¹¹²

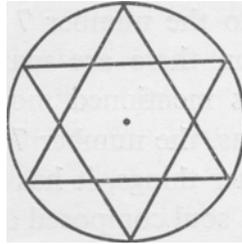
The six-pointed star is a crystalized "act of faith," for the upward pointing triangle represents man's aspiration reaching upward toward his own divine source, while the downward pointing triangle represents the downpouring of inspiration and spiritual power through his own higher vehicles. It is the sign of his present relationship with God and the assurance of his ultimate union. It is the Spirit which is God coming down to touch the spirit which is man; it is also the self which is man reaching upward to touch the Self which is God. A realization of the full meaning of this truth is the highest form of yoga and the consummation of all mystical experience.

Yet, in a very real sense, this symbol of the two interlaced triangles is in itself incomplete. While it is the sign of union—of man's lower self with his higher, and of his higher Self with God—each of these trinities in itself alone is insufficient and incomplete. For at the center of each triad there is an invisible and unmanifest Reality. Within the divine Trinity there is God who is Absolute Being. Within the human triad there is the divine Monad. Within each triangle there is the invisible Point—its heart or soul. The symbol of the double triangles finds its completion only with this invisible Point as its

¹¹¹ *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 45.

¹¹² One interested in the mathematical aspect of these symbols will recognize that 3 (spirit) plus 4 (personality) equals the perfected man.

center. Thus in man as well as in the universe, this union is complete only when the 6 becomes 7.



Should we require confirmation of this truth, the following quotations from *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky are instructive. “The interlaced triangles is the perfect symbol of union or yoga, and the unmanifest or invisible point in the center becomes the seven, sacred symbol of the ever-indwelling spark or life.” (Vol II, p. 626). And again, “The six-pointed star refers to the six Forces or Powers of Nature, the six planes, principles, etc., etc., all synthesized by the seventh, or the central point in the star.... In its Unity, Primordial Light is the seventh, or highest, principle.” (Vol. I, p. 236)

If, as we have stated, the number 6 represents incompleteness and aspiration, it finds its fulfillment and its completion in the number 7. The statement, “For the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it” could be said equally of the 6 Planes of Nature, the 6 Races of humanity and the 6 principles of man—all find their completion and are synthesized in the 7th. The number 7 represents the completion of a cycle of manifestation. Thus there are 7 Planes of Nature, 7 Races, 7 Worlds, 7 Rounds, 7 Chains. “On the seventh day God rested from His labors.”

Of references to the number 7 as meaning completion or perfection there are many. In the Bible no other number is mentioned more often. To the renowned Pythagoras, the number 7 meant perfection, because, among other things, it has a body composed of 4 principles and a soul composed of 3. The number 7 relates to phases or cycles of physical and spiritual development. Thus man’s life span is made up of “7 ages.” To repeat again from *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. II, p. 625), “The number six has been regarded in the Ancient Mysteries as an emblem of *physical* Nature. For six is the

representation of the six dimensions of all bodies—the six directions which compose their form, namely the four directions extending to the four cardinal points . . . and the two directions . . . that answer to the Zenith and the Nadir. Therefore, while the Senary was applied by the Sages to *physical* man, the Septenary was for them the symbol of man *plus* his immortal Soul.”

From ancient times the number 7 has been held sacred. There may be stated three principal reasons for this. First, because it is the number of the mystery of Creation, of God in manifestation. Second, because it somehow governs the law of gestation. And third, because it is the number of perfection. Examples and references to substantiate this triple statement could be multiplied many times. In *The Key to the Universe*, quoted above, Dr. Curtiss has made an exhaustive research on the number 7—its sources and meanings. The Hebrew word “Sabbath,” which is the 7th day comes from the root stem “Sebo,” which means the completion of a cycle. The 7th letter of the Hebrew alphabet is “Zain” and implies rulership or victory. The Greek word for the letter “Z” is “Zeta” and signifies “life.” It is the root stem of the word Zeus (Jupiter), the father of the gods—from which has sprung the many names of Deity: deus, theus, Je-sus, etc. We trace this root word back to ancient Egyptian sources. The word for their 7th letter was “Zenta” and was interpreted as “life.” It may be significant that the letter “Z” is in form, a double and inverted “7.”

