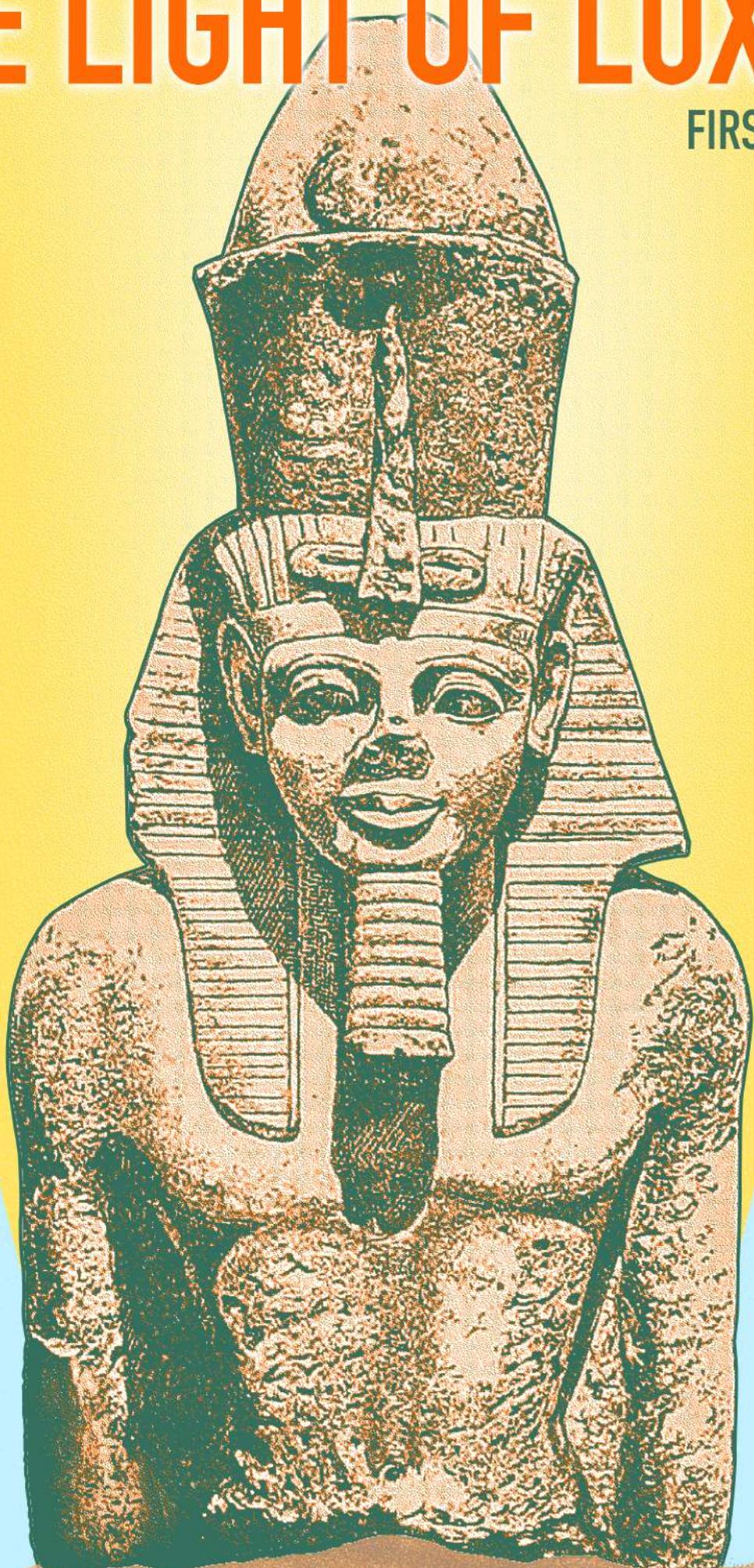


THE LIGHT OF LUXOR

FIRST EDITION



INDEPENDENT THEOSOPHICAL MAGAZINE

THE LIGHT OF LUXOR

Independent Theosophical Magazine



Theosophy

We often speak of Theosophy as not in itself a religion, but the truth, which lies behind all religions alike. That is so; yet, from another point of view, we may surely say that it is at once a philosophy, a religion and a science.

C.W.Leadbeater

The Society

"The Theosophical Society was organized for the purpose of promulgating the Theosophical doctrines, and for the promotion of the Theosophic life. The present Theosophical Society is not the first of its kind."

H.P.Blavatsky

Its Objects

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

Annie Besant on Karma

EVERY thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world, and becomes an active entity by associating itself, coalescing we might term it, with an elemental—that is to say, with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence—a creature of the mind's begetting—for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus a good thought is perpetuated as an active, beneficent power, an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offspring of his fancies, desires, impulses and passions; a current which reacts upon any sensitive or nervous organization which comes in contact with it, in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls it his "Skandha"; the Hindu gives it the name of "Karma". The Adept evolves these shapes consciously; other men throw them off unconsciously.

About The Light Of Luxor

The Light Of Luxor is an Independent Theosophical Magazine dedicated to promote Theosophical ideas, The ancient Wisdom, inspired by Helena Blavatsky and the early founders of the Theosophical Society with its headquarters based in Adyar, India.

The idea of The Light Of Luxor Magazine came to mind after studying H.P. Blavatsky's biography, some of her writings and other theosophical writings. Blavatsky visited Egypt several times and lived there in the early 1870s. In her travels to Egypt she came into contact with adepts residing in Egypt one of them belonged to a lodge called The Observatory of Luxor. The Observatory Of Luxor and the name of the Master are mentioned in The Mahatma Letters to H. S. Olcott, Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, Second Series.¹ H. P. Blavatsky and the early founders of The Theosophical Society worked under the direction of several Masters of the wisdom, Blavatsky mentions them in the Secret Doctrine Volume I: "The members of several esoteric schools – the seat of which is beyond the Himalayas, and whose ramifications may be found in China, Japan, India, Tibet, and even in Syria, besides South America."² The Egyptian and Hermetic Mysteries are referred to extensively in Blavatsky's Book Isis Unveiled. In her last stay in Egypt before founding the Theosophical Society she had attempted to set up another society but the time was not opportune, the right moment was in 1875 in New York when she and others founded The Theosophical Society.³ Later other TS members wrote books related to Egypt which also inspired the idea of this magazine, The Idyll of the White Lotus by Mabel Collins, The Perfume of Egypt, The Hidden Side of Freemasonry and Glimpses of Masonic History By Charles Webster Leadbeater.

The Light of Luxor Magazine is dedicated to the Masters of H.P Blavatsky, those living beyond the Himalayas, the recesses of Egypt or wherever they may be in world. And to the Unknown Workers all over the world who tirelessly work to ensure the link remains unbroken.

The Editor : Julian Ochoa.:

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The hidden meaning of Christmas

Catalina Isaza Cantor (Colombia-Adyar)

Introduction

Special greetings to all, dear friends. We are on the verge of a new year, after a 2020 full of challenges and learning. Before closing this year and, on the occasion of the upcoming Christmas festivities, we want to share with you something about the hidden, esoteric meaning of Christmas. Although this celebration has become primarily a reason for consumption and advertising, it is good to remember that its origin has to do with the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Christ. From the esoteric point of view, it goes much further than that: it constitutes a symbol of the spiritual awakening of which all of us will take part at some point in our journey towards the divine.

Christmas, within the Christian vision, is composed of three moments. The first one, Advent (arrival), marks the previous four-week stage of preparation to receive the birth of the child. In the biblical account, this corresponds to the departure of Israel in difficult conditions. The Nativity

(birth) is the moment when Jesus comes to life in a manger in Bethlehem. Finally, the Epiphany (appearance) refers to the arrival of the three Wise Men to the manger and the presents that they offer to the child who has just been born.

The sacred books of religions, such as The Bible for Christians, often use symbolic language to express profound truths, mysteries. The value of the use of symbolic language is that the symbols do not change, because they contain universal truths that can be interpreted by anyone who has enough wisdom and intuition to do so, despite the passage of time.

The life of Jesus, which we read in the biblical gospels, is a compendium of mysteries that reveal to us that the Christ Consciousness has to be born inside each one of us. The authors of the gospels, disciples of Jesus, were enlightened men and in their gospels they recorded eternal truths using allegories and symbols, in order to lead those intuitively awake readers to occult knowledge. Geoffrey Hodson reminds us that

This story of the life of Jesus is a record of the experiences of the spirit in matter, of the Monad in man, and of the ascent of the spirit from the mortal clutches of matter toward the reconquest of that freedom that constitutes the natural state of the spirit and of the Monad in the world of Divine Reality (The Christ Life from Nativity to Ascension).

Let us remember that we are multidimensional beings in continual evolution. The constitution of man and the universe, as indicated by theosophical literature, is septenary: there are seven planes of manifestation through which the divine spirit (the Monad) descends in order to gain experiences that lead it to reunite again with the divine, completely transformed and reinvigorated with the realization of the spiritual. Like Adam and Eve or the prodigal son, we must leave the Paradise, we must abandon the Father's house and live the experiences of the world and taste the fruit of knowledge, to be able to go back to Him. Our divine essence, coming from the Monad, is covered by the veils of matter and it is necessary to gradually remove them until we reach the development of the divine nature that we potentially have.

It is clear that in our present evolutionary state we do not have vehicles to act consciously on all planes and we are primarily dominated by the vehicles of denser matter such as the physical, the emotional and the lower mental. Therefore, limiting the celebration of Christmas to

the purely commercial and consumerist approach, is to limit it to the densest and most material parts, and leaving aside what it contains from the point of view of our spiritual realization.

A double birth

Our nature is both, divine and human: "Is it not written in your Law: I have said, you are gods?" (John 10:34). "Do you not know that you are God's sanctuary and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). We must awaken that divine and immortal aspect in ourselves. That means the aspects of the higher triad: The Father or Will, the Son or Wisdom, Love and the Holy Spirit or Creative Intelligence. One of these aspects, the Son, the wisdom Love, manifested himself in Palestine. Christ came united with the nature of the Father to bring peace and love to men, and although he disappeared from the eyes of men, he is in intimate contact with the humanity all the time, as a dynamic and always active Christ. Within us is that spark waiting to be born. The birth of Christ represents the birth of this spiritual being.

The Christos state is therefore not something that is restricted solely to Jesus. That is why he is only called the Christ after his baptism. We are all potential Christs, the Christos state is a state of initiation, of illumination of the self. When the spark of the Christ is born in man, it is called the twice-born (the anointed one, dedicated to the divine), because he had a physical and a spiritual birth. Jesus and Christ are

therefore not interchangeable; Jesus is not the only Christ who has lived.

Angelo Silesius, a Franciscan and German mystic of the 17th century, tells us that even if Christ is born a thousand times in Bethlehem, if he is not born in our hearts, we will remain sad. Jesus says to Nicodemus: "He who is not born of water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God (...) you must be born again. He who is not born again cannot see the kingdom of God "(John 3: 5-7). In order to reach that double birth we must develop the higher qualities through the higher mind and use intuition.

Understand the allegory to remove the veils

To access the hidden meaning of this birth, let's examine the symbols and go beyond the literal interpretation. All the characters of Christmas represent something that is inside us.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that the angel Gabriel presents himself to Mary, a young woman who was betrothed to Joseph, a descendant of King David, and announces that she will conceive a son by the grace of the Holy Spirit:

You are going to get pregnant and have a son who you will name Jesus. This child will become very important, God will make him king, and his reign will never end (...) The Holy Spirit will draw near to you; the most high God will cover you with his power. That is why the child will live

completely dedicated to God, and will be called "Son of God" (Lk. 1: 31-35).

The annunciation is a profound change that occurs within each being. It represents the interaction of the spirit, the angel Gabriel, with matter, Mary. The Virgin Mary is the vehicle through which spiritual intelligence is to be manifested. The conception is immaculate because it is not a physical birth but one of the spirit. Mary, the soul of man, the higher mind, must develop in order to be able to tread firmly the path back to the Father's house. Only when the soul is united with the life-giving force of the Holy Spirit (Creative Intelligence), can the Son be born, the Love Wisdom that resides in each one of us. What we designate in Theosophy as concrete mind cannot, by itself, lead the individual to realize the union with his higher nature. Joseph represents that specific mind and, therefore, can only be the putative father, because the Son is only born when the soul is united with the spirit: the true father is God, the divine nature.

It is clear that the intellect plays a role in the fulfilment of the individual. That is why it must be an eager intellect, as the Gospel of Matthew shows us:

While Mary was betrothed to Joseph, it was found that she had conceived of the Holy Spirit. José her husband, wanted to leave her secretly. And thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said to him: Joseph, do not be afraid to receive Mary your wife, because what is

begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (Mt. 1: 18-23).

