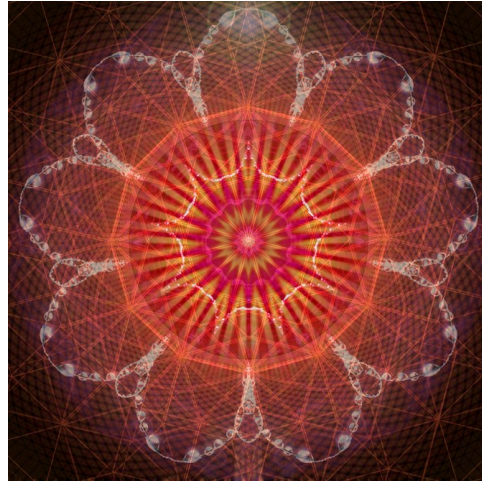


Spring 2018, Volume 13, Number 4



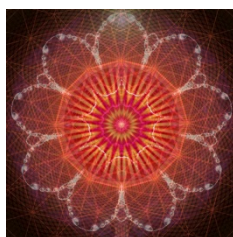
The Esoteric Quarterly

An independent publication dedicated to the trans-disciplinary investigation of the esoteric spiritual tradition.

**Esoteric philosophy and its applications
to individual and group service and
the expansion of human consciousness.**



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The Esoteric Quarterly

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The mission of the *Esoteric Quarterly* is to provide a forum for the exploration of esoteric philosophy and its applications. Full-length articles and student papers are solicited pertaining to both eastern and western esoteric traditions. We also encourage feedback from readers. Comments of general interest will be published as Letters to the Editor. All communications should be sent to: editor@esotericquarterly.com.

Astrological and Occult Sciences

The featured articles in this issue each deal with energy and force and their potent impacts, influences and effects. Esoteric Astrology, unlike exoteric astrology, which deals with the personality and the form aspect, is a science that is concerned with energy relationships and “those conditioning and governing energies and forces which play through and upon the whole field of space.” The energies emanating from the planets, the zodiac and the various constellations stimulate the consciousness aspect of both individuals and groups, and seek the eventual transformation of all “bodies” from a lower to a higher state.

The Occult Sciences, on the other hand, are related to creative power, in other words, to the wise but seemingly magical use of pranic energy and force. The term “magic” can be defined in different ways, but true occult magic is concerned with the spiritual aspect and human betterment. The white magician is one who consciously enters into the realms of energy and force and, working with intelligence, and purity of life and motive, seeks to transmute, adapt, and distribute force in an effort to meet spiritual need.

The first article in this issue, from Maureen Temple Richmond, summarizes the main esoteric aspects of Aries, Taurus and Gemini, the important first three signs in the zodiacal wheel. The article “explores each sign according to seasonal analogy, associated element and modality in traditional astrology, general themes according to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey, portions of human anatomy and functions ruled, the associated Labor of Hercules, and the three levels of rulership as proposed by the Tibetan Master through Alice Bailey.” Although Richmond is well versed in the deeper levels of esoteric astrology, she manages to avoid undue complexity by engaging the reader in the practical service contribution of each of these three signs.

Our next offering by Phillip Lindsay examines the esoteric significance of Draco, the Dragon,

one of the largest and most important constellations in the sky. The article discusses the various myths and symbology of the Dragon, along with its transformational effects upon the planets in our Solar System. Lindsay also explores Draco within the context of a greater corporate Being—the “One About Whom Naught May Be Said,” before moving on to Draco’s association with the Seventh Ray, and the buddhic qualities of Neptune. He then turns his attention to the mysterious karmic relationships among Draco, the Solar Logos, and our planetary Logos. Another section reveals information about Draco and those adepts—the beneficent dragons—who choose the Path of Earth Service. Lindsay concludes his survey with a hint about the distant future when “the Dragon of Wisdom will rule.”

Our final full-length offering from Kubilay Akman and Donna Brown provides a rare glimpse in to the Islamic esoteric sciences. The article begins with an overview of the many different forms of Islamic occult practice, such as the divinatory role of the *Qur’an* and the science of letters, numbers and names. Magic, its purpose and influence in the ancient and modern world are touched upon. The article’s primary focus is on Ahmad Al-Buni, a 13th century Sufi master and his *Shams Al-Ma’arif* or “Book of the Sun of Gnosis,” one of the most famous texts on Islamic theurgy and the esoteric and occult arts. The authors’ take an esoteric and sociological approach in interpreting some of Al-Buni’s talismans or charms, to show how the occult sciences were used to help one strengthen one’s connection to God, and find solutions to the many problems of life.

In addition to the featured articles in this issue, we have included a short paper by Vijay Srinath Kanchi, which seeks to provide an answer to the long-standing debate as to how consciousness evolved. Professor Kanchi draws upon Vedic spiritual teachings asserting

that consciousness predates the unconscious *Prakriti* or source of matter.

As part of our series on the *Great Esotericists of the Past*, John Nash contributes a paper exploring the life and work of Geoffrey Hodson, an occultist, author, Liberal Catholic Priest and one of the principal luminaries in the Theosophical movement for over 70 years.

In each issue we offer a section of inspiring poems. The poems in this issue are from the writer and poet, Adam DeFranco, who describes himself as “a worker and student of synthesis.” He is one of the co-editors of the *Wisdom Journal* (E-Newsletter). Some of his poems and articles have appeared in the *Beacon*, *The Journal of Esoteric Psychology* and *The Wisdom Journal*. He may be contacted at: geronimoadam@aol.com.

The Great Chain of Being, the luminously intricate image in our “Picture of the Quarter” is from the San Francisco based artist, Daniel Goldstein. The artist’s woodcuts, collages and sculptures, which have been exhibited across the globe, are influenced by the two themes of movement and permeability and by the constant movement and changing shapes in the cosmos. In the work featured here, Goldstein experimented with the moving light of television as a source material for photographs. He created a special process to filter the light in to a variety of elaborate patterns in collaboration with John Kapellas. Daniel is also the founding president of *Under One Roof* and *Visual Aid*, two highly successful non-profits that generate funds for education, medical and support services. For further information on the artist and his work visit: www.danielgoldsteinstudio.com.

Readers of this issue might also be interested in our uplifting and thought provoking “Quotes of the Quarter.”

The continued success of this journal depends on the flow of high-quality articles, poetry and artwork, and, we invite prospective authors, poets and artists to consider the *Esoteric Quarterly* as the vehicle of choice for sharing their work. Submissions can be sent to: editor@esotericquarterly.com. Should you be interested in being involved with the *Esoteric*

Quarterly in some capacity or another, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

Donna Brown
Editor-in-Chief

Publication Policies

Articles are selected for publication in the *Esoteric Quarterly* because we believe they represent a sincere search for truth, support the service mission to which we aspire, and/or contribute to the expansion of human consciousness.

Publication of an article does not necessarily imply that the Editorial Board agrees with the views expressed. Nor do we have the means to verify all facts stated in published articles.

We encourage critical thinking and analysis from a wide range of perspectives and traditions. We discourage dogmatism or any view that characterizes any tradition as having greater truth than a competing system.

Neither will we allow our journal to be used as a platform for attacks on individuals, groups, institutions, or nations. This policy applies to articles and features as well as to letters to the editor. In turn, we understand that the author of an article may not necessarily agree with the views, attitudes, or values expressed by a referenced source. Indeed, serious scholarship sometimes requires reference to work that an author finds abhorrent. We will not reject an article for publication simply on the grounds that it contains a reference to an objectionable source.

An issue of concern in all online journals is potential volatility of content. Conceivably, articles could be modified after the publication date because authors changed their minds about what had been written. Accordingly, we wish to make our policy clear: We reserve the right to correct minor typographical errors, but we will not make any substantive alteration to an article after it “goes to press.”

Additionally, we expect authors to disclose any prior publication of an article, adapted from a book or any another source, at the time of its submission.

Poems of the Quarter by Adam DeFranco

I am moving now
in the tide of the world

you see
I have come back
to tell you
I have crossed the border
to be here

my boots leak
filled with rain
and my lungs
are burning
with this diamond fire
compassion of peace
to all beings

I am patient
simple
returning to the source
to the great migration

the joy
and the pain
I do not understand
but here
now
I am
moving in the tide of the world



I am the guardian at the gate
your sister
and your brother
and tho I bring war
there is no death

you cannot touch me
or smell me
yet I am the flower in your garden
the tree in your heart

make no mistake
I know you better than anyone
I soulify you
count the very hairs on your head
every hour you breathe
and tho I cannot speak or read

I know your tender fibre
let you prepare
I will come in the heat of night
to bless you
bleed you
drown you
in the sea
of burning towers

in the end
which will never come
I will breed
your sons and daughters
your Self
in God's great and holy cathedral

be you angry or mild
I will love you incandescent
till your blood is luminous
rill you thru and thru
till there is no war



Resurrection

maybe there are talismans
for health, wealth and
invincibility
I seek the one for resurrection

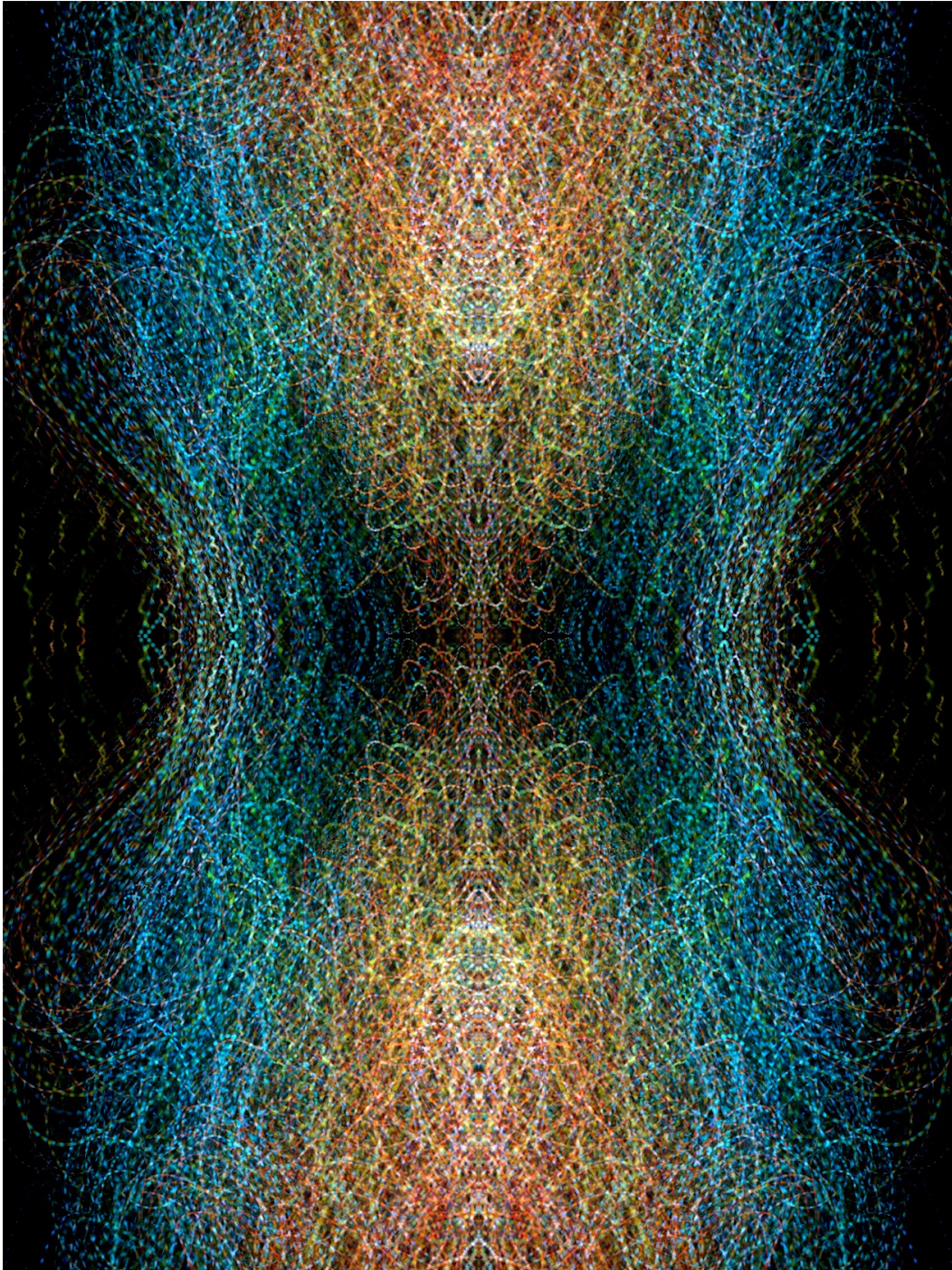
I will carry boundlessness
like the Himalayas
let loose birds from my mouth
become an oracle blue straggler
among the stars

let me travel
to a new country
learn a new language
fluent with hope
with its world of open gates

let me become
translucent transparent
invent a ritual of release
or become a hermit on the isthmus of panama

the orange trees flower now
flowering plants and red flowers
but I am a lake of water
on top of a tree
a galapagos of cranes
who know no hunger

Picture of the Quarter



The Great Chain of Being | by Daniel Goldstein | www.danielgoldsteinstudio.com

Quotes of the Quarter

Just as musical harmony could be expressed in mathematical formulas by measuring the ratio of the strings, so the essence of everything seemed to be expressible in numbers. Observation of regular movements in the sky led to the concept of a beautifully ordered harmony of the spheres. The evolution of the world was paralleled by that of numbers: unity came into existence from the void and the limit; out of One the numbers appear, and out of number comes the whole heaven, the entire universe. As Edward Temple Bell writes for the Pythagoreans, “the cosmos is isomorphic with pure mathematics” and everything in the universe is measurable by common whole numbers.

Annemarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 11-13.

The function of the brain and nervous system and sense organs is in the main *eliminative* and not productive. Each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But insofar as we are animals our business at all costs is to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing value of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a messy trickle of the kind of consciousness, which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet. ... The various other worlds that human beings erratically make contact with are so many elements in the totality of awareness belonging to Mind at Large.

Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (New York: HarperCollins, 1956), 6.

From one Yuga to the next the degeneration is accompanied by a decrease in duration, and this is thought to influence the length of human life; and what is most important in this respect are the ratios that exist between the respective durations of these periods. If the total of the *Manvantara* is represented by 10, that of the *Krita-Yuga* or *Satya-Yuga* is 4, that of the *Treta-*

Yuga is 3, that of the *Dvapara-Yuga* is 2, and that of the *Kali-Yuga* is 1. These numbers are also those belonging to the feet of the symbolic bull of *Dharma*, which are represented as resting on the earth during the same periods. The division of the *Manvantara* is therefore carried out according to the formula $10=4+3+2+1$, which is in reverse, of that of the Pythagorean *Tetraktys*: $1+2+3+4+10$. This last formula corresponds to what the language of Western Hermeticism calls the “circling of the square,” and the other to the opposite problem of “squaring the circle,” which expresses precisely the relationship of the end of the cycle to the beginning, that is, the integration of its total development.

René Guénon, *Traditional Forms & Cosmic Cycles* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), 5-6.

He sees and knows that the cosmos, which to the self conscious mind seems made up of dead matter, is in fact otherwise—is in very truth a living presence. He sees that instead of men being, as it were, patches of life scattered through an infinite sea of non-living substance, they are in reality specks of relative death in an infinite ocean of life. He sees that the life which is in man is eternal, as all life is eternal; and the soul of man is immortal as God is, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all, that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love, and that the happiness of every individual is in the long run absolutely certain.

Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness* (Philadelphia: Innes & Sons, 1905), 61.

The idea that the heart is the centre of the psychology of the individual instead of the brain would revolutionize modern thinking about normal and supernormal psychology. Adopting this view would be analogous to the Copernican revolution, wherein scientists

realized the Earth, rather than being the centre of the universe, circled around the sun within the solar system. With that radical re-conceptualization, human egocentrism was shattered. In the same way, a deeper conceptualization of the heart, consciousness and the Self, would constitute a revolutionary development in modern psychology, philosophy and the life sciences, and serve to further the understanding of the religious teachings of humanity.

Christopher Holmes, *God, Science and the Secret Doctrine* (Ontario, Canada: ZeroPoint Publications, 2010), 248.

In the history of the human intellect, there is no more important fact than the Hindu teaching that the beatitude or supreme good is to be attained through science; namely the perception of the real from the unreal, setting aside matter and qualities or affections or emotions, and persons and actions, as mayas or illusions, and thus arriving at the conception of the One eternal Life and Cause, and a perpetual approach and assimilation to Him, thus escaping new births and transmigrations. . . . Truth is the principle and the moral of Hindu theology. Truth as against Maya, which deceives Gods and men; Truth, the principle, and Retirement and Self Denial the means of attaining it.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. X: 1847-1848 (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1973), 162.

Beyond the Sephiroth of Creative Consciousness, we come to the most important concept of all—Nothingness, which we might otherwise term Nirvana. Nothing can define Nothing, and yet it is Everything. The Qabalah attempts to symbolize the emanation of All from Nil by using a Light analogy. First NOTHING, (Ain), then a condition of LIMITLESSNESS, (Ain Soph), the ENLIGHTENED LIMITLESSNESS, (Ain Soph Aur). Thus we are helped to arrive at Nothing by degree. ... The trend of our civilization allows us to regard NIL in completely the wrong way, and we should reverse our polarity towards it. We

neglect Nothing at our greatest cost, for it is the Universal Element, the Ultimate Thought and the Unique Source of all Energy. Once we reach enough spiritual stature to direct power from the NIL, we “become as Gods,” and when everything means nothing to us, all will be possible. The Supreme Negation and the Omnipotent Affirmation are identical.

William G. Gray, *The Ladder of Lights* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1981), 222 & 227.

What are the Masters? Human beings like yourself, but older. They are not Gods, nor Angels, nor Elementals but are those individuals who have achieved and completed the same task as you have set yourselves. What you are now, they were once. What they are now, you can be.

Dion Fortune, *The Cosmic Doctrine*, (New York, Samuel Weiser), 1976), 9.

The rational soul begins to contemplate the things akin to itself and looking through the worlds as through a mirror beholds the marvelous beauties of the concepts, unfolds and removes symbolic coverings and brings forth the thoughts and sets them bare to the light of day for those who need but a little reminding to enable them to discern the inward and hidden through the outward and visible.

Philo, *On the Contemplative Life or Suppliants* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1941), 160-161.

These days the Zen and Tibetan Buddhism, as well as various forms of yoga, indicate that at least certain components of the practice and inner workings of Eastern religions have become a growing influence in America. Without such prevalent practical applications of Eastern spiritual traditions, including Sufism, the quest to reawaken and rediscover the Way within Western religious traditions would be vastly impaired, perhaps to a debilitating extent.

Jacob Needleman, *Sufism and American Literary Masters* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2014), xii-xiii.

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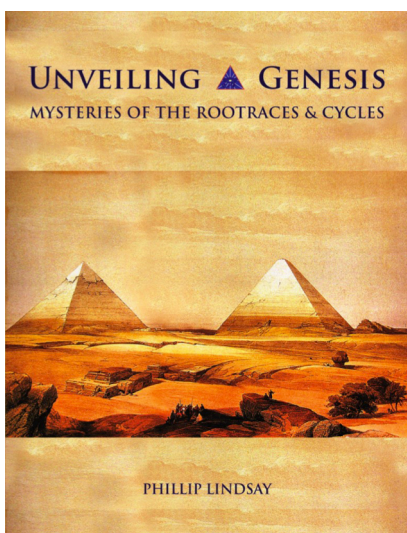
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Unveiling Genesis: Mysteries of the Roottraces and Cycles

By Phillip Lindsay



Unveiling Genesis probes the mysteries of human civilization, its origin in ancient Lemuria, and ebb and flow in the roottraces like Atlantis, through to the current Fifth Roottrace and into the future.

It is essentially the story of the human soul and the evolution of consciousness, interpreted in the light of Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, and *The Book of Genesis*, drawing upon Eastern and Western traditions – Judaic and Hindu, Christian and Buddhist.

The science of cycles, the yugas, astrology and the seven rays are incorporated to illustrate the vast chronology of human evolution. These esoteric sciences are also bridged where possible to scientific disciplines such as geology, anthropology and biology – revealing their agreement, proofs and unity.

Unveiling Genesis was coincidentally released in 2017 with the *The Hidden History of Humanity* video, (2 hrs. 37') - and makes an excellent companion volume for greater depth and detail. This book is a vastly updated and re-written version of *The Hidden History of Humanity* (2005), with 143 figures, 108 tables and hundreds of illustrations to assist the reader in deciphering our complex human origins.

641 pages. (8.25" x 9.5") ISBN 978-1-876849-15-3.

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The Spiritual Effects of the Zodiacal Signs: Aries to Gemini

Maureen Temple Richmond

Abstract

This article examines the astrological signs of Aries, Taurus, and Gemini for their spiritual and esoteric implications. In a format designed to help the student readily apply the concepts of esoteric astrology to his or her astrological birth chart, the text explores each sign according to seasonal analogy, associated element and modality in traditional astrology, general themes according to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey, portions of human anatomy and functions ruled, the associated Labor of Hercules, and the three levels of rulership as proposed by the Tibetan Master through Alice Bailey. In the final segment of each section, the author demonstrates the progression encountered from the earliest stages of evolution to the later more advanced stages. Thus, for each sign, the triple rulership system is discussed in tandem with progress on both the Wheel of Life and the symbolic crosses of evolution for mass humanity, disciples, and initiates.

Aries, the Ram (March 20 – April 19)

When the zodiacal year begins for the northern hemisphere in early spring, the life force held in abeyance by nature during the winter is poised to burst forth into vital expression once again. Even against the still-chilly temperatures of late winter and earliest spring, the irrepressible life force pushes insistently, sending pointed green shoots upward from the soil and outward from the branches of trees and shrubs. With the increasing warmth and light following the Vernal Equinox at 0 degrees Aries, the plant kingdom erupts into a riot of color and form, contrasting starkly against the remaining greys and whites of winter. To much surprise, Aries has arrived, un-

abashed by its somber surroundings and filled to exploding with the bold colors and unstoppable life wave of earliest spring.

Similar to the emerging and reborn life of the early spring season, the drive of the soul incarnating under the influence of Aries insists on bursting forth into life experience, ready and willing to meet all things, seemingly undaunted by none. This bold stance obviously is at once the gift and the test of Aries, a sign known for its courage but also for its failure to take heed of surrounding conditions before charging headlong into action. Yet, souls incarnate under the influence for legitimate spiritual reasons. What might these be?