It is perhaps fitting that this final study of the interlaced triangles should end on the keynote represented by the number 7. For as from the One, represented by the Point, came all manifestation, as represented by the 6-pointed star or the double triangles, so at the completion of the cycle does manifestation reach perfection through the “Seven” which is the invisible point of unity and union. The symbol of the interlaced triangles with its invisible center expresses the entire philosophy of life in manifestation. The number 7, which is the Point, is the eternal “Silent Watcher.” It is God in His universe. It is God in man. It is the sign of attainment and triumph. In it is contained both the hope and the fulfillment of the integration of life and of man’s ultimate union with God.

“And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.”

BOOK 6

THE SACRED WORD



CHAPTER XXX

THE SACRED WORD

This final chapter deals with a subject at once so sacred, and wrapped in secrecy, that the writer feels that he is trespassing upon holy ground. Indeed, one explores in vain the sources of information for some concise and ready-at-hand exposition of the subject. It is only as he finds, through much searching, a hint here and a line there, that he is able to piece together an integrated whole. It is therefore in deepest humility that he endeavors to capture their meanings and frame them into words. Yet one must try, and failing, try again. There is comfort in a confession, so well put by Dr. Arundale in his book, *The Lotus Fire*: “Who seeks must err, who finds must err. . . . Yet must we seek and find and err, for only thus shall we, and all that lives, achieve Divinity.”

Long after one contacts Theosophy—and I speak here only for myself—and has begun to learn something of the meanings of the various symbols which make up its “Seal,” he becomes conscious of a strange figure or hieroglyph above the Seal itself. He eventually learns that this character is Sanskrit, and represents the Word OM (AUM). This is an ancient word whose origin is lost in the beginnings of the Aryan race in Central Asia. Tradition has it that this word was so sacred that it could not be correctly pronounced by man—that indeed it was taught to certain Spiritual Men of humanity by an Incarnation of the God Vishnu.

Several questions enter the mind. Why is this Word sacred? Among the uncounted millions of words, not only in Sanskrit, but in all the languages on our globe, why has this particular Word been held sacred from ancient days until now, and by peoples of many races? What is its meaning, and what is the source of its power? It will be our purpose in this study to try to find answers to these, and other questions—answers which not only our intuition but our reason can accept.

Words and Letters

May we digress for a moment to consider two or three facts concerning the origin and formation of words? It is a fact known to philologists that spoken language

antedated the written word by unknown ages, that many of the ancient scriptures and religious epics were handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. The first languages were phonetic rather than written, and the first efforts of the primitive to communicate was through sound. It was not until comparatively modern times that words formed by characters came upon the scene. The earliest attempts at forming letters was undoubtedly by pictures. Later, with the development of the intellect, hieroglyph and symbol replaced the word-picture, and form and sound were combined to express an idea.

Another fact, although not stressed by modern etymologists, is that in certain of the known ancient languages—notably Sanskrit, Egyptian and Hebrew—letters were not only sounded, but shaped to express a thought or an idea. Words were coined by the special arrangement of their letters, according to their inherent meanings, to project a concept; and the slightest change in this arrangement would materially alter this original concept.¹¹³ Not only that, but many of the ancient teachers and sages, notably Pythagoras, in Greece, taught that there exist definite relationships between letters of the alphabet, numbers, forms (geometrical figures), sound (music) and color. One is forced to accept as true the theory that these several manifestations of life are somehow linked together through the laws of their inherent characteristics.

Commenting on this thought, Dr. Arundale writes, “You have a colour alphabet, a sound alphabet, a fragrance alphabet and you have also a form alphabet Language is derived from Life, is an expression of Life. Its constituent words express the varying moods of Life, divided as these may be into the great threefold division of Will, Wisdom and Activity.”¹¹⁴

In confirmation of this, H. P. Blavatsky writes, “Letters, as well as numbers, were all mystic, whether in combination, or taken separately.”¹¹⁵ And again, “In the Sanskrit, as

¹¹³ Fabre d'Olivet, early in the 19th century, in his work, *Hebraic Tongue Restored*, claimed that the “Hebrew contained in Genesis is the pure idiom of the Ancient Egyptians which was composed entirely of universal, intellectual, abstract expressions.”

¹¹⁴ *The Lotus Fire*, pp. 78, 367.