Although there is a first impulse to flee, because the mind also resists giving way to the gifts of the spirit, when it (Joseph) is ready to understand the need for that birth, it hears the voice of intuition (in dreams comes the angel) and gives way to the higher. An eager intellect is fit enough to turn away from the tendencies of the material world. For this reason, Joseph protects his family from Herod, who represents our lower nature, who wants to kill the child (the spiritual) because it constitutes a hindrance to give free rein to the pleasures and impulses of the senses.

Once Jesus is born, Joseph takes his family to Egypt to stay safe from Herod. The East is known as the source of wisdom, it represents the lessons from the knowledge of the world, essential for the development of the soul. Only when the aspirant is firmly grounded not to fear Herod, can he return to Israel in peace: the lower nature no longer has power over that being.

Isis Unveiled mentions the miraculous conception and compares it to the legend of Perictione (Plato's mother) who had immaculately conceived her child. All religions drink from each other. For example, in the tradition of India there is also the twice-born (the anointed one), chariya, Shankaracharya, who consolidated the Vedanta doctrine, in which it is

mentioned that at the beginning of the Kali Yuga a virgin would be born who will conceive the son of God. This evidences universal symbolism and the truth that we must all prepare for the second birth, the birth of the Christ in us.

As for the birth of Jesus, it took place in difficult and very humble circumstances. The intention is to show that spiritual enlightenment is equally possible for all men regardless of their material circumstances. He is born in a manger surrounded by shepherds, sheep, and animals. In *Isis Unveiled*, HPB speaks of the birth of Jesus in a cave; it is the cave of the heart where our Christic principle has to be born: the manger is the etheric cave of the heart.

In the manger, the child is the centre; next to him are Mary, the soul that mediates between the divine and the worldly, and his father, the mind that has been subjugated by the commands of the spirit. The shepherds are the first called, they were in the field shepherding and the angels, the energies of heaven, manifested to them to inform the birth of the son of God.

The shepherds represent those beings that are one step ahead of the mass of humanity on the path to spiritual realization, and they are delighted each time a Christ is born. They take care of the sheep, the men and women who wander through life from one place to another without yet knowing the true purpose of the walk.

The Wise Men represent the wisdom and their gifts symbolize the three forces in us that are capable of transforming everything: will wisdom and holiness.

Let us remember that Herod asks them for information about the child but they are imprecise in order to protect him, because those qualities safeguard the true spiritual nature. The Wise Men personify the ministers of the Solar Logos. In all religions, the East is the side from which divine gifts come to men: gold, the true spiritual wisdom whose value is unalterable; frankincense, the soft fragrance of aspiration to high that burns thanks to the will represented by fire, and myrrh, the natural aroma of holiness (Gerald Tranter, *Wisdom and Christianity*).

These are all qualities of the spiritual nature, of the soul after that second birth. Once the Wise Men offer the gifts to the child, they have committed themselves to the higher and so they return by a different path in order to avoid Herod: they have left the empire of the lower nature.

Victory of light over darkness

The Christian world celebrates on December 25 of each year the birth of the Child Jesus. It is, as we see, a celebration of the utmost importance once it is understood from the point of view of the internal development of all human beings. Undoubtedly, it is also a historical fact of which the exact date is not known. Most likely, the date on which Christmas is celebrated does not coincide with the actual date of the birth of the historical

Christ. However, the choice of this particular date also has a meaning that is worth highlighting, since it even goes back to pre-Christian times.

On 25th December, pagans celebrated the day of the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, the birthday of the Invincible Sun. The pre-Christian feast was a feast of rebirth, the cosmic event that enlivens nature with its light and warmth. After a cold autumn in the northern hemisphere, winter arrives, the moment when nature hides itself and then produces the birth of its entrails in a splendid spring (Esoteric Christianity). The winter solstice is the time of the year when the day begins to gain ground over the night: after experiencing the shortest day of the year, the sun begins to shine more light on the world; there is more clarity and more light.

According to *The Secret Doctrine* (V.1), the ancient Egyptians celebrated on December 25, the birth of several of their most important divinities, especially, Osiris (son of Seb and Neith) and later the birth of his son Horus, who is the "Christos", symbol of the sun. HPB, in her *Collected Writings*, quotes the London Egyptologist Gerald Massey who talks about the historical Jesus and the mystical Christ. What he says is that the Messiah corresponds to the Horus of the Egyptians. In addition to that, it shows that in the Egyptian tradition the child born is represented in what corresponds to the hieroglyph of the birth of the sun. In other cultures, this festival used to be related to the birth of solar gods (Apollo or Helios, among others). The universality of

symbols is evident.

So we see that, from the mythical point of view, this legend of Christ, was found thousands of years before the Christian era. It was only in 325, with the Council of Nicaea, when the Church decided that on 25th December the birth of Jesus would be celebrated. This is also because at the beginning of the winter solstice there is also a greater intensity of the vibratory presence of the Cosmic Christ, a fact that in Christianity has been applied to Jesus and that corresponds to what has been called the Spirit of Christmas. It is an energy that comes from the centre of our star system and that comes year after year to distribute (more than material things), that which human beings cannot do without: peace, love, harmony and joy. In our life it is the symbol that Christ is reborn in us: it is an interior renewal.

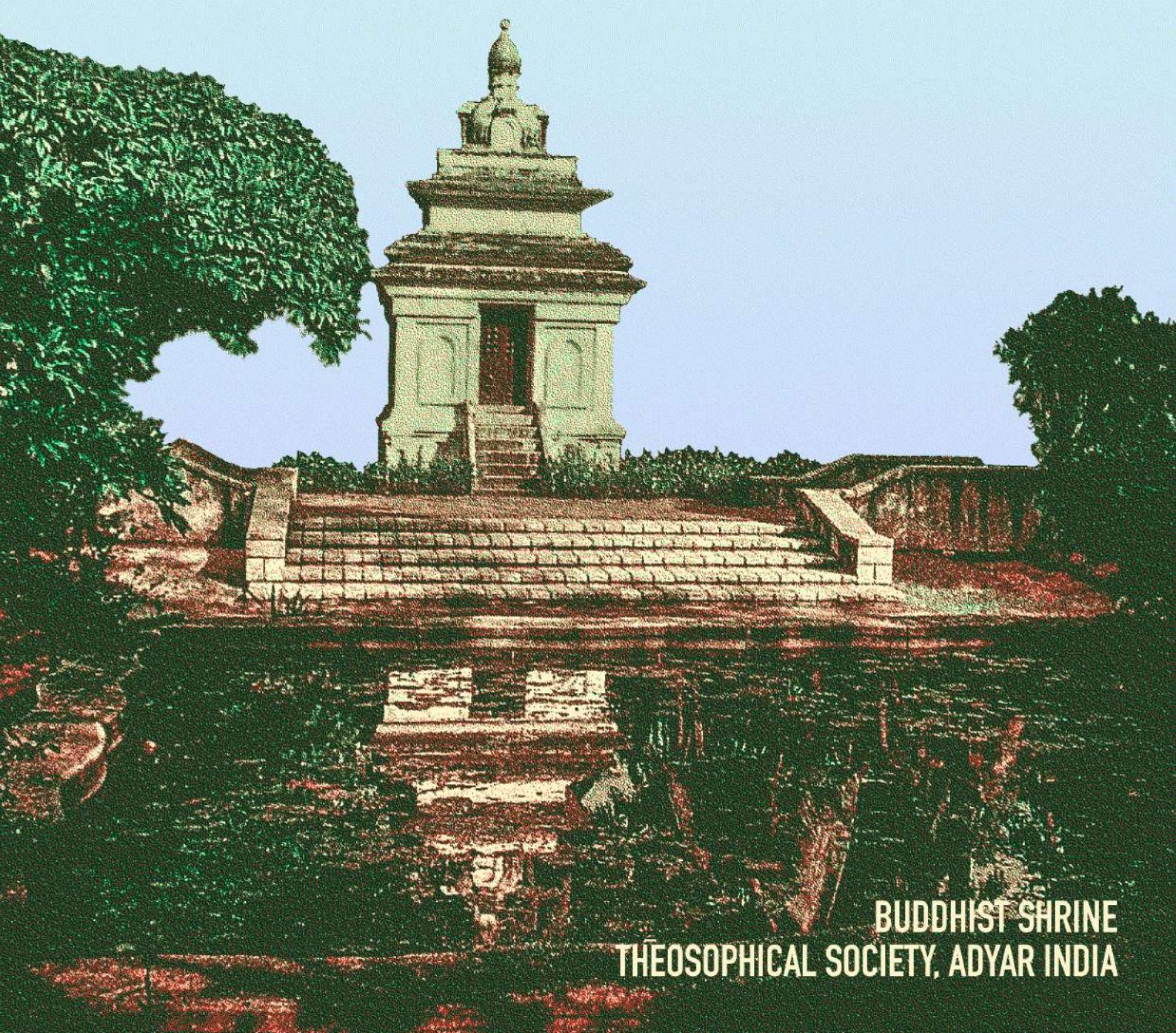
Conclusion

What is relevant on this date is not whether it is a proven historical fact or not, whether the conception was immaculate or not in physical terms. What really matters once we unveil the hidden teachings behind this celebration is the recognition that every human being has an inherent Christ nature that must be awakened: "Christ in

you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

The figure of the Christ is there to show us what is to come in terms of our spiritual journey. There are beings who are ahead of us, one of these beings is Jesus and every year we celebrate his birth. True Christianity must therefore be creative, transformative. Once we understand the hidden teachings, it is our duty to become architects of our own destiny and rebuild our lives.

We are called to be vehicles of resistance against the trivialization of the spiritual and to give Christmas the true dimension that it has: to resist the consumerism in which it has become and, instead of turning to the external, as advertising suggests, look within to begin the path of the Christ in our hearts. It is also about living the Christmas spirit from sharing and bringing a true sense of community in which solidarity, camaraderie and fraternal union become possible from the real celebration of love. So let us invite the true Christ who is love, compassion, service and transformation to take part in our Christmas celebrations from now on. A Merry Christmas to all and may the essence of Christ be born and quickened in the hearts of all humanity.



BUDDHIST SHRINE
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR INDIA

Theosophy and Gnosticism

Pablo D. Sender

Most of Gnostic teachers spoke about a flawed creator, the Demiurgos, and the lower worlds as a flawed creation, an error that could have been avoided. It is also true that Plotinus criticized the Gnostic teachings on that very point, saying that everything in the universe was created according to a universal Law and that creation has a purpose.

Many theosophists adopted the Neo-Platonic point of view instead of the Gnostic one, since HPB, her Masters and later Theosophists also taught that the Universe is ruled by immutable laws, order, and harmony. In fact, in the Key to Theosophy H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) calls the Theosophical Society "its [the Neo-Platonic School] modern successor". [1] Let us then examine briefly some of HPB's teachings about the subject.

I) The Demiurgos

Although she frequently used that term for the "creator" of the lower worlds, she did not refer to him as a flawed god. She says:

But that Demiurgos is no personal deity,—

i.e., an imperfect extra-cosmic god,—but only the aggregate of the Dhyan-Chohans and the other forces. [2]

II) Creation is not a mistake

From a theosophical point of view, the lower worlds are not avoidable mistakes but an inherent part of the process of evolution, called the "Cycle of Necessity", through which the Monads have . . . to progress on their task of evolution, from which task none of us can be freed, neither by death nor suicide, for each of us have to pass through the "Valley of Thorns" before he emerges into the plains of divine light and rest. [3]

III) The imperfection of the lower worlds

It is true that these worlds are imperfect, but it is only because "...that which is finite cannot be perfect". [4] The theosophical teachings agree with the Gnostics that those worlds were created by lower beings, but they were not "Angels" of an evil nature (Archons). HPB wrote: . . . there are inferior Beings among those Hosts, but there never were any devils or

'disobedient Angels', for the simple reason that they are all governed by Law". [5]

IV) Non-deterministic Law

HPB puts always forward the existence of the Law. However, it does not preclude the process from the possibility of mistakes: That process is not always perfect; and, however many proofs it may exhibit of a guiding intelligence behind the veil, it still shows gaps and flaws, and even results very often in evident failures. [6]

However, those "failures" do not involve a moral act but only mean that this "aggregate of forces" is also in process of evolution, and therefore those entities are also "learning".