According to the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice A. Bailey and the Tibetan Master, Djwhal Khul, Aries is a sign “of strong and potent impulses, violent fluctuations, and exaggerated efforts.”¹ These words evoke the image of a spirit of enterprise so intent on progress that it leaps and careens, like a headstrong spring Ram, in this direction and that, putting more muscle and determination behind its soaring trajectory than is truly required. One of the three fire signs in the zodiac, Aries

About the Author

Maureen Temple Richmond is a lifelong astrologer and esotericist known for her scholarly study titled *Sirius*, a comprehensive examination of the teaching on that great star as revealed in the works of Alice Bailey. Author of numerous essays, poetry, and fiction, Richmond holds a Master of Arts in English and Creative Writing from Southern New Hampshire University. She is a native of Arkansas, where she currently makes her home. A counseling astrologer, Richmond advises Anglophone clients around the world. She can be reached at star-song1208@gmail.com.

connotes great enthusiasm, vitality, and courage. It would not be an exaggeration to say that fiery Aries as the initiating sign of the zodiac is so packed with drive, zest for life, and unnerving verve it can barely contain itself. This is so with good reason: as the first sign of the zodiac, Aries is symbolic of First Cause, that great impelling cosmic entity or mind power which conceives all and propels all into manifestation. Contact with and responsible reaction to this high origin is the driving reason why souls undertake incarnations influenced by the sign of Aries.

The sensing of divine ideas in the mind of the cosmic entity is the primary purview of the Aries function. Thus, the individual born with the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, or planets in this sign is often powerfully propelled by ideas sensed from on high. He or she may be compelled by sudden overpowering urges to pursue this or that line of endeavor, only to be driven in an equally intense manner in yet another. Undisturbed by the sheer power of its sudden and often brief impulses, Aries is more intent on registering the high voltage of the motivating spark than it is upon follow-through. In fact, the ability to connect with inspiring sources is precisely the skill to be learned and internalized by souls incarnating under influence from Aries. Symbolic of the fire from heaven which powers all cosmic evolution onward, the red-hot sign of Aries derives its *raison d'être* simply from connecting with, registering, and riding on the surge of inspiration. In fact, Aries as a zodiacal influence deals with the whole process of inspiration, which is to say, the descent of spirit and soul light from on high as it enlivens and energizes the material forms below.

In the process of incarnating fire from heaven or channeling down spiritual light from the higher planes, the Aries influenced individual frequently brings to bear all the force it can muster in an effort to embody and be just like the First Cause itself, which is all-powerful and the very origin of power itself. Never a lazy sign, Aries; in fact, sensing the inexhaustibility of the divine energy from which it hails, the Aries influenced individual unquestioningly imagines itself to be in possession of equally

infinite resources of energy. Consequently, the Aries-powered soul finds itself ever ready to confront any test and rise to any challenge. Although such an attitude is essentially admirable, Aries is so keyed up and alert that sometimes it even perceives challenges where there are none. While it is true that Aries contains the power to overcome any obstacle, still, when this indefatigability rages wildly out of hand, Aries may waste its force in interpreting life and human relations as a war, fighting imaginary or unnecessary skirmishes all along the path.

Thus, the Aries-driven soul must learn not only to register and act upon inspiration, but also to moderate its responses to both the inner and outer worlds. As an accomplishment-oriented, and competitive sign, Aries fears inferiority and obscurity, two conditions it will endeavor to prevent with all its power. This is both the blessing and the curse bequeathed by the sign of Aries, a sign determined to avoid mediocrity and to arrive at meaningful attainment, whether personal or planetary. On the way to this accomplishment, Aries will hold back nothing, devoting all to the effort at hand, for Aries is privately driven by the specter of failing to prove its high abilities or of falling short of meaningful notice.

While seemingly inexhaustible energy resides in Aries, still it wants for the discipline and finesse that can carry its intentions through to accomplishment. Hence, the Aries-influenced individual many times starts projects or responds to challenges in a rush of confidence and enthusiasm, only to abandon them later when the white heat of first moments dies out and the routine work of implementing an inspired vision settles in. This pattern may pertain to the Aries-influenced individual in creative work, relationships, service, self-discipline, or any other area of life.

In traditional astrology, Aries is associated in the human anatomy with the head and brain. As the origin of the nerve impulses and glandular secretions which command the physical body, the brain functions for the human physiology just as does the sign Aries within the creative process of Deity. In the same way that

Ultimate Source or First Cause originates the ideas and energy flows which move outward to cause the material manifestation of the Cosmos, so also the head and brain act as the source and cause of thought and action in the human frame. As the receiving agency for the mental body on higher vibrational levels, the brain registers ideas, images, and impulses coming from much higher levels and transforms them into conscious thought and action. Just as Aries is the first sign of the zodiacal year and emblematic of the origin of all things, so also are the Aries-ruled head and brain of the human body the command center of the individual. Upon this region of the body does the soul make its impressions and from this region of the body therefore emanate the spiritual motivations for individual existence.

Reflective of all these Aries-related themes, the labor of Hercules associated with this sign by the Alice Bailey tradition is titled *The Capture of the Man-Eating Mares*. In this labor, Hercules is ordered by a higher authority to subdue a herd of wild horses that have been terrorizing the countryside. Raised by the son of war-god Mars, the wild horse pack (unlike regular grass-feeding horses) consumes the fresh meat of human bodies and contains mostly mares, who are finding mates and reproducing madly. The situation thus threatens to expand beyond control into a generalized attack on human community. Hercules is dispatched to gain control of the herd and sequester it in a secure enclosure.

Hercules selects a valued companion by the name of Abderis to accompany him in the adventure. As the labor begins, Hercules rushes forth with a great shout, ready at once to take on any battle. But only at length do Hercules and Abderis locate the dangerous mares, whereupon Hercules applies his legendary strength and miraculously bridles them all in preparation for leading them to an enclosure. Immediately pleased with himself for a speedy victory over such a daunting test, Hercules confidently hands the reins over to Abderis and struts ahead in pride. As soon as the back of Hercules is turned, the mares revolt in a savage rage. They turn upon and trample Abderis to death, break their bridles, and escape to con-

tinue their unrestrained reproduction and predation. Devastated by what he has allowed to occur, Hercules mourns the loss of Abderis and scolds himself bitterly for his inattention to duty. Humbled, Hercules returns to the herd of man-eating mares and efficiently subdues them on his own, bridling them and leading them to secure enclosure.² This time, he displays no pride in his deed.

In this vignette from classical mythology, all the themes of the Aries experience appear. There's the almost comic initial overconfidence, the inexhaustible energy supply brought to bear on any challenge, the immediate disinterest once the primary test is met, the inevitable dismay and painful regret when the results of impatience emerge, the consequent moderation of the raw Aries energy, and finally, the mature handling of the situation using a fearless yet responsible approach.

As the reader will note, this simple story encapsulates the essential problems and eventual masteries associated with the influence of Aries. All the characteristics of Aries are represented. According to the Alice Bailey tradition, the savage mares in this labor represent the unrestrained thoughts and emotions of the not yet self-disciplined individual.³ Hence, the wild mares are none other than the ego-driven impulses of the lower personality nature, often given to warring with and on the surroundings and in so doing, constituting a menace to others. Hercules represents the disciple or spiritual seeker who must step into the situation of self and get a grip on his or her method of interacting with life. The first attempt to master the situation ends in disaster caused by the classic Aries faults of smug self-confidence, self-promotion, and sudden fits of impatience. The final and successful victory over the raging mares represents the steady application of self-discipline and the consequent reining in of unruly and even belligerent impulses, words, and acts.

Clearly, the nature of the experience of the soul under the influence of Aries depends greatly on the point of evolution attained and demonstrated in lives past. For the soul who has opted for the less evolved expression, Ar-

ies brings out and exposes the oppositional, irritable, and even belligerent attitudes of the self which sees itself alienated from and hence in contention with its surroundings. In this case, the soul is still following the direction of mass humanity on the Wheel of Life and therefore would be said by the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan to be progressing in the way characteristic of the mutable cross. The life path of such an Aries influenced individual is typified by the exoteric ruler of Aries, which is Mars, symbolic of struggle, conflict, animosity, needs for personal recognition, and the easily insulted ego, but also of persistence, endurance, industry, and valor. He or she will duel with life to the end in order to demonstrate personal validity.

For the soul who has determined to subject self to ethical and spiritual restraints during past lives, experience under the influence of Aries manifests differently. Symbolized not by the exoteric ruler but by the esoteric ruler of Aries, which is Mercury, the life path of the more evolved Aries influenced individual entails a meaningful encounter with the mind nature under the intellectual effect of Mercury and the rulership over the head and brain accorded traditionally to Aries. In the situation of Aries falling under the dominion of esoteric ruler Mercury, the purpose and result of an incarnation conditioned by Aries is to stimulate the mind nature, to render it vitally alive and responsive, and to reveal the world of ideas residing in and on the mental plane. In this case, the Aries is awakened to the world of thought and makes this his or her primary interest. Still, the individual may retain some of the contentious characteristics of exoteric ruler Mars, but these formerly troublesome characteristics are now somewhat subdued, expressed

as nuanced wars of words and more diplomatically phrased battles of ideas, rather than as emotional and physical combat in the way of interpersonal violence and war.

The Aries individual on the fixed cross of self-discipline and discipleship can, therefore, be of great use to the Divine Plan in advocating and promoting evolutionary ideas, for he or she possesses both the drive and personal courage of Mars, which is necessary if he or she is to successfully endure the resistance to creative change often found in reactionary surroundings, and the mental focus of esoteric ruler Mercury. As a result, the Aries influenced individual focused on the mental plane becomes a promoter of ideas. He or she has shifted from the direction pursued by mass humanity on the Wheel of Life to the direction pursued by what Alice A. Bai-

ley and the Tibetan termed the discipleship or fixed cross path.

For the Aries-influenced individual who has already devoted self in many past lives to the path of discipleship as symbolized by the fixed cross, the impact of Aries manifests in yet another way entirely. Now on the symbolic cardinal cross, the Aries-influenced individual comes under the hierarchical ruler, Uranus. As a result, the experience of the advanced individual conditioned by this sign concerns the impelling of evolution through acting in the role of the initiator, the one who sets trends in motion. Aries-influenced persons of advanced evolutionary status may therefore impel or drive evolution in any number of ways, perhaps by activating the etheric energy centers of individuals and groups through occult radiation, or by sparking societal progress through leadership roles as they establish important organizations or assume positions of governance.

As an accomplishment-oriented, and competitive sign, Aries fears inferiority and obscurity, two conditions it will endeavor to prevent with all its power. This is both the blessing and the curse bequeathed by the sign of Aries, a sign determined to avoid mediocrity and to arrive at meaningful attainment, whether personal or planetary.

Aries is often found in the number one position, no matter the evolutionary level. This number one position is also the nature of life expression and service demonstrated by those upon the symbolic cardinal cross, the cross of divine causes. Thus, Aries on the symbolic cardinal cross or way of the initiate operates so as to advance evolution in some sphere of human endeavor. Needless to say, such an individual has long ago reversed his or her direction on the Wheel of Life, proceeding in opposition to the current of mass humanity with its fixation upon obtaining personal comfort. Instead, the Aries-influenced initiate sets his or her gaze on high goals requiring unrelenting effort. He or she is entirely engaged with propelling planetary consciousness to the next level of realization, as decreed by the Divine Plan.

Taurus, the Bull (April 19 – May 20)

Representing the second stage of spring in the seasons of the northern hemisphere, Taurus the Bull symbolizes the segment of time in the annual cycle when vegetational growth slows down from its astounding speed under Aries to a more measured pace, filling in and rounding out the forms of plant life and establishing the presence of the spring season on a grounded, secure basis. As Taurus time unfolds, the animal kingdom moves more visibly and overtly into dramatic actions related to mating and reproduction. At the same time, prior reproductive activities result in the appearance of the young, and nature is filled with the signs and evidence of fertility. Thus, the great solid Bull of Taurus embodies the fecundating power of nature, the reproductive urge, and the ability to create material forms for the evolution of the indwelling lives.

Indeed, Taurus carries out the will of the spirit specifically by manifesting in tangible form the objectives of the intangible cosmic self. In the words of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan, it is Taurus that “forges the instruments of creative living or of destruction....”⁴ In the individual, Taurus converts inner urge into outer physical plane occurrence.⁵ One of the three earth signs, Taurus confers solidity and tangibility. Quite

literally, it is the fashioner of forms in the physical world. Whether these forms are to be used to create or to destroy, still it is Taurus that provides the substance for the job.

However, the process of converting spiritual idea into manifested substance would never occur were it not for the factor of desire. Thus, Taurus is not only the fashioner of forms, but is also emblematic of the internal desire that drives all manifestation processes. According to the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan Master, Taurus stands for the forces which bring the incarnational intent down from the mental plane to ground it in the plane of desire, the astral or emotional plane.⁶ A necessary movement in the divine creative process, the transformation of mental idea into vital desire takes place under the potent influence of Taurus, also called the Bull of Desire, which name constitutes an acknowledgement of the considerable reproductive urge of the male ox in nature. Those who have lived around animals of the farm have a notion of what this means. Once a bull embarks on his springtime reproductive rites, there’s no dissuading him. His is the force of undeterrable intent, manifesting as unstoppable sexual desire. His virility is encapsulated in the Taurus symbol, a powerful bull poised and ready to assume his proper role.

The message of Taurus as aroused springtime Bull is simple: a thing must be wanted before it can exist on the tangible physical plane. Taurus embodies the gravitational desire power which draws a divine idea from on high in the abstract planes down into a slower rate of vibration known as desire, from which condition the concept or divine idea can precipitate into material form. Without this step in the divine creative process, everything would remain hypothetical, a swarm of good ideas circulating in divine mind. Taurus represents the necessary transformation of high potential into actual demonstrated reality through the agency of desire, a critical phase in the divine creative process. Thus, it can also be said that Taurus connotes the drawing power of Divine Desire, the magnetic force field that attracts substance to accrete and accumulate upon the etheric scaffolding of any intended form. Here is a

facility and function necessary for all to understand and properly express.

Taurus also transfers idea to manifested form in yet another way. Ruler of the neck, throat, and sound-making capacity of the vocal cords, Taurus connotes the power of sound as voice, speech, and musical tone. As students of Alice Bailey's esotericism well know, voice, speech, and tone or pitch play a special role in the manifestation of forms, whether sounded deliberately and ritually as occult mantram or casually and informally as everyday human speech and song. In either case, uttered sound provides a bridge from idea to material manifestation, transferring abstract idea energy into the more tangible sound vibration, which then itself impacts matter and causes it to be shaped accordingly.

Given that the sign of Taurus centrally concerns the power of sound, tone, speech, and word, it also concerns the power of occult creativity. According to the esoteric astrological doctrine, it is from the Taurus-ruled portion of the human frame that spiritual creativity is controlled, as the throat chakra determines the nature of the forms manifested.⁷ In many cases, this gaining of control is as simple as guarding speech and making sure it is both harmless and constructive. In any case, the right use of the organs of speech, say Bailey and the Tibetan, constitutes the clue to the process whereby any disciple brings about change from personality to soul focus.⁸ Specifically, Bailey and the Tibetan recommend that the Taurus-influenced individual use speech in such a way that it is directed, outgoing, spiritually motivated, and explanatory in nature.⁹ It is therefore evident that whosoever would master the self under this sign must therefore also master the management of the sound-making capacity which emanates from the Taurus-ruled region of the throat chakra, thyroid gland, and vocal cords, seeing to it that his or her making of sound and use of creativity lines up with the highest sensed notion of divine desire on the earlier stages of the path and with the highest sensed notion of divine will on the later stages.¹⁰

In the world of daily human endeavor, Taurus shows up as the love of nature, land, cultivated

gardens, order, art, fashion, ornamentation, beauty, money, material security, predictability, order, and stability. It is that urge which drives all entities to plan ahead for the securing of conditions pleasant to the senses, such as attractive and effective shelter, comfortable clothing, adequate food, and objects of decoration. As an earth sign, Taurus naturally connects to the things of the senses. Focused on what it can touch, Taurus embodies and drives the desire for material security, inviting a love of possessions and the doting care with which they may be maintained through the cultivation of a well-groomed and manicured look. Whether it is laces, lawns, or Lamborghinis, Taurus lavishes time and patient effort on making all things look and function their best. Even the Taurus of modest means takes care to display his or her treasures in an appealing manner. After all, the things of the earth are priceless jewels to Taurus, worthy therefore of endless polishing so that they may shine with the luster of high-quality silver or precious gems. Value, both real and sentimental, figures highly in the estimation of this sign.

As is apparent, the form-loving side of the Taurus influence can, when exaggerated, lead quite easily to possessiveness, hoarding, greed, and exclusively pecuniary instincts. These and the sensuous side of Taurus make this a sign in which the soul is tested sorely upon the point of right management of desire and of tangible assets. Without giving into the temptation to practice profligate sexuality or to staking material ownership as proof of power and dominion, the soul must learn to use the forces of Taurus for the greatest good of all. Hence, the Taurus influenced person is tried again and again to prove that he or she may be productive, creative, and resourceful, but not crassly carnal, indulgent, or stingy.

As the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan states, Taurus is tricky because it feeds the desire for material advantages and for worldly power and success.¹¹ Obviously, Taurus tests the soul on the issues of sex, money, and possessiveness. These are basic survival factors tied in with the sacral and base of spine centers, and therefore regions requiring utmost discrimination in han-

dling. Once devoted to physical reproduction, the forces of the sacral center ultimately must be transferred to the throat center, the region ruled by Taurus. In this process, the striving seeker must face and master the more personal temptations of the Taurus archetype before he or she can implement the Taurus influence for the aims of the Divine Plan. Thus, the spiritual movement contained within the influence of Taurus is the transformation of raw personal desire into refined aspiration, and from thence into recognition of the impersonal Divine Will.¹² Once that sequence of transformation is accomplished, however, the form-creating power of Taurus can be placed at the service of the general good with excellent results, for "...the liberated Taurean is ever a constructive, planning, creative forward-moving force."¹³

Emblematic of all the Taurean themes just described, the labor of Hercules associated with this sign by the Alice Bailey writings is titled *The Capture of the Cretan Bull*. In this vignette, Hercules is as always dispatched by the command of a higher authority, this time to locate, subdue, and ride a sacred bull from the island of Crete to a holy city guarded by the three cyclopes, or one-eyed monster men.¹⁴ Without much drama, Hercules succeeds in the task, manfully riding through choppy seawaters bareback on the Bull to deliver his mount as requested.

As is evident, the capture of the Cretan Bull stands as an allegory for the right management of the desire nature. Hercules astride the Bull symbolizes the higher intelligence of the soul taking command of the animal or physical nature and causing it to be devoted to higher purposes, as symbolized by the herding of the Bull to sacred ground. The higher purposes or the single eye of the soul might be symbolized by the one-eyed men, who individually and together stand for the undivided intent of the soul as it follows its purpose and mission. Thus, this labor depicts the ushering of the lower self into secure safekeeping under the supervision of the higher self. Hercules as emblem of the disciple makes sure this transfer takes place, personally riding on the back of the Bull of Desire until the Bull is permanently

brought to reside under the watchful eye of the soul.

Thus, the Capture of the Cretan Bull demonstrates the necessity for the disciple to learn the right management of all that falls under the nature of desire, including the Law of Attraction manifesting as the sex force.¹⁵ This labor deals with the whole question of desire, the astral or desire plane, and the potency of the forces to be found on the desire plane.¹⁶ The headstrong and sensual Bull embodies in one symbol all these impulses, bespeaking the intensity of desire, its seeming autonomy, and the close connection of desire with physical reproduction.

The Bull often wants its way no matter what else is happening. If challenged or crossed, the Bull is capable of mounting a terrifying show of force to overcome the opposition. Thus, in the unevolved Taurus-influenced individual, personal intent can overwhelm the needs of others; shows of rage may prove that ferocity lies within, still to be tamed. A fixed sign in the system of traditional astrology, Taurus stands its ground for good or for ill and is consequently known for its stubborn insistence on getting its way and its stolid resistance to change.¹⁷ Moreover, fits of ill temper are often a problem with the unevolved Taurus-influenced person, as the individual demands that others serve his or her desires, no matter the surrounding circumstance.¹⁸ Such a Taurus-influenced individual may be said to tread the Wheel of Life following the direction of mass humanity. He or she is therefore evolving at a relatively slow pace, symbolically depicted as being on the mutable cross, according to Alice Bailey and the Tibetan Master.

On this segment of the evolutionary path, the Taurus-influenced individual pursues the comforts and satisfactions of the body as though they were the primary reason for living. Spiritual glimmerings may beckon, but the Taurus individual evolving symbolically in the mutable cross fashion can't bring himself or herself to place much importance on abstract matters. Instead, the accumulation of personal wealth may well become the primary driving motivation, pushing other important considerations to

the side. In this case, the Taurus-influenced individual comes under the exoteric ruler of this sign, which is Venus, symbol of the pleasures of the flesh and the satisfaction of appetite. The Taurus-influenced individual ruled by exoteric ruler Venus may invest large sums of money on home decoration, delicious feasts, and the most flattering clothes, on courting social notice and hobnobbing with the privileged. To some, this constitutes success, and a level of personality fulfillment is experienced. Yet, all the while, the real sources of authentic existence suffer from inattention.

By contrast, the Taurus-influenced individual who has seen the light of the soul follows a different star. Having dedicated self to personal responsibility and alignment with the soul in lives past, he or she has, as a result, ceased following the mass direction on the Wheel of Life, has moved off the symbolic mutable cross, and has arrived at the stage of the symbolic fixed cross. Hence, he or she benefits from the steadying power of earthy Taurus, which on the discipleship path manifests as consistency of spiritual intention instead of the willful stubbornness of the personality-centered individual. Indeed, the gifts of Taurus on the discipleship path are many. According to the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan Master, for the evolved soul treading the Wheel of Life in the opposite direction to that pursued by the masses, the sign of Taurus confers the ability to adhere to soul purpose.¹⁹ Instead of bouncing around in the field of life experience with no particular center of gravity, the Taurus-influenced disciple establishes spiritual priorities and keeps them in the forefront of the mind. Proceeding through life in this fashion, the Taurus-influenced disciple is enabled to produce a divinely illumed life expression.²⁰ This means that he or she wins the battle of incarnation by staying focused exclusively on the values and principles that he or she has identified as the next step worthy of attainment, and in so doing, tames the personality and uses it to reveal the light of the soul within.

As a result, the influence of Taurus is potent to produce discipleship accomplishments, such as the attainment of patience and poise, con-

sistency of effort, and the power of unwavering determination. Building competence in each of these fields over long periods of time, the Taurus-influenced disciple moves relentlessly and irresistibly toward initiation. When this is the case, the Taurus-influenced disciple proves that he or she has come under the esoteric ruler, which is Vulcan, in classical mythology the god of the blazing underground forge where tools necessary for life are forged. Just as Vulcan's work proceeds under conditions of great heat and pressure in the interior of the Earth, so the disciple's work in the world takes place under stress and trying circumstances that sorely test his or her resolve and skill. The Taurus-influenced disciple takes advantage of these adverse conditions to labor properly, demonstrating his or her commitment to the tasks at hand. Thus, Taurus to the evolving soul represents opportunity to make significant advances in the application of the spiritual will.