¹¹⁵ *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 412.

also in the Hebrew, . . . every letter has its occult meaning and its *rationale*. . . . The vowels, especially, contain the most occult and formidable potentials.”¹¹⁶

The idea of the sacredness of words (and letters) is older than the oldest language upon our planet, for man’s first written language was a divine language, whose alphabet was given to infant humanity by the divine Teachers (Avataras) of our race.

Before leaving the subject of letters, one more thought seems worth expressing at this point. The ancients perceived a difference in the value of letters—a distinction not recognized by the modern etymologist. The obvious division of letters is into the two categories of consonants and vowels. Vowels color and qualify the sound; consonants shape and limit its expression. The vowel is the sound, the life, of the word. The consonant shapes its form, and becoming its body, as it were, limits and defines its life. In this connection, we may easily see an association between words and individuals; for as life may be perceived as individual only as it is clothed in a body (form), so words become articulate only as their sound is broken up and shaped by consonants. As Dr. Arundale writes, vowels are the life elements of words.¹¹⁷

To state this thought in another way: words may be said to possess two qualities—wisdom and power. Through their form they express wisdom; through their sound they express power. The power of a word is released through its vowels; the idea is brought into being through its consonants. The significance of this distinction will be recognized throughout this study.

Some Fundamentals

As a basis upon which to build our thesis on the word AUM, it will be of value to consider briefly a few fundamental principles. We conceive of One Absolute Being, whom, unable either to name or to describe, we call “God.” He is the Ultimate Source and Causeless Cause of all existence. Everywhere present throughout the visible and invisible universe, He contains within Himself the potencies of all manifestation. Being both spirit and matter, He embodies within His nature in perfect equilibrium the essence and causes of each.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 121.

¹¹⁷ *The Lotus Fire*, p. 368.

When, in the eternally recurring aeons, the Ultimate wills to manifest, this Being, acting within Himself, polarizes His nature as it were, and there appear on the one hand Pure Spirit and on the other Root Substance. And it is from the union of these two opposing Realities, in infinite varieties of combinations, and in ever-descending worlds of density, that all manifestation comes into being.

A stanza from the ancient *Book of Dzyan* states the formula of this Cosmic process:

Father-Mother spin a Web, whose upper end is fastened to Spirit . . . and the lower one to . . . Matter; and this Web is the Universe, spun out of the Two Substances made in One. . .

Between these two poles of the One Reality, there appear, throughout the whole of manifestation, from God to atom, countless series of triplicities:

Spirit	Matter	Life
Life	Form	Consciousness
Energy	Matter	Law
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

Nor should it seem unnatural to conceive that, on the highest spiritual realm, Deity follows this same threefold pattern. The idea of a Triune God is common to all religions throughout all ages, and is not peculiar to Christianity. What is peculiarly unique in Christianity (although the Logos doctrine was borrowed mainly from the Greek mysteries) is the teaching that the “Word [Logos] was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Indeed this idea has colored the Christian doctrine of the Trinity to the extent that the “Word made flesh” is associated or identified with the “Divine Incarnation.” We might tabulate certain of the Deific Trinities ¹¹⁸ as follows:

Christian:	Father	Son (Word)	Holy Ghost
Greek:	1st Logos	2nd Logos	3rd Logos
Hindu:	Shiva	Vishnu	Brahmā
Egyptian:	Osiris	Horus	Isis
(Human) :	(Father)	(Son)	(Mother)

¹¹⁸ The student is referred to the chapters of Book V, under the subject of the “Interlaced Triangles.”

The Word “AUM”

Above the Theosophical Seal, though apart from the symbols which comprise it, are the “Sanskrit letters which represent the sacred Word “AUM.” In contemplating the particular position of this character in relation to the Seal itself, one calls to mind the obverse side of the Great American Seal in which is pictured an unfinished pyramid, while above it, though not touching it, there is the triangular cap-stone, in the center of which is depicted the “All Seeing Eye” of God. The significance in the similarity of this juxtaposition in these two Seals should become obvious as our study of the word AUM proceeds.

The shape of the letters of this Sanskrit word is easy to remember, and as easy to make, when one translates the components of the figure into terms with which we are familiar. For instance, the main part of the figure is written as “three dash Pi,” as 3-Π, and represents the letter “A.” A comma placed directly above the horizontal line of the Pi and a little to the left represents the letter “O.” The letter “M” is a dot placed at the right of the comma.