There is a certain danger in believing that any system, because under immutable laws, will function in the right way just mechanically, without any effort on the part of humanity, Masters, etc. HPB makes the following interesting statement:

In sober truth, vice and wickedness are an abnormal, unnatural manifestation, at this period of our human evolution—at least they ought to be so. [7]

I think we theosophist should have a sense of urgency and responsibility for human evolution, trusting at the same time in the Universal Mind and Law—two attitudes that may seem paradoxical but are in fact complementary.

Insight, Spring 2007

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The Author Pablo Sender Kindly shared this article with The Light of Luxor Magazine.

HINDU TEMPLE, THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY ADYAR, INDIA



Was Cagliostro a "Charlatan"?

H.P. Blavatsky

To send the injured unredressed away,
How great soe'er the offender, and the.
wrong'd Howe'er obscure, is wicked, weak
and vile
Degrades, defiles, and should dethrone a
king.

-SMOLLETT.

The mention of Cagliostro's name produces a two-fold effect. With the one party, a whole sequence of marvellous events emerges from the shadowy past; with others the modern progeny of a too realistic age, the name of Alexander, Count Cagliostro, provokes wonder, if not contempt. People are unable to understand that this "enchanter and magician" (read "Charlatan") could ever legitimately produce such an impression as he did on his contemporaries. This gives the key to the posthumous reputation of the Sicilian known as Joseph Balsamo, that reputation which made a believer in him a brother Mason say, that (like Prince Bismarck and some Theosophists) "Cagliostro might well be said to be the best abused and most

hated man in Europe." Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the fashion of loading him with opprobrious names, none should forget that Schiller and Goethe were among his great admirers, and remained so to their Goethe while travelling in Sicily devoted much labour and time to collecting information about "Guiseppe Balsamo" in his supposed native land; and it was from these copious notes that the author of Faust wrote his play "The Great Kophta."

Why this wonderful man is receiving so little honour in England, is due to Carlyle. The most fearlessly truthful historian of his age—he, who abominated falsehood under whatever appearance—has stamped with the imprimatur of his honest and famous name, and thus sanctified the most iniquitous of historical injustices ever perpetrated by prejudice and bigotry. This owing to false reports which almost to the last emanated from a class he disliked no less than he hated untruth, namely the Jesuits, or—lie incarnate.

The very name of Giuseppe Balsamo, which, when rendered by cabalistic methods, means "He who was sent," or "The Given," also "Lord of the Sun," shows that such was not his real patronymic. As Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, F.T.S., remarks, toward the end of the last century it became the fashion with certain theosophical professors of the time to transliterate into Oriental form every name provided by Occult Fraternities for disciples destined to work in the world. Whosoever then, may have been Cagliostro's parents, their name was not Balsamo." So much is certain, at any rate.

Moreover, as all know that in his youth he lived with, and was instructed by, a man named, as is supposed, Althotas, "a great Hermetic Eastern Sage" or in other words an Adept, it is not difficult to accept the tradition that it was the latter who gave him his symbolical name. But that which is known with still more certainty is the extreme esteem in which he was held by some of the most scientific and honoured men of his day. In France we find Cagliostro;—having before served as a confidential friend and assistant chemist in the laboratory of Pinto, the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta-becoming the friend and protégé of the Prince Cardinal de Rohan. A high born Sicilian Prince honoured him with his support and friendship, as did many other noblemen. "Is it possible, then," pertinently asks Mackenzie, "that a man of such engaging manners could have been the lying impostor his enemies endeavoured to prove him?"

The chief cause of his life-troubles. was his marriage with Lorenza Feliciani, a tool of the Jesuits; and two minor causes his extreme good-nature, and the blind confidence he placed in his friends—some of whom became traitors and his bitterest enemies. Neither of the crimes of which he is unjustly accused could lead to the destruction of his honour and posthumous reputation; but all was due to his weakness for an in- worthy woman, and the possession of certain secrets of nature, which he would not divulge to the Church. Being a native of Sicily, Cagliostro was naturally born in a family of Roman Catholics, no matter what their name, and was brought up by monks of the "Good Brotherhood of Castiglione," as his biographers tell us; thus, for the sake of dear life he had to outwardly 'profess belief in and respect for a Church, whose traditional policy has ever been, "he who is not with us is against us," and forthwith to crush the enemy in the bud. And yet, just for this, is Cagliostro even to-day accused of having served the Jesuits as their spy; and this by Masons who ought to be the last to bring such a charge against a learned Brother who was persecuted by the Vatican even more as a Mason than as an Occultist. Had it been so, would these same Jesuits even to this day vilify his name? · Had he served them, would he not have proved himself useful to their ends, as a man of such undeniable intellectual gifts could not have blundered or disregarded the orders of those whom he served. But instead of this, what do we see?.

Cagliostro charged with being the most

cunning and successful impostor and charlatan of his age ; accused of belonging to the Jesuit Chapter of Clermont in France'; of appearing (as a proof of his affiliation to the Jesuits) in clerical dress at Rome. Yet, this "cunning impostor" is tried and condemned—by the exertions of those same Jesuits—to an ignominious death, which was changed only subsequently to life-long imprisonment, owing to a mysterious interference or influence brought to bear on the Pope !

Would it not be more charitable and consistent with truth to say that it was his connection with Eastern Occult Science, his knowledge of many secrets—deadly to the Church of Rome—that brought upon Cagliostro first the persecution of the Jesuits, and finally the rigour of the Church? It was his own honesty, which blinded him to the defects of those whom he cared for, and led him to trust two such rascals as the Marquis Agliato and Ottavio Nicastro, that is at the bottom of all the accusations of fraud and imposture now lavished upon him. And it is the sins of these two worthies subsequently executed for gigantic swindles and murder—which are now made to fall on Cagliostro. Nevertheless it is known that he and his wife (in 1770) were both left destitute by the flight of Agliato with all their funds, so that they had to beg their way through Piedmont and Geneva. . Kenneth Mackenzie has proven that Cagliostro had never mixed himself up with political intrigue the very

soul of the activities of the Jesuits. "He was most certainly unknown in that capacity to those who have jealously guarded the preparatory archives of the Revolution, and his appearance as an advocate of revolutionary principles has no basis in fact." . He was simply an Occultist and a Mason, and as such he was allowed to suffer at the hands of those who, adding insult to injury, first tried to kill him by lifelong imprisonment and then spread the rumour that he had been their ignoble agent. This cunning device was in its infernal craft well worthy of its primal originators.

There are many landmarks in Cagliostro's biographies to show that he taught the Eastern doctrine of the "principles" in man, of "God" dwelling in man—as a potentiality in *actu* (the "Higher Self")—and in every living thing and even atom—as a potentiality in *posse*, and that he served the Masters of a Fraternity he would not name because on account of his pledge he could not. His letter to the new mystical but rather motley Brotherhood the (Lodge of) Philalethes, is a proof in point. The Philalethes, as all Masons know, was a rite founded in Paris in 1773 in the Loge des Amis Réunis, based on the principles of Martinism¹, and whose members made a special study of the Occult Sciences. The Mother Lodge was a philosophical and theosophical Lodge, and therefore was right in desiring to purify its progeny, the Lodge of Philalethes. This is what the Royal

1 The Martinists were Mystics and Theosophists who claimed to have the secret of communicating with (Elemental and Planetary) Spirits of the ultramundane Spheres. Some of them were practical Occultists.

Masonic Cyclopædia says on the subject :

"On the 15 February 1785 the Lodge of Philalethes in solemn Section, with Lavelle de Langes, royal treasurer; Tassin, the banker; and Tassin, an officer in the royal service; opened a Fraternal Convention, at Paris. . . Princes (Russian, Austrian, : and others), fathers of the Church, councillors, knights, financiers, barristers, barons, Theosophists, canons, colonels, professors of Magic, engineers, literary men, doctors merchants, postmasters, dukes, ambassadors, surgeons, teachers of languages, re... ceivers-general, and notably two London names,-Boosie, à merchant, and Brooks of London-compose this Convention, to whom may be added M. le Count de Cagliostro, and Mesmer 'the inventor' as Thory describes him (Acta Latomorum, vol. ii. p. 95), of the doctrine of magnetism ! Surely such an able set of men to set the world to rights, as France never saw before or since!"

The grievance of the Lodge was that Cagliostro, who had first promised to take charge of it, withdrew his offers, as the "Convention" would not adopt the Constitutions of the Egyptian Rite, nor wouldnt Philalethes consent to have its archives consigned to the flames, which were his conditions sine qua non. It is strange that his answer to that Lodge should be regarded by Brother K. R. H.

Mackenzie and other Masons as emanating " from a Jesuit source." The very style is Oriental, and no European Mason-least of all a Jesuit-would write in such a manner. This is how the answer runs :

..."The unknown grand Master of true Masonry has cast his eyes upon the Philaletheans. . . Touched by the sincere avowal of their desires, he deigns to extend his hand over them, and consents to give a ray of light into the darkness of their temple. It is the wish of the Unknown Great Master, to prove to them the existence of one God--the basis of their faith ; the original dignity of man; his powers and destiny. . . . It is by deeds and facts, by the testimony of the senses, that they will know GOD, MAN and the intermediary spiritual beings (principles) existing between them; of which true Masonry gives the symbols and indicates the real road. Let then, the Philalethes embrace the doctrines of this real Masonry, submit to the rules of its supreme chief, and adopt its constitutions. But above all let the Sanctuary be purified, let the Philalethes know that light can only descend into the Temple of Faith (based on knowledge), not into that of Scepticism. Let them devote to the flames that vain accumulation of their archives; for it is only on the ruins of the Tower of Confusion that the Temple of Truth can be erected."

In the Occult · phraseology of certain Occultists "Father, Son and Angels" stood for the compound symbol of physical, and

astro-Spiritual MAN². John G. Gichtel (end of XVIIth cent.), the ardent lover of Boehme, the Seer of whom St. Martin relates that he was married "to the heavenly Sophia," the Divine Wisdom-made use of this term. Therefore, it is easy to see what Cagliostro meant by proving to the Philalethes on the testimony of their: "senses," "God, man and the intermediary Spiritual beings," that exist between God (Atma), and Man (the Ego). Nor is it more difficult to understand his true meaning when he reproaches the Brethren in his parting letter which says :—"We have offered you the truth; you have disdained it. We have offered it for the sake of itself, and you have refused it in consequence of a love of forms. ..Can you elevate yourselves to (your) God and the knowledge of yourselves by the assistance of a Secretary and a Convocation ?" etc³.

Many are the absurd and entirely contradictory statements about Joseph Balsamo, Count de Cagliostro, so-called, several of which were incorporated by Alexander Dumas in his Mémoires d'un Medicin, v those prolific variations of truth and fact which so characterize Dumas père's romances. But though the world is in possession of a most miscellaneous and varied mass of information concerning that remarkable and unfortunate man

during most of his life, yet of the last ten years and of his death, nothing certain is known, save only the legend that he died in the prison of the Inquisition. True, some fragments published recently by the Italian savant, Giovanni Sforza, from the private correspondence of Lorenzo Prospero Bottini, the Roman ambassador of the Republic of Lucca at the end of the last century, have somewhat filled this wide gap. This correspondence with Pietro Calandrini, the Great Chancellor of the said Republic, begins from 1784, but the really interesting information commences only in 1789, in a letter dated June 6, of that year, and even then we do not learn much.

It speaks of the "celebrated Count di Cagliostro, who has recently arrived with his wife from Trent vid Turin to Rome. People say he is a native of Sicily and extremely wealthy, but no one knows whence that wealth. He has a letter of introduction from the Bishop of Trent : to Albani. . . So far his daily walk in life as well as his private and public status are above reproach. Many are those seeking an interview with him, to hear from his own lips the corroboration of what is being said of him." From another letter we learn that Rome had proven an ungrateful soil for Cagliostro. He had the intention of

2 See the Three Principles and the Seven Forms of Nature by Boehme and fathom their Occult significance, to assure yourself of this.

3 The statement on the authority of Beswick that Cagliostro was connected with The Loge des Amis Réunis under the name of Count Grabionka is not proven. There was a Polish Count of that name at that time in France, a mystic mentioned in Madame de Krüdner's letters which are with the writer's family, and one who belonged, as Beswick says, together with Mesmer and Count St. Germain, to the Lodge of the Philalethes. Where are Lavalette de Langes' Manuscripts and documents left by him after his death to the Philosophic Scottish Rite? Lost?

settling at Naples, but the plan could not be realised. The Vatican authorities who had hitherto left the Count undisturbed, suddenly laid their heavy hand upon him.