This focus on the spiritual will in Taurus intensifies as the discipleship path meets and merges into the path of the initiate. Once found evolving symbolically on the cardinal cross, the Taurus-influenced initiate is no longer occupied with expunging the fury, resentment, stubbornness, and territoriality of the unevolved Taurean expression. Further, the Taurus-influenced soul on the initiatory path has also transcended the need to develop patience and power under the esoteric rulership of demanding blacksmith Vulcan. Now the initiate comes under the influence of the hierarchical ruler, also swarthy Vulcan but with a new twist. With positive self-management and discipleship virtues firmly established, the Taurus-influenced individual draws from Vulcan at the hierarchical level a new synthesis of simplicity, directness, and focus. Now evolving symbolically on the cardinal cross, the Taurus-influenced initiate follows the reversed or initiate's direction on the Wheel of Life; he or she consequently devotes his or her power to the creation of a momentum that will drive all service projects through to manifested accomplishment. As Alice Bailey and the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul have stated, the Taurus-influenced initiate takes the lead in con-

structive planning for the manifestation of the Divine Plan.²¹

At this point, the power of Taurus to generate desire has been transformed from carnal craving through the stage of spiritual aspiration to the implementation of the Divine Will.²² For the initiate past the Third Initiation, Taurean power has thus become the ability to lock into the notion of a specific service objective, to persist on course until the goal is obtained, and hence to manifest Divine Will on Earth. Driven by Vulcan as hierarchical ruler of Taurus, this level of attainment under Taurus influence enables those at and beyond the Third Initiation to manifest the highest component of the Bull and its power to generate and sustain intention.

Gemini, the Twins (May 20 – June 20)

Bridging between the delicacy of early spring and the full power of summer, Gemini provides a transitional phase leading from one season to the next. An air sign in traditional astrology, Gemini is the quintessential shape shifter. Like air, it can't be confined or pinned down. As one of the mutable signs in traditional astrology, it is given to movement and alteration as its preferred mode of functioning. Accordingly, the zodiacal sign of Gemini stands for change and adaptation. Souls who opt to incarnate under its influence have done so for a reason; they've decided to develop the capacity to be fluid, adaptable, and flexible. The very archetype of fluctuation and change, Gemini helps in this process as it confers the capacity to understand and identify with any perspective or position.

Deriving its name from the Latin term for a pair of twins, Gemini is symbolized by two brothers or sisters gazing at each other as if in deep communication. Indicative of exchange of information, Gemini concerns the process of communicating, speaking, talking, sharing perspective, and of receiving feedback in the manner of a freewheeling discussion. Central to this process is the mechanism of consciousness—the mind, brain, and nervous system—which provides the medium of transmission for

communication, knowledge, and ultimate understanding. It is this information processing system which the Gemini-influenced individual comes to acknowledge and even master through an incarnation under the sign that deals with the transmission of words and ideas, whether through common human discourse or through mental telepathy. In fact, Gemini as ruled exoterically by Mercury is the sign of the mind and of mental communication. This is the region of experience in which the Gemini-influenced individual has determined to focus.

The role of Gemini as awakener to the existence of mind and as refiner of consciousness is significant. The influence of this sign in Humanity not only cultivates awareness of the mind, but also works on the mind to loosen rigid points of view and to open the way for new perspectives. According to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan, Gemini constitutes a critical function in the zodiac because it sets up the proper conditions for points of change and facilitates needed re-orientations.²³ Because Gemini is so all over the map, it is nothing if not a sign connoting diversity and multiplicity. Even though the seeming inconsistency of this sign may flummox the other members of the zodiac, still it fulfills an important role in the process of gaining cosmic understanding.

As a mode of functioning or thinking, Gemini indicates a state of mind that can tolerate and even embrace great differences of viewpoint. The Gemini-influenced individual does not mind trying on a new angle of vision for size. After all, it just might fit! If so, the Gemini-influenced person will adopt it so long as it provides new insight and information. Likewise, Gemini has no problem shedding a point of view found constrictive or inconsistent with the facts of life. The needed changes in consciousness that will allow for the evolution of the soul in Humanity flow directly from the influence of the sign of Gemini.²⁴ Thus, the influence of Gemini as a sign is surely connected with the expansions of consciousness and the evolution of the intellectual paradigms under which Humanity evolves. The ability to change and grow is critical for evolution, and Gemini is a major source of that power.

A mental sign linked to the world of words, ideas, and concepts, Gemini is fundamentally intellectual and social, a maker of the connections between notions, people, and philosophies. The act of making connection itself is the province of Gemini, which sign is said by Alice Bailey to be the very energy that establishes relationship. Symbolized by the two pillars united above and below, Gemini is that factor which mediates between the opposites, bringing them together even while the two disparate elements retain their identities. In so doing, Gemini is the go-between, uniting similar elements, which might otherwise remain discrete entities. Hence, as energy, Gemini is of utmost use and importance in establishing understanding and cooperation in the human community.

Ruler of the arms and hands of the human body, Gemini connotes this side and that, the right and the left, the two working together to form one whole.²⁵ By extension, Gemini implies the working relationship or cooperation that can exist between opposites or polarities. The alternating electrical charges which characterize the functioning of the human nervous system also fall under the rulership of Gemini,²⁶ again showing the close interrelation and functional partnership of the opposites, in this case the positive and negative charges of the cellular substance which enable the structures of the nervous system to carry information to and from the brain. In the esoteric astrological tradition, Gemini is also associated with the thymus gland.²⁷ Located near the physical heart and the heart chakra, the thymus gland is thus linked with the spiritual love vibrations channeled by this center. Love being the cosmic factor that brings and holds all things together; the rulership over this glandular center by relational Gemini restates the unification theme. Another esoteric factor serving to bring opposites together is the etheric body, which unites the personality vehicles and the soul. Thus, the etheric body as a uniting function is also ruled by go-between Gemini.²⁸ In sum, Gemini in the human body is represented by and rules the arms and hands, the nervous system, the thymus gland, and the etheric body. All these functions in the human body are es-

sential factors in establishing relationship within the human system and between the human system and its environment.

Relationship can only arise if duality exists, such that two or more units can come into interaction. According to Alice Bailey, the primary symbol of duality in the zodiac is that of Gemini, the Twins.²⁹ As a result, the soul electing to incarnate under the influence of Gemini gains under this sign a definite perception of duality as a force in cosmic evolution.³⁰ Cosmic duality implies the existence of polar forces, such as positive and negative, male and female, conscious and subconscious, manifestation and obscuration, life and death, and their resulting opposed electrical charges. Of these polarities operating in cosmic process, Gemini is both the symbol and the source. Through this sign, according to Alice Bailey, work the forces of attraction and repulsion—the contrasting charges of electrical potential—that either draw units together or push them apart.³¹ Thus, the soul incarnating under the influence of Gemini takes on a life study of the polar opposites in existence, whether these manifest as male and female, day and night, or any other set of opposed conditions.

Between polar opposites passes the magnetic interplay that naturally arises between all oppositely charged entities.³² This magnetic interplay not only creates the dramatic tension between distinct units, but also pulls them into closer and closer connection. Facilitating increasingly fluid interaction, the influence of Gemini ultimately brings about the resolution of duality into unity in this way.³³ Thus, while the Gemini-influenced individual observes the magnetic interplay that arises between the members of any pair of opposites, he or she also gains the opportunity to study not only duality in expression but its resolution into single identity. He or she witnesses everything from intensive division and strife in the daily world to the interaction of sublime forces on the higher planes as they generate the conditions necessary for cosmic manifestation and obscuration. In this way, the Gemini force field creates a showcase for the interactions between polar opposites demonstrating as magnetism so

strong as to obliterate distinction and drive all onward to a point of unity and merging.

The labor of Hercules associated with Gemini conveys this theme of opposites merging, but it does so in a fashion that is less than obvious. Titled *The Gathering of the Golden Apples of the Hesperides*, this labor sees Hercules dispatched by his higher voice to fetch the famed golden apples of a mysterious tree said to confer the gift of immortality upon those who consume its fruit. Growing in an idyllic and mystic garden guarded by the three muse-like nymphs called the Hesperides, the golden apple trees of the Hesperides were far out of reach for those unwilling to journey long to their location. Of course, Hercules was game.

The labor itself concerns his extensive pilgrimage to locate the tree of immortality and the tests of discernment and character that Hercules encountered on the way. In fact, there were five such tests, conspicuously matching the number of the human senses, perhaps suggesting that the five tests of the Gemini labor represent the tests undergone by the personality as it seeks to know the soul.³⁴ The tests involved recognizing a true teacher, subduing a serpent by removing it from its power base in the dark earth and raising it high to the sky, recognizing a false teacher, freeing Prometheus, and aiding Atlas to carry the weight of the world. The severity of these tests increased to the point that Hercules had nearly forgotten his quest for the tree of immortality. However, once Hercules had interrupted and even set aside his pilgrimage to the tree of immortality as he focused exclusively on the completion of each of the five tests, he easily located the garden containing the tree of immortality. Hercules was immediately greeted by the Hesperides maidens who willingly granted him the golden fruits without any further delay or effort. The mes-

sage seems to be that acts of service and right thinking constitute the real journey to immortality and serve to join the personality and the soul, thus leading to eternal life.³⁵

According to Alice Bailey, it is precisely the unification of the soul and the body, which is the problem to be wrestled with under the influence of Gemini.³⁶ In other words, it is the merging of two fundamental polarities—the eternal and the temporal—that takes place under this sign. In the Gemini labor of Hercules, the search for the garden of the Hesperides and the tree of the golden apples leads to this unification. The lengthy hunt for the garden and its miraculous tree aptly symbolizes the search for the immortal soul that is conducted by the personality pursuing the spiritual path.³⁷

It's a familiar chase to all who have aspired to soul contact. The personality

longs for the uplifting connection with the soul, but seems to block its own desire for this union through stubborn and self-centered attitudes which lead it to wage petty battles and accumulate bitter resentments.

Thus, the two polarities of soul and body cannot come together until the lower rightly pursues the higher. In the Gemini labor, Hercules as the body or personality goes looking for its higher counterpart. On the way, Hercules is tested five times to see if he's worthy of the high encounter with the soul. These five tests consume years of time and effort, exhausting Hercules as the lower self to the point that he nearly forgets the object of the search. At last, Hercules as the body or personality demonstrates cognizance of the proper values, and the reunion of the lower and higher selves then takes place quite naturally.

This same process can be seen at work in a progressive fashion as the Gemini-influenced

The needed changes in consciousness that will allow for the evolution of the soul in Humanity flow directly from the influence of the sign of Gemini. Thus, the influence of Gemini as a sign is surely connected with the expansions of consciousness and the evolution of the intellectual paradigms under which Humanity evolves.

individual mounts from symbolic cross to symbolic cross on the path of discipleship and initiation.

Initially, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic mutable cross wanders in the fields of human experience, prodigal to its own soul existing unrecognized in the higher dimensions of being. At this point, the Gemini-influenced individual follows the direction of mass humanity on the Wheel of Life, driven by herd instinct and not really thinking independently.

In this first phase of experience in Gemini, the individual is buffeted about by the alternating conditions of existence, and does no more than register the fact that great contrasts are to be met in the sphere of human experience.³⁸ Much time may be consumed by the Gemini-influenced individual who mistakes the trees for the forest and who consequently buries self in mounds of useless information, cluttering the mind with unrelated bits of knowledge lacking any organizing principle. Littered with abandoned projects and forgotten intentions, his or her mental body evidences patterns of circular thinking which rarely arrive at a definite conclusion. As a result, the unevolved Gemini type has a mind filled with ideas, which infrequently find their ways into meaningful demonstration.³⁹

To complicate the situation, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic mutable cross extracts from this sign only its most superficial effects, giving in to a tendency to switch direction with every passing alteration of the environment, pitching about like a rudderless vessel on a restless ocean.⁴⁰ To remedy this wasteful pattern, the Gemini must discover purpose by engaging with the soul, the great organizing principle in human psychology. Thus, the Gemini-influenced individual must first get a grip on the lower nature, emphasize the mental function, discriminate between the essential and the non-essential, and discover how to direct his or her thoughts along meaningful lines of endeavor.

Coming under the influence of Mercury as exoteric ruler, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic mutable cross struggles to

make the first necessary realization—that he or she has a mind and is capable of directing it. It sounds simple, but the quest stretches on for protracted periods, as the personality-centered Gemini succeeds in recognizing the mental aspect of self only to fall prey to the seductive glimmer of mind as an instrument for exercising superiority over others. Cunning and insincerity tempt the less evolved Gemini, who must experience the dismay of being misled and toyed with before he or she can see that simple sincerity and plain truth count for much. Meanwhile, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic mutable cross is often lost in the mental glare of admiration for his or her own cleverness, still unable to see that outsmarting, fooling, or elaborately deceiving others is no admirable use of the mind. Although he or she may accumulate much learning and factual information through formal or self-directed education, the Gemini on the mutable cross still has not firmly grasped the notion that mind is not intended to be the tool of the selfish ego, but rather is designed to function as the connecting mechanism with the higher self.

The Gemini influenced individual on the symbolic fixed cross, however, has long ago learned to respect the divine purpose of the mind nature and has acknowledged its intended role as a servant of the highest sensed spiritual principles. As a result, he or she renounces instinctual reaction and reverses direction on the Wheel of Life, no longer following the methods of the masses, who often accept appearances unquestioningly. Now possessing a degree of facility in consecrating the mind to the spiritual ideal, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic fixed cross resolves to employ the mind nature in the service of the higher self. He or she uses the mind as an organ of higher perception and of occult radiation, dedicated to the sensing and distribution of evolutionary ideas, either through conventional forms of communication or through telepathy. Coming under the influence of Venus as esoteric ruler of Gemini, the Gemini-influenced individual sets him or herself on a course of continual upliftment, developing a personal program to stimulate the mind nature

with appropriate educational and cultural experiences, the content of which he or she seeks to pass along to the environment in some meaningful fashion.

Where others see multiplicity and division, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic fixed cross perceives unification in process; consequently, he or she acts as an agent of mediation where division threatens, using his or her innate understanding of the relations between opposites to open channels for communication and understanding. Inspired by the elevating influence of cultured Venus, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic fixed cross embraces compassion and high-quality human interaction. No longer is he or she vulnerable to the specious seductions of the lower mind, for he or she has long ago curbed the self from using the mind as an instrument with which to prey upon, deceive, or subjugate others. Instead, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic fixed cross devotes him or herself to demonstrating how the mind nature may be used to advance the Divine Plan on Earth.

In the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic cardinal cross, the unifying powers of Gemini reach their greatest expression. Whereas the Gemini-influenced individual in the early stages of evolution under this sign had all the challenge he or she could manage simply in experiencing, identifying, and acknowledging the existence of the pairs of opposites, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic cardinal cross now witnesses and even facilitates the fusion or coming together of the polar opposites.⁴¹ In so doing, he or she continues to evolve on the Wheel of Life in a direction opposite to the mass of Humanity with its tribal, sectarian ways, instead advocating principles of unity and commonality. Thus, the initially divisive and fragmenting influence of Gemini is transformed into an energy that can bring together apparent opposites and contradictions. Such a power is greatly needed in the management of global affairs in a world characterized by a bewildering diversity of beliefs, languages, customs, religions, and lifestyles.

From the curiosity-rich sign of the Twins, the Gemini-influenced individual of evolved status extracts and uses the acute mind power of this mental sign to develop and express a fluid, analytical understanding of Humanity and planetary circumstances.⁴² For example, he or she might be involved in a mathematical or statistical discipline from which the trends of Humanity may be discerned. In this way, the Gemini-influenced individual on the symbolic cardinal cross would dedicate the intellectual and scientific gifts of this sign to the analysis of data and the identification of global trends for the betterment of Humanity.

Having passed the Third or Transfiguration Initiation, the Gemini-influenced individual now on the symbolic cardinal cross reaches the highest level of functioning under this sign and so comes under the radiation of the hierarchical ruler, which according to the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey is the planet Earth.⁴³ Given that Earth in the esoteric astrological doctrine is considered a non-sacred planet, it is likely that Earth only stands in as a veil for the true ruler of this, the most sublime expression of Gemini. A likely candidate for the true hierarchical ruler of Gemini is Jupiter, Ray II agent of love and wisdom, and as such, a potent unifier of perceived opposites. In any case, at this most evolved level of expression for Gemini, the seeker knows past all doubt that his or her mind is to be used as an instrument of healing and unification, not as an implement of war, strife, division, or competition. Instead, he or she applies self to the use of the mind nature as a sending station for telepathic images and rays of energy which will provide relief, comfort, intellectual solutions, scientific discoveries, and practical answers for the technical and sociological challenges of human living. In this way, the Gemini-influenced seeker on the symbolic cardinal cross both observes and facilitates the fusion of the opposites, in contrast to his or her earlier stages of the Gemini experience in which he or she struggled merely to properly notice the pairs of opposites.

At last, the Gemini-influenced seeker on the symbolic cardinal cross will be involved with the use of the mind as an agent of inquiry into the Divine Mind itself, penetrating into the laws and mysteries of the cosmos as an advance guard on the leading cusp of evolution. He or she will fulfill the divine intention for Gemini, the sign of the Twins, the two halves making one whole, as Humanity reaches up through his or her quest to God and creation merges with Creator.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated, each sign of the Zodiac represents a distinctive set of assets and challenges. In Aries, the ebullience of emerging divine life explodes into expression, distributing the excitement of the creative process but also needing finesse and self-control for its higher manifestation. In Taurus, the power of substance captures the imagination, compelling in its capacity for transforming divine images into matter, but also needing direction away from sensual desire to bring forth its divine intentions. In Gemini, the mind nature emerges and reflects the fascinating world of ideas, but all the same, finds itself needful of wise discrimination if it is to achieve its divine objectives. In each of these three signs, spiritual progress takes these assets and challenges into consideration while simultaneously leading up the ladder of the triple rulership system, all the while ushering the seeker around the Wheel of Life and through the symbolic crosses of evolution. With the stages of spiritual refinement thus made plain for each of these signs, the spiritual seeker with the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, or planetary groupings in Aries, Taurus, and Gemini thus stands better oriented to the grander purposes behind each of these astrological influences.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules: An Astrological Interpretation* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1974), 27, 28, 30.

² Bailey, *Labors of Hercules*, 27, 28, 30.

³ Ibid., 35, 37.
⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 374, 375.
⁵ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 375.
⁶ Ibid., 380.
⁷ Ibid., 397.
⁸ Ibid.
⁹ Ibid., 398.
¹⁰ Ibid., 375.
¹¹ Ibid., 107.
¹² Ibid., 381.
¹³ Ibid., 397.
¹⁴ Bailey, *Labors of Hercules*, 39-40.
¹⁵ Ibid., 46 – 53.
¹⁶ Ibid., 41.
¹⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 375.
¹⁸ Ibid., 378, 397.
¹⁹ Ibid., 375.
²⁰ Ibid., 378.
²¹ Ibid., 397.
²² Ibid., 381.
²³ Ibid., 350.
²⁴ Ibid., 345.
²⁵ Ibid., 366.
²⁶ Ibid.
²⁷ Ibid., 367.
²⁸ Ibid., 352.
²⁹ Ibid., 346.
³⁰ Ibid., 351.
³¹ Ibid., 352.
³² Ibid., 347.
³³ Ibid.
³⁴ Bailey, *Labors*, 60.
³⁵ Ibid., 60, 75, 76.
³⁶ Ibid., 65.
³⁷ Ibid.
³⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 152.
³⁹ Ibid., 364.
⁴⁰ Ibid., 367.
⁴¹ Ibid., 152.
⁴² Ibid., 367.
⁴³ Ibid., 163.

The Constellation Draco in World History

Phillip Lindsay

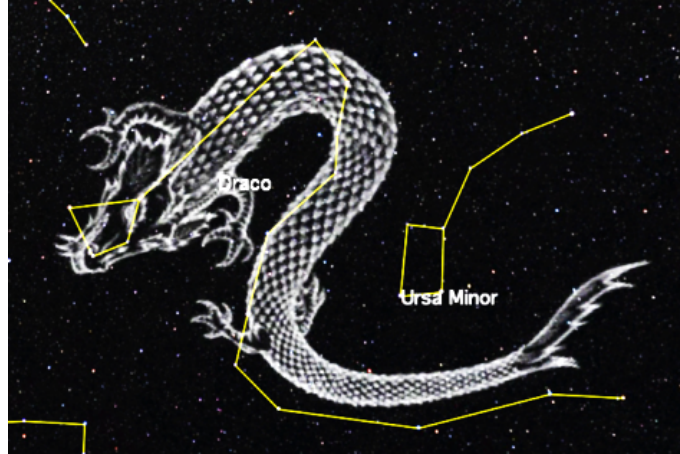


Fig. 1: The Constellation Draco.

Abstract

This essay examines the esoteric significance of the constellation Draco, its relation to this solar system, Earth and its importance in ancient cultures. The symbolism of dragons and serpents exists in most religious and mythological traditions as expressions of wisdom or materiality.

Draco, the Dragon has for countless cycles been host to the pole star Thuban, imparting certain energies essential for the hastening of human evolution on planet Earth. Further exploration opens up a large range of relationships to other constellations such as Capricorn or Ursa Minor, various planets, long-term cycles, rootraces and the planetary centre known as Shamballa. The author's two main source references are from the writings of H.P. Blavatsky and Alice A. Bailey.

Introduction

Dragons and serpents have multiple associations, enduring or enjoying various reputations—whether it is the curly-tailed “dragon” that is the substance of a new galaxy, our own planetary kundalini—or the Initiates, the “sons of snakes.”

It is only when its pure boughs had touched the terrestrial mud of the garden of Eden, of our Adamic race, that this

Tree got soiled by the contact and lost its pristine purity; and that the Serpent of Eternity—the heaven-born LOGOS—was finally degraded. In days of old—of the *divine Dynasties* on Earth—the now dreaded Reptile was regarded as the first beam of light that radiated from the abyss of divine Mystery.

Various were the forms which it was made to assume, and numerous the natural symbols adapted to it, as it crossed æons of Time: as from Infinite Time itself—*Kala*—it fell into the space and time evolved out of human speculation. These forms were Cosmic and astronomical, theistic and pantheistic, abstract and concrete. They became in turn the Polar Dragon and the Southern Cross, the

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Alpha Draconis of the Pyramid, and the Hindu-Buddhist Dragon, which ever threatens, yet never swallows the Sun during its eclipses.¹

Draco means “dragon,” creatures that have been prolific in all world cultures throughout the ages. Dragons are often interchangeable with serpents in religious traditions, particularly the cobra. Dragons are reptiles that existed relatively recently in history; it stands to reason, with many world mythologies that feature dragons, in addition to the prolific species within the reptile kingdom, from the days of the dinosaurs in old Lemuria to present day.