We then have the assembly of the three letters, spelt A-U-M.

As a matter of fact, AUM (OM) is not a word at all in the strictest sense of the term, for it serves no grammatical purpose. Ernest Wood writes, “The Word differs from all other words in that their meanings are conventional. The meaning of OM is inherent.”¹¹⁹ A study therefore of the intrinsic values of each letter will help to reveal to us this inherent meaning. It is said that the word AUM (as must all words) be considered from two points of view: first the written word; and then the spoken word. Through its *form*, it reveals—as well as conceals—the wisdom of God. Through its *sound* it releases the power of God.

¹¹⁹ *Practical Yoga*.

We observe that the three letters A-U-M, as they have come down to us, extend their roots backwards through Latin, Greek and Hebrew practically unchanged. The letter “A” (Alpha or Aleph) represents the idea of authority, leadership and dominance. In the Hebrew, Aleph is the symbol of the bull because it represents power. In its esoteric or divine aspect, it typifies God as Father—Causation and Potential Power. It signifies the active or masculine polarity of manifestation. It is the inner reality—life or spirit—behind or within all things. In man, it is his inner self, the Atma or divine Spirit. It is the Logic Will flowing through the whole Creation down to the physical level—in man through the Atma into his physical body. To sum up the teachings of the Secret Doctrine, the letter “A” expresses the idea of leadership and power. As sound, it is a filling of the mouth and a going out of dominant power. It may be noted that the first cry of the infant is a prolonged “AHHHH!” First in letters, it is first also in the process of creation. The outgoing breath (spirit) is God’s causative, creative power flowing out into the universe and in man. “The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters [primordial substance],” and “God *breathed* into man’s nostrils, and he became a living soul.” Looking at it symbolically, the “A” is the point of spirit within the circle of manifestation—it is the living reality in every living form, man in his body, God in His universe.

Equally significant is our analysis of the letter “M” (Mu or Mem). We recall the two poles of manifestation, spirit-matter, out of which the web of the universe is spun by God as “Father-Mother.” So the letter “M” signifies the feminine, the mother aspect of Creation—the form building or germinative power. The letter “M” represents the pole opposite to spirit, the formative side of things, the root substance or Mulaprakriti. In all languages, eastern and western, it is the symbol of water, the “Great Deep.” As a glyph, it pictures waves  (ripples) in the Sea of Water. In many of the world’s great religions, the names of the Mother Principle of Deity, as personified by the Mother of the Divine Son, and many philosophical concepts alluding to manifestation, begin with the letter “M.” The following examples will be recognized: Mary, Mother of Jesus; Maya, Mother of Buddha; Minerva, goddess of wisdom, sprung from the head of Zeus; Miriam, sister of Moses; Moses, named by pharaoh’s daughter because “I drew him up out of the water”; Mare, Latin for the sea, symbol of universal matter; Mater, Latin for Mother.

Many Sanskrit words, suggesting manifestation as opposed to spirit, begin with the letter “M.” For instance: Maya, illusion; Manvantara, a period of manifestation; Mahat, universal intelligence; Manas, the thinking principle or mind; Mandala, meaning a circle or web. “M” would represent the polarity opposite to spirit, from the lowest to the highest level, and in a figurative sense is the vesture or garment of spirit. Hence, the causal body is the vesture or vehicle of spirit even as the body is the abode of the soul. On the divine level, the letter “M” is both feminine and masculine; hence the aspect of Deity which represents manifestation is both the universal Mother (Nature) and the Holy Ghost (Mahat, Manas and Manu).

The letter “U” (Upsilon or Vau) serves a dual purpose. It separates two thoughts or ideas while it unites them into a whole. In a sense it is the point of intersection of two lines forming an angle. That is, it separates the two lines at the same time that it holds them together. According to d’Olivet, the “U” or “Vau” is both a separative agency and a cohesive force.¹²⁰ It is the principle of division and of union. It changes unity to duality and blends duality into unity. It thus serves a dual function in the process of manifestation, as it does in the word “AUM.” It separates or polarizes the One in order that manifestation may appear; and it links these dualities again into unity.

The Wisdom of the Word

In the *Yoga Sutrās of Patanjali*, the Word “AUM” is mentioned twice. The first time is at the very beginning, the first Sutra which reads, “AUM (OM). The following instructions concern the science of union.” And in the 27th Sutra we read, “The word of Ishvara is AUM, (OM).” The significance of these two statements to our understanding of the “Word” will become apparent as we continue.