In a letter dated 2 January, 1790, just a year after Cagliostro's arrival, it is stated that: "last Sunday secret and extraordinary debates in council took place at the Vatican." It (the council) consisted of the State Secretary and Antonelli, Pillotta and Campanelli, Monsignor Figerenti performing the duty of Secretary. The object of that Secret Council remains unknown, but public rumour asserts that it was called forth owing to the sudden arrest on the night between Saturday and Sunday, of the Count di Cagliostro, his wife, and a Capuchin, Fra Giuseppe Maurijio. The Count is incarcerated in Fort St. Angelo, the Countess in the Convent of St. Apollonia, and the monk in the prison of Araceli. That monk, who calls himself 'Father Swizzero,' is regarded as a confederate of the famous magician. In the number of the crimes he is accused of is included that of the circulation of a book by an unknown author, condemned to public burning and entitled, 'The Three Sisters. The object of this work is to pulverize certain three high-born individuals.'

The real meaning of this most extraordinary misinterpretation is easy to guess. It was a work on Alchemy; the "three sisters" standing symbolically for the three "Principles" in their duplex symbolism. On the plane of occult chemistry they "pulverize" the triple ingredient used in the process of the transmutation of metals ; on the plane of Spirituality they

reduce to a state of pulverization the three "lower" personal "principles" in man, an explanation that every Theosophist is bound to understand.

The trial of Cagliostro lasted for a long time. In a letter of March the 17th, Bottini writes to his Lucca correspondent that the famous "wizard" has finally appeared before the Holy Inquisition. The real cause of the slowness of the proceedings was that the Inquisition, with all its dexterity at fabricating proofs, could find no weighty evidence to prove the guilt of Cagliostro. Nevertheless, on April the 7th 1791 he was condemned to death. He was accused of various and many crimes, the chiefest of which were his being a Mason and an "Muminate," an "Enchanter" occupied with unlawful studies ; he was also accused of deriding the holy Faith, of doing harm to society, of possessing himself by means unknown of large sums of money, and of inciting others, sex, age and social standing notwithstanding, to do the same. In short, we find the unfortunate Occultist condemned to an ignominous death for deeds committed, the like of which are daily and publicly committed now-a-days, by more than one Grand Master of the Masons, as also by hundreds of thousands of Kabbalists and Masons, mystically inclined. After this verdict the "arch heretic's" documents, diplomas from foreign Courts and Societies, Masonic regalias and family relics were solemnly burned by the public hangmen in the Piazza della Minerva, before enormous crowds of people. First his books and instruments were consumed. Among

these was the MS. on the Maçonnerie Egyptienne, which thus can no longer serve as a witness in favour of the reviled man. And now the condemned Occultist had to be passed over to the hands of the civil Tribunal, when a mysterious event happened.

A stranger, never seen by any one before or after in the Vatican, appeared and demanded a private audience of the Pope, sending him by the Cardinal Secretary a word instead of a name. He was immediately received, but only stopped with the Pope for a few minutes. No sooner was he gone than his Holiness gave orders to commute the death sentence of the Count to that of imprisonment for life, in the fortress called the Castle of St. Leo, and that the whole transaction should be conducted in great secrecy. The monk Swizzero was condemned to ten years' imprisonment; and the Countess Cagliostro was set at liberty, but only to be confined on a new charge of heresy in a convent.

But what was the Castle of St. Leo? It now stands on the frontiers of Tuscany and was then in the Papal States, in the Duchy of Urbino. It is built on the top of an enormous rock, almost perpendicular on all sides; to get into the "Castle" in those days, one had to enter a kind of open basket which was hoisted up by ropes and pulleys. As to the criminal, he was placed in a special box, after which the jailors pulled him up "with the rapidity of the wind." On April 23rd 1792 Giuseppe Balsamo—if so we must call him—ascended heavenward in

the criminal's box, incarcerated in that living tomb for life. Giuseppe Balsamo is mentioned for the last time in the Bottini correspondence in a letter dated March 10th 1792. The ambassador speaks of a marvel produced by Cagliostro in his prison during his leisure hours. A long rusty nail taken by the prisoner out of the floor was transformed by him without the help of any instrument into a sharp triangular stiletto, as smooth, brilliant and sharp as if it were made of the finest steel. It was recognized for an old nail only by its head, left by the prisoner to serve as a handle. The State Secretary gave orders to have it taken away from Cagliostro, and brought to Rome, and to double the watch over him.

And now comes the last kick of the jackass at the dying or dead lion. Luiggi Angiolini, a Tuscan diplomat, writes as follows: "At last, that same Cagliostro, who made so many believe that he had been a contemporary of Julius Cæsar, who reached such fame and so many friends, died from apoplexy, August 26, 1795. Semironi had him buried in a wood-barn below, whence peasants used to pilfer constantly the crown property. The crafty chaplain reckoned very justly that the man who had inspired the world with such superstitious fear while living, would inspire people with the same feelings after his death, and thus keep the thieves at bay..."

But yet—a query! Was Cagliostro dead and buried indeed in 1792, at St. Leo? And if so, why should the custodians at the Castle of St. Angelo, of Rome show innocent tourists the little square hole in which Cagliostro

is said to have been confined and "died"? Why such uncertainty or-imposition, and such disagreement in the legend ? Then there are Masons who to this day tell strange stories in Italy. Some say that Cagliostro escaped in an unaccountable way from his aerial prison, and thus forced his jailors to spread the news of his death and burial. Others maintain that he not only escaped, but, thanks to the Elixir of Life, still lives on, though over twice three score and ten years old ! :

"Why" asks Bottini, "if he really possessed the powers he claimed; has he not indeed vanished from his jailors, and thus escaped the degrading punishment altogether ?"
We have heard of another prisoner,

greater in every respect than Cagliostro ever claimed to be. Of that prisoner too, it was said in mocking tones, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe. ..." How long shall charitable people build the biographies of the living and ruin the reputations of the dead, with such incomparable unconcern, by means of idle and often entirely false gossip of people, and these generally the slaves of prejudice! So long, we are forced to think, as they remain ignorant of the Law of Karma and its iron justice.

H. P. B.

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HEADQUARTERS BUILDING, THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
ADYAR INDIA



The Christians of St. John the Baptist

Ehsan Mansouri

The Mandaeans

The Christians of Saint John named Mandaeans (Arabic: نوئيادن ماندآن، هئي باصئل، romanized: **aṣ-Ṣābi'ah al-Mandā'iyūn**) were forced to flee about 1950 years ago from persecutions and harms happened in Jerusalem and had to settle on sides of Euphrates in cities of Baghdad, Basra, Amarah, Khorramshahr, Hoveyzeh, Shooshtar and Anwaz that were all located on the Persian Empire.

You can find them fully in white customs made from cotton next to the Karun River at Ahwaz City of Iran while they are doing their own unique ablution and prayers. They live next to the river and mostly their profession is in Silverwork, Enamels and Goldsmith.

The Christians of Saint John have two separated calendars, first is the great celebration of Adam named "Dahwa Rabba" starting the 15th of July each year that is now year of 445,338 and the second one is the birth of Saint John. The Mandaeans have four celebrations

including 5 holy days "Banjeh" on every late March, The birth of Saint John, The great celebration "Dahwa Rabba" and the small celebration of the creation of the earth "Dahwa Hamina" on November.

They also organize "Ashoorie" to respect the victims of the great flood from the Book of Genesis, and furthermore "Fal Festival" with preparation of a special meal made of date palm and sesame. Their holy book named "Ganza Rabba" means the great treasure that is teachings of Adam and his son Seth that covers the whole Mandaeans' rituals. They believe that Adam had 3 sons and 3 daughters, but it was not allowed any marriages between siblings, therefore, God ordered to send 60 similar families from the world of light to the earth and they all created the very first civilization.

Ganzoora Nejah Chahili is the spiritual leader of the Mandaeans in Iran, He is a 60 years old goldsmith, a very tall with long white beard in a white custom. He believes that they are mostly forgotten

by outside world and some people think they are worshiping stars and water but that is a wrong statement. They have some prophets including Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Enosh and especially John the Baptist. The Mandaeans group existence into two main categories: light and dark. They have a dualistic view of life, that encompasses both good and evil; all good is thought to have come from the World of Light (i.e. light world) and all evil from the World of Darkness. In relation to the body-mind dualism coined by Descartes, Mandaeans consider the body, and all material, worldly things, to have come from the Dark, while the soul (sometimes referred to as the mind) is a product of the light world. The World of Light is ruled by a heavenly being, known by many names, such as "Life," "Lord of Greatness," "Great Mind," or "King of Light". This being is so great, vast, and incomprehensible that no words can fully depict how awesome Life is. It is believed that an innumerable number of beings, manifested from the light, surround Life and perform cultic acts of worship to praise and honor this great being. They inhabit worlds separate from the lightworld and are commonly referred to as emanations from the First Life; their names include Second, Third, and Fourth Life.

The Lord of Darkness (Krun) is the ruler of the World of Darkness formed from dark waters representing chaos. A main defender of the dark world is a giant monster, or dragon, with the name "Ur;" an evil, female ruler also inhabits the dark world, known as "Ruha". The Mandaeans

believe these malevolent rulers created demonic offspring who consider themselves the owners of the Seven (planets) and Twelve (Zodiac signs).

According to Mandaean beliefs, the world is a mixture of light and dark created by the demiurge (Ptahil) with help from dark powers, such as Ruha, the Seven, and the Twelve. Adam's body (i.e. believed to be the first human created by God in Abrahamic tradition) was fashioned by these dark beings; however, his "soul" (or mind) was a direct creation from the Light. Therefore, many Mandaeans believe the human soul is capable of salvation because it originates from the lightworld. The holy book is in old Aramaic language and they are native to the alluvial plain of southern Mesopotamia and are followers of Mandaism, a monotheistic Gnostic religion. They were probably the first to practice baptism and are the last surviving Gnostics from antiquity. The Mandaeans were originally native speakers of Mandaic, a Semitic language that evolved from Eastern Middle Aramaic, before many switched to colloquial Iraqi Arabic and Modern Persian.

They are not allowed to divorce, and the water is sacred as they believe the water was sent by order of God from the world of light to the earth to create the life. Their diet is mostly birds and only ram as read meat.

There are five spiritual degrees in their ritual and faith.

1. Ashkanda: A person who is responsible for baptism, Termida assistance, slaughter and etc.
2. Termida: is a Marriage officiant, responsible for baptism and all other holy rituals.
3. Ganzoora: a spiritual leader, Marriage
4. Risha Adama: High Priest of the Mandaean.
5. Rabbani: Prophets.

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"I am not of anytime or of any place; beyond time and space my spiritual being lives and external existence. I turn my thoughts back over the ages and i project my spirit towards an existence far beyond which you perceive, I become what I choose to be. Participating consciously in the absolute being, I arrange my actions according to what is at hand. My name defines my actions because I am free. My country is where ever my feet stand at the moment. Put yesterday behind you if you dare, like the forgotten ancestors who came before you, give no thought to the morrow and the illusionary hope of greatness will never be yours, I will be what I am."

Alessandro Cagliostro, The Masonic magician (2008).

Reflections on Ethos and its explanations about the world

Santiago Beltran

Ethos is a common reference, which generates ways of feeling and thinking, it has been configured in facets throughout history, that is, it is constituted as a transformation that has precisely been modifying the direction of thinking. So, it is fully changing and variable, with different vicissitudes. Ethos is the common belief of humanity, it is the notion of the world, thus, the spiritual beyond the routine and normalized in history, is positioned as the transcendent.

The question about Ethos is not far from the reflections typical of Theosophy, in fact, in its studies the manifestations of religions are collected in their explanation of the world. Questions about beliefs must necessarily be consistent with what H. P Blavatsky calls the synonym of Eternal Truth¹.

We can affirm from Heidegger in his text The epoch of the image of the world², the

existence of a foundation that supports each stage, epoch of humanity, in other words, a philosophical or metaphysical foundation. In the classics it was knowledge of the world, wondering about it, about being, the unfolding of truth and attitude with reference to being. In the Middle Ages, the philosophical support was divine creation, the Bible and God, who although everything was explained by him, it was possible to think about Christian doctrine (explanation of the world by Christian means). Finally, when we speak of a modern metaphysical foundation, we must speak of Descartes with his Cartesian philosophy, which gives rise to modern science, which denies its foundations and engages in factual calculation.

To this extent, Ethos is made up of general characters with incidents that concern human management. It is a collective determination, a mode and some signs

1 H.P. Blavatsky. La clave de la Teosofía. Editorial KIER 1982.

2 Heidegger, Martín. Los senderos del bosque, Madrid: alianza editorial, 1998. La época de la imagen del mundo

referring to the being that generate ways of feeling and thinking. In short, it is the quest that the Masters speak of, as Blavatsky asserts.