Drakôn or *Dragon*. Now considered a “mythical” monster, perpetuated in the West only on seals as a heraldic griffin, and the Devil slain by St. George. In fact an extinct antediluvian monster. In Babylonian antiquities it is referred to as the “scaly one” and connected on many gems with Tiamat the sea ... In Egypt, it is the star of the Dragon (then the North Pole Star), the origin of the connection of almost all the gods with the Dragon.

Bel and the Dragon, Apollo and Python, Osiris and Typhon, Sigur and Fafnir, and finally St. George and the Dragon, are the same. They were all solar gods, and wherever we find the Sun there also is the Dragon, the symbol of Wisdom-Thoth-Hermes. The Hierophants of Egypt and of Babylon styled themselves “Sons of the Serpent-God” and “Sons of the Dragon” ... As the serpent casts its old skin only to reappear in a new one, so does the immortal Ego cast off one personality but to assume another.”²

In the esoteric tradition, a dragon is a “dragon of wisdom”—whether that is the Logos of a sun, a planet or a Master of Wisdom:

This is the [solar] system of the SON, whose name is Love. This is the divine incarnation of Vishnu. The Dragon of Wisdom is in manifestation ... A solar Logos is both a Divine Manasaputra and likewise a Dragon of Wisdom ... the planetary Logos within a scheme, the Dragon of Wisdom-Love ... will make of the human unit a Master of the Wisdom, a

Lord of Love, a Dragon of Wisdom in lesser degree.³



Fig 2: The Uraeus, a symbol of divine authority

In Gnostic and Celtic traditions, “Dragon” was the mystical name for the “Sons of Wisdom.” Yet, what was once a symbol of light and wisdom has been degraded through history, so that associations with dragons or serpents became malevolent or evil. And this is true of course; there is the serpent/dragon of matter and the serpent-dragon of spirit. The latest expression in popular culture is Smaug in *The Hobbit* stories, or the so-called “reptilians from Draco” for the astral pseudo-esoteric believers.

The word *Draconian* is often expressed in modern media, describing politicians taking “draconian measures.” Indeed, the word hails from Draco, an Athenian statesman, one of the first democratic legislators who imposed harsh laws. Ever since then, the name Draco has had a negative connotation, compounding already existing superstitions around the dragon of evil.



Fig. 3: Victory – Gorynych the Serpent.
(Nicholas Roerich, 1942).

The theme of politics and the law is the domain of Libra (where Saturn is exalted) who regulates karmic law. Saturn was anciently known as, “The Dragon with seven heads ... the Dragon of Life.”⁴ Dragons and serpents have always been used as an allegory for eternity, fohat, divine intelligence and esoteric wisdom.

As the Old Commentary states:

The circle of revelation is rounded out; the cycle is completed; the serpent of matter, the serpent of wisdom and the serpent of life are seen to be one whole and behind the three “stands the Eternal Dragon...”⁵

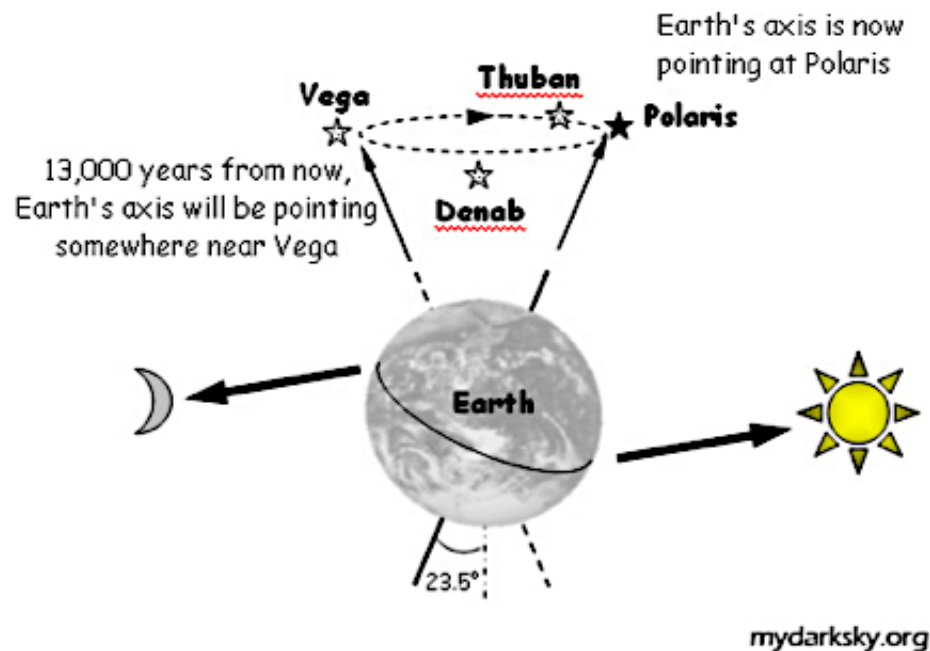


Fig. 4: Thuban in Draco as the pole star.

The Relation of Draco to this Solar System

Saturn has further associations with Draco, as this is a planet of manas or mind, ruling the throat centre, seat of the mental body. It is also the ruler of Capricorn, a constellation closely associated with Draco:

A further factor in cyclic computation lies in the effect of the following stars and constellations upon our system and upon any particular scheme within the system:

a. The Great Bear. b. The Little Bear. c. The Pole Star, especially where our planet

is concerned. d. The Pleiades. e. The constellation of Capricorn. f. Draco. g. Sirius. h. The various constellations and stars of the Zodiac.⁶

Note the phrasing, “The Pole Star, especially where our planet is concerned.” The present pole star is Polaris —“The Star of Direction—governing Shamballa”⁷; but the last pole star was Thuban—in the constellation Draco—Thuban will again be the pole star in future precessional cycles: “Later, another Pole Star will take the place of Polaris, owing to the interplay of forces in the universe and the general shift and movement.”⁸

THE SEVEN STATES OF BEING—UNDER KARMAIC LAW	Nos. Down	Ray	Name	Sign	Energy	Comments	Nos. Up
	6	I	Divine Flames Divine Lives	1. <i>Leo</i> Planet—Sun Colour—Orange	Parashakti Supreme energy	Fire—Air Logoic Plane	7
	7	II	Divine Builders Conferring soul (C.F. 605) Burning sons of desire	2. <i>Virgo</i> Planet—Jupiter Colour—Blue	Kriyashakti Materialising ideal	Ether Monadic Plane	6
	8	III	Lesser Builders Conferring form (C.F. 605) The triple flowers	3. <i>Libra</i> Planet—Saturn Colour—Green	Jnanashakti Force of mind	Water Atmic plane	5
	9	IV	Human Hierarchy The Initiates Lords of Sacrifice	4. <i>Scorpio</i> Planet—Mercury Colour—Yellow	Mantrikashakti The WORD made flesh. Speech	Solar Angels Agnishvatas Buddhic	4
	10	V	Human Personality The Crocodiles Makara, the mystery	5. <i>Capricorn</i> Planet—Venus Colour—Indigo	Ichchhashakti Will to manifest	Fire Mental Plane	3
	11	VI	Lunar Lords Sacrificial Fires (C.F. 378)	6. <i>Sagittarius</i> Planet—Mars Colour—Red	Kundalinishakti Energy of matter Form	Water Astral plane	2
	12	VII	Elemental lives The Baskets of Nourishment. The Blinded Lives	7. <i>Aquarius</i> Planet—the Moon Colour—Violet	None	Earth	1

Fig. 5: The Seven Creative Hierarchies in Active Planetary Expression.⁹

“These seven Hierarchies are (as says H. P. B.), the sevenfold ray of wisdom, the dragon in its seven forms. This is a deep mystery, and only a clue to it all can be found at this time by man in the contemplation of his own nature...”¹⁰

Draco’s influence upon the entire solar system is profound, influencing the evolution of all other planets besides Earth:

The relation of the fifth Hierarchy to a certain constellation [Draco] has also a bearing upon this mystery. This is hidden in the karma of the solar Logos, and concerns His relationship to another solar Logos, and the interplay of force between them in a greater mahakalpa. This is the true “secret of the Dragon,” and it was the dragon-influence or the “serpent energy” which caused the influx of manasic or mind energy into the solar system.¹¹

Bear in mind that the subject of the Creative Hierarchies is the most fundamental and occult basis for Esoteric Astrology— as the 12 hierarchies are the *lives* that underlie the twelve zodiac signs. The fifth creative hierarchy is ruled by Capricorn and is called the “human personality” and the “mystery of Makara, the crocodiles.” This concerns the relationship of the lunar angels to the solar angels and the development of manas or mind,¹² but also Love-Wisdom:

The units of the fifth Hierarchy are called “The Hearts of Fiery Love”; they save through love, and in their turn these lives are peculiarly close to the great Heart of Love of the solar Logos. These great redeeming Angels, who are the Sons of Men on their own true plane, the mental,

are ever, therefore, pictured as taking the form of twelve-petalled lotuses—this symbology linking them up with “the Son of Divine Love,” the manifested solar system, which is said to be a cosmic twelve-petalled lotus, and with the logoic causal lotus, equally of a twelve-petalled nature.¹³

The “other solar logos” mentioned in the earlier passage may be one of the stars in Draco, possibly Thuban (*Arabic* “snake”) in the tail of the dragon; it was the pole star in 3,350 BCE, and countless 26,000-year precession cycles before that. Or, it might be Eltanin (*Arabic* “great serpent”), the highest magnitude star (2.4) in the constellation Draco, residing in the “head” of the serpent.



Fig. 6: Sevekh, the crocodile-headed.

The “greater mahakalpa” (great aeon/cycle) is most likely 311 trillion years, as that figure represents the entire incarnational span of our solar logos, an “Age of Brahma.” The crocodile (a reptile) also has a relation to the dragon:

The mythical dragon originated in the crocodile, which is the dragon of Egypt ... in one particular cult, the Sut-Typhonian, the first god was Sevekh [“the seven-fold”], who wears the crocodile’s head, as well as the Serpent, and who is the Dragon, or whose constellation was the Dragon.¹⁴

Students might usually associate Sirius and the Pleiades with manas and buddhi transmitted into this solar system. The passage above demonstrates that Draco contributes its own “brand” of manas —the manasic principle manifests in five ways.¹⁵ Yet, Draco is also a source of Buddhi:

A planetary Logos is the meeting place for two types of force, spiritual or logoic, which reaches Him ... from the seven Rishis of the Great Bear on Their own plane, and, secondly, of buddhic force which is transmitted via the seven Sisters or the Pleiades from a constellation called the Dragon... and from which has come the appellation, “The Dragon of Wisdom.”¹⁶

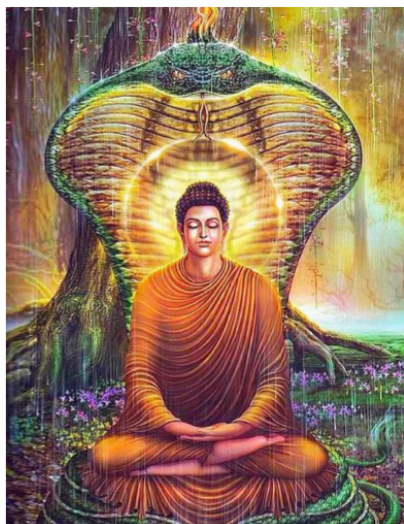


Fig. 7: The Buddha: A Serpent of Wisdom.

Thus far in this enquiry, there emerges the staggering importance of Draco in this solar system, as important as other more well-known constellations. Even our Solar Logos is relatively ignorant of the role of Draco and

other constellations, as the following comments make clear:

Certain influences indicate to Him and certain lines of force demonstrate to Him the fact that some constellations are knit with His system in a close and corporate union. We know that the Great Bear, the Pleiades, Draco or the Dragon are in some way associated with the solar system but as yet He knows not their function nor the nature of the other constellations.

It must also be remembered that the turning of our tiny systemic wheel [solar system], and the revolution of a cosmic wheel [OAWNMBS – see later.]¹⁷ can be hastened, or retarded, by influences emanating from unknown or unrealised constellations, whose association with a systemic or a cosmic Logos is as mysterious relatively as the effect individuals have upon each other in the human family. This effect is hidden in logico karma and is beyond the ken of man.¹⁸



Fig. 8: Nagajuna: Conqueror of the Serpent (Nicholas Roerich, 1925).

Hence, the evolution of our even “tinier” Earth wheel has been hastened through history by the direct invocation of the forces of Draco—through astronomical alignment with the monuments and temples of our most advanced civilizations.

Those edifices have all been aligned with the solstices, equinoxes and pole stars above whilst below, these buildings have been positioned upon magnetic ley lines upon the Earth surface; many have incorporated in them the most extraordinary sacred geometry to facilitate the alignment of the heavens with earth; invoking celestial guidance into the sacred sanctuaries by the priest-initiates, astronomer-astrologers, the intermediaries between the Solar Logos and a civilization.

Understanding the aforementioned Fifth Creative Hierarchy, ruled by Capricorn-Makara is most important, particularly through the study of some of its greatest exponents such as the Buddha —often depicted under a multi-headed cobra:

The seven-headed serpent *Ananta* of Vishnu, the *Nag* around Buddha — the great dragon eternity biting with its *active* head its *passive* tail, from the emanations of which spring worlds, beings and things. You will comprehend the reason why the first philosopher proclaimed ALL is Maya — but that one principle, which rests during the *maha-pralayas* only — the “nights of Brahm.”¹⁹

Likewise, Nagajuna, founder of the Madhyamika School was called,

... the “Dragon Tree” ... standing as a symbol of Wisdom and Knowledge. The tree is honoured because it is under the Bodhi (wisdom) Tree that Buddha received his birth and enlightenment, preached his first sermon and died.²⁰

The “Dragon” and “Snake-Kings” of history are the *Nâgas* who,

... in Buddhist legends instruct people in wisdom on lakes and rivers, and end by becoming converts to the good Law and *Arhats* ... The “fish” is an old and very suggestive symbol in the Mystery-language, as is also “water”. Ea or Hea was the god of the: sea and Wisdom, and

the sea serpent was one of his emblems, his priests being “serpents” or Initiates.

Thus one sees why Occultism places Oannes and the other Annedoti in the group of those ancient “adepts” who were called “marine” or “water dragon”-- *Nâgas*. Water typified their human origin (as it is a symbol of earth and matter and also of purification), in distinction to the “fire *Nâgas*” or the immaterial, Spiritual Beings, whether celestial Bodhisattvas or Planetary Dhyânis, also regarded as the instructors of mankind.²¹

Lake Manasarovar (mind-lake) might fit this description, high upon the Tibetan plateau, a revered and sacred place for several religions and location of the “palace of dragons.” Manas here means the broadest sense of mind in its many forms —its widest sense as — intellect, intelligence, understanding, perception, sense and conscience.

Draco as Base Chakra in the OAWNMBS

The Ageless Wisdom informs us that this solar system is part of a larger corporate entity of seven solar systems, composing a Being known as the *One About Whom Naught May Be Said*, or OAWNMBS. Our solar system represents the unawakened heart centre within that Being— “our solar Logos is the embodied force, is the heart centre.”²² Draco’s role has also been revealed:

Centre	OAWNMBS
Head	Great Bear
Ajna	Sirius
Throat	Pleiades
Heart	Our sun (Sol)
Solar Plexus	Orion
Sacral	Antares
Base	Draco

Fig. 9: Centers within the OAWNMBS.

The constellation of the Dragon has the same relation to the ONE greater than our Logos as the centre at the base of the spine has to a human being.²³

The base chakra is the seventh centre counting down. Hence, it has a relation to the seventh ray, the cosmic physical plane and the

human physical plane. The Earth plays a similar role in our solar system as Draco does in the OAWNMBs:

... the lowest centre at the base of the spine to the highest centre, the head centre. This is a correspondence to the relation of the Earth to the Sun.²⁴

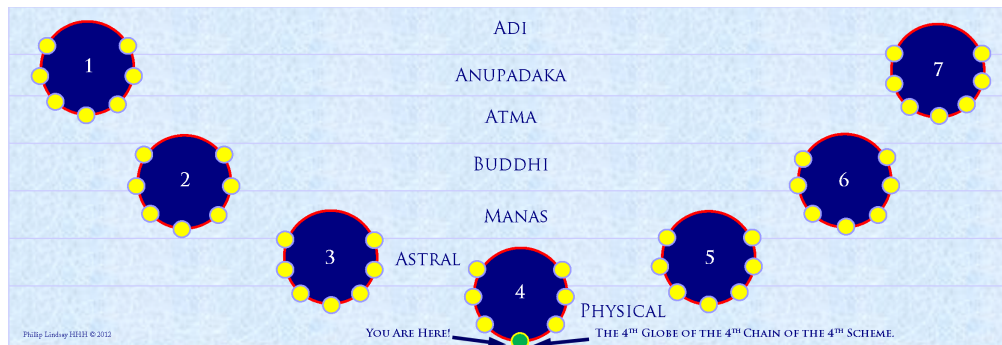


Fig.10: The Chains and Globes of the Earth Scheme.

This analogy might hint that the Earth is, or will be, the base chakra of this solar system. Our planet is a laggard in the solar system due to the failure of its previous Moon chain incarnation.²⁵ Hence, extra stimulation has been required to catch up with the other planets.

Earth should be at the equivalent stage as Venus, its “sister” and “sacred planet”—but remains a “non-sacred planet.” Successful human evolution will eventuate if there are no more chain failures in this Earth Scheme. The subject of the schemes, chains and globes is broad, discussed at length in the author’s *Unveiling Genesis: Mysteries of the Roottraces and Cycles*.

Again, Saturn emerges as a planet with its close relation to Earth and Draco. As the seventh chakra, the base centre has a direct correspondence to the physical plane. We are informed that,

Saturn is *in fact* the correspondence to the logico physical permanent atom. This is an occult mystery and must not be separated from its allied truth in the cosmic scheme.²⁶

As the most well known of the Four Lords of Karma, Saturn has a particular affinity with Earth; both planets are co-rulers of the Third Ray of Active-Intelligence as well as the

human throat centre, seat of the mental body. The third ray has a direct connection with the seventh ray and Saturn is the seventh planet from the Sun, when including Vulcan. Saturn may act as some kind intermediary between Draco and Earth.

Draco, the Seventh Ray and Purple

In keeping with the theme of seven, there are historical associations with Draco and purple—the colour of the seventh ray:

The “Avesta” describes the serpent Dahaha, as of the region of ... Babylonia ... the Assyrian dynasty, whose symbol was the *purpureum signum draconis* — the purple sign of the Dragon.²⁷

The Assyrians were the aforementioned builders of Dracontia, part of the second sub-race of the Fifth Roottrace (5.2) who travelled through Europe building some of the mighty structures like Stonehenge and Carnac:

“The Assyrian priest bore always the name of his god” ... The Druids of the Celto-Britannic regions also called themselves snakes. “I am a Serpent, I am a Druid,” they exclaimed. The Egyptian Karnak is twin brother to the Carnac of Bretagne, the latter Carnac meaning the serpent’s mount.²⁸

Another association comes from one of the oldest sciences, Chinese astronomy. Draco inhabited a region of the sky referred to as the Right Wall of the Purple Forbidden Enclosure. Purple refers to the North Pole star, presumably whatever one is current, but may have originated many thousands of years ago when Draco was the pole star.

Purple is universally connected to royalty and so the emperor inhabited the heavenly abode of the Celestial Emperor. The surrounding celestial region, the Purple Forbidden Enclosure was considered the realm of the Celestial Emperor and his family.

It is notable that Sir Francis Bacon, the future Chohan of the Seventh Ray, used to dress in purple from head to toe at the court of King James I. (Purple is composed of two colors, red and blue, the colors of the first and second rays, the personality and soul rays of Britain.)

Draco the Pole Star and Great Pyramid

The current pole star today is Polaris, the brightest star in the constellation Ursa Minor, the Little Bear. Ironically this constellation bore Draco's name at one time, possibly because of Polaris and Draco's *Thuban* taking turns as pole stars at various times in history. Ursa Minor was also known anciently as "the wings of Draco:"

The seven-headed serpent has more than one signification in the Arcane teachings. It is the seven-headed *Draco*, each of whose heads is a star of the Lesser Bear; but it was also, and pre-eminently, the Serpent of Darkness (*i.e.*, inconceivable and incomprehensible) whose seven heads were the seven *Logoi*, the reflections of the one and first manifested Light—the universal LOGOS.²⁹



Fig. 11: The pyramids of Giza and Thuban in Draco.

Note that those "seven heads" can also be seen as the Seven Rays whose vehicles were the seven Logoi, or seven sacred planets. Constellations and pole stars have been associated with ancient civilizations and their sacred temples at various times in history. Deneb in the constellation of Cygnus was the pole star in 15,000 BC, then Vega in 11,500 BC and Tau Herculis in 7,400 BC.

In Draco's case, the temples were called Dracontia, dedicated to the Dragon, emblem of the sun. They were attended by the priest-astronomers who invoked the energy of that star, thereby evoking subjective guidance. Some Dracontia examples are Karnac in Egypt, Carnac in France and Stonehenge in Britain.

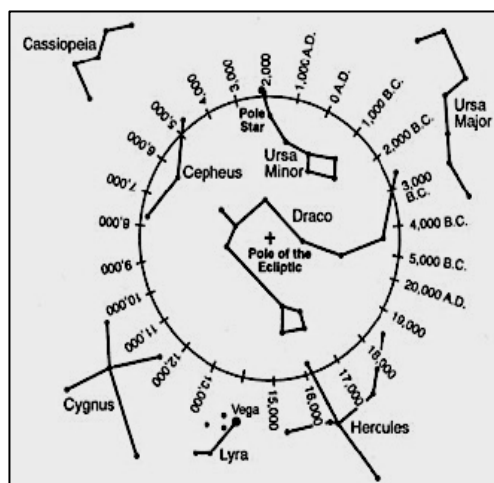


Fig. 12: The pole stars in the 26,000 year cycle.

Figure 12 displays the pole stars that feature over a 26,000 year precession cycle. Note that Draco wraps itself around the central Pole of the Ecliptic:

The position which the constellation of Draco at one time occupied showed that the great serpent was the ruler of the night. This constellation was formerly at the very centre of the heavens, and is so extensive that it was called the Great Dragon. Its body spreads over seven signs of the Zodiac ... Draco, once the *pole-star*—the symbol of "Guide," Guru and director—had been thus degraded by posterity, "The gods of our fathers are our devils," says an Asiatic proverb.³⁰

One of the best-known alignments of Draco is with the Great Pyramid at Giza. In the following diagram (Fig. 13), the shafts from the

Queen's chamber are aligned to Sirius and Kochab in Ursa Minor, whilst the Kings chamber points to Orion and Thuban in Draco. These stars occupy several of the earlier mentioned constellations. HPB tells us that the pyramid's date of construction can be worked out accordingly:

It is well known to us that at whatever epoch the great Pyramid of Egypt may have been built, it must have been at a

time when Draconis, the then Polar Star, was at its lower culmination and the Pleiades—Alcyone especially—were on the same meridian above ... Assuming that the long narrow downward passage was directed towards the pole star of the pyramid builders, astronomers have shown that ... Alpha Draconis, the then polestar, was in the required position about 3,350 B.C., as well as in 2,170 B.C. ...