We recall that the vowel “A” expressed spirit, power and life; while the consonant “M” represented matter, form and wisdom. This same pattern shall be our guide in considering the “Word” as a whole. Uniting the two ideas which these letters represent, we have spirit-matter or life-form wedded to produce the “Sacred Word,” which, like the Divine Son, of which it is the symbol, is born of a heavenly Father and an earthly Mother. It is indeed the “Word made flesh.”

¹²⁰ *Hebraic Tongue Restored.*

The identity of the “Sacred Word” with the “Word made flesh,” whether we think of the latter in a historical, cosmic or mystical sense, is evidenced by many veiled references in many scriptures of the world—including the Christian Bible. Ishvara has been called the “Supreme Lord” of Creation, the “Logos” or “First Born,” the “Voice” or “Word.” We find many allusions to the “Word” as the Second Logos, the Second Aspect or Son, the Cosmic Christ, Vishnu—builder and preserver of life and form. The examples in myth and fable of Divine Sons having earthly mothers are too numerous to mention. Within such solar myths is preserved the sacred truth that man himself is both human and divine, that within his being is the seed of a Divine Father, though born of an earthly “Mother.” Herein is contained the doctrine of the “Incarnation,” of the “Descent” of Deity into human form, of the “Word made flesh.”

The first, if not the whole, purpose of religion, of yoga, and of meditation is to awaken man to the realization of this sacred truth. The “Word” within him is the Word of the Master, the inner God, who resides in the heart of all beings. Alice Bailey, in her commentary on the above Sutra, says that when the student, through meditation and living, comes to an understanding of this truth, this “Word within him, causes the Second or Christ aspect of divinity to shine forth resplendently.”

This “Word” is the “Inner Voice” of conscience which, if heard and obeyed, guides one through the conflicts of passion and desire. It is the “still small Voice” that may be heard even in the midst of life’s tumult. It is the “Voice of the Silence” which says to the earnest seeker, “Thou art thyself the object of thy search: Thou art thy Master and thy God.” For as one meditates upon this Word, the inner ear, which is the intuition, begins to hear its voice, and awakens to the realization that the Christ within is one with the Eternal Christ; and that the “Word” which he hears is one with the “Word which was in the beginning.”

Meditation on the inner meaning of AUM may become an act of union, in which the lower and the higher natures are united into one—one in essence and one in purpose. This sense of unity expands to take in all life. There comes the awareness of inner attunement with the universal law of harmony and purpose.

There is a feeling of at-one-ment with God and Nature which brings to the mind a sense of atonement and peace. The “Hidden Splendor” within himself, perceives that splendor in every other. Moreover, he begins to realize the underlying purpose in incarnation, and the relationship of the Divine Self to the form in which it resides. He recognizes the personal body as the vehicle of the soul on the plane of activity; and the soul as the vehicle of the Eternal Spirit upon the plane of consciousness. The wisdom of AUM thus reveals to man his place and purpose in the universe. He sees himself as a Fragment of God, whose triune nature as Father—Son—Holy Ghost finds its expression in his own triple spirit as Atma—Buddhi—Manas. The reverent use of the “Word” establishes this relationship in his own brain consciousness; and he discovers a peace, which transcends every seeming discord and a strength, which enables him to stand unshaken against every seeming adversity.

It has been stated that every Root Race upon our planet has had its own Word, within which was embodied its keynote and destiny. We have been told that for the Fourth Root Race, the Tau was that Word and Way of attainment. For our own, the Fifth Root Race, the sacred Word is AUM. From outer observances we turn to inner realization. Thus the AUM reveals the nature and inner identity of the soul of man with his body, and its relationship with Manas, the fifth principle or mind. It thus becomes especially the Way or Path of Wisdom for the Aryan Race. One final note of interest. Long before recorded history, the Sanskrit word AUM passed from India into Egypt. There the spelling was slightly changed—the AUM becoming AMN. This name was applied to the Hidden God, the Illimitable, the Ultimate, the Eternal God of Light “Amen-Ra.” This Word, as well as something of its divine significance, was in time appropriated by the Hebrews, and “O-MN” pronounced “O-mein,” became the sacred oath or invocation to the “Hidden God.” This same word changed to “AMEN” is to this day used at the end of every Christian hymn and to close, as with the seal of Truth, every prayer.