The forgetting of "being" in Modern times.

Following this line, Heidegger speaks of a "forgetting of being", he considers that it is necessary to make a call to "thinking" not limited from modern technique, but from a development of truth. For him, the anthropocentric foundation cannot be a total referent of Ethos, that is, it cannot be considered as the only character, consequently, there is a loss of objectification, a loss of referents, thanks to the humanistic egoism reflected in nihilism .

In this sense and within the framework of these assumptions, it is necessary to refer to the question that Umberto Eco asks Carlo Maria Martín, the bishop of Milan, in the text *What those who do not believe believe*³. The question that Umberto Eco asks himself in the context of an Ethos, (which apparently has collapsed) is related to hope and consequently to the future of humanity, what is the ultimate goal of man?

In this sense, a dialogue is proposed between Eco and the bishop of Milan that consists of a reflection on the end of

humanity, a concern in Theosophy, which is centered not on an apathy for the future, but an examination of the past that It has led us to what we are today, in verbatim words: "What critical function can a reflection on the end adopt that does not imply disinterest in the future, but rather constant judgment of past mistakes?"⁴ . Foucault raises something similar when he mentions the characterization of an Ethos positively, in the critique that must exist on the limits of knowledge.⁵

Thus, the problematization of various aspects makes it possible to bring to light issues that have not been resolved, a work that draws attention to Blavatsky when he talks about the abstract and the concrete⁶. What we want to emphasize is not a formulation of a new Ethos, but the reflection on matters and experiences that precisely in the modern decadence of being, do not allow us to be collectively interested in the truth. Modern Ethos has lost the character of search, and this is manifested in the art of the 20th century

In the first instance what Hobsbawm wants to denote is that the crisis of avant-garde art of the 20th century comes hand in hand with the failure of modernity, he refers to the work of art as an "expression of the times"⁷, that is, as the manifestation of Ethos. In this sense, for Hobsbawm avant-garde art manifests itself for a

3 ECO Umberto, Martini Maria Carlo. *¿Que creen los que no creen?* Ediciones temas de hoy, S.A.

4 IBID

5 Reflexión que hace Foucault en el texto *¿Que es la ilustración?*

6 IBID

7 Hobsbawm Eric. *a la zaga, decadencia y fracaso de las vanguardias del siglo XX* . Editorial critica Barcelona 1999

minority, it does not attract the attention of the public and this is the greatest failure. It is configured as a "technological obsolescence"⁸, it is totally incapable of not being absorbed by it, of linking itself to its media and of becoming an influence for capitalist advertising, and not for spiritual transcendence.

This inability to give an answer to technology is due to the importance and freedom given to the author as a creator in the context of modernity, he is seen as the inventor of a work whose originality allows it to be irreproducible, since Hobsbawm this is in a way the nightmare for the avant-garde art of the twentieth century, even from the economic plane since its specificity and originality is contradictory with the required and growing mass market in modernity itself, this makes art something more particular or minority.

It is then necessary to consider art, to remove it from a low profile. In Adorno there is the positivist denial of art, this means that the aesthetics is determined according to the essence of the work, rather than its form, in this sense, the true artistic function should not move, but by the otherwise it demands to shock the viewer. The cultural industry produces a number of images lacking in essence and content, which for Adorno constitute a degradation of aesthetics, insofar as it proceeds from a commercial logic, "The

participation of the empirical subject in the artistic experience, *telle quelle* is only limited and modified, and could decrease as the range of works grew. Whoever enjoys them in a too concrete way is a trivial man"⁹.

But how to make it possible for the transcendence reflected in spirituality through art to be transmitted to all people? In other words, how can the spirituality of the whole mass be shocked? How to make art precisely reproducible, so that we all have access to it so that it is precisely configured and perhaps a new perspective is constituted?

In a matter of art, there must be a recognition of others, that is, it must be admired not as something particularistic, but rather as something spiritually transcendent collective. Returning to Umberto Eco in his dialogue with the bishop of Milan, it is necessary to consider the conception of the space of the other, since the foundations for an Ethos center on the moment in which others enter to play an important role in history "The ethical dimension begins when others enter"¹⁰

To conclude, it is necessary for art to focus on the position accessible to what Theosophy teaches us, in relation to the search for Truth outside of egoism, it is necessary to eliminate its reproducibility

8 Hobsbawm Eric. *a la zaga, decadencia y fracaso de las vanguardias del siglo XX*. Editorial critica Barcelona 1999

9 Arte sociedad, estética Adorno Tiedeman

10 Eco Umberto, Martini Maria Carlo. *¿Que creen los que no creen?* Ediciones temas de hoy, S.A. Pág. 89

and originality that confers it as something very indecipherable, in this sense, it is necessary to contemplate in this case different perspectives, which may be behind everything that modern Ethos himself has not seen. In this way, the search for other artistic alternatives different from

the known ones may help us to configure a way of being, a new character and a new way of feeling and thinking in a high moral ideal.

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"There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe: I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer; there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards there is reward past all telling—the power to bless and save humanity; for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come."

H.P. Blavatsky

The Brethren of the Rosy Cross.

Alexander Wilder

Were there Rosicrucians or were there not? This question agitated Europe two centuries ago, as Luther before that, and Savanarola, and Markion had each in his own time and way shaken the Church to its very foundations. All this was because a little book had appeared in the country of Wurtemburg purporting to unfold the existence of a secret fraternity possessing arcane and scientific knowledge, and devoted to the amelioration of human suffering, and the enlightenment of mankind.

The religionists of the seventeenth century could see only blasphemy and iniquity in such a proposition. They invoked fire from heaven upon the Brotherhood, and threatened them with death by breaking on the wheel. A few years before, Bruno had been burned at the stake by order of the Holy Office for teaching the Copernican system and the Pythagorean philosophy; and now Lutherans were emulating Romanists in their frenzy to get human blood to shed. A few years later these vultures were sated to the full. In

1618 began the thirty years' war between Catholic and Protestant Germany, which sucked all Europe into its bloody vortex, and continued till whole districts were depopulated, and the wild beasts of the forest succeeded to the abodes of more ferocious humankind. After the war came pestilence. Small-pox broke out spontaneously, and the Black Death accompanied. Europe was a prodigious charnel.

The tale of the Brotherhood was modest enough. Christian Rosenkrenz had been a traveller in the East, where he had received instruction into the profoundest lore, — magian, rabbinic, theurgic, and alchemic. Among other acquirements, were the knowledge of the philosopher's stone, the art of transmuting metals, and the elixir of life. Returning to Germany, he established a little fraternity of eight disciples, obligating them to keep the doctrine secret for the space of one hundred and twenty years after his death. This occurred in 1484; and accordingly in 1604 there appeared *The Discovery of the*

Brotherhood of the Honorable Order of the Rosy Cross. It appealed to all who desired to co-operate with them to make public their names. The Rosicrusians, it declared, were genuine Protestants. They were engaged in no movement or conspiracy against the ruling powers. Their aim was the diminishing of human wretchedness, the spread of education, the advancement of learning, science, universal enlightenment, and love. They possessed profound and occult knowledge, such as the alchemists, Arabian thaumaturgists, Egyptian and Chaldean wise men had brought forth; but all that was of little account. Their one high purpose was to benefit their fellow-creatures, body and soul.

A fire-brand of more destructive nature could not have been hurled into the combustible pyre of Europe. The Pope, the Emperor, the Christian and Catholic kings, the Protestant monarchs of the Baltic and North seas, exploded with terrible concussion. Not till thirty years of war and massacre had passed by, could the boiling caldron become quiet. Universal love and enlightenment, even now, if duly proclaimed, would imperil every throne in Europe from that of Alexander to the royal seat of Victoria; and even the political factions of the United States, blatant in their professions of freedom and democracy, would crumble to their primeval atoms.

Nevertheless, they tell us that there were no Rosicrucians. The Brotherhood was all a fond dream, written out by a Lutheran mystic divine named Andreea, on purpose

to rouse the philanthropic minds of oppressed Europe to concerted action. A confederacy of such men, he believed, would renovate the world. But no great convention was held for the purpose. The reporters and daily newspapers of the time had no sensational articles unfolding the plans of the Grand Alliance for the Amelioration of Human Calamity. It may be added that there was no country in Europe where such a convention could have met, except in secret. They would have needed that extraordinary Temple of the Holy Ghost under ground, if they had ventured upon their World's conference. As the matter stands, nobody can intelligently declare that they did not so assemble.

Learned men have made but a very indifferent handling of the matter. Des Cartes advertised all through Germany for men who belonged to the Rosicrucian Fraternity, or knew of it. He received letters from every sort of adventurer, but nothing affording the least light upon the subject of his enquiry. It was finally his opinion that there was no such association in existence. It is plain enough that if there were Rosicrucians, the knowledge concerning them had been "hid from the wise and prudent but was revealed to babes."

Andreea declared that the Rosicrucians had symbols and occult means of communication similar to those of the Alchemists and Astrologists. Indeed the Red Cross had been the badge of the templars. That Order had been suppressed in 1307, yet Francis I. had burned four members alive, a short time previous. He

had also exterminated the Albigenses of Province, a Gnostic brotherhood, with secret rites and symbols, dating from the earlier Christian centuries. The Rosicrucian Brotherhood then had usages in common with both.

Ignorance has always been the mother of unquestioning orthodoxy. Nobody is so hostile to the general dissemination of knowledge as a priest. Greater cruelty has never been perpetrated among mankind than that authorised and commanded by the ministers of religions. From Theodosius down, the record of the Christian religion has been the autobiography of the seven-headed bloody red Dragon.

The Persian conquest of Asia Minor had led to the establishment of the religion of Mithras in that country. After the destruction of the Empire of Alexandria, the kingdom of Pontus was established, having Mithraism for its ruling faith. When Pompey conquered the country, the religion was carried thence to every part of the Roman Empire. The father of Jesus it is said was a "soldier of Mithras." It flourished as a secret worship till its suppression by Theodosius; and even then, the pagani or country-people kept up the observance away down into the Mediaeval period. The Popes and Bishops denounced the rites as magic, witchcraft and commerce with the Powers of Darkness. Probably the Witchcraft of the Middle Ages was a relic of the old Magian worship.

In the seventh century, Sylvanus, a native of Samasata, established the fraternity

of Paulicians, including in it the various Gnostic communes, the Manichenians of Armenicus, and the Mithraites of Pontus. Their doctrines were an amalgamation of the Pauline and the Zoroastrian but they denounced the Ebionite religionists of Judea. They were fiercely persecuted by all the Christian Emperors, Arian as well as Athanasian. For near two centuries they maintained an independent government in the Caucasus. One of the emperors colonised a part of them in France, whence they spread into Bulgaria. Being employed in the Roman armies, they were transferred to various countries of Europe; Italy and France abounded with proselytes. Among these were the Albigenses.

Other believers in the Gnosis or arcane knowledge had been removed into Persia. They were denominated Sophi or sages, the worshipers of Sophia or Heavenly wisdom. Their converts were known as Sufis, and long constituted the learned class of the country. They were expert in medicine and astronomy, and adepts in secret doctrines. They believed in a grand universal creed which could be secretly held under any profession of an outward faith; and in fact, took a similar view of religious systems to that entertained by the ancient philosophers. A mystic union with the Divinity, theurgic powers and a tendency to ascetism, characterised them.

Thus the Rosicrucian Brotherhood possessed a heritage of all the arcane systems and religions of the earlier world. Hargrave Jennings, their latest chronicler imputes to them the symbols, traditions

and learning of the principal mystic fraternities. The Hermetic philosophy of Egypt, the fire-theosophy of Persia, Druid-worship, Gnosticism, the Kabala, the Ancient Mysteries and Orders of Knighthood, Magic, Alchemy, Hindu beliefs, etc., all are treated by him in this connection. His style is curiously complicated; he tells little where he seems to be telling much, and with an obscurity of expression which seems to show little real knowledge or understanding of his subject. Yet he reveals the secret when to the non-expert he apparently hides it closest.

Could they change metals into gold? "Nature herself," said Mejnour to Glyndon, "is a laboratory in which metals and all elements are for ever at change. Easy to make gold — easier, more commodious, and cheaper still, to make the pearl, the diamond and the ruby." Raymond Lulli, a Franciscan monk, born in 1234, a rare expert in medicine and alchemy, is said by one writer to have supplied Edward I. with six millions of money to enable him to carry on war against the Turks in Palestine. Another writer affirms that he made gold for Edward III. in the Tower of London, for an entire coinage of gold nobles. He endeavoured to unite the European countries in a project to Christianise Asia and Africa; but failing in this, set out alone. He made several converts; but was finally stoned to death by the Moslems in 1314.

Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes) lived in the reigns of the first James and Charles, who were rather famous for

persecutions of "witches."^{*} He relates that he endeavoured once to sell 1,200 marks' worth of gold to a goldsmith. The man told him at first sight that that gold never came out of the mines, but had been produced by artificial means, not being of the standard of any known kingdom. He hurried away, leaving his gold behind.

* Which is precisely the English word for Gnostikos. The Gnostics were accused of Sorcery.

Indeed, if a single element lies at the foundation of nature, as Dr. Thomas R. Frazer of Halifax, N. S., has demonstrated, an opinion in which he is followed by S. Pancoast of Philadelphia and J. Norman Lockyer, to whom the credit is given — then the transmutation of metals is a matter perhaps in reach.

Is there an Elixir capable of prolonging life? Thomas Vaughan was born about the year 1612. A writer in 1749 remarks: "He is believed by those of his fraternity to be living even now; and a person of great credit at Nuremberg in Germany affirms that he conversed with him but a year or two ago. Nay, it is further asserted that this very individual is the president of the illuminated in Europe, and that he sits as such in all their annual meetings."

Artephius, who lived 750 years ago wrote a book entitled On the Art of Prolonging Human Life, in which he asserted that he had already attained the age of 1025 years. Several asserted that he was the personage whose life was written by Philostratus under the name of Apollonius of Tyana. He

wrote a book on the philosopher's stone, which was published at Paris in 1612.

"All that we profess to do is this" said Mejnour to Glyndon; "to find out the secrets of the human frame, to know why the parts ossify and the blood stagnates, and to apply continual preventives to the effects of time. This is not magic; it is the art of Medicine rightly understood. In our order we hold most noble — first, that knowledge which elevates the intellect; secondly, that which preserves the body."

The late Major-General Ethan A. Hitchcock was like his grandfather the noted Ethan Allen of Ticonderoga fame, addicted to curious study. In his treatise Alchemy and the Alchemists, he deduces an allegorical interpretation for the philosopher's stone, the transmutation of metals, and the elixir of life. «The genuine adepts,» says he, «were searchers after truth in the highest sense of this word.» The philosopher's stone, he adds, «can be found in no other thing in the universe but the nature of man, made in the image of God.» The Elixir, under this interpretation, would signify spirituality — «eternal life.» Sallust the Neo-Platonic philosopher has instructed us that «that which in a literal sense is manifestly absurd and impossible, must be understood in some other sense.»

Lord Bulwer-Lytton has forcibly depicted the careers of Zanoni and Mejnour, living through the ages from the period when the Chaldean Akkads ruled in Babylonia. He has shown that the boon of life is not desirable, though he represents it with

none of the horrors which characterise the story of the Wandering Jew, forgotten by death. Mr. Jennings, following in a similar vein remarks that Rosicrucians evade the idea that they possess any extraordinary or separate knowledge, they live simply as mere spectators in the world, and they desire to make no disciples, converts nor confidants. They submit to the obligation of life, and to relationships — enjoying the fellowship of none, admiring none, following none, but themselves. They obey all codes, are excellent citizens, and only preserve silence in regard to their own private convictions, giving the world the benefit of their acquirements up to a certain point; seeking only sympathy at some angles of their multiform character, but shutting out curiosity wholly when they do not wish its imperative eyes.

This is the reason that the Rosicrucians passed through the world mostly unnoticed, and that people generally disbelieve that if there ever were such persons; or believe that if there were, their pretensions are an imposition.

It is not generally known that the Rosicrucians bound themselves to obligations of comparative poverty but absolute chastity in the world, with certain dispensations and remissions that fully answered their purpose; for they were not necessarily solitary people: on the contrary they were frequently gregarious, and mixed freely with all classes, though privately admitting no law but their own. Their notions of poverty, or comparative poverty, were different from those that

usually prevail. They felt that neither monarchs nor the wealth of monarchs could endow or aggrandise those who already esteemed themselves the superiors of all men; and therefore, though declining riches, they were voluntary in the renunciation of them. They held to chastity, entertaining some very peculiar notions about the real position of the female sex in the creation, the Enlightened or Illuminated brothers held the monastic state to be infinitely more consonant with the intentions of Providence.

Mr. Jennings refuses to explain these views more at length. "We have drawn to ourselves a certain frontier of reticence," says he, "up to which margin we may freely comment; and the limit is quite extended enough for the present popular purpose — though we absolutely refuse to overpass it with too distinct explanations or to enlarge further on the strange persuasions of the Rosicrucians."

They held that all things visible and invisible were produced by the contention of light with darkness. The grossness and denseness in matter is due to its containing little of the divine light. But every object contains also in it a possible deposit of light, which will eventually and inevitably be liberated from the dark, dead substance. Unseen and unsuspected, there is shut up there an inner magnetism, an ethereal spirit, a divine aura, a possible eager fire. All minerals, in this spark of light, have the rudimentary possibility of plants and growing organisms; all vegetables have rudimentary sensitizes which may

eventually enable them to change into locomotive creatures, of meaner or nobler function.

The Rosicrucians claim to be able to pass into the next world, to work in it, and to bring back from it gold and the elixir vitae. This last was only to be won in the audacity of God-aided alchemic explorations, and was independent of those mastered elements, or nutritions, necessary to ordinary common life. The daily necessary food taken for the sustenance of the body was the means of dissolution.

Man's interior natural law is contained in God's exterior magical law. It follows that man has a secondary nature, he is a ruin, so to speak, and lives in the ruins or dregs of a higher creation. Woman entered the great scheme as its negative or obverse. She is of the natural order, and represents nature. She had therefore no part in the earliest, spiritual, supernal world; but pertains to material existence, — to the "fall into generation." The yielding to her fascination is the losing of man's place in the scheme of the Immortal World, and the receiving of Death instead. He forsakes the numina for the nomina, the noumena for the phenomena, the divine, interior life for external manifestations and delights. Yet when the Ineffable Light at the beginning entered into the embrace of the Primeval Darkness, it did a similar act.

Much has been written of the magic power of virginity. Little has been known. Creation is generation; and in generation, God is active. Virginity is therefore God's Rest, —

the Sabbath of the Universe. Hence it has been always regarded as Sacred — as Holy Silence. We may note the contradiction; Virginity is the key of Heaven, yet without its infraction there could be no heaven. Solve this whoever may.

Robert Flood (or Floyd) speaks of those who cannot conceive the powers of arcane knowledge to be philosophers, unless they put their knowledge to some ordinary worldly use. It is an incomprehensible puzzle to the common worldly-wise man, that persons who live in the mental atmosphere, have so little ambition to become gold-makers and wealth-producers for the greedy. But their security is inherent in this very indifference. Wars, pauperism, and all manner of calamity, are the outcome of the policy, mode of living, the canonised and popularised greed of the world.

The existence of the Brotherhood is yet in dispute — and probably always will be. "There is scarcely one who thinks about us," Flood says, "who does not believe that our Society has no existence; because, as he truly declares, he never met any of us. And he concludes that there is no such brotherhood because, in his vanity, we seek not him to be our fellow."

Certainly, so long as men believe in no such mysterious fraternity, its members are safe from persecution, and interruption in their hallowed pursuits. They may carry their secrets with them safely, — secrets possessed during all the ages of human existence, and yet sacredly preserved

from far-off time till now. De Quincey has aptly and admiringly remarked of these Mejnours and Zanonis: "To be hidden amidst crowds is sublime. To come down hidden amongst crowds from distant generations is doubly sublime."

The Magians and Chaldean theurgists were massacred and driven into exile by Darius Hystaspes. Diokletian destroyed the sacred books of Egypt. Theodosius Justinian and the fanatic Moslems extirpated all whom they could find possessed of mystical learning. The hordes of Scythian banditti who ravaged all the East — China, India, Persia, Western Asia and even Europe — destroyed every shrine and crypt of which they discovered the existence. Even the Catholic Church, King James I. of England, the Royal Council of Sweden, and the Colonial Legislatures of the United States, made the possession of occult knowledge a capital offence.

Yet they all missed the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. When Cagliostro-Balsamo was immured in a Roman dungeon, to be tortured and murdered, it was fondly imagined that the Golden Secret would be disclosed. The hope was illusory. It could be communicated to none except those who were able to comprehend it. A preparatory discipline was necessary for this purpose; and whoever accomplished that successfully, would certainly never betray it. If such a one could entertain the impossible idea of doing such a thing, the treasure would certainly be found not to be in his possession.

So the Rosicrucian philosophers have lived in every age. They have jostled others in the church or at the market place, yet without being recognised. They are numerous enough now, to constitute the salt of the earth. They always have maintained their existence, and each of

the Brotherhood knows infallibly every member of the fraternity. Their existence may be a myth, yet it is not. The parable is for those who can comprehend it. "None of the wicked will understand, but the wise will understand," said the prophet Daniel.

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MONUMENT OF THE OUTER FOUNDERS
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
ADYAR, INDIA.

Hermeticism

Julian Ochoa

The corpus Hermeticum was translated in 1471, from then until the 16th century, 16 editions were printed. This body of knowledge was the inspiration of many great men, Giordano Bruno, and Pico de la Mirandola took advantage of studying these manuscripts[6]. Scholars during this period claimed that Hermeticism was compatible with Christianity, but for Giordano Bruno, Hermeticism was a little bit different. According to Bruno, Hermeticism was literally the teachings of the ancient Egyptians and since Egypt was older and had its own magical and mythical past, he deemed Christianity and Judaism as decadent versions of the older Egyptian religion[7].

Bruno thought that with the Hermetic knowledge he attained he could bring about change in Europe. He was clinging to an old prophecy in the corpus that said, that Egypt would fall and be taken over by darkness and ignorance, but that in a distant future the ancient religion would rise again to be a light unto the world. Bruno thought the age he lived in was

right to bring about these changes, but his ideas were radical for his time. One of many of Bruno's arguments was that Jesus tried to restore the ancient Egyptian religion; Bruno also believed that the earth and all the planets revolved around the sun, not the established theory of the time that stated that earth was the centre of all the cosmos, such ideas led him into trouble and to an unfortunate end[8].

Depending on the scholarly source, the number of hermetic texts varies from 1000 to 20,000, but all agree that the most common number of texts to be attributed to Hermes is 42. Since there are so many texts attributed to Hermes, it is possible that Hermes was not one person alone, but several writers that wrote different texts throughout the ages and put Hermes Trismegistus as the author; Marcilio Ficino only managed to get 15 texts out of Constantinople. Mainstream scholarship can trace the origins of the texts as far back as the 1st or 4th centuries A.D. The Gnostic gospels found in Nag Hammadi contains a text of a conversation between

Hermes and Asclepius. In addition, there is a side note from a scribe from those times apologizing for not copying more hermetic texts. This implies the possibility that there were many more texts between the 1st and 4th centuries. Zosimus of propolis a Greek- Egyptian mentioned the hermetic texts in the third century; in the 6th century John Stobi edited some hermetic writings[9].

One of the most famous hermetic texts is the Tabula Smaragdina also known as the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus. From this text comes the most famous dictum "As above so below". The Emerald Tablet is the key to alchemy, astrology and all other occult lore, Eliphas Levi says that the emerald tablet contains all the magic you need to know[10]. There are a few legends about the origins of the emerald tablet, one is that Sarah, Abrahams wife found the tablets in a cave where Hermes dead body was holding the tablets, another one says that Alexander the Great found the emerald tablet under the sphinx, one says that Apollonius of Tyana Wrote the emerald tablet.

There are many myths about who was Hermes Trismegistus, therefore one has to take Hermes as an allegory. One account says Hermes lived before the flood and wrote all the teachings in stele so they could survive the catastrophe. After the flood, another Hermes wrote the ancient wisdom into books and another built the Egyptian pyramids and other cities, another Hermes was Enoch, Adam's grandson. Who had written all the

Antediluvian wisdom into two columns which survived the flood, these columns were used to set up the new temple which was built by Noah, another Hermes built initiatic temples under the Egyptian cities. Cicero the Roman statesman wrote of five Hermes and that one had traveled to Egypt from Greece to teach letters and laws. St Augustine says hermes was contemporary with Moses, In the Islamic tradition, Hermes is known as Idris[11].