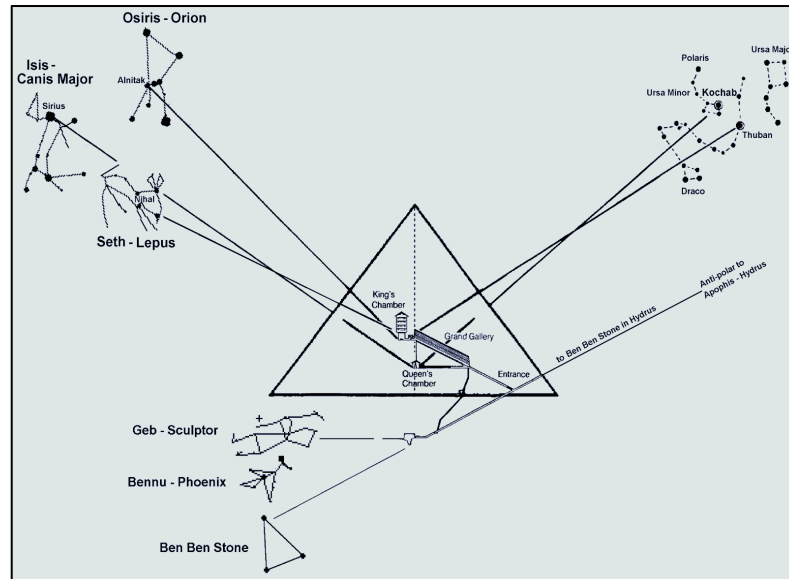


Fig.13: Great Pyramid alignments with Sirius, Orion, Ursa Minor and Draco.

... But we are also told that, “this relative position of Alpha Draconis and Alcyone being an extraordinary one ... it could not occur again for a whole sidereal year”. This demonstrates that, since the Dendera Zodiac shows the passage of three sidereal years, the great Pyramid must have been built 78,000 years ago, or in any case that this possibility deserves to be accepted at least as readily as the later date of 3,350 B.C. ... the builders of the Pyramid had erected it as an Observatory of Occult Astrognosy³¹, and—called the Polar Star Draco, or Draconis, for reasons, certainly perfectly known to themselves.³²

As noted earlier, in Egypt the crocodile was the origin of the dragon and Sevekh. The seven-fold dragon was Saturn. This seven-headed dragon/serpent is prominent at the Angkor Wat temple complexes in Cambodia, visited by the author several times. In *Uveiling Genesis*, the Khmer civilization is pro-

posed as part of the second subrace of the Fifth Root race (5.2), which had its beginnings some 860,000 years ago, along with the ancient Egyptians and Mayans. The same consciousness guided construction in all these civilizations.

Draco's Connection with Neptune

In a *Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, Bailey touches upon

A peculiar group of Beings connected with a certain constellation and the lesser Dragon, who have their habitat on Neptune and work with the sixth principle in the solar system. They take physical form, animated by purified desire, controlled by mind, and are the dispensers of love-wisdom by means of certain of the “Halls of Wisdom” on the various planets. The words “Halls of Wisdom” in their esoteric significance describe a stage of consciousness not a location.³³



Fig. 14: Entrance to Preah Khan, Cambodia.

The “certain constellation” is most probably Draco, as will be explained further on. The “lesser Dragon” is likely to be the constellation Hydra—in mythology the nine-headed dragon or serpent that lurked in the swamp of Lerne—a major test for Hercules at his “eighth gate,” his Scorpio initiation. The passage above connects the earlier referenced buddhic principle of Draco, to the buddhic qualities of Neptune:

This planet has also a vital relation to the sixth logoc principle, or Buddhi, and therefore the sixth principle of man. No man begins to co-ordinate the buddhic vehicles until he comes under Neptunian influence in some life or another. When this is the case, his personality horoscope will show Neptunian influence dominating somewhere.³⁴

As touched upon earlier, the “certain constellation” is most likely Draco, which the following passage indicates through its associations with Neptune:

Poseidon is a “Dragon”: “Chozzar, called by the profane Neptune” ... the “Good and Perfect Serpent,” the Messiah of the Naaseni, whose symbol in Heaven is *Draco* ...³⁵ The dolphin was the vehicle of Poseidon-Neptune ... one with him, esoterically ... this “dolphin” is the “sea-dragon” as much as the Crocodile of the Sacred Nile is the vehicle of Horus ... it is ... Neptune who converts into a sphere the dodecagonal pyramid, “and paints its gate with many colours.” He has FIVE

androgynous ministers—he is *Makara*, the Leviathan.³⁶



Fig. 15: Hydra constellation.

There are some very tantalizing, though oblique remarks here! Makara is also Capricorn, which was referenced earlier in relation to Draco and “cyclic computation.” Hence Capricorn could be a second contender for that “certain constellation” in the passage above.³⁷ The latter description, “Paints its gate with many colours” may refer to the differentiation into the seven ray types from the one source, or even the 12-sign zodiac; or, a multi-hued chakra (gate). Again, we return to the Fifth Creative Hierarchy and Capricorn:

The fifth group [Creative Hierarchy] is a very mysterious one, as it is connected with the Microcosmic Pentagon, the five pointed star representing man. In India and Egypt, these Dhyanis were connected with the Crocodile, and their abode is in Capricornus ... Sebak or Sevek ‘or seventh’ ... is a dragon in reality, not a crocodile. He is the “Dragon of Wisdom,” or Manas, the “Human Soul,” Mind, the Intelligent principle, called in our esoteric philosophy the “Fifth” principle.³⁸

The mysteries of the Capricorn and Draco constellations are entwined with one another, abounding with ambiguities woven by HPB and only penetrated with the intuition. Hence, there is a good argument for either one of them being that “certain constellation”; currently the author favors Draco.

Now, a further exploration of the Hydra constellation for contender as the “lesser Dragon” and the “peculiar group of beings ... who have their habitat on Neptune ... and work with the sixth principle in the solar system.”



Fig. 16: Makara at Preah Ko temple, Cambodia.

Neptune is the ruler of the sixth ray of Devotion and Idealism, the “sixth principle”—which is also the second principle when counting in reverse, considering Neptune as the second synthesizing scheme — and considering the sixth ray upon the “even ray line” of Love-Wisdom.

The Hydra is associated with the eighth labor of Hercules in the sign Scorpio, ruled by Mars exoterically and esoterically. Mars, with Neptune, is the co-ruler of the sixth ray of Devotion and Idealism. Neptune is a sacred planet; Mars is like Earth, still a non-sacred planet.

These “Beings” therefore, seem to have expressed the success of the initiate Hercules who, “animated by purified desire, controlled by mind” have vanquished the nine-headed dragon in the swamp through esoteric Mars, earning them their “habitat on Neptune.” to be “dispensers of love-wisdom.”



Fig. 17: Capricorn constellation.

Mars and Neptune are also the rulers of the solar plexus centre, seat of the astral body. The energies of the solar plexus are eventual-

ly raised up into the heart, the fount of Love-Wisdom. Neptune plays a part as the “higher light of the solar plexus,” assisting the raising process through higher aspiration and associated with the heart per se.

The goal set before humanity is that of becoming Masters of the Wisdom, or conscious units in the Body of the Dragon of Wisdom or of Love. This a man achieves when he can function consciously in the buddhic vehicle, or when the astral permanent atom is superseded by the buddhic permanent atom.³⁹

Draco and Planet Earth

Human individualization occurred in ancient Lemuria between 18-21 million years ago —when humans moved from being simply members of the animal kingdom with instinctual consciousness, to gaining the “spark of mind” — and becoming living souls. To frame a context for this, a previous passage is worth repeating because it reminds us of the macrocosm and its relation to Earth, the microcosm:

The relation of the fifth Hierarchy to a certain constellation [Draco] has also a bearing upon this mystery. This is hidden in the karma of the solar Logos, and concerns His relationship to another solar Logos [Thuban?], and the interplay of force between them in a greater mahakalpa. This is the true “secret of the Dragon,” and it was the dragon-influence or the “serpent energy” which caused the influx of manasic or mind energy into the solar system.

Entangled closely with the karma of these two cosmic Entities, was that of the lesser cosmic Entity Who is the Life of our planet, the planetary Logos. It was this triple karma which brought in the “serpent religion” and the “Serpents or Dragons of Wisdom” in Lemurian days. It had to do with solar and planetary Kundalini, or serpent fire. A hint lies in the fact that the constellation of the Dragon has the same relation to the ONE greater than our Logos as the centre at the base of the spine has to a human being. It concerns stimulation, and vitalization with a consequent co-ordination of the manifesting fires.⁴⁰



Fig. 18: Ancient Greek Vase with Hercules and Hydra.

The beginning and end of this passage have already been explored, the latter making the analogy of Earth as base chakra within this solar system, corresponding to Draco in the OAWNMBS. But what was the “serpent religion” and the Dragons of Wisdom in Lemurian days”?

The Dragons of Wisdom may have been the Kumaras and/or their emissaries, the guides of the race, who came to Earth from the Venus chain of the Earth Scheme to individualize Humanity. The “serpent religion” may have been the first “religion” —based upon the manasic principle of Draco —for the Dragons of Wisdom; and for humanity, the serpentine force at the base of the spine, which was where their original consciousness was focused, the base, sacral and solar plexus centers.

... our planetary Logos ... became geometrically linked with two other centres, of which Venus was one, and logoic Kundalini—circulating with tremendous force through this adjusted Triangle—brought about that intensification of vibration in the human family which resulted in individualisation.⁴¹

Bear in mind, that the period of Individualization coincided with the death of the reptile kingdom around 21 million years ago (not 65 million years as exoteric science insists):

At human individualisation in the middle of the third rootrace. This was produced by a vast destruction of the forms we call animal-man. This point has seldom been brought out in teaching. The advent of the Lords of the Flame, the electrical storm which ushered in the period of man, was distinguished by disaster, chaos, and the destruction of many in the third [animal] kingdom of nature.

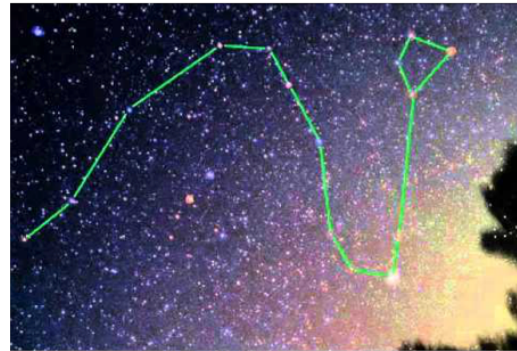


Fig. 19: Draco the Dragon constellation.

The spark of mind was implanted and the strength of its vibration, and the immediate effect of its presence caused the death of the animal form, thus producing the immediate possibility of the newly vitalised causal bodies vibrating to such purpose that new physical vehicles were taken. That was the Will aspect manifesting in the fourth round in connection with the human family.⁴²

There is also the mystery of human embryonic development that appears to reproduce previous forms in the animal kingdom —of which the reptile is one phase. This is logical as human bodies are animal in nature, but distinct from the animal kingdom in that each body is inhabited by an individual soul.



Fig. 20: The death of the dinosaurs in Lemuria.

The newly individualized Lemurian humanity, polarized in the lower centers, was given instruction by the guides of the race, in what would be considered today “sex magic.” The “Ibhezhan adepts”

... had to deal with a humanity which was in its infancy, whose polarization was most unstable, and whose coordination was very imperfect. There was very little mentality to be found and were practically altogether, astral; they functioned even

more on the astral plane than on the physical, and it was part of the work of these early adepts, working under instruction from Shamballa to develop the energy centers of the human unit, stimulate the brain and make him fully self-conscious on the physical plane.

Their objective was to bring about a realization of the kingdom of God within, and little attention was paid (in Their training of Their disciples) to the bringing about of the realization of God in nature or in other units. It was necessary in those days to employ methods more definitely physical than are permissible now, and these methods of physical stimulation were employed and the laws of energy as they work through the various centres were taught until the time came when another big change was made in the hierarchical methods, and the door from the animal kingdom into the human was closed and the door of initiation was opened. It was felt at that time that man was then self-centered enough and individualized enough to permit of a drastic change in method and practice.



Fig. 21: The veneration of the serpents in Egypt, symbols of higher entities such as the Nirmanakayas.

All this took a vast period of time and it is the remnants of the earlier Temple practices which have come down to us in degraded phallic teaching, in Tantric magic and the practices of Hatha Yogis. The infant humanity of Lemurian and early Atlantean days had to be taught what they were by means of symbols and methods which to us would be crude, impossible and of a nature which the race should have transcended for many millions of years.⁴³

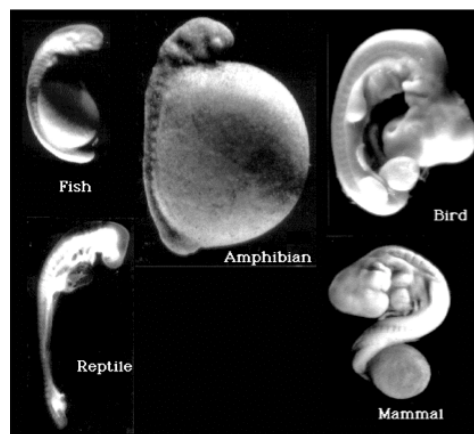


Fig. 22: Stages of human embryo growth.

One might imagine therefore, that this period was the source of the “serpent religion” in its lower aspect, in the arousal of kundalini, sex practices and basic hatha yoga postures in order to help bring about a co-ordination between the etheric and clumsy physical bodies of that time. As that humanity “were practically altogether astral,” the stimulation of the sexual/sacral centre may have had a grounding effect, but not without its attendant risks in terms of over-stimulation, leading to black magic. Eventually,

... the Ibezhan adepts (again under instructions from the Masters at Shamballa) began to withdraw into the Temples, to make the mysteries more difficult of attainment and to work against abuses and distortions, a number of Their erstwhile followers, many of great power and knowledge, fought Them and thus we have one of the causes of the appearing of black and white magic ...⁴⁴

Hence, we see the origins of the serpent of evil/wisdom and the serpent religion with which we are more familiar in the later Atlantean and Aryan rootraces, in practically every world culture—like Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent of the Mayans in Central America where the second outpost of Shamballa was established;⁴⁵ the serpent mounds of North America, created by Atlantean initiates; the Nagas of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions; the Nagal, chief sorcerer and serpent worshipper of the Mexican Indians; Tiahuanaco at Lake Titicaca in Bolivia; the extensive serpent symbolism in ancient Egypt and the more recent Gnostic traditions.



Fig. 23: Quetzalcoatl the feathered serpent.

This first location of Shamballa and teaching to the fledgling Lemurian humanity was said to take place in the “centre of South America,” geographically today in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. The mighty Amazon jungle encroaches into this area and is home to many reptiles, including the giant Anaconda.

It was this area where the explorer Percy Fawcett disappeared, searching for the “lost city of Z,” now a feature film. Apparently Fawcett devoured a lot of theosophical literature introduced to him by his brother, and was aware of Shamballa. Before Fawcett, an exploration party claimed to have found this city in the 1750’s:

At a distance of some three or four miles ... buildings could be distinctly made out, was a huge city ... The stupendous masonry was black with age, and the grandeur of the architecture tied every man's tongue ... The overwhelming dignity of the design, the awesome silence and mystery of an old abandoned city possessed them ... High above the crown of the central arch, and deeply engraved into the weathered stone, were characters of some sort ... comparable with some of the finest relics of Egypt ... From this hall opened fifteen smaller chambers, in each of which was the carved head of a serpent from whose opened jaws poured a small stream of water ...⁴⁶

This may be just one example of ancient serpent worship in old Lemuria. Directly west of this area is the fabled region of Tiahuanaco on Lake Titicaca, ruled over by the god-

dess Copacati, often represented by images of serpents.

At a later date than the present, discoveries will be made, revealing the reality of the old form of hierarchical work; ancient records and monuments will be revealed, some above ground and many in subterranean fastnesses. As the mysteries of central Asia in the land stretching from Chaldea and Babylon through Turkestan to Manchuria, including the Gobi desert, are opened up, it is planned that much of the early history of the Ibezhan workers will be revealed.⁴⁷



Fig. 24: Phallic Towers in Turkey.



Fig. 25: Central Asia – left; right– the Gobi Desert straddles the northern region of ancient India–across to China, the Hub of the Eastern regions.

Note the phrase “subterranean fastnesses” that conceal old cities and even as some claim, hide civilizations living underground. There have been three locations of Shamballa corresponding to the roottraces, relocated each time to bring a physical presence near the new evolving races. Bear in mind that a roottrace encompasses continents around the planet, but will have several seed points:

Rootrace	Shamballa	Location
3 rd Lemuria	South America	Temple of Ibez. Matto Grosso, Brazil.
4 th Atlantis	Central America	Ancient Mayans – Guatemala, Mexico.
5 th Aryan	China/Mongolia	Gobi Desert – straddling India for West and China for East.
6 th Rootrace	South America	Temple of Ibez. Shamballa full circle.

Fig. 26: Shamballa Governs Each Rootrace from a Physical Location.

HPB affirms the stupendous amount of undiscovered history waiting for mankind:

There, all along the coast of Peru, all over the Isthmus and North America, in the canyons of the Cordilleras, in the impassable gorges of the Andes, and, especially beyond the valley of Mexico, lie, ruined and desolate, hundreds of once mighty cities, lost to the memory of men, and having themselves lost even a name. Buried in dense forests, entombed in inaccessible valleys, sometimes sixty feet underground, from the day of their discovery until now they have ever remained a riddle to science, baffling all inquiry, and they have been muter than the Egyptian Sphinx herself.⁴⁸



Fig. 27: Australian Aboriginal rainbow serpent. The Aborigines are the oldest surviving Lemurians.

If Draco's influence on Earth has been specifically designated to hasten evolution since the failed Moon chain, then its influence from the earliest Lemurian rootrace may be apparent. In the commentary to the Stanzas of Dzyan in *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB refers to "dragons" in the 3rd, 4th and 5th rootraces:

... so far back as the third "Deluge" of the Third Lemurian race, that "Great Dragon," whose tail sweeps whole nations out

of existence in the twinkling of an eye ... *The GREAT DRAGON has respect but for the 'SERPENTS' of WISDOM, the Serpents whose holes are now under the triangular stones," i.e., "the Pyramids, at the four corners of the world."*

This tells us clearly that ... the Adepts or "Wise" men of the three Races (the Third, Fourth and the Fifth) dwelt in subterranean habitats, generally under some kind of pyramidal structure, if not actually under a pyramid.⁴⁹



Fig. 28: Egyptian goddess Wadjet with falcon wings.

What exactly is the "Great Dragon" here? Our planetary or solar logos, both "dragons" who serve the "Greater Dragon" Draco? Was the Lemurian rootrace regarded as an incarnation or the seed of Draco, particularly because both Earth and Draco might share the same status as base chakras of their respective entities that everything seeded in Lemuria by Draco earned it the appellation of the "Great Dragon," which holds the blueprint for Earth's future status as base chakra?

The "Serpent" and "Dragon" were the names given to the "Wise Ones," the initiated adepts of olden times. It was their

wisdom and their learning that were devoured or assimilated by their followers, whence the allegory. When the Scandinavian Sigurd is fabled to have roasted the heart of Fafnir, the Dragon, whom he had slain, becoming thereby the wisest of men, it meant the same thing.⁵⁰

Mystery of the Serpent and the Soul

The following longer passage from *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, is interspersed with some commentary:

If students will apply themselves to the consideration of these facts, to the investigation of the serpent lore in all lands, mythologies and scriptures, and if they will link up all this knowledge with that concerning those heavenly constellations which have a serpent appellation (such as, for instance, the Dragon), much illumination may come. If the intuition suffices, knowledge may then be imparted which will make clearer the connection between the physical bodies with their centres, and the psychic nature.

... The secret of life lies hidden in the serpent stage — not the life of the Spirit, but the life of the soul, and this will be revealed as the “serpent of the astral light” is truly approached, and duly studied. One of the four Lipika Lords, Who stand nearest to our planetary Logos, is called “The Living Serpent,” and His emblem is a serpent of blue with one eye, in the form of a ruby, in its head.⁵¹



Fig. 29: Shiva with cobra and wisdom eye.

Note that blue is the color of the second ray of Love-Wisdom (indigo) and the sixth ray

of Devotion (sky blue)—and that the ruby is a symbol of the sixth ray. DK continues...

Students who care to carry the symbology a little further can connect this idea with the “eye of Shiva” which sees and knows all, and records all, as does the human eye in lesser degree; all is photographed upon the astral light, as the human eye receives impressions upon the retina ... The application and value of the hints here given may be apparent if the subject of the third eye is studied, and its relation to the spine, and the spinal currents investigated.

This third eye is one of the objects of kundalinic vivification, and in the spinal territory there is first the centre at the base of the spine, the home of the sleeping fire. Next we have the triple channel along which that fire will travel in due course of evolution, and finally we find at the summit of the column, and surmounting all, that small organ called the pineal gland, which when vivified causes the third eye to open, and the beauties of the higher, subtler planes to stand revealed ... It should be noted here that this evolution on the etheric planes has a closer effect upon man than on the physical⁵²



Fig. 30: Kundalini serpents

The kundalini serpent lays coiled at the base of the spine. The Tuatara lizard from New Zealand (an old Lemurian remnant), has a “third eye”— a pronounced photo-receptive eye, which is currently thought to be involved in setting circadian and seasonal

cycles. This “eye,” according to HPB is now atrophied but was “necessarily active in its origin.”⁵³ Likewise the human, original one eye at the top of the head, receded into the brain and became the pineal gland.

All this physico-psychical occurrence is possible to man owing to certain events which happened to the Heavenly Serpent in the second, or serpent, round. These happenings necessitated the formation and evolution of that peculiar and mysterious family we call the reptilian.

These forms of divine life are very intimately connected with the second planetary scheme [Venus], being responsive to energy emanating from that scheme, and reaching the earth via the second globe in the second chain [Venus globe of the Earth chain]. A group of special devas (connected with a particular *open* sound in the planetary Word), work with the reptile evolution.⁵⁴



Fig. 31: The Staff of Hermes, or the caduceus.
(Artist: Mario Pichler).

We are currently in the Fourth Round of evolution and each round lasts for around 617,000 million years; hence the second serpent round occurred a long time ago. The second planetary scheme is Venus, Earth's “sister” planet. Venusian energy was potentially present at Individualization in Lemuria 21 million years ago. Magnetic force was broad-

cast from Venus, via the second (Venus) chain of the Earth Scheme, via the second (Venus) globe of that chain to our physical globe. Bear in mind that Individualization saw the destruction of the majority of the reptile kingdom.

