

Of Symbols and the Temple of Man's Being

T124 The Inner Teachings 10th March 1942 St Mary Abbot's Place, London

Invocation:

Let us pray to the Source of all being, to the Heart of Truth. Our Father-Mother God, may we be filled with Thy love; may Thy power enable us to become aware of worlds superior to that in which we manifest. We pray for Light. We pray that the Light may shine for us and through us according to Thy will.

Amen.

We had decided to speak tonight on symbols—a wide subject which will arouse many questions. This is what we hope to do. But before we embark on the main theme we would give you a picture, a symbol if you like, of a temple. No printed or painted picture can convey the same idea as an actual temple, the creation of one's mind and soul. It is such a temple as this which we would describe, similar in shape to an Egyptian temple, the roof supported by many pillars, but its main beauty is the golden light which floods it, a radiance emanating from the temple itself. It appears to stream in great power from a central point in the canopy above. In these rays of golden light we see many exquisite colours—the seven primary colours which we know and many others of great beauty. There is silence in this temple. Then a Voice—we cannot see the speaker; the command rings through our temple—'Let the Light Shine!' This is a symbol and it embodies the whole purpose of man's evolutionary path, the building of this temple of man's being. The voice of the silence issues from the heart of man* and cries, 'Let the Light Shine!' Many of you retain memories of previous incarnations. The memories of life since our creation lie within us and it only requires a certain chord or vibration to touch that memory for it to be brought to the consciousness. Thus many of us have memories of temples in the past and of hearing from the silence the command, 'Let the Light Shine!' God said, 'Let there be Light'—and there was Light!

*[*For editorial policy around gender, see the introduction.]*

What is a symbol? You are all conscious of seeing symbols; you may say, 'I imagined I saw' and then you question 'but did I really see?' If the form was built up, created in your imagination, you actually saw a symbol. If it was of your own creation, it was caused by an impression which your teacher was making upon your higher mind. Symbols have always been used from the beginning of life to teach men of certain inner truths, of a new way of life; symbols represent experiences which the soul passes through on its evolutionary path, and the experiences of past races*, soul experiences, religious experiences, are often depicted by symbols carved in stone. Through these symbols the researcher has gathered knowledge concerning the religions of the past races, but we would add that unless the researcher has some spiritual understanding he fails to interpret the symbols correctly. Thus many misunderstandings occur. I wonder what men in the future will think of some of the evidences which will be left behind from your day! They are likely to get a very wrong impression of your mental and spiritual culture, do you not think? —an instance of how symbols can be misunderstood.

A symbol is a form built up to represent an experience of the soul on the evolutionary path. Some of the most well-known symbols are to be found in Egypt, principally in the Egyptian

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Book of the Dead. We think that if you visit some of your cathedrals or Christian churches you will be astonished to read the mind of man in past centuries, because some symbols will indicate how certain men had reached a high degree on the evolutionary path whilst others had progressed only a very little way. These symbols were placed in churches for a particular purpose—to teach people visiting the church or worshipping there, certain spiritual lessons. In the past centuries many people were unable to read written language, but they learnt much from symbols.

Many of you have seen symbols clairvoyantly. Often you think them a creation of your own imagination, but they are really the expression of an idea or teaching which your teacher is endeavouring to give you. You would like to ask for an explanation of these symbols. It is better for you to meditate upon them and pray for understanding, because then light can come through your own work and is so much sweeter than if it comes to you through someone else's work. In the Egyptian teaching the necessity for each soul to work for its own enlightenment was emphasized. We know, do we not, the truth that we cannot get into heaven by any easy way? It seems to be natural for man to be lazy, but nemesis overtakes the slothful, as you witness in every department of life. It is impossible for man to progress unless he does it himself, by his own effort; the ancient schools of mystery teaching emphasized this truth and this need and even today freemasonry stresses the need for the candidate to work steadily and methodically and perfectly on all planes of his being. The worker is always rewarded. We often deplore the waste of time on earth. Man does not realise this. Do you know that even in recreation man wastes his time? Recreation should be purposeful. Man must use the time at his disposal to the best possible advantage. If you have a period of relaxation, completely relax your body and your mind and give yourself up to the revivifying spiritual forces. Enjoy your rest, be filled with sunlight, enjoy nature, lie upon Mother Earth and absorb the magnetism of the earth. Breathe in the air and glorify in it. Use periods of relaxation wisely and healthfully. There is an old and very true saying, 'Whatever Thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'. Every piece of work taken up is worthwhile, is work given you to do, and good will come even if you are not particularly interested in the work, but if you apply your interest and try and find out how much there is in it and what good it is going to do after it is completed, then even the thoughts and emanations of the worker can be constructive, helpful to life.