Like Zoroaster which was a Title given to Persian initiates of high degree, Hermes was also a Title given to high initiates. Thoth-Hermes was more of a ritualistic personification of an idea, a concept which, with time became a person. It is unknown when Thoth/Hermes appeared as a person, but Thoth and Hermes do appear in mystery dramas, stories and rituals which are part of allegorical stories[12].

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the city of Alexandria fell into the hands of different forces, in order to survive the test of time, traditions like hermeticism had to be taken to safer places. Many of the hermetic teachings survived under the Islamic empires, and out of the Islamic traditions the Druze religion emerged, the Druze religion contains hermetic and Neoplatonic teachings, Plato and Proclus are Druze saints. Hermetic ideas traveled from Alexandria to Baghdad, its most ardent followers lived in a town near Baghdad called Harran. Harran was a community where Hermeticism was its main religion, once this community

collapsed, the Hermetic texts and ideas were taken to Constantinople, from there the corpus was taken to Florence.

Hermes Trismegistus as Sage or God was known as the builder of nations, messenger of the gods, God of merchants and thief's, responsible for medicine, chemistry, law, art, writing, astrology, music, magic, rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, some called him the 1000 thousand times great. Manly Palmer Hall said that Hermes was the author of the book of Thoth, a book about human regeneration. Some say that his teachings were also transmitted via the tarot cards. Levi said that all the temples in Egypt contain in its walls some of his teachings[13].

Hermeticism came to Europe during the renaissance via the Alexandrian age. The most crucial time for Hermeticism and Egyptian religion happened during the age of Alexander the great. With the creation of Alexandria and the Ptolemaic succession, many people from as far as India and Greece congregated in Alexandria. Where the biggest library of the ancient world instructed all its seekers. During the Ptolemaic age, all sorts of religions mixed; Egyptian religions, Greek, Roman, Jewish, eastern religions, and later Christianity; people from different religions lived in harmony, sharing ideas that slowly gave birth to new and different traditions. The God Hermes was likened to Thoth out of which Thoth-Hermes came about, all the teachings of both gods were combined into a new tradition[14].

There are debates about whether the Hermetic tradition has any similarities to Egyptian religious and philosophical ideas, what is certain is that, it is not part of the Amonistic or Osirian philosophies. Nor do they have anything to do with the teachings of Akhenaten. Hermeticism could not have been written before Greek philosophy as the hermetic concepts are very similar to Greek philosophy[15].

The discovery that Hermeticism was possibly born in late antiquity caused controversy in renaissance Europe. The reformation was happening, one Christian scholar had studied the Corpus Hermeticum and concluded that the writings were not ancient but were from around the 1st to the 3rd centuries. This finding disillusioned many and the hermetic writings went into hiding. This just meant that Hermeticism was no longer mainstream, Rosicrucianism emerged in the 1600s which created a new space for hermetic studies.

Mysteriously Rosicrucianism emerged causing a sensation across Europe, but since the brotherhood was nowhere to be seen, it was considered a hoax. Nevertheless, both traditions survived and influenced the creation or the enrichment of many groups, most particularly in the late 1600s when masonic lodges were popping up across Europe[16].

By the 1700s freemasonry was the new esoteric tradition which would give space for its members to study Hermeticism and Rosicrucianism. In the 1800s writers like

Eliphas Levi wrote about hermeticism, masonic writers linked freemasonry to hermeticism as part of an unbroken lineage back to ancient Egypt and beyond. In 1877 H.P. Blavatsky, Co-founder of the Theosophical Society had published ISIS unveiled to which she dedicated around 30,000 words to hermeticism. Later biographers and critics have said that ISIS unveiled was a book inspired by western teachers and that her later book the Secret Doctrine was inspired by eastern Masters. Isis unveiled, was written to compare the similarities between the western and eastern traditions. Some say ISIS unveiled is a hermetic text. It can be said that for HPB to compare the east and west She had to use the hermetic tradition as it touched on ideas that are possibly older than Christianity or any other western esoteric idea. It can be argued that Hermeticism influenced Christianity and all the other traditions that came out of the west. Blavatsky explains that hermeticism is part of the ancient wisdom, she compared Hermes to Buddha and Jesus, Blavatsky went on to say that the Hermetic teachings were Vedantic in origin[17].

Since the late 1800s hermeticism has seen a type of revival, many groups have adopted Hermes name, The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor which was operated by French Occultist Max Theon, and Scottish freemason Peter Davidson. The Hermetic Society, was created by Anna Kingsford a member of the Theosophical Society in London, out of that society the Hermetic Order of the golden dawn came about. Many other groups have come

out since then using hermeticism as their name or inclination.

Many books on hermeticism have been written. Most stories surrounding hermeticism are related to men, or groups of men, but so far women have women have not been considered participants in this tradition, however writers like Blavatsky and Anna Kingsford have not been mentioned and another more obscure writer Mary Anne Atwood left two books about hermeticism, Atwood wrote A suggestive inquiry into hermetic mystery. Atwood along with her father were working on hermetic ideas, her father wrote a long poem about hermeticism. When she finished writing the book her father read it and said the book was an abomination and requested that all the copies of the book be burnt. He was envious of his daughter's work as he was not a good writer. Luckily for future generations someone had bought one of Atwood's copies and that copy was reprinted after Mary Anne's Death.

Hermeticism has been used to denote most part the western mystery tradition. Since the Dawn of the Theosophical Society, there have been critics that say that the Society has only focused on eastern teachings, however if one looks carefully at Blavatsky's writings they are all inclusive. The Hermetic tradition has been argued to be one of the most important traditions to represent the spiritual lineage of the west. It doesn't matter what date is attributed for the birth of hermeticism, if it's the ancient Egyptian line or the

Ptolemaic / Alexandrian age, hermeticism is not truly western or eastern, Hermeticism comes from old syncretism's, the roots of which come from the ancient wisdom. The Ancient Wisdom, Theo-Sophia or

Hermeticism, is so ancient that it doesn't make sense to give it a label of east or west, perhaps it is only good to add a label to it just as a point of reference[18].

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MOSQUE, THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
ADYAR INDIA



Force of Vril: The power of Vajra

Bruna R. Carvalho

Vajra is the Sanskrit word for Thunderbolt or Diamond, symbolizing its impenetrable, indestructible, and invincible Force. The Vajra (aka Dorje), has been an important weapon in Hinduism and Buddhist Cultures, however, it is actually an artifact that appears throughout different cultures around the world. Maybe not as the Vajra we know of, but different, with its meaning remaining the same. An example of that is within the Greek Mythology, where Zeus, (God of the sky, lightning, thunder, law, order, justice), received a weapon from Cyclops, (one-eyed creatures), of the Golden Race. The weapon would either kill or turn one into "God". In other words, it would either be used for the evolution or the destruction of mankind. For war or peace.

Of course, one cannot take its shape bluntly as it is, it is definitely metaphorical, symbol language for something that is hard to explain with words. There are various depictions of what this Artifact could really mean, some of them being esoteric, others being historical, with all

of them being ancient science.

The Birth of Vajra: The Master of all Weapons

According to the Puranas, It is said that it all started with Dadhichi (a great sage and devotee of the Lord Shiva).

Dadhichi had an important task to do, mainly, to protect the weapons of the gods and to let no enemy steal them. Hundreds of years passed, and there was still no sign of the Gods returning. Dadhichi started to notice that the weapons of the gods were losing their glow. Not knowing how to preserve them, he decided to wash them in Holy water. This caused the Powers to get dissolved in the water, so Dadhichi decided to drink them up, preserving the energy and power inside his body. The material of the weapons faded and disappeared soon after. When the enemies of the gods became stronger, the gods came up to Dadhichi once again, requesting their weapons back. He told the Gods what had happened and that he

had to drink the energy of their weapons. Because of this, Dadhichi decided to give up his life so that the gods could make great weapons out of his bones and save the world.

Even though the Gods, were unwilling to do it, they knew that there was no other way. If they wouldn't accept Dadhichi's sacrifice, they wouldn't be able to save Mankind. Once Dadhichi sacrificed himself for mankind, the Gods proceeded in making the weapons out of his bones with the name "Vajra" given to them. (In another description, it is claimed that Indra (The king of heaven and God of thunder) was the one who killed Dadhichi and made the Vajra out of his Bones).

In the meantime, Dadhichi's Wife had been away while this occurred, after her return, she was filled with sorrow and wished to end her life. Since she was pregnant at the time, she waited until the child was born, handed the child to a fig tree for rearing, and killed herself shortly after.

After the gods regained their weapons, the story mainly revolves around Indra (The king of Heaven, of the Devas, the divine beings). Asura-Vritra, the Demon of Drought, (Asuras also known as Suras are Devas who decided to be malevolent towards humanity and the Gods), knowing that the Gods had regained their powers, immediately came to challenge Indra. Eventually, the Gods or/with Indra won against the Demon.

The different depictions of the Vajra

An interesting thing about the Vajra is that while its name is mostly known on the eastern side of the world, we can actually find cave-engravings, hieroglyphs, tablets depicting a weapon as strong as lightning, and in the shape of a Vajra. This is what questions many historians. Did these ancient civilizations have some sort of contact with one another? Did they pass their knowledge from generation to generation? Did they simply just found this knowledge from previous civilizations? Or is there a truth, a universal story of how we came to be, that all these civilizations were trying to describe?

Zeus and his Thunderbolt

As mentioned above one example of the Vajra existing in other Cultures is within Greek mythology, depicting Zeus (Sky Father) and his Weapon of Lightning. Zeus was the youngest son of the Titan, Cronus (The devourer of children), and Rhea (both children of Ouranos and Gaia). Cronus would devour every recently born child he would have, Rhea however didn't let that happen to Zeus so she fled and handed him over to Mount Dikte. Once he grew older, Zeus recruited Metis to his cause, where she later served the Titan Cronus (Zeus Father) a magical drought. This caused the Titan to spit out all the Six-Giant sons he had eaten. It is said that, in gratitude for that act, the Weapon of Lighting was given to Zeus by the Cyclops, the master builders, who were at the time of the great battle imprisoned by the Titans. Zeus eventually defeated the Titans and the Hundred-Headed Serpent Typhon.

The Sumerians and the Vajra

The Vajra can also be seen in Sumerian history, written in about 7 Clay-tablets. The Tablets describe the Enuma Elish, a great battle, the creation of man, and the praise of Marduk. Like Zeus, Marduk too was the Sumerian "Sky God", who also fought for justice, law and order. The story explains how Tiamat (the goddess of the sea, represented as the primordial chaos), her army of dragons and demons, led by the God Qingu (the unskilled laborer) were defeated by Marduk.

In the Battle against the serpent Tiamat, it is said that Marduk ordained the wind to enter Tiamat's mouth and puff up her body. Soon thereafter, he shot the Serpent with an arrow that eventually split her into two halves. With one half he created the heavens, with the other half he created the physical world.

The Popol Vuh of the Mayans

Lightning is an important factor in the Mayans Popol Vuh description of the creation of our universe. While I must admit that the Mayan myths are quite complex to understand without doing long deep research into them. Here is what I found which could relate to the Vajra. According to the Popol Vuh, In the beginning, there was absolute silence, along with the endless black sea (cosmos). With no light to be seen, nor life to be heard. There were great makers, builders in this sea, they were known as the Plumed Serpent. There were makers, builders in the sky as well, these

were known to them as the "Heart of the Sky" (also known as Huraqan "one-legged" both from the concept of a hurricane and of a lightning bolt). Together these builders were the ones to plan their way to create what we today call "our universe".

Soon thereafter the Heart of the sky, made every living animal, first those of the mountains and then those of the sky. However, they could not speak the same language, leaving the Heart of the sky to know that some of those creatures would be possessed by the other. The Heart of the sky, with the wish to create a being who would nurture and respect, formed humanity out of the mud. Yet this too failed, while they did talk, they immediately crumbled, not functioning properly. This made the Heart of the sky seek guidance through their grandparents, the diviners. The Grandparents suggested creating humanity out of wood, while this did indeed work, while humanity multiplied and spoke, there was nothing in their minds. No memory of their builders, no memory of the Heart of sky. No soul. (And maybe this meant, no sense of consciousness, no purity in the world) This caused the Heart of sky to send a great flood, that wiped all of humanity. Realizing that there was no Sun or Moon, the Heart of the sky decided to create them. The sun for the day and the moon for the night. In the end, the Heart of sky manages to create humanity, with a true and living soul, from white and yellow corn. It is very interesting how the Plumed serpent comes into place in this story as well, one could almost connect it to the

Norse depiction of the Ragnarök, when Jörmungandr (the sea serpent, the serpent biting its own tail) also known as the Midgard (World), releases her tail. Causing the Ragnarök to happen, the chaos or apocalypse.