There are some great mysteries in this statement about the second planetary scheme Venus, the second round cycle and the reptile kingdom. HPB makes some curious comments whilst discussing the transition of Humanity from hermaphrodite to two-sexed beings during the Individualization period of three million years:

Exoterically, the *Nagas* are semi-divine beings which have a human face and the tail of a serpent. Yet there was a race of *Nagas*, said to be a thousand in number only, born or rather sprung from Kadra, Kasyapa's wife, for *the purpose of peopling Pâtâla*, which is undeniably America, as will be shown; and there was a NAGA-Dwipa, one of the seven divisions of Bhârata-Varsha, India, inhabited by a people bearing the same name, who are allowed, even by some Orientalists, to be *historical*, and to have left many a trace behind them to this day.

Now the point most insisted upon at present is that, whatever origin be claimed for man, his evolution took place in this order: (1) Sexless, as all the earlier forms are; (2) then, by a natural transition, he became, “a solitary hermaphrodite,” a bisexual being; and (3) finally separated and became what he is now.⁵⁵

The “race of semi-divine beings” recalls the Nirmanakayas, those high initiates of the 6th and 7th degree whose role is as intermediaries between Shamballa and Hierarchy. They are focused on the plane of atma and specialize in directing the thought currents of humanity.

The “race of Nagas” certainly might be symbolic, as in “serpents of wisdom” who had a special mission in seeding a new civilization. The number 1,000 might also be a cipher for the duration of a subrace of 4,320,000 years—as the author has demonstrated elsewhere.⁵⁶ Anyway, it is a very large subject, well beyond the reach of this article!

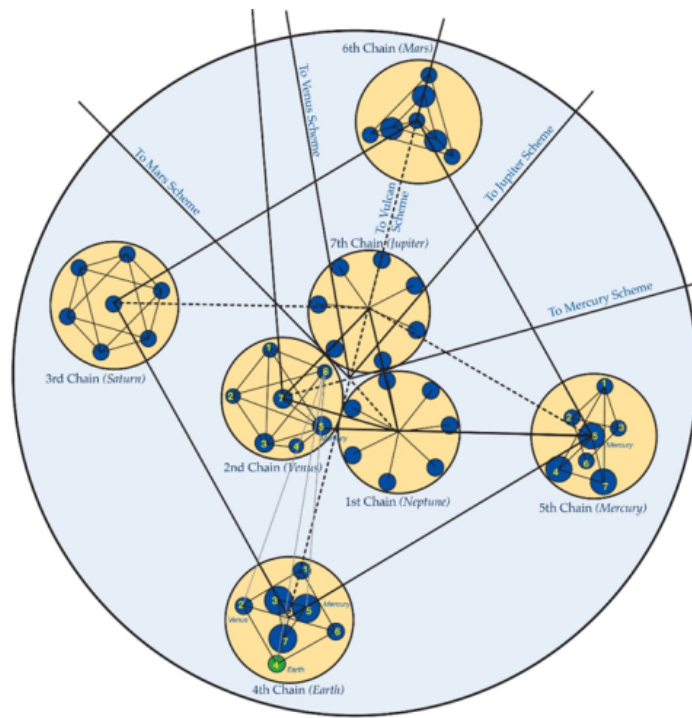


Fig.32: Detail of the Earth Scheme.

Note the second *Venus chain* - “responsive to energy from the second planetary scheme [i.e. planet Venus], that reaches the earth via the second globe of the *Venus chain*.”⁵⁷

Draco and the First Path of Earth Service

Here lies a great mystery in the relation of our planetary logos to the constellation of Draco, or at least a star within it. Eventually in our planetary evolution, after advanced initiations are taken, the option of choosing one of the seven cosmic paths opens up:

- Path IThe Path of Earth Service.
- Path IIThe Path of Magnetic Work.
- Path III ...The Path of the Planetary Logos.
- Path IVThe Path to Sirius.
- Path VThe Ray Path.
- Path VIThe Path of the Solar Logos.
- Path VII ...The Path of Absolute Sonship.

The Path of Earth Service. The adepts who stay upon this Path are distinguished by a dual attribute, which is their guarantee of attainment along this line of spiritual endeavour. They are animated by *wise-compassion*. These words should be carefully studied for they hold the clue to the nature of this first Path.

The adepts who choose this Path are called esoterically the “beneficent dragons,” and the energy with which they work and the stream of living force upon which they are found emanates from the constellation of the Dragon, working through the zodiacal sign Libra. This special spiritual energy produces in all those groups which come under its direct influence a profound faculty for identification.

This identification does not concern the form nor the soul but only the spiritual point of positive life which in the human unit we call the “Jewel in the Lotus.” It should be remembered in this connection that there is a jewel at the heart of every atom. Every jewel has seven facets which are the seven doorways to the seven Paths.

The “beneficent dragons” are distinguished by their “luminosity,” and it is this basic quality which lies behind the injunction given by all spiritual teachers to their pupils in the words “let your light shine forth.” It may only be stated that luminosity is gained upon the battleground through a fight with a dragon. The following summation may be found suggestive:

PATH I. EARTH SERVICE

Attributes.....Wise-compassion.

Source.....Constellation of the Dragon, via Libra.

Method.....Twelve cosmic Identifications.

Hierarchy.....The sixth.

Symbol.....A green dragon issuing from the centre of a blazing sun. Behind the sun and over-topping it can be seen two pillars on either side of a closed door.

Quality gained...Luminosity.”⁵⁸



Fig. 33: The First Path, Earth Service. “A green dragon issuing from the center of a blazing sun. Behind and overtopping it can be seen two pillars on either side of a closed door.”

(Author’s ©).

The following excerpts from the “Old Commentary” point to Saturn, exalted in Libra and who may hold the title of the “lesser dragon”— as opposed to the earlier discussed Hydra:

The Dragon who hideth within the lowest of the Sacred Three ariseth in His might. In His mouth He holdeth the balances, and in the balances He weigheth the sons of men who upon the field of battle are impaled upon His spear.⁵⁹

The “Sacred Three” may be the three synthesizing schemes of Uranus, Neptune and Saturn—Saturn being the “lowest.” The balances are Libra, the sign in which Saturn is exalted as the Lord of Karma, the one who weighs in the scales human actions. The sons of men are “impaled upon his spear” because they have created karma with which Saturn will reckon:



Fig. 34: Saturn’s dragon. (Artist: Rob Carlos).

... These two are drawn together. Their essence blends. The man who seeks this path is then impaled upon the spear and thrust within the fiery light which veils the balance. The mystic process then proceeds and ... Thus is the work of SATURN seen, and thus the consummation is effected.

Through SATURN’S fateful force the victor then is swiftly projected to the summit of the crest, and thence to that vibrating disk which guards the fourfold door of luminosity... The note that sounds forth from that first great WAY is yet unheard by Him. Its sound is lost in the uprising cry of the children of the lesser dragon.⁶⁰

The presence of Libra here is potent because the end of the 20th century “will see the influence of Libra steadily coming into pronounced control and into a position of power in the planetary horoscope.”⁶¹ Perhaps during this period between the ages of Pisces and Aquarius, Earth is also receiving some accelerating radiation from Draco? This is most plausible, given that the planetary centre of Shamballa is also impacting upon human consciousness

more so than at any other time in human history.⁶²

The Dragons of Wisdom in the Future

The fifth round lies many millions of years ahead in human evolution, representing a point of achievement and a separation of various evolutions:

In the fifth round, at its middle point, certain things will eventuate... The fifth Hierarchy will rise to its full power. This will precede the Judgment Day, and will mark a point of tremendous struggle, for the manasic vehicle “manas” (which they embody) will rebel against the translation of the life within (the buddhi).

There will, therefore, be seen on a racial scale and involving millions simultaneously, a repetition of the self-same struggle which embroils the man who seeks to transcend mind and to live the life of Spirit. This will be the final Armageddon, the planetary kurukshetra, and will be succeeded by the Judgment Day when the Sons of Manas will be cast out and the Dragons of Wisdom rule.

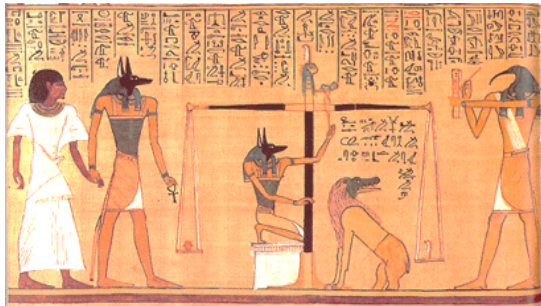


Fig. 35: The Great Balance in the Hall of Judgment.

This only means that those in whom the manasic principle is over-potent or under-developed will be considered as failures and will have to wait for a more suitable period for development, while those who are living the buddhic life, and in whom it is waxing stronger—spiritual men, aspirants, disciples of various degrees, initiates and adepts—will be left to pursue the natural course of evolution on this scheme.⁶³

Therein lies a paradox, especially for Fifth Roottrace MAN who has had to develop *manas* or mind, but will have to ultimately “transcend mind and to live the life of Spirit”. Even now in our current race, the mind is “over-potent” and has created some serious problems - reflected by current and looming environmental catastrophes. The separative nature of the lower mind has contributed to Humanity’s lack of connection with Mother Nature.

Conclusion

Here ends this brief summary of Draco and its symbolism, one of the greatest of the Mysteries. If the attainment of buddhic consciousness is the goal for Humanity, then Draco, as one of the sources of buddhi, is of extraordinary importance—as evidenced in all ancient cultures. This essay will be the seed of a future book that will attempt to delve more deeply into this most arcane subject.

- ¹ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1 (reprint; 1999; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1888), 406-407.
- ² *Theosophical Glossary* (reprint; 1971; Pasadena, CA: The Theosophical Co., 1892).
- ³ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (reprint; 1971; New York: Lucis Trust, 1951), 176, 305, 512.
- ⁴ Alice A. Bailey *Esoteric Astrology* (reprint; 1997; New York: Lucis Trust, 1979), 656.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 630-631.
- ⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 795.
- ⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 197.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ¹⁰ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 146-147.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1203.
- ¹² Phillip Lindsay, “The Mystery of Makara” *Soul Cycles of the Seven Rays* Vol. I (Apollo Pub. 2006).
- ¹³ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1203.
- ¹⁴ H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings XIV* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), 202.
- ¹⁵ *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 402.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1162.
- ¹⁷ OAWNMBS – The One About Who Naught May Be Said: A greater cosmic Being consisting of seven constellations. Draco, the Great Bear, Sirius, Orion and the Pleiades represent

- other centers within this body. Our solar system is regarded as the unawakened heart centre within that Being. See also later in text.
- 18 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1084-1085.
- 19 A. P. Sinnett, *The Mahatma Letters* #44 (reprint; 2008; London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1923).
- 20 H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* (reprint: 1978; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), Glossary part 2.
- 21 *Theosophical Glossary*.
- 22 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 512.
- 23 Ibid., 1203.
- 24 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 25.
- 25 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 415-7.
- Phillip Lindsay, *Unveiling Genesis: Mysteries of the Roottraces and Cycles* (Apollo Publishing, 2017.)
- 26 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 406.
- 27 H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* Vol. II (reprint; 1999; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1972), 486.
- 28 Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* Vol. I (Pasadena: Theosophical Press, 1983), 150.
- 29 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. I, 411.
- 30 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II (Pasadena: Theosophical Publishing House, 1970) 33.
- 31 The branch of astronomy concerned with knowledge of the fixed stars.
- 32 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II, 432.
- Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* Vol. XIII (Pasadena: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), 322.
- 33 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 533-4.
- 34 Ibid., 899.
- 35 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II, 356.
- 36 Ibid., 577.
- 37 This subject is covered extensively in “Capricorn: Neptune and the Mystery of Makara” in *“Soul Cycles of the Seven Rays I*, Phillip Lindsay. (Apollo Publishing, 2006).
- 38 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. I, 219.
- 39 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 511.
- 40 Ibid., 1203-4.
- 41 Ibid., 369.
- 42 Ibid., 425.
- 43 Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* reprint; 1977; New York: Lucis Trust, 1972), 380.
- 44 Ibid., 380.
- 45 Ibid., 379.
- 46 Online at:
<http://wisdomworld.org/additional/ancientlandmarks/MysteryOfMattoGrosso.html> (accessed February 20, 2018).
- 47 Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 380.
- 48 This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Theosophist* for April, 1880.
- 49 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II, 351.
- 50 Ibid., 404.
- 51 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 893-896.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II, 297.
- 54 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 893-896.
- 55 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II, 132.
- 56 Lindsay, *Unveiling Genesis: Mysteries of the Roottraces and Cycles*.
- 57 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 385.
- 58 Ibid., 1244-1247.
- 59 Ibid., 1267.
- 60 Ibid., 1267-1269.
- 61 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 238.
- 62 Phillip Lindsay, *The Shamballa Impacts* (Apollo Publishing, 2000.)
- 63 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 705-706.

Ahmad Al-Buni and His Esoteric Model

M. Kubilay Akman and Donna M. Brown

"Magic can be briefly described as the art of influencing the course of events by the occult control of natural phenomena through the application of ritual observances acquired through a study of esoteric and often closely guarded corpus of knowledge and traditions, oral and written, supposedly achieving results not obtainable through ordinary means."^{1, 2}

Abstract

This article investigates the Islamic esoteric/occult model of the controversial North African Sufi, Abu'l Abbas Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Yusuf al-Buni, whose works are widely viewed in the Muslim world as a part of an unorthodox, occult practice. The article begins with a discussion of the Islamic view regarding occultism and the various mainstream schools that are critical of these practices. Magic and its influence in the ancient and modern world are also discussed along with natural magic's compelling role in the development of modern science. In addition to touching upon Al-Buni's life and his primary works, this article examines Al-Buni's esoteric and magical practices from both an esoteric and a sociological perspective. Its primary focus is on a series of charms or talismans created by Al-Buni to exercise control over the seemingly uncontrollable events in life and the environment.

Overview: Islamic Esotericism

Ahmad Al-Buni was a mysterious Sufi master who lived in Egypt in the 13th century. More will be said about him shortly, but first we need to examine the Islamic esoteric and supernatural practices that formed the context in which he worked. These practices form part of what is called *'ulūm al-ghayb* or the "esoteric (inner) and/or occult (hidden) sciences,"³ which have been commonplace in all Muslim countries and at every level of society throughout history. The Islamic esoteric and occult sciences include "divination, astrology, dream interpretation or oneiromancy," and those practices that deal with "the properties of the divine names, the magic of numbers and letters, spells, sympathetic magic, sorcery,

amulets, talismans and charms, and the properties of medicinal plants."⁴ There are, however, three main distinctions with respect to the Islamic occult sciences. They are:

- 1) *ilm al-sihr* (demonic/black magic)
- 2) *'ilm al-khawāṣṣ wa-al-ṭalāsīm* (theurgy)
- 3) *ilm al-ḥiyal wa-al-sha'wadhah* (white or natural magic)⁵

The Renaissance philosopher, Pico della Mirandola, upheld these three basic distinctions. Mirandola tied the three types of magic—natural, celestial/mathematical, and ceremonial/religious—to the three worlds, i.e., the sublunary, celestial, and supersensible worlds respectively.⁶ Other occult philosopher's held similar views.

Sihr, the first type of Islamic occult knowledge or science, involves the invocation of infernal and sublunary force, and is strictly condemned

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Donna M. Brown is a long-time student and teacher of esoteric philosophy. Her background includes a career in the arts and election to public office in the District of Columbia. She has served as a Board Member for the *Center for Visionary Leadership*, and the *School for Esoteric Studies* where she continues as a commentator.

by *Sharia* scholars and Islamic law. While its study is permitted, its practice is *ha'ram* or forbidden. Practices that invoke the angels and celestial beings, and those that draw upon the knowledge of the beautiful Names of Allāh (*asmā'u llāhi l-ḥusnā*), and passages from Qur'an are permitted, although they are largely hidden from the uninitiated. Such practices fall under the category of theurgy or more aptly, "Qur'anic theurgy,"⁷ which involves supplication and contemplation based on the "Science of Letters" (*Ilm al-ḥurūf*) and their relationship to the ninety-nine Names of God, which reflect His attributes or qualities.⁸ Included are the subsidiary sciences of astronomy, astrology, alchemy and geomancy. These subsidiary practices are also employed in white or natural magic as well as black magic or *sihr*.

Qur'anic "theurgy" or "God working" requires both knowledge and spiritual exertion. For example, *Ilm al-ḥurūf*, or the Science of Letters, and *al-jafr*, a form of gematria based divination, are among the most mystical and secret sciences. Their practice requires a methodological approach, and more than a passing mathematical and astronomical/astrological knowledge.⁹ Qur'anic theurgy, as the name implies, also entails a deep, allegorical interpretation or exegesis of the Qur'an and various other pertinent writings.

Ilm al-ḥiyal wa-al-sha'wadhah or natural magic involves "natural" phenomena in general with no malevolent or irreligious intent. It is based on the elemental force suffusing or inherent in any natural process. Its production is said to remain a secret that is only disclosed to practitioners.

Most other occult and magical technologies, such as the creation and use of talismans, amulets, magic charms and spells, also require the assistance of an expert skilled in the occult sciences. All these aforementioned technologies might fall into any of the three categories listed above. Charms, amulets and spells might be classified as white or black magic depending on the techniques used and their purpose, although drawing clear lines between categories can be difficult. Talismans, on the other hand, are usually employed in white or natural

magic and in theurgic practice. An example of the latter can be seen in the case of talismatic scrolls. "Inscribed with multiple prayers and supplications to God,"¹⁰ and based on Islamic letter magic, verses from the Qur'an and the various Names of God,¹¹ talismatic scrolls were used almost exclusively as tools of devotion in an effort to bring one closer to God or Allāh.

Abu'l Abbas Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Yusuf al-Buni

Very little is known about the mysterious Ahmad Al-Buni. He was supposedly born in Annaba, Algeria, Bune County (Constantine), lived in Egypt and died in Cairo in 1225 CE during the Golden Age of Islam.¹² Al-Buni was a contemporary of Ibn-Arabi, and some scholars believe that they shared at least one spiritual teacher—the Tunisian Master 'Abd-al-*"aziz al-Mandawi*¹³—among the many eminent Sufi teachers of the time. He was influenced by Plato, Aristotle, Hermes, and various Chaldean magicians and refers to them in his written works. Indeed, there are a number of equivalencies between Neoplatonic philosophy and Al-Buni's work. Although Al-Buni was a Sufi Sheikh in the Sunni tradition, he is believed to have been influenced by certain Shi'a movements that made use of magic letters and talismans.¹⁴

Al-Buni's corpus has been among the main sources of occultism, magic and "secret knowledge" in Muslim societies, with his more than 40 works. In addition to his *Shams Al-Ma'arif*, another mysterious text—*Luma'at al-nuraniyya* (Brilliant Lights)—investigates the occult properties of the ninety-nine Names of God and advised the faithful on how they could harness their supernatural power through amulets and talismans. These are just two of the many highly colored texts illustrated with tables and diagrams guiding the reader toward supernatural and divine succor. Another manuscript of interest is Al-Buni's *Sharhu-al-Barhatiyah*, "consisting of a set of 24 names from the Arabic alphabet that correspond to the lunar mansions. The names, which are used for summoning or conjuration, are said to date

to Enoch before being used by King Solomon.”¹⁵

His major works, particularly *Shams al-Ma'arif* (The Book of the Sun of Gnosis, a 13th c. grimoire), elements of which will be examined here, have been among the most widely read and most influential sources for occult activities based on the secret symbology of geometry, numbers and letters. This work has been likened to *The Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, by Henry Cornelius Agrippa—one of the most important sources for magic and ritual in the Western world.

The current form of Al-Buni's book consists of two volumes; *Shams al-Ma'arif al-Anmat* and *Shams al-Ma'arif al-Sughra*. The book begins with several chapters that introduce the reader to talismans, magic squares and prayers for protection. Included is an all-important section on “number science,” consisting of combinations of numbers and letters that are believed to impart wisdom and spiritual development, and which create a magical effect. According to Al-Buni, these occult sciences are the only way to communicate with angels (*Malā'ikah*), genies (*Djinn* or *Jinn*), and spirits.

Authorities differ as to the magical secret behind the activity of the letters and numbers. Some thought that 28 letters had an inherent temper and were categorized based on the four elements of fire, air, water, earth, or the qualities by which the *materia prima* manifests itself. The four elements have another significance in terms of their four “natures,” hot, cold, humid and dry, which correspond to the states of the soul. Others thought that the secret of the letters resided in their numerical proportion or their relationship to the 28 mansions of the moon. But more importantly, the science of letters is to be considered triply for their: 1) sonoral symbolism; 2) graphic or hieroglyphic symbolism; 3) arithmologic or numerical symbolism or value.¹⁶ Al-Buni seems to have accepted all of the above in addition to believing that the number and letter science could be comingled with the power of the stars based on their inherent qualities and propitious position in the sky.

Although Al-Buni's corpus focuses on the entire range of occult sciences, such as his complex letterist cosmology, or the “beautiful Names of God” and their magical and numerical properties in the creation of his complicated and abstruse magic squares and diagrams of the invisible worlds, this article will explore his “science of charms,” which is especially evident in Folk Islam but not by any means limited to popular beliefs and practices. But before moving on to this discussion, one may well ask if these ancient texts have any relevance and efficacy in today's world? We shall look at them from a sociological perspective, and not only from the perspective of esoteric studies, religion, psychology and history.

Magic and Its influence on the Ancient and Modern World

Regardless of cultural context and civilization, human beings have always needed to exercise control over the seemingly uncontrollable events in their life and environment. Magic, occultism, and related practices of intellectual and practical endeavor have found a suitable basis to develop in this sociological environment. Such practices are rooted in the belief that there exists a hidden reality of energies and forces affecting everyday life that are concealed behind the world of form and outer appearances. Furthermore, the lines between the manifest and invisible world were thought to be permeable. The world, according to this view, was animated with Life. “The structure of this world view,” according to the noted Sociologist, Dr. Edward Tiryakian, in his *On the Margin of the Visible: Sociology, the Esoteric, and the Occult*, can be likened “to the scientist who regards the dynamics of his world view in terms of impersonal forces.”¹⁷

For Sir James Frazier, magic was also akin to science in that it is based on man's confidence that he can dominate nature directly if he understands the Laws that magically govern it.¹⁸ His views were consistent in this one respect with the Theosophist, Helena Blavatsky, who viewed Magic “as the exercise of natural powers,” but whose powers were Superior to the usual functions of nature. “A miracle,” writes Blavatsky,

is not a violation of the laws of Nature, except for ignorant people. Magic is but a science, a profound knowledge of the Occult forces in Nature, and of the laws governing the visible or the invisible world. Spiritualism in the hands of an adept becomes Magic, for he is learned in the art of blending together the laws of the Universe, without breaking any of them and thereby violating Nature.¹⁹

Tiryakian, writes Thomas Kearny in a summary of Dr. Tiryakian's aforementioned book, insists that rather than regarding

the esoteric and occult as vestiges of an earlier, less sophisticated mentality, the rationale behind this volume is to regard them as an ever present, though usually much less visible, antithetical complement to mainstream Western culture. This "counterculture" has been a perennial seedbed of innovations and inspirations in religion, science, politics, and other domains (such as art and literature),²⁰ medicine and psychology.

