


MYSTIC SYMBOLISM
OF
ANCIENT GUILDS




THE MYSTIC SYMBOLISM OF ANCIENT GUILDS



EXTRACTED FROM
HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS
FOR THE ILLUMINATION OF THOSE
WHO ARE SEEKING MORE LIGHT

By PROFUNDIS



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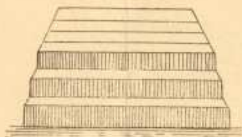
THE PURPOSES OF THIS BROCHURE

The following pages present a different interpretation of those ancient symbols or *emblems* which are apparently a part of very old ceremonial rites but which are seldom properly understood by the modern students of mysticism.

The purpose of this brochure is to interest the deeper minds in the principles which underlie all mystical or secret ceremonies, and to awaken a further interest in the *practical* application of such principles in contradistinction to an abstract interest in the purely *speculative* use of these things.

The brochure is not an *expose* or *revelation* of anything secret or hidden; but it is a voice in the silence, whispering softly to those who can hear and understand, while seeming to be inexplicable to the uninitiated.

Pass it along for others who are ready to read! As it came to you—so shall you dispose of it, freely and with discrimination ever mindful of the injunction: "as ye give unto others, so shall ye receive." If every reader will mail or hand this brochure to several others, the very limited edition will fulfill the mission intended. The author will feel rewarded in proportion to the degree in which each reader assists in the obligation of spreading more Light.



THE THREE STEPS. While exoterically representing the three steps or phases of life,—*youth, manhood and age*, or the three degrees of progress through the mysteries of Life, the truly ancient interpretation is quite different.

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

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

The principle is found in the figure 3. This numeral typified the ancient principles of *divinity*, or the law of creation, *perfect creation*. Therefore, in approaching a "holy" or sacred place, three steps were taken (as the last steps in reaching the point, not as three steps in the beginning or middle of the approach as is now often done) to indicate that he who approached the point was conscious of, or mindful of, the *three* principles of nature and God which gave him earthly existence. For, according to the law of the triangle, man's whole conscious existence depended upon the *unity* of these 3 principles in man. Exoterically the three principles were expressed as *body, spirit and soul*.



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

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

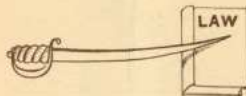
Was the purpose of the incense pot simply to demonstrate a burning fire, the incense itself might be disposed of and only the glowing charcoal used. But the incense used in Egypt, and still used in some ceremonies, was carefully prepared according to the laws of alchemy. The vibrations emanating from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



THE BEE-HIVE. Being "busy as little bees," may give rise to the belief that the bee-hive is an emblem of industry and that it reminds us of the fact that we must labor and none shall be idle among us. But one could hardly call that a mystical interpretation of this symbol, and it most certainly is not the ancient meaning given by the mystics of Egypt and other countries to this strange, *natural* emblem.

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

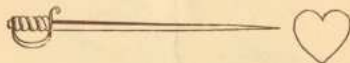
In other words, the mystical interpretation of this symbol was that man must mold his outer and physical body so that it will contain, and preserve, the richness, sweetness and fruits of our labors and experiences, not for our own selfish use, but for the upbuilding and strength of others. There is,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



THE LAW AND THE SWORD. Well may some consider the "Constitution" as the law and the sword as the *Guardian's defense* against cowards; but the symbolism of the double emblem is quite different from this.

To the mystics, the law was Logos and Logos was the law. In other words, THE WORD was THE LAW, and the word or law was represented first by the stone tablets with rudely cut hieroglyphics, then by the parchment scroll, and later by the book. Therefore, a tablet, scroll or sacred book was always placed on the Altar along with the other sacred articles. This ancient custom was changed in the later years by substituting the Holy Bible for the ancient book, for the Bible came to be considered as *The Word or Law* through the influence of religion and the church which considered the Holy Bible as the permanent record of The Logos. This is the origin of the use of the Bible in so many secret societies and fraternities of modern times, although there are some such organizations which adhere to the more ancient custom and use neither the Bible or Book of Constitution, but have a book, usually a hand-illuminated one, containing the ancient laws and rituals of the guild which they emulate.

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

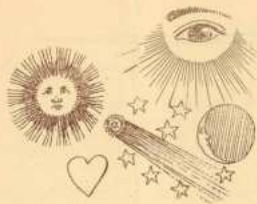


THE SWORD AND HEART. It may appear superficially that this emblem suggests to the thinking mind the principle that justice will overtake all men, sooner or later. But such an interpretation is far from the very important and significant interpretation which the mystics of old contemplated.

To the mystics, the heart was ever symbolical of the voice within, the divine mind of God in man, or as we now speak of it, the conscience of man. It was from the heart that impulses to do, inspiration of thought and action, seemed to have conscious realization, just as the heart seemed to be the centre of all emotions.

Also, it seemed to the mystics of old, that when the conscience of man spoke, it did so with an effect upon the heart. These effects were according to the nature of the voice within. If conscience approved of what man did, the soft voice within filled the heart with joyous emotions; if conscience disapproved of an act or thought, the voice within became angered or enraged and it not only spoke in more drastic manner, but the censor was accompanied by "the pricks of conscience and the pangs of regret."