The Torah: Arrows of Elohim

In the Bible, the Torah, the 10 commandments of the people, came to humanity along with a set of Thunders and Lightning-bolts representing the voice and strength of God. Believe it or not, even the word Torah has an interesting meaning and reference to the Vajra/Lightning-bolt. As a few examples, these are a few Verses of the Bible depicting the power of the Lightning-bolt:

"And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them"
2 Samuel 22:15

"Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them."
Psalm 18:14

"The clouds poured out water;
The skies gave forth a sound;
Your arrows flashed here and there."
Psalm 77:17

"Flash forth lightning and scatter them;
Send out Your arrows and confuse them."
Psalm 144:6

The word "Torah" also has a fascinating meaning on its own, while it means "Instruction", "Teaching" or "Law" it also

has a deeper meaning when you dive deeper into the Hebrew language. The word consists of the Hebrew letters (yud, resh, heh), while they are connected to the ancient practice of archery, meaning "to flow" or "to shoot an arrow in order to hit a mark" there is another meaning in those letters that is very interesting and true.

'The Letter Yud/Iod: The source we can not understand

The letter Yud/Iod is the 10th letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. To understand Iod we need to also understand Kether, since the Iod and Kether were the ones causing the first Emanation, the first Knot in the Tree of Life of Kabbalah. Kether is the Father of the Father, the first manifestation of existence, of life as we know it.

When the of the non-existent yet existent, the spirit between God and creature, the Ruach (Wind/Breath) Elohim, the Spirit which floats above the waters of life in order to originate Life. The Ray of creation, the son, as a lightning-bolt flashes downwards which resulted in the creation of our Universe.

The Iod that first emerges out of the womb of the Divine Mother, Space.

As an example, we have with Zeus or Indra, the Light that descends like a lightning bolt symbolized in the hands of Zeus/Indra/Jupiter (The Vajra symbol), which is Kether.

Iod: Door, dot, that which mind can not understand, the intelligence which in conjunction with the Kether, manifested

and created Beauty, Kingdom, Foundation and the Universe.

↪ The Letter Resh: The Mind

"R" meaning "The Mind" goes hand in hand with "esh" meaning fire. The letter Resh follows the letter Beth (Meaning "to create", "the divine Mother", "The Kundalini". Representing the creation that occurs in the real man (man in the sense of the being)

In Greek mythology we have Athena/Minerva the divine Feminine force, the intuition, the knowledge understood, born from the head of Zeus. This force is depicted in us as Fire, as esh.

If we look into how the Kundalini/Chakra energies work, the root chakra (our Sexual-organs) is where our nervous-system collects the most potent, vital forces/energies. Through Tantra (Transmutation, turning something into something else, metal to Gold), that Fire is harnessed, purified, and transformed. (This is not to be confused with Tantric-magick or Sex-magick, since those practices lead to impurity, not to the purity of the soul).

↗ The Letter Heh: Behold!

Lastly, we have the letter Heh/Hei, the fifth letter in the Hebrew language. The letter Hei represents Creation, it consists of both the letter Daleth (the Physical world) and Iod (the world to come) emerged together. Therefore, the letter Hei represents both worlds, all that is above

and all that is below. This term might sound familiar to the saying "As above so below", which did not come from Aleister Crowley, but from Hermes also known as Thoth. Unfortunately the term "As above, so below" has been twisted by humanity to eventually represent "As in heaven so in hell", "As in good so in Evil", "As in purity so in impurity", when in reality the term is referring to the ways things should be. The Phrase Yud, Resh, Heh allows us to understand that term at some level, which I will be explaining further in the next paragraphs.

There is a lot to uncover and study about these 3 Letters, however, for this post, I decided to keep it short, in order to keep things clear. (We will be doing a Qabbalah/Kabbalah series soon, so stay tuned to not miss it)

The meaning of Yud/Iod,Resh,Hei/Heh

If we combine the meaning of these 3 Letters, we come up with an interesting phrase that eventually explains what the Torah (Yud,resh,heh) is in the first place. The world that is to come/ the unexplainable source (Yud), The Mind (resh), That which is above that which is below, Behold (Heh)

If we read this from the right to the left we end up with: "Behold, That which is above and that which is below, the mind of the world to come/the unexplainable source" This is exactly what the Torah/The 10 commandments stand for, they are the mind of the source, the whole, that which

we can not explain how it came to be in the first place. The Law to become the perfect being, the being God/the father of the father wants us to be.

Thanks to these depictions, one can finally come closer to a solid definition of what the Vajra/the lightning (a weapon so admired by the ancients) really represents, knowledge and understanding.

The Quran: Lightning of Allah

Even in the Muslim faith, we can see how lightning plays a big role in representing this unknowable, invisible force/energy that the root of creation consists of. Either by being its voice of warning, hope, danger, or awakening.

"It is He who shows you lightning, [causing] fear and aspiration, and generates the heavy clouds."

Quran 13:13

"And the thunder exalts [Allah] with praise of Him – and the angels [as well] from fear of Him – and He sends thunderbolts and strikes therewith whom He wills while they dispute about Allah ; and He is severe in assault."

Quran 24:43

"Do you not see that Allah drives clouds? Then He brings them together, then He makes them into a mass, and you see the rain emerge from within it. And He sends down from the sky, mountains [of clouds] within which is hail, and He strikes with it

whom He wills and averts it from whom He wills. The flash of its lightening almost takes away the eyesight."

Quran 30:24

Today's depiction of the Hindu lightning or Vajra/Dorje is commonly seen with its counterpart the Ghanta/Drilbu (aka The bell). Together the Vajra and the Ghanta symbolize the ultimate balance between female and male both in the material and spiritual world. They are seen by the Hindus as forces/symbols/sounds that represent what scientists refer to as the Big Bang, the divine mother and divine father derived from the eternal silence. These artifacts are used by Hindus and even Buddhists, throughout their Mudra practices. Ghanta is held on the left hand, symbolizing the feminine energy, while the Vajra is held on the right hand, symbolizing the masculine energy, that each of us possesses in our body and spirit. Together they symbolize the perfect union between wisdom and the action upon that wisdom. (Ghanta: Wisdom / Vajra: action, skillful)

The Vajra Symbology:

The Five prongs (Can also be identified as Lotus petals), (Four encircling one) of the Vajra represent the five perfections of the male energies, generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, and concentration. In other depictions, they are seen as flames of the Five Dhyanis Buddhas. Which are meant to rejoin the flames of the One, whose mind is emptiness and boundless.

The Eight petaled lotus on the Vajra

represents the eight Bodhisattvas, while the syllables symbolize the Eight female Bodhisattvas. Another interesting fact about the Lotus is that it represents "Being born of the Mud", but it has the capacity to cross existence (physical) without damaging itself to impurity, being able to flourish in Nirvana.

In the middle of the Vajra, aka Bindu, means the balance of energies and matter, the indestructible material of the mandalas, symbolizing the eight or sixteen emptiness. (The Heart of the spirit, of the Universe)

At the base of the handle, are a series of three small rings, which are combined with the other three rings on the bells crowning.

As a whole, the Vajra shows two identical parties, like two mandalas, which are symmetrically "divided" by the central sphere. To express its differences yet similarities. (example; female and male, positively charged or negatively charged particles...etc) Consisting of the universal love with the skillful as its opposite, which together achieve liberation.

Ghanta Bell Symbology:

The sixth perfection belonging to the five of the Vajra is the mouth of the bell, symbolizing the perfect feminine, wisdom. Overlapping the lotus base of the bell, there are five pearls of wisdom with those of the vajra, this represents the embodiment of the five Buddha wisdom

forms (the crowning symbol of the bell). As stated above the sound of the Bell represents the void, silence, emptiness before creation came to be. Perfect stillness. The cosmos before any of its creation. Therefore combining a Vajra and a Ghanta bell symbolize the Unity of all Duality. The duality that in reality isn't dual at all.

The Crossed Vajra: The heart of the All

In the image above you can see a crossed Vajra, one without the colors and the other with its given colors. The crossed Vajra symbolizes "Universal", it points towards all our cardinal directions; West, East, North, South representing stability. The given colors symbolize the four elements of creation/world; Fire, Water, air, and Earth.

East = white / West = red (together making the horizontal line representing love), North = green / South = yellow (together making the vertical line representing knowledge)

Here too we can see how its purpose is to mean Balance.

These colors have profound meaning throughout cultures, mythologies, and religions. They are mentioned in almost every existing Religion and even science. Even though many refuse to consider mythology as the way ancients expressed their scientific knowledge, with all of this, we should really start considering that perhaps these mythological stories are indeed scientific explanations shaped into

the culture, or made in a way to be taken upon the next civilizations. Us being one of those upcoming civilizations. These colors being part of the Four elements and four poles of the world have an interesting relationship with the Prisma. In fact, much of this and the following has something to do with what we call "The Prisma". Which I will be writing about in a further post.

The Three Vajras (Three Roots)

Another name given to the crossed Vajra is "Three Roots or Three Vajras". This name was given to the vajra to uplift its meaning, even more, the number three stands for the three foundations of the world.

Vajra one; Is the Body/Essence

Vajra two; Is the Voice/Nature

Vajra three: is the Energy/the Mind

In the end, these three Vajras represent our Crown (OM), Throat (AH), and Heart (HUM) chakras. Without having these three foundations in balance with their main purpose, nothing else will work properly. In other words, if the heart is tempted with evil, the mind and the actions/words will result in being corrupted. Just like without the voice, the wisdom and the understanding of the Mind and Heart won't have a way or voice to be taught/spoken unto the world.

While the Buddhists and Hindus have the Three Vajras, in Norse mythology they have the Three wells.

The Three wells of Yggdrasil

In Norse Mythology the Yggdrasil (Tree of Life) consists of three wells, these three wells are the only source of water for the roots of this tree, if these water wells drought or get poisonous, even if one of those wells does, the tree will get sick or die.

The Urdarbrunnr Well: In this well, a council takes place, where Thor (the Norse Zeus, justice/law god) goes to take his inspiration. This well represents Law and justice as well as the Past, Present, and Future.

The Hvergelmir Well: Here it is said to inhabit all the frost creatures, one of them being Nidhogg (a dragon/Serpent) that has tried to destroy the roots of the Yggdrasil Tree, aka tree of life.

The Mimisbrunnr Well: It is said that whoever drinks of this well, will attain all true and real wisdom/knowledge.

Here again, we are warned to take these roots that stabilize us, that keep us sane in balance. This particular story led me to see how connected everything truly is. How all these civilizations had their own way to spread, share this knowledge that is actually implanted deep in our hearts, minds, and bodies. This serpent/dragon seen in all these cultures, most of the time being associated as being a demon of drought makes much more sense now. It has the capacity to live in

each of us. This drought being spread to different lakes, seas, trees are meant to show us how without one of them we get sick and without all of them, we die. If our heart, mind, and actions/bodies do not work with one another. Our real self dies. Making us live in misery while spreading more misery.

Achieving Unity of all Duality

The meaning of achieving Christ consciousnesses, one-ness, or Atma Buddha is by achieving a Diamond Soul, a Vajra soul. A soul like diamond indestructible, impenetrable of any corruption or wickedness. Not that we won't be tempted but that we will just like a diamond, reflect that temptation/energy, and never let it corrupt/consume/break itself. This is what the Vajra is meant to symbolize to us.

In conclusion, we can see how all these stories, being so different yet similar are meant to tell us the same thing. The simplicity of the knowledge these different civilizations realized or received from even more ancient civilizations. It is meant to teach us the same thing. They do not talk about any lightning-, Godlike- power one can achieve in the egoistic, materialistic sense. That power was a power given to all creation, a power we are all meant to control, our hearts, minds, and words. As little of significance as they can seem to us, those were the very first requirements for creation to exist. Whether you believe in it or not, all you have to do is to look around and you will see that all we process

started with an idea. A thought. The fruit of that thought, the essence we put behind it, determined its effect on our planet. Perhaps this was not just a religion, not just a belief, but a concept these people hold on to so tight, because they knew, that if they couldn't control it, it would lead them to their very own destruction. How can we seek to understand God/the source and creation when we can not even understand ourselves in the sense of being the best version we can be. Not just towards ourselves but towards others. These ways, just like the 10 commandments, are the rules, the laws passed from generation to generation, hoping to one day be taken seriously. And to be acted upon.

There is no outside magic to be possessed, we are that power, we live within that power and our goal is to find that harmony within it. Not to be less, not to be more, not to be equal, but to be one day "One" with it.

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