Thus, spiritualism, magic and the occult prepared the ground for development in many fields. An endless stream of great thinkers, historians and philosophers such as Plutarch, Pythagoras, Plato and Iamblichus were involved in esoteric practices. Many of the key thinkers and "heroes of the Renaissance and the 'Scientific Revolution,' from Bruno to Pico to Newton"²¹ have been "shown to be profoundly occultist in orientation and methodology—and profoundly dependent on Arabic sources."²² One may point to the influence of the Islamic theologian and logician Averroes, to Ibn Sina (Avicenna), the astronomer, thinker and physician, or Moschopoulos, a Byzantine scholar who drew on Al-Buni's works in his pure mathematical treatise on the subject of magic squares, to name only a few.

Occultism was also responsible for the Renaissance view of the "Dignity" and "Divine power in man." Since man, created in the image of God and gifted with reason and the power of choice, stands between heavenly and infernal realms, he can free himself from the limitations of nature and fashion for himself the

thing he prefers. Thus, the exercise of magical powers, at least in certain periods and places, was and continued to be thought of as an expression of man's role as mediator between the terrestrial world and the supermundane.²³

Al-Buni: Sufi Sage or Magician?

So how does one define the position of Abu'l Abbas Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Yusuf al-Buni in Islamic history? Is he a legitimate Sufi or clandestine magician or a combination of both? The answer, we may say, lies in one's point of view. *Hikma* or wisdom, and mathematics, as well as letter magic, involving the Names of God, was Al-Buni's primary focus. Yet his *Sharhu-al-Barhatiyah* or *Berhatiah*, although it too employed letter magic, is primarily a book of power and conjuration. It serves as a guidebook for summoning the "Djinn" or "Jinn" (spirits of fire and air that can be beneficent, neutral or evil), as well as for the practice of "Red Magic," which engages the planet Mars and usually deals with matters of love and sex. Saturn is prominent in Al-Buni's *Berhatiah* and in Islamic magic in general.²⁴ This planet is involved in matters having to do with concerns about creation, justice, time, power, protection and death. It should be noted here that Al-Buni viewed the planets, the lunar mansions and the signs of the zodiac as spiritual beings and essential players in occult workings.²⁵

Many of Al-Buni's magic spells were veiled designs for multi-purpose use. They could be used for fulfilling personal desires and for increasing personal power, or anything else that a person might desire, such as healing, purification, acquiring seership and invisibility. Yet Al-Buni's spells and conjuration came with his caveat that evil acts and intentions would bring about punishment, while godly acts and intentions would bring about reward. Moreover, some authorities, such as Noah Gardner, have argued that Al-Buni's spells "were intended to be circulated among a closed community of learned Sufis,"²⁶ and were never meant for broader readership among the uninitiated masses. Gardner goes on to point out that "Al-Buni intended his followers to read his core

works in conjunction with one another”²⁷ so that they formed a system or instrument for thought or knowledge. In fact, Al-Buni actually prohibited his followers to show or divulge his works containing “the secrets of wielding occult powers and the knowledge of hidden forces,” as evidenced by the following injunction from the *Shams Al-Ma’arif*: “It is forbidden for anyone who has this book of mine in hand to show it to someone not of his people and divulge it to one who is not worthy of it.”²⁸

Because of the dangers inherent in magical work, and the fact that the invocation of any being other than Allāh is believed to be tantamount to sorcery in Islam, a number of Muslims soundly reject Al-Buni’s work as clandestine magic. His work has also been criticized as having Assyrian (typically Syrian Christian) and Isra’iliyyat (Qabalistic) influences²⁹ and therefore of not being entirely Islamic.

Does this latter critique have a basis? Although the traditional view is that Sufism had its be-

ginnings in the first century, with its origins among Ashab al-Suffa³⁰ during the lifetime of the Prophet (SAW),³¹ other “Universalist” views trace the pre-Islamic roots of Sufism back to the early Christian mystics of Syria and Egypt, to the Essenes, the Pythagoreans, the Zoroastrians and others. Jewish influences were certainly present. During the Abbasid period (750–1258)—the Golden Age of Islam in which Al-Buni lived—Ishraqiyyat traditions (the body of narratives originating from Jewish and Christian traditions), were encouraged by many Muslim scholars. Their acceptance was no doubt based on the Prophet Muhammad’s well-known hadith, “Narrate [traditions] from the Children of Israel for there is nothing objectionable in that.”³²

When we compare the symbolic imagery from various cultures, we find a number of common symbols between Al-Buni and Judeo/Christian esoteric traditions. The Star of David or the Seal of Solomon (Figure 1) is among these symbols.

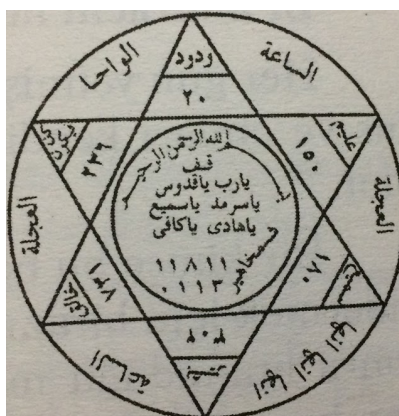


Figure 1: magical power for healing³³

This same symbol with different names and with its own unique characteristics has been used in the esoteric traditions of all three Abrahamic religions, as well as in the different branches of the Theosophical Movement. Its true origins, however, are thought to be Chal-

dean or Vedic.³⁴ While adherents among the three monotheistic faiths recognize their common roots and acknowledge a number of the same prophets, the more conservative elements of these faiths are not keen to acknowledge much commonality with respect to symbols.



Figure 2: The Star of David from Leningrad Codex, 1008 CE

But we must also consider that Islam is the last of the Abrahamic religions; therefore, it is not surprising to find similarities with the previous Abrahamic faiths. *Amantu* (the expression of belief) in Islam includes the belief in Allāh *Subhanahu wa ta'ala* (SWT, Glory or Exaltation”),³⁵ his prophets and books. *Shahada* (witnessing His Oneness and believing in Prophet Muhammad), is the primary and first step in Islam. However, as every Muslim knows, *Amantu*³⁶ includes the acceptance of and belief in all the prophets and holy books (in their original). From this perspective, believing in the power of a prophet’s seal, in this case and context the Seal of Solomon (AS),³⁷ and in all the prophets, is not at all contradictory to Islamic thought. After all, Hadhrat Solomon (AS), the son of David, is also a prophet in Islam who brought knowledge or wisdom from God or Allāh (SWT),³⁸ which included seals, sigils and other visual symbols.

With respect to the first of the two seals above, we might note that Al-Buni’s six-pointed star (*rub‘al-ḥizb*) generally depicts Islam’s “seal of the prophets.” But in this specific representation it provides for the miracle of healing as well as protection. In other representations, as a pentalfa, it retains its use as an ancient sign for conjuring spirits and spiritual forces. However, its usage is dependent upon the user’s character and spiritual stature. According to Hafez, a 13th century Persian Sufi Master and poet, “A man must be a Solomon before this magical seal will work.”³⁹

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the six-pointed star or Seal of Solomon (Figure 2) is often viewed as a sign of God’s rulership and protection. It was the sign given to Solomon, the king of Jerusalem, by God, which allowed him to master and control the *Djinn* or spirits of the air, on the earth, and under the earth, and the means by which he wrought the building of the Temple.

Yet in the final analysis, the Seal of Solomon is a universal, multi-layered symbol, used to represent such ideas as the six-directions of space, the conjunction of Spirit and Matter in the manifested universe, and the Great Universe or primordial and eternal Oneness of the macrocosm and microcosm.

Structuring Conceptual Basis, Theoretical and Methodological Frames

In addition to touching upon the historical and esoteric/occult aspects of Al-Buni’s work, this article, as previously noted, takes up a sociological approach in examining Al-Buni’s work. As such, it seeks to touch upon human conduct, cultures and societies in order to explain and predict human behavior and interaction. A social science approach necessarily involves working with certain primary concepts, such as the physical and spiritual environment, social structures, functions, forces and goals. In this article we will look for certain fundamental concepts in the sociology

of religion, which will not only be useful in our study of Al-Buni, but also in any context on religious topics and issues.

The Sociology of Religion is a sub-discipline of sociology that focuses on the collective social dimensions of religion, relations between religion and society and the analysis of religious groups and related processes. When sociologists of religion concentrate on the inter-relations between societies and religion, they notice a relationship between religion and social stratification⁴⁰ This relation has a dynamic nature; for example, sometimes a similar social phenomenon may appear differently within different social classes, groups, ethnicities, etc. Hence, religion has a vital role in society and is impacted by general social influences.

Dr. Mustafa Aydin, one of the outstanding authorities in Turkey on the sociology of religion, emphasizes the importance and role of differentiation in society and their influences on religious life. Although Islam is strongly opposed to inequality of any kind, stratification develops when some groups have more access to power, privilege, information and other resources.

Theories in the sociology of religion provide a dual perspective on social stratification. On the one hand stratification influences and is reflected in religion; on the other hand religions/religious social orders have their own hierarchies, along with different layers of authority and knowledge. Sociologists have been attentive to stratification between different religions as a way of understanding rituals, beliefs, religious doctrines, social reflections and moral values. In Islam, mainstream religious practices are directed by scholars, different *madhab's* or schools of Islamic jurisprudence⁴¹, Sufi orders "and folk-Islam" have associated but sometimes separate approaches to religion.⁴² Although they share a foundation of common beliefs and core practices, the picture is varied, sometimes in a contradictory way.

In this article we will be referring to either the "sociology of Islam" or "Islamic sociology." We recommend the following language for these terms: The sociology of Islam can be seen as a sociological practice focused on the

Islamic religion; however, Islamic sociology is a part of the intellectual activity in the circle of Islam undertaken by Muslim scholars. The first definition is a secular position. The second is an aspect of the religion in which Islam is viewed as part of a comprehensive reality.

According to Samiyah Mustafa Khashshab, Islamic sociology is the discipline of analyzing the data regarding Islamic thought. From a historical perspective this discipline investigates historical issues, values, thoughts, etc. using a scientific approach.⁴³ Khashshab claims that Islamic sociology has focused on the following subjects:

1. It examines the main religious foundations of society as an introduction to the social doctrines of Islam from a sociological perspective.
2. Islamic sociology analyzes social systems and the epiphenomena related to them and their structural dimensions/functions in a comprehensive way.
3. It focuses on the pioneers of social, anthropological and scientific thought in Islam, such as Ibn Haldun, Farabi, Masudi, Ibn Sina, etc.
4. Islamic sociology examines the contribution of Islamic thought to the universal values of social thought in order to provide a detailed analysis of this intellectual process and to protect Islamic thought from external blockages, which create crises.
5. It seeks to find scientific social laws, and to understand societies based on these laws.⁴⁴

This model is, of course, open to discussion. The point as to whether there are "laws" as defined by positivist sociologists is especially vulnerable and not really a strong argument after all the critical theories and philosophical critiques of Western thought since the last quarter of the 20th Century. Despite these issues, Khashshab's efforts to establish a sociological model, is an important endeavor.

All these discussions about the sociology of Islam show us that regardless of the various theoretical positions, Islamic practices should

be considered in a societal context *and* as an historical influence. We can focus further on Al-Buni's esoteric work now, referring to necessary sociological concepts when it is required.

Looking at Al-Buni's Works

In the first chapter of *Shams al-Ma'arif al-Kubra*—his major work—Ahmad Al-Buni gives the clues towards his methodology in occult sciences. He emphasizes the esoteric/

hidden meanings and powers of letters (*huruf*), and numbers, and their interrelations with astrologic incidents.⁴⁵ He begins to reveal these secrets from the onset of the first chapter.

Al-Buni's esoteric model is like a web knit with letters, numbers, words and their meanings and functions being operative on different levels. His major works can be seen as a map of this mysterious universe of hidden knowledge.

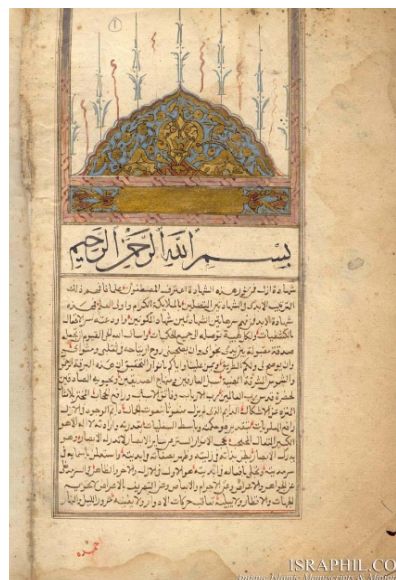


Figure 3: A 17th Century manuscript page from *Shams al-Ma'arif al-Kubra*

Shams al-Ma'arif al-Kubra has been read and its occult practices have been used for centuries in all Muslim countries. We might ask what motivated people to seek help from such a deeply esoteric source. Why did people make amulets and talismans (derived from the Greek verb “teleo,” which means to accomplish or bring into effect), modeled upon the instructions in his books? The motivations are as different and numerous as the many different types and classes of people who sought to use them. Each case, locale and social group, requires a different sociological research to understand the deeper reasons; but in general terms, all of these individuals and groups sought to invoke transcendent energies and forces in order to influence or alter the normal

course of events, whether they relate to the inner psychological or spiritual life, or social, secular living.

For Al-Buni, like all Sufi masters and the majority of Muslim *ummah* (nation), the ninety-nine Beautiful Names (*Asma'ul Husna*) of God embody the spiritual attributes of His essence and can be invoked to affect change in one's self, in others or the world. Even Muslims who are disinclined to accept esoteric practices usually admit that Allāh's (SWT) different names harness specific energies when recited by the believer.

Let us look at some of the names and the different powers that can be activated through these recitations. For instance, Al-Buni says

that when someone recites the name *Al-Alim* (The Knower of All) often, he or she gains the ability to speak with *hikmah* or divine knowledge and wisdom. The name *Al-Qawiyy* (The Possessor of All Strength) provides divine protection and security when properly recited.⁴⁶ Recitation of *Al-Barr* (The Doer of Good) results in the beautification of all states, both materially and spiritually. Recitation of *Al-Adl* (The Just) inspires one to be balanced or just in his/her every deed.⁴⁷ In addition to providing a detailed elucidation of all the hidden powers of the 99 Beautiful Names, Al-Buni offers additional occult practices connected to the recitation process, which are not common in mainstream Islamic practices involving the Qur'anic names of God.

Occult science, according to Rudolf Steiner, is in "a position to penetrate far deeper into the being of things than can be done by ordinary perception"⁴⁸ and this tendency to perceive more "deeply" is common to both the Eastern and Western esoteric traditions. However, it is essential to remember that for the true initiate there is neither West nor the East; there is the same Ocean of Light from which and to which the different paths or rivers flow.

Occult symbols and other forms of symbolism have been an important part of religious life for thousands of years. "Symbolism is," according to Herbert Silberer, "the most universal language that can be conceived. It is also the only language that is adapted to the various degrees of intensity as well as to the different levels of the intro-determination of living experience without requiring therefore a different means of expression; for what it contains and works with are the elementary types themselves [or symbols which are as adequate as possible to them] which, as we have seen, represent a permanent element in the stream of change."⁴⁹ The universal essence of esotericism may appear in different locales or "accents;" however, what is being sought is already seeking to be found. The sacred *Hadith Qudsi*⁵⁰ attributed to Allāh (SWT) says: "I was a hidden treasure and I loved (*ahbibtu*) to be known, ..." ⁵¹

An important element of Al-Buni's occult symbolism deals with the many different sides of social life, not just with the esoteric or religious aspects. The practices recommended in his works are mostly focused on finding solutions to social problems invoking such things as: money, health, jealousy, love, diseases, disasters and psychological issues. Sometimes, he advises working with a group of images, which are spread through his works, in order to create a sort of interconnected sacred geometry.

It must be stated here that the charms that will be explored here are full of hidden significances pertaining to the names of God, prophets, stars, mansions of the moon, angels and jinn, as well as to numbers and passages in the Qur'an, all of which are deliberately veiled and hidden from the uninitiated. Furthermore, different individuals and groups provide dissimilar interpretations involving the meaning of numbers. Various prayers and other key components in making and using these charms are missing. Therefore, a complete interpretation of the images presented herein is beyond the scope of this article.

Winning in this World with "Divine Protection"

The ultimate purpose of Islamic mysticism is to know Allāh and to attain peace and joy in the endless, eternal life, in other words to restore oneself within the primordial state of *fitra* as described in the Qur'an. However, in addition to providing a methodology for knowing God, Al-Buni seems to have wanted to offer people tools to help them through the trials and tribulations of every day life.⁵² Success and achievement in the world are also important. That is why millions of people have been practicing activities of this kind for centuries. There are many earthly gains on which people may focus. For instance, love, good health, economic advantages and financial plentitude are among the desires of this world. The following charm (Figure 4) is suggested by Al-Buni for financial gain and security.

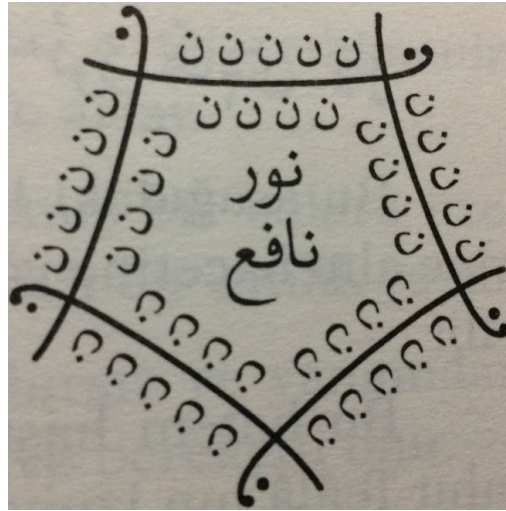


Figure 4: Charm for economic power⁵³

In Islamic and Sufi traditions numbers are seen as messengers. The above charm (Figure 4) consists of multiples of 4 and 5 “n’s” (ن), *Nun’s* or *Noon’s*. In the Sufi tradition the number 4 generally corresponds to the profane world, while the number 5 signifies constant appearance and manifestation. N or *Nun* means, among other things, “arising,” or “generation,” as in a sprouting seed or the seeds of the future.

In the Abjad number-letter system, *Nun* carries a numerical value of 50, which by itself represents benefit. There are a total of 45 n’s or *nun’s* (ن) in the above charm. In the Abjad system the number 45 represents the planet Saturn and the archangel Uzrā’īl (also Azrael and Izareel).⁵⁴ The 4+5 gives us the number 9, a number connected to the idea of attainment, satisfaction and accomplishment. We might also add that the number 9 leads to 1 and the beginning of a new cycle. The names in the

center of the pentagon are *Nour* or *Nur* (light or irradiation), *Naf’ie* (welfare or benefit), and signify beneficent light, and financial gain and security as mentioned above.

The charm is to be carried in the wallet by the person who wants to have financial abundance or preserve wealth. From time immemorial humans have sought wealth and worldly powers. Although greedy, self-seeking is certainly contrary to spiritual values, it is important to have one’s physical/financial needs met so that one is not locked in misery and struggle. Furthermore, sufficient finances provide a measure of security and the freedom to pursue more lofty goals, such as directing financial abundance to those in need. Indeed, as one of the five pillars of the faith, Islam places an emphasis on charity or *zakat*. But Muslims believe that charms such as the one above tend to be ineffective if one’s intentions are impure, and can create problems for the user.

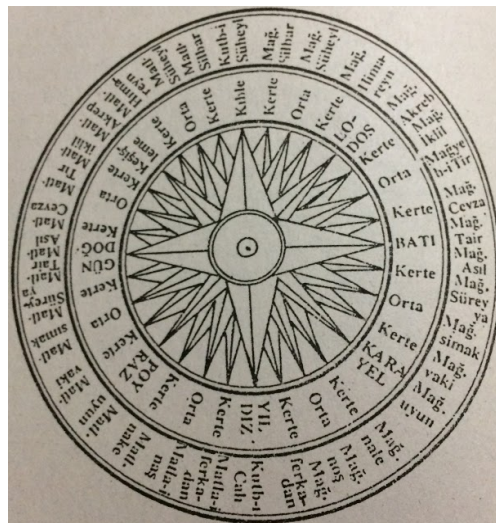


Figure 5: Geography, Meteorology and Astronomy Chart⁵⁵

Al-Buni's esoteric model is also designed to focus the awareness on energies and forces in the environment and nature. His comments suggest that geographical, meteorological and astronomical realities are foundational to occult practice.

The above chart (Figure 5), consisting of a star or stellium and concentric circles, explains the various wind patterns in the seas and the 32 winds of the oceans, such as *Poyraz*, which refers to the cool northeast wind, along with the names of certain stars and constellations (such as *Simak* or Arcturus, and *al-Akreb* or Scorpio) in order to provide a sense of direction, since as the Qur'an states, they are signs

and conditions that people who are wise can learn to understand.

The chart resembles a Feng Shui compass, which is used for determining favorable or unfavorable areas and formations. The common thread between Al-Buni's occult knowledge and Feng Shui is spatial awareness. Spatial awareness is essential in all traditional ways of knowledge since it involves the ability to recognize one's self and the objects in one's environment in terms of harmonious relationship. With such knowledge the winds, the seas and stars, can by Allāh's will, be pressed into service for humanity. Thus, this chart provides some of the coordinates for earthly living.

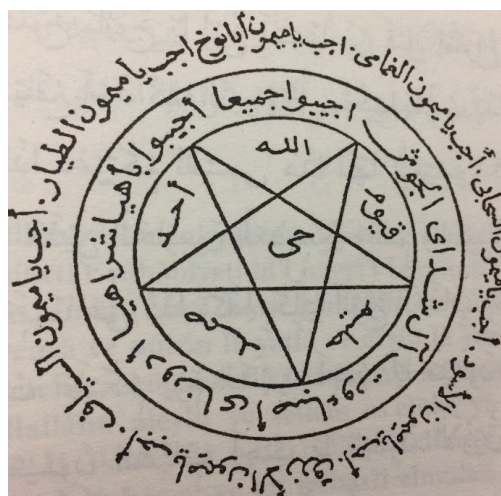


Figure 6: for finding the lost⁵⁶

The above charm (Figure 6) in Al-Buni's esoteric system is used to help find something or someone who is lost. This figure contains a five-pointed star or "guiding stellium." Such a stellium might also be used as a tool for summoning, but it also reminds one of the five pillars of Islam, the five daily prayers, and light or knowledge. The star itself is composed of triangles, which figure prominently in Islamic art, architecture and Islamic esoteric practices. The triangle is an ancient symbol having many hidden meanings. Among its many significances in Islam, it symbolizes unity in diversity, the synthesis of various virtues, the forces of life and the point where matter and consciousness connect with the higher realms. Its use here may be to Sumarian and Akkadian cuneiform texts as a tool that brings brightness to regions not warmed or lit by the light. Some of the words the charm contain are: "Allāh," "the one everlasting," and "Salim," meaning "safe" or "undamaged."