The pricks of conscience, then, are symbolized by the Sword point at the naked heart, representing what seemed to be a law of God,—that within the human breast conscience stood on guard with sword unsheathed, ready to prick at the naked heart when wrong was done. Here we have the reason for the Tyler with Sword at the door to the Temple in later rituals, and for the Guardian of the Threshold with his sword, in Egyptian ceremonies.



THE ALL-SEEING EYE. In modern times the Eye may be used to represent the eye of The Supreme Architect of the Universe, but this is a limitation of the interpretation which the mystics of old and of today give this very ancient symbol.

To them the Eye is symbolical of sight, but especially of that *clear sight* which gives *realization*. When the Eye was adopted as the symbol of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, it was intended to typify the all-conscious, or ever-conscious mind of God which *sees* all, and therefore *knows* all. In this sense the Eye came to be the symbol of Divine Consciousness or *Cosmic Consciousness* (called by some modern mystics, the *universal consciousness*).

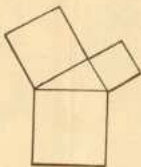
Therefore this Eye is said to rule over the Sun and the Moon, the Comets and the Stars, and likewise the heart of man; not that these obey (by volition) the ever watchful eye, as child obeys the parent in fear of the watchful eyes, but all nature manifests according to the divine scheme conceived in the mind of God and all such manifestations are ever the same, ever true to principle, because the Eye of Divine Consciousness directs the operations of all Cosmic laws.



THE ANCHOR AND THE ARK. Here we have another dual emblem, part ancient and part very modern. The esoteric meaning of these two are too obvious for extended comment,—safe passage on the sea of life, and safe mooring in the harbor of peace. But the two emblems have other and more esoteric interpretations.

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

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



THE FORTY-SEVENTH PROBLEM OF EUCLID. It may, when understood in its geometrical presentation, arouse an interest in the arts and sciences, as is often claimed; but, the emblem is seldom presented in such light. To the average student of mysticism of modern times, the emblem means nothing, although it suggests some law pertaining to the square and triangle.

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

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

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

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



THE HOUR GLASS. This is another emblem which has so obvious an esoteric meaning, that its mystical interpretation is often lost sight of. Truly, time is fleeting, and the human life on earth is like the passing of the sands.

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

In the first place, we must remember that the second, minute and hour of time as now used, is a man-made affair and to the mystic no such arbitrary standard or gauge could have a deep and divine significance. To the Master mystic neither time or space exist; both are artificial creations of man's mind to explain away, or excuse, his inability to overcome seeming obstacles.

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



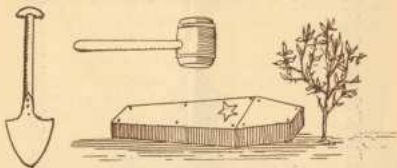
THE SCYTHE. This is supposed to be another symbol of *time* reminding us of our short span of earthly existence. But this too is a purely exoteric interpretation of the emblem.

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

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

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

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

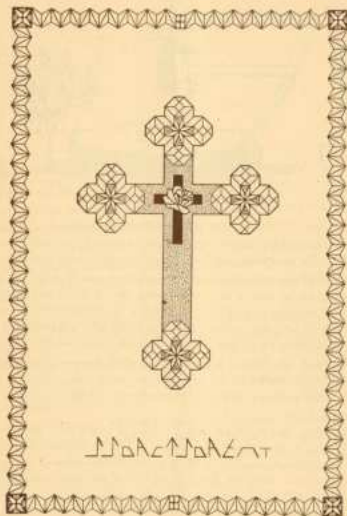


THE MAUL, THE SPADE AND THE COFFIN. In their combination these emblems form a symbol limited to *one* or possibly two forms of secret societies. But, separately, each has a mystical meaning quite interesting.

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

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

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



THE ROSE AND CROSS. Here is, perhaps, the most ancient of all mystic symbols and though universally recognized by its Latin name, the term *Rosae Crucis* and the interpretation of the symbol is very little understood.

In the first place, the symbol has naught to do with Christ, Christianity or any sectarian form of religion. In its original use, the symbol was not even a religious one; and today it is considered Divine only because it represents principles or laws which are sacred.

The Cross itself had its origin in Egypt and may be seen upon the obelisks and other structures built hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. In fact, the Romans adopted the Cross as an aid to torturing the wicked, only because it was used in this way symbolically by the ancient mystics.

But when the Rose was added to the Cross a more wonderful meaning was conveyed to the mind of the initiated. Jesus was crucified on a Cross as a matter of course by those who did not know the meaning of the Cross; therefore, some may be excused for considering the Cross as a symbol of the Christian doctrines. But when the Cross with a Rose upon it is thus used, even today, by those who claim to understand the mysticism of symbols, there is no excuse whatever.

The Rose Cross is the special, logical and exclusive exoteric symbol of the *Rosicrucians*,—the mystic sect which originated in Egypt and has continued to the present time as the most profoundly learned Order of mystics in the world. To them the Cross with the Rose has no connection with Christianity or any other religion than that of Brotherhood, *universal knowledge* and mystic power.