To come back to spiritual matters, the ancient Egyptian was taught that he must work at spiritual advancement, and every act of his life on the physical plane was work dedicated to the building of the temple of the soul. As we have often said, we can talk and give you ideas, we can perhaps point a way which would be helpful, but we cannot walk the path for another. Your brother must walk on his own two legs himself, but you can be a kind companion and help him on his journey by your interest. The spirit teachers can companion you, they can make you feel a sense of happiness and worthwhileness in your efforts, but you alone must do the work and you alone are responsible to the Grand Master for its execution.

Remember that whilst the work of the soul may go on after death, nevertheless special opportunities are given to man whilst on earth to bring through, to develop the God-consciousness or the cosmic consciousness or the Christ consciousness; that

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consciousness must be brought through into physical life. Special opportunities are presented to man in his outer form to develop and grow in this God consciousness. This is the reason why, when man has lost his physical body and awakens to a heavenly state of consciousness (perhaps after passing through vicissitudes in the 'underworld') he sees how he has neglected to take advantage of opportunities afforded by the earth life and then that is when the soul feels an urge and desire to return again to earth, where fresh opportunities await it.

Many say, 'When I get to heaven I shall not want to come back to earth—I don't see any need to do so!' No, you do not see the need now, but when the soul catches a glimpse of the glories of God's life, God's heavenly manifestation, God's beauty—when the soul is able to look into its inmost depth and see the potential beauty and good therein; then the soul desires only one thing, to purify and perfect itself. Thus it cries out, 'How can I be more worthy to look upon such glory?' The path is indicated. There is only one way and that is through work. So the soul descends and takes on another life on earth, for the soul has heard ringing through the temple above, ringing through the Temple of the Silence, the words, 'Let the Light Shine'.

Many of you know the symbol of the Egyptian Tau cross—formed like a T, or sometimes with a bar at the base of the perpendicular, indicative of the commencing of the evolution of the soul; as man works and progresses that horizontal bar at the base gradually rises and when it comes to the centre of the perpendicular bar we arrive at the symbol of the equal-sided cross. At that stage man has realised self-consciousness; he has completed the first stage of his evolution towards the Divine Man. Then that horizontal bar rises until it rests on the top of the perpendicular—that is symbolical of the higher spiritual consciousness which has come. There is the symbol where is depicted rather an elongated circle on the top of the cross called the Egyptian 'ankh', the symbol or the key of life; that circle is symbolical of the cosmic or universal consciousness of life. It can also be likened to the crown of feathers known in Egypt as well as in America, although in America this later became the well-known war bonnet of the North American Indian*. But even that has its symbolism, because even on the spiritual plane there must be the continual overcoming of the enemies which attack the soul and the spirit. The Egyptian crown symbolised the illumination or the cosmic consciousness reached by the aspirant.

*[*When these teachings were given in the 1930s, the term 'Indian' or 'Red Indian' was common parlance used to refer to Native Americans. The term 'Native Americans' has been a commonly accepted term since the 1960s.]*

There is another symbol with which you are familiar—the rose, known as the lotus in the Egyptian and Indian schools of mysteries. We interpret the rose as representing the heart of the Christ consciousness and we associate the red rose with that Christ consciousness sometimes depicted as lying at the centre of the cross—man, the cross, and the rose at the centre, the sweetness of Christ, or the heart. The rose represents the heart of love. Someone once asked concerning the symbolism of the white rose. The red rose represents the human effort and human suffering and human struggle towards perfection. The white rose seems to us to represent the purity of the soul in heaven, a heavenly purity, a heavenly radiance,

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shining white with innocence. We should use the symbol white rose to indicate a heavenly visitation, one coming from heaven who was of the heavenly hierarchy and not one who had come through earth evolution. There are beings in the celestial worlds who have not passed through this earth's evolutionary path. We associate the red rose more with the earthly experience and the white rose with the heavenly experience.