The following chart may be useful in helping the mind to establish some relationship with the Word AUM:

THE WORD	GOD AS	MAN AS	SOUL AS	SYMBOL OF		CONSCIOUSNESS
A	Father	Spirit	Atma	Father	Spirit	Will
U	Son	Soul	Buddhi	Son	Conscious- ness	Intuition
M	Holy Ghost	Body	Manas	Mother	Matter	Mind

The Power of the Word

To consider the Word AUM from the point of view of the idea which it expresses to our minds is to utilize half its value. It is one thing to meditate upon the meaning of the Word—to understand its hidden Wisdom. It is another thing to use it—to release its power. AUM is a *mantram* or word of power.

It is common knowledge that there is a certain power in words, either for good or evil, according to the thought in the mind of the one who speaks the word. It is a psychological fact that idle words dissipate one's own power and influence. Words of gossip destroy both the character of the object of the gossip and confidence in the one who gossips. Unkind words instill doubt, fear and hatred; kind words bring hope, courage and good will. But here, the power of the word is not inherent within the word itself but rather in the idea or the intent in the mind of the one who speaks it. It is the "tone" or quality of the voice which has power for good or evil. "To pronounce a word is to evoke a thought, and make it present: the magic potency of speech is the commencement of every manifestation."¹²¹ But when that word through association and usage is linked with inner and spiritual values, the power of its sounding is multiplied many times.

The Third Commandment reads, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This name, and it may be any name applied to Deity, embraces an expression of the Divine Creative Potency. The power invoked by this word, being either good or evil, will embody the degree of purity and the purpose of the one who speaks it, and the results produced will be measured by that quality. Jesus knew the power of the spoken word. He said, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall

¹²¹ F. Homer Curtiss in *The Voice of Isis*, p. 408.

give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.” Many teachers have warned that speaking the name of Deity idly or in anger sends out a destructive and evil force into the world, particularly upon those who hear, and drags the one who speaks into ugly regions of the astral world; while that same name, uttered as an invocation or in prayer, releases powers of good, commensurate with one’s faith and purpose.

It need not be emphasized here that sound—physical sound or vibration—is a creative (or destructive) power. Examples are given of a glass tumbler being shattered by a long sustained note of the human voice, or a bridge shaken by the rhythmic tread of marching soldiers. On the higher emotional and mental levels, the measure of the value of sound is increased many-fold. For instance, medical science recognizes the therapeutic value of certain types of music whose power releases healing forces within the body, or attunes the body to the healing forces in Nature, whether physical or psychic. “Sound,” says H. P. Blavatsky, “is the primary creative force.” She calls sound the “Son of Deity.” The following statement might be of interest to students of the occult: Sound is related to the first element, ether, and the sense of hearing was evolved in the first race of men whose bodies were etheric.¹²² We might, in a truly scientific sense, paraphrase the first sentence in the Gospel of St. John, “In the beginning was sound.” Dr. Annie Besant says that the power of sound is both creative and destructive. Forms may be built or destroyed by sound. It may be of interest to students of the occult that sound is produced by the larynx (organ of voice), to be made articulate by passing through the mouth and shaped into words by the tongue, lips and teeth. Occultly the throat chakra is the center related to Manas, the higher mind; and as the human creative faculty, residing as an elementary physical force at the base of the spine, is raised and sublimated, it becomes an effective power in the realm of creative thinking.¹²³

It is said that in ancient days in many civilizations, notably the Hebrew, Egyptian and Hindu, it was forbidden to pronounce the name of Deity because of the sacredness of the power released by its sound. H. P. Blavatsky writes, “The real secret and

¹²² *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 113.

¹²³ This elementary creative force is dealt with in detail in C. W. Leadbeater’s book, *The Chakras*.

unpronounceable Name of [God], the ‘Word that is no word,’ has to be sought in the seven names of the first Seven Emanations [*i.e.*, lesser deities].”¹²⁴ Again she writes, “The *power of names* is great, and has been known since the first men were instructed by the *Divine Masters*.”¹²⁵ The sacred Name has been called “The Ineffable, the Unutterable, the Unpronounceable.”