Q. Can you give an explanation of the dot within the circle?

A. It is one of the most ancient symbols, a beautiful symbol. The central dot [is] the beginning of life, the first manifestation of life. All around is a protecting circle. The first manifestation of life is encompassed and always protected by the universal light; the man being encompassed within that circle is unable to break outside that circle. It is also the ancient symbol of the Sun, and there again it is the same: the Sun, the beginning of life, the radiation of the sun and the life within the Sun, the central spot from which no Master can err. As soon as man realises his potentialities and keeps himself polarised to the Sun, he cannot stray, he cannot go wrong, he is always true. 'To thine own self be true'—to the inner self, the voice of conscience, be true—'thou canst not then be false to any man'.

Q. You said that a man was reborn when the urge came for evolution, but are there no souls reborn who have not the urge?

A. As far as White Eagle knows, souls up to a certain point on the evolutionary path are directed by a certain law, shall I say. In a lower form of life, life passes out of the lower forms and returns to other forms, animal, vegetable, the lower human. Up to a point the soul or the life force returns directed by higher directors, but there comes a point on the path of evolution when the soul is quickened, where the soul sees or recognises a certain responsibility. Shall I say, when the soul sees the Light? When it once sees the light it can comprehend to a certain degree the Spiritual Being, the Creator of Light, and when once the soul has realised its affinity with that Divine Life, it knows love. When the love of God is born within, then it has that urge to return. I would really describe that moment as a degree on the path of evolution, a degree wherein the soul receives self-consciousness, whereafter it has the urge to grow towards the next stage which is the cosmic consciousness or the Divine consciousness.

Q. What is the meaning of the symbol of the white bird found in Egyptian symbology?

A. I think I know what you mean. It has several names but may be described as a white hawk. Is not Hather the name? That is a symbol of divine life, the Life Spirit. The white bird is symbolical of divine wisdom. It is symbolical in some instances of the initiate, one born into higher consciousness.

Q. Why can I heal other people and not heal myself?

A. A profound question, because one teacher may say, 'Physician heal thyself!' On the other hand, an occult law forbids one to employ occult forces for one's own benefit. But there is no

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reason why you should not be able to restore yourself to correct polarization to the Divine Light or the Sunlight. I think there is just a little inharmony in yourself? First study, meditate on the physical, mental and spiritual laws which will bring wholeness, or holiness, or healthiness. You are breaking a little law somewhere—search for yourself and find out honestly where, and then you will heal yourself. There is just a little inharmony within. That is why you say you cannot heal yourself, but you can heal yourself. But I am going to qualify this in this way: possibly you are giving out too much to others. Remember it is everyone's duty to be perfectly healthy, a perfect channel for the healing power, and you must not overdo your strength; you must be strictly obedient to the laws of spirit, mind and body, and then you will be loving your neighbour as yourself. Remember the injunction—love thy neighbour as thyself, not more than thyself, because you want to be a useful server to God.

Q. I read a little while ago 'The rose must re-become the bud'. What does this mean?

A. I would say that the rose which is an expression of beauty and all that is lovely and sweet must also remain very humble and childlike. Do you get that idea? The need for withdrawal and humility, the enclosing and enfolding of all that is beautiful and sweet, in order that it may open again in freshness and sweetness. It is a mystical answer, but think it over and I think you will get the inner meaning.

Q. Perhaps the saying, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' rather answers the question?

A. A valuable contribution, brother. It is the teaching of humility and that is one of the greatest lessons to be learnt by one who has achieved; he has to learn to withdraw. Masonically it means the one who has become the rose, who has been in the chair, has to step down and become the bud again.

Benediction:

We receive the blessing within the Silence and unto God, the Father, Mother and Son be all honour and glory. May we live to glorify thy Holy Name in thought, word and action.

Amen.

The search matches with either words and phrases, which appear in the text, or the following 'key' words and phrases, which are similar in meaning to those in the document:

Soul growth, afterlife, balance