In the light of such profound statements, the student may ask, “Is it permissible to pronounce the Sacred Name as represented by the word AUM; and if so, how should it be pronounced?” The word AUM (OM) is sounded by opening the mouth and breathing out with sustained tone the sound “O” as in “home without sounding the “H.” The lips are then closed, allowing the sound to continue through the nostrils, and to die away on the same note—the mind meanwhile dwelling upon some high ideal, such as Ego and its threefold nature, its relationship with God as Trinity, or upon our highest idea of the Master. Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the fact that the word is really sounded by the Ego or Soul, and that the physical act should be accompanied by our loftiest thoughts.

And yet the correct sounding of the Sacred Word is not so simply done. Since the number seven runs through all Nature as the sacred number of perfection—7 colors, 7 notes, 7 Rays, 7 forces in Nature, 7 days, 7 principles in man, 7 Archangels, 7 Spirits before the Throne, 7 Creative Hierarchies, 7 Logoi (Words), 7 letters in the Sacred Name, etc.—should one wonder that there are also 7 syllables in the true pronunciation of the Sacred Word? It is said that before one can truly pronounce the Word audibly, he must first have attuned his own sevenfold nature to the divine harmony. The 28th Sutra of Patanjali states, “Through the sounding of the Word and through reflection upon its meaning, the Way is found.” Commenting upon this statement, Alice Bailey writes that the Word, correctly sounded, must be sounded by the Soul or Ego on its own plane; and before the aspirant may properly sound the Word on the physical plane, he must have “through meditation and discipline, coupled with service, made a conscious at-one-ment with the soul.”¹²⁶ We have been told too that none, except the Master, may guide us

¹²⁴ *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 473.

¹²⁵ *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 811.

¹²⁶ *The Light of the Soul*.

safely along the way of the Mysteries. Surely none may direct the course of this inner process for another. Each must find the way within himself.

We may summarize the above thoughts as follows To correctly sound the sacred word “OM,” with the whole nature attuned, is to bring one’s entire being in rapport with the eternal laws, both of God and Nature, thus forming an unobstructed channel through which the powers of harmony may be invoked for the helping of man. One may visualize three steps by which this may be accomplished:

- (a) A recognition of the four lower principles of man as vestures of the Soul and as instruments for its activities in the lower worlds.
- (b) A realization that the Soul or Ego is a spiritual triad embodying the threefold aspects of Deity, and that these three principles are in turn emanations of the . . .
- (c) One Eternal Self, the Monad or Son of God.

Dr. Arundale adds this thought: “The student in his yoga [meditation] will glorify the Sound that it may become the ‘Voice of God’.”

The Divine Word

Through this at-one-ment of body, soul and spirit comes the realization that we are one with the Infinite Word, which is God. “This creative Word is continually being pronounced within man and throughout the vast universe. It is the Universal Christ, Vishnu, Ishvara—bringer of spiritual life.”¹²⁷ This divine Voice flows outwards or downwards through the universe, through the kingdoms of Nature and through man. We are reminded of the beautiful lines in Psalms XIX, “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor knowledge where their voice is not heard.” This “Voice of God” is the rhythmic law of creative evolution. Its sound penetrates the Seven Creative Hierarchies, who guide and direct its vibrations into the kingdoms of Nature, to bring them to perfection in accordance with the Divine Image. Nature obeys this Voice without question. It is when this Voice reaches man who

¹²⁷ *The Voice of Isis*, by F. Homer Curtiss.

is the microcosm that the Word may be reproduced in articulate language; for man alone has the power to use his voice to translate the Word into Wisdom and Power.

Finally, it may be said that this “Voice” or “Word,” as it sounds forth through all manifestation, does so in three basic notes or tones. *First*, in Nature, the sound of the “Voice” is heard throughout the physical universe as the tone “Fa.” This might be called the Word of the Third Logos—Brahma or the Holy Ghost. *Second*, it is Pranava, the Word of life as it is breathed into all living forms. It is the note of conscious life, the Word of the Second Logos, the “Word made flesh,” the Incarnated Son. And *finally*, it is the “Voice of the Silence,” the innermost Self, the divine Monad. It is the First Logos, or God as Father. For the Word which man can speak brings into radiant manifestation the glorified or transcendent Christ; it awakens the Egoic consciousness and releases the soul from the limitations of form; and synthesizes the threefold man as spirit—soul—body with the three streams of Logic Life.

In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God.

John 1: 1

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