This charm or talisman, like many others contained within Al-Buni's works has an accompanying prayer written in Arabic.⁵⁷ Typically, for charms, Al-Buni outlines a triple application model:

1. The symbolic element, or figure
2. The recitation of a prayer or a divine name
3. Physical practices (such as the incorporation of certain materials or combinations of materials, specific actions or movements, etc.

Working with Al-Buni's charms, talismans and amulets also involves the cultivation of certain psychological attitudes in the mind of the practitioner. However, little research involving an interdisciplinary approach in the fields of sociology, religious studies, psychology and anthropology has been conducted into this aspect of Al-Buni's work thus far.

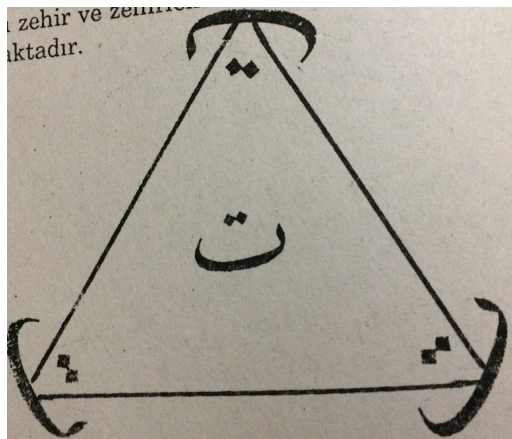


Figure 7: Healing for Poisoning⁵⁸

Figure 7, along with several others in Al-Buni's work, also utilize the geometry of the triangle. This charm uses the letter "t" or *Ta* (ت) a Sun or solar letter with a numerical value of 400 > 4, which is connected to the idea of "ending," in some Sufi orders,⁵⁹ as in the four phases of the moon: crescent, waxing, full and its eventual waning, as well as the four elements, the directions, seasons, the four humors—warm, cold, dry, humid, etc. Hence, four is a symbol of the manifest world and spatial order. The number four can also mean that

one undertakes a task with full, concretizing energy.⁶⁰

T or *Ta* is usually categorized as corresponding to the element of air, but also to the earth element in some systems. This particular talisman is used to heal a person who has been poisoned, especially one who has been bitten by a venomous snake, insect or scorpion. However, its healing powers are only activated with the addition of certain ritual practices and the inclusion of various materials, such as water, silver and camel leather. The materials used in

the making of charms like this one were based on the Laws of Antipathy and Affinity.⁶¹ Among its other uses is the healing of viral diseases, such as pox.⁶² Work with this charm must be accompanied by the recitation of a special prayer.

The charm below (Figure 8) is an expression of *Basmala* the name of the incipient or opening lines of the Qur'an, which reads *bismillāh*

ar-rahmāni ar-rahīm. It can be translated roughly as: "I begin in the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful." Al-Buni maintains that anyone who carries this talisman or charm is given the power to arouse a higher sympathy in the people around him or in his social circles.⁶³ This is grounded on the idea that the user's first action is based on the blessings of Allāh or God, who is the source of all action and aid.



Figure 8: Esoteric writing of Basmala⁶⁴

This same charm can also be seen as a way to increase leadership skills, when the charm is prepared and used in the prescribed way. Today, individuals, especially those in the professional sphere who are seeking to be more effective may receive help from life coaches or mentors. In the past, this charm had a similar function. People's needs remain the same while the tools to achieve them continuously change.

One of the most mysterious occult practices in *Shams Al-Ma'arif* concerns the Arabic letter *Shin*, (ش) *Sheen* or *Šīn*, as can be seen in the charm below (Figure 9). *Shin* is a solar letter with a numerical value of 300 and is related to the element of fire. This charm has a connection to one of the *Asma'ul Husna* or 99 Beautiful Names, *Al Quddus* (القدوس), The Most Holy, which begins with the Arabic letter *Shin*. The letter *Shin* symbolizes the presence within and equates to the Arabic *Shakina* and the He-

brew *Shekinah*. *Shin* is also one of several letters in the Arabic alphabet that is constructed of three upward lines with three dots above, which might be said to represent the Kingdom, and the King-like qualities of majesty and dignity. Hence, this charm is thought to impart majesty and dignity to the user.

The person working with this charm must recite a special prayer, which is said to invoke the service angel of this letter whose name is *Jibr'il*, also spelled *Jibreel* or *Gabriel*, and whose name in the Abjad system has a value of 245.⁶⁵ The number 245 is the same number as *ar-ruh*, or Spirit.⁶⁶ The appearance of the angel carries a potent spiritual energy since angels are beings that dwell in the presence of God or Allāh. They are most often thought to be light or fire beings that serve as intermediaries between the heavenly and earthly realms. Hence, Islamic esotericism, like any other esotericism, can give entry to supermundane dimensions

that are not yet explainable by the current state of scientific knowledge and the methodologies of the hard sciences.

The service angel *Jibr'il* is one of the most important angels in the Qur'an. It was he who

appeared to Muhammad in the cave of Hijra and revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet. Thus, he is the bearer of revelation and inspiration. *Jibr'il* also has the ability to protect and purify and to breathe Allah's spirit into a person.

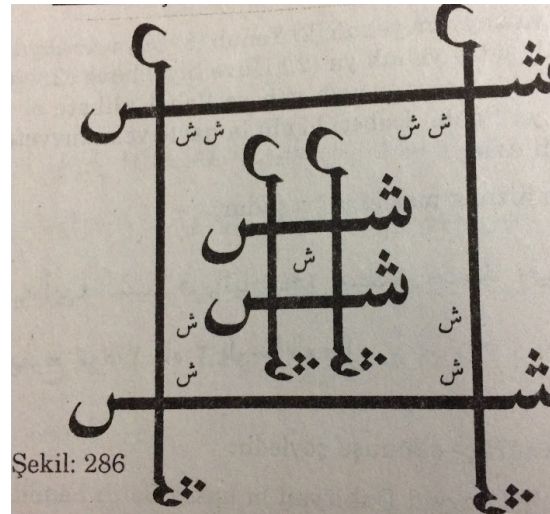


Figure 9: The charm of Shin

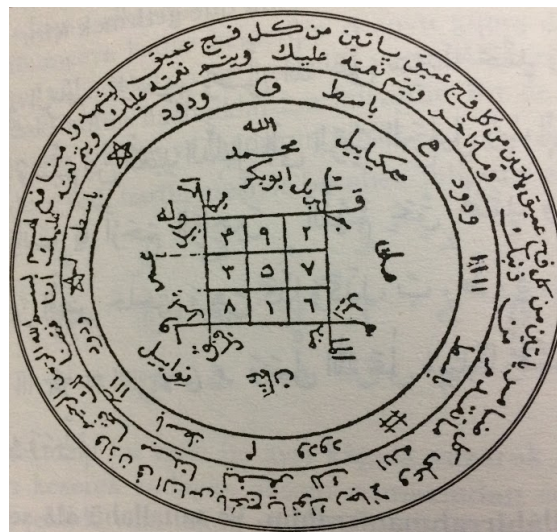


Figure 10: Charm for barakah and protection

(Figure 10) can be used for those in search of *barakah* (divine blessing and plentitude). Barakah can be sought for pious motives where it expresses as a flow of blessings and the experience of a closer connection with Allāh (SWT). It can also be sought in business, or for protection from the evil eye and envy. When it is used for business, the charms must

be kept in the shop, office or place of work. When used for protection, the individual needs to keep it on his or her body.⁶⁷ This particular charm is composed of an esoteric combination of text, letters, a 3 x 3 magic square and numbers reminiscent of certain Qabalistic charms.

We can see that ancient esoteric knowledge was employed for both earthly, pragmatic rea-

sons, and for spiritual reasons. The very same charm was often designed with a dual purpose in mind: for acquiring spiritual and/or material/practical benefit. The use of esoteric knowledge for materialistic or purely earthly motives has been, and still is, a common fact of life. Such use extends to temples, churches and other places of prayer and worship where petitioners seek to apply for divine and/or earthly aid.

Many of the charms in the Bunian corpus are used for the healing of the sick. In order to heal a person one should know the name of the disease. Here, there is a semiotic⁶⁸ connection between the name and disease itself. Knowing the name allows for a shift to another signifying level where the first letter of the name is used along with a recitation to call in the “service angel” that corresponds to that name. This chain of semiotic levels serves to provide healing to the sick person.⁶⁹ Such alternative medical practices have both spiritual and physical components akin to that of Ayurveda and other holistic approaches to healing. There is of course a psychological dimension that comes into play with respect to healing outcomes. Such research is beyond the scope of the present article and should be approached separately based on sociological and anthropological methodologies.

The Arabic letter “r” or *Ra* (ر), and its mysterious functions require a special focus in the

charm below (Figure 11). *Ra* is considered to be a “Sun” letter with a value of 200 in the Abjad System.⁷⁰ There are 24 “*Ra*’s” in the charm below. Thus we have $200 \times 24 = 4,800 \Rightarrow 12$ and > 3 . The number 12 signifies completed perfection and is associated with the name Allāh (ALLH), which equates to the numbers $66 \Rightarrow 6+6 = 12$. Twelve is also a number that figures prominently in the Qur’an and in nature, having to do with, among other things, perfection, completion, and periodic movements and circulations. Twelve is the higher octave of 3 and is an indicator of great understanding and wisdom.

The number 3 represents synthesis and a sequence of spiritual events relating to manifestation. Verse 1: 3 in the Qur’an, corresponds to the number 3 and to Allāh’s compassion and mercy. The number 3 also corresponds to unicity, as well as the three important steps or degrees in Islam: Islamic law (*shari’a*), spiritual path (*tariqa*) and divine Truth (*Haqiqa*).

In Sufi traditions *Ra* “is symbolic of *Tawhīd*, unity oneness with Allāh. The letter *Ra* or R, represents return of all things to the One, which is the principal reason for existence.”⁷¹ *Ra* appears in *Ar-Rahman* (beneficent), the first of Allāh’s attributes, and in *Ar-Rahīm* (merciful), the second attribute or beautiful name. Working with this letter, like all other letters, necessitates proper timing and special conditions.

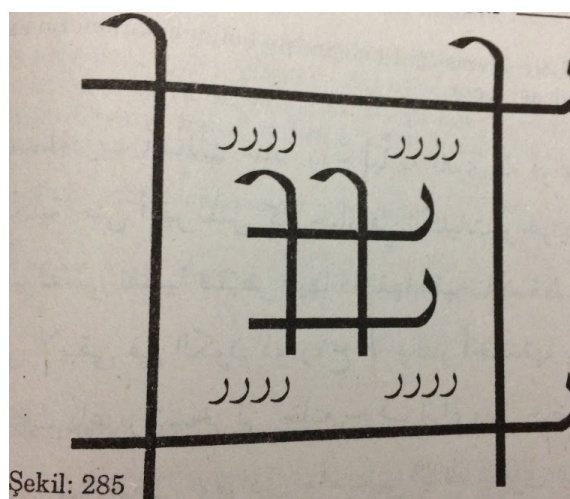


Figure 11: The Charm of Ra Letter

This same letter is used in order to increase the yield of fruit bearing trees. The service angel of the letter *Ra* (ر) is called *Dehiryâil* or *Dahariel*, and is viewed as an angel of the Fifth Heaven (which is likened to Edenic state), and one of the angels charged with maintenance of existing things. In some systems, however, the

angel *Dahariel* is seen as the Guardian of First Heaven, although *Jibr'il* or Gabriel would seem to be a more likely candidate.

When *Dahariel* is invoked with the aid of the suggested prayer the angel will assist the caller in any way.⁷² Thus, this charm, according to Al-Buni's esoteric teachings is quite powerful.

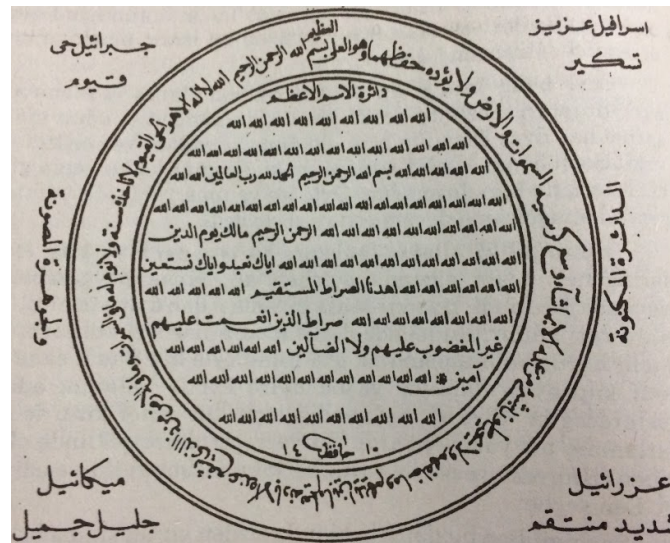


Figure 12: The powerful circle from a Chinese Shaykh⁷³

The circular charm above (Figure 12) is one of the most powerful in the Bunian corpus. One of the distinguishing characteristics of this charm is the repeated script for the name of God or Allāh (الله) Allāh is the Supreme Divine Principle in the Arabic language. The idea of absolute “unicity” and the One and the Many is expressed in the name Allāh. The “...first syllable is short, contracted absolute, while the second is long, expanded and infinite...”⁷⁴ Thus, the name Allāh seems to have a specific mantric quality deliberately formulated to communicate the idea that there is one sole divinity having the potential for duality and infinite possibility. According to some scholars, the word Allāh comes from the word *waliha*, which combines the idea of total love with that of Being beyond all constraints of the mind. The name is comprised of two syllables, “*Al*” and “*lah*.” *Al* is affirmation. *Lah* is negation or no. The name Allāh both affirms and negates, thus it refers to the still point that transcends both and which gives entry into the

essence of Being.⁷⁵ In this charm or talisman Allāh is referred to as “the King of Judgment Day.” The four corners of the charm contain the names of four archangels: *Jabr'il* or Gabriel, who delivers revelation; *Israfeel* or Raphael, who blows the trumpet of destruction and resurrection, *Mikaaiyl* or Michael, whose role is to provide material and spiritual sustenance, and *Uzarel* or *Azarel*, the Angel of Transformation and Death, who is directed by Allāh to take the souls of the deceased from the body.

According to Al-Buni in his *Shams Al-Ma'arif*, this symbol was originally given by a Chinese Shaykh, probably a Sufi master, in possession of certain esoteric secrets. Among the many benefits (health, success, etc.), of the charm, it is said to attract love and respect to the one who carries it on his or her person in the prescribed fashion. It is also claimed that through the power of this circle, *Hadhrath*,⁷⁶ or Jesus Christ (AS) was resurrected bodily from the dead.⁷⁷

The example above shows that the knowledge of Al-Buni's corpus extended beyond the Arabic world and North Africa. In this charm we see the transfer of knowledge between different parts of the world where Islam spread.

Al-Buni provided only limited information concerning the charm below (Figure 13).⁷⁸ We know that he deliberately excluded certain esoteric information from his books to safeguard it from the ignorant or unworthy. That means that facets of his esoteric knowledge were probably handed down to his disciples by oral transmission.

The geometric arrangement of this charm, however, is most interesting. The charm seems to be a geometric yantra of sorts that may have

been used for meditation, concentration or a for creating a pattern of energy or force.

The names in the middle of the grid refer to Allāh and his primary prophets, i.e., Abraham, Jacob, Muhammad, Suleiman (or Solomon), Zakaraia, Ishmael, Yunus or Joseph, Jesus, Moses, Elias, Lut or Lot, etc. Belief in apostleship exists within the framework of *Tawhid* (Unity), and the prophets form a unity and wholeness in regard to the historical chain, and the main theme of their messages.⁷⁹

The names of prophets and religious figures are thought to have the power to protect an individual by acting as conduits between these holy figures and anyone carrying the charm or talisman.

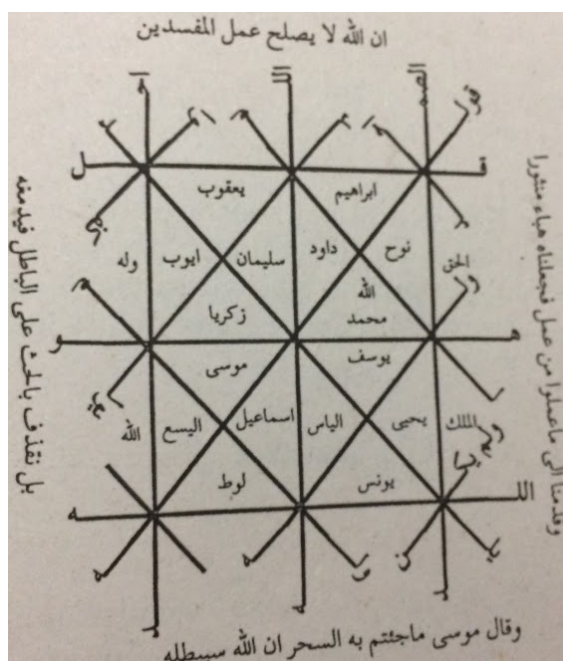


Figure 13⁸⁰

Figure 14 below, serves to ensure love between two persons. Rose water is used in conjunction with this charm as well as some of the individual's personal belongings. The charm also includes a special prayer.⁸¹ There are seven five-pointed stars in this charm. Seven is an important number in Islam. The Qur'an contains 25 references to the number 7, such as the seven heavens, seven hells, the seven periods of creation, seven paths to enlightenment, sev-

en counter clockwise circumambulations around the Ka'ba in Mecca, the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus and so forth.⁸² "An allusion made to the number seven in the Qur'an typically includes references to God as the all-powerful creator. Thus, the number 7 is directly linked to the power of the divine and has great symbolic value as an expression of Muslim belief and the miracles of God."⁸³ In some Sufi traditions, the number 7 is related to the seventh

paradise of intimacy or the relationship of the lover to the Beloved or Divine.

In addition to the number 7, the number 5 figures prominently—the five elements of which man is made, which corresponds to the five healing elemental breaths in some Sufi practices, the five daily prayers, five pillars of Islam and the five categories of Islamic law. Hence, the five-pointed stars included here might well serve as a reminder of the importance adhering to basic tenets of spiritual life as a foundation for any endeavor. This same number is also associated with the Ishtar and the planet Venus, which rules Friday and the fifth “paradise of bliss” in some Sufi traditions.

The Love charm, reading from right to left, contains a combination of nine letters and

numbers: a number nine (٩), two number eights (٨), another nine (٩), the letter “t” (ط), having an equivalency of nine, the Arabic number one, *Alif* (ا), and two more “t” each have an equivalency of nine. Hence, we have: $9+8+8+9+9+1+9+9=71 > 8$. In addition to pertaining to the 7 heavens, 7 can pertain to the seven levels of the heart and the seven eternal attributes of God’s essence. The Number 1 symbolizes primordial unity, the very essence of the Divine, and the First Cause. Taken together 71 might be interpreted as Allāh—the One—and His creation in its Fullness. As for the number 8, Muslims and Sufi’s believe that, among other things, this number signifies the eternity of life, the eight angels that carry out God’s plan, and to one or more of the eight gardens of Paradise.⁸⁴

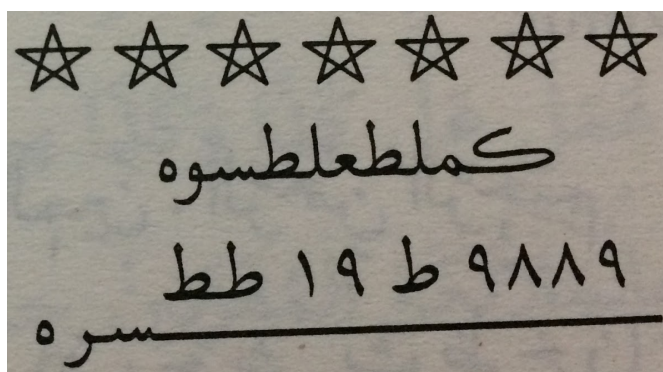
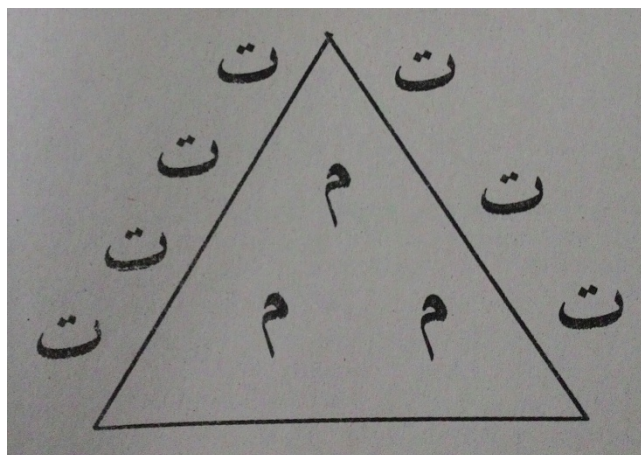


Figure 14: Love Charm

It is interesting to note that rather than viewing love as a natural organic process, many civilizations sought to ensure love or attraction between the sexes by exerting some kind of influence upon one or both of the individuals involved. Such practices were not rooted in natural or mutual attraction between the sexes. Rather, they were often enacted for pragmatic and/or for purely selfish reasons, but they could also be used to heal marital strife or rekindle desire for married couples.

Triangles, as previously noted, figure prominently in Al-Buni’s work as an esoteric medium for establishing good relations and positive energy with a bride who is about to be married. Figure 15 below is employed for just this purpose. We might note here that the triangle is said to represent the union of the male and the female that creates a third entity or thing. Triangles also represent a strong foundation and stability—key factors in a good marriage.

Figure 15⁸⁵

Although the purpose of (Figure 15) has not been revealed, the charm consists of a triangle, a Pythagorean and Sufi symbol for completion. The triangle is surrounded by 7 “*Ta’s*” or “*Taa’s*” (ت), and contains 3 “*M’s*” (م). The letter *Ta* has a numerical value of 400 and is related to the element of air. The letter is important to Sufis because it is the first letter of *Tawhīd* or God’s oneness and unity. *Ta* is related to divine ecstasy, the perfection of the senses and the experience of the Adamic state. *M*, *Mim* or *Meem* has a value of 40 and corresponds to the element of fire. The number 40 could be a reference to a symbolic period of time or seclusion (forty years and/or forty days) needed before spiritual revelation and guidance can be gained. The letter *M* also pertains to the messengers of Allāh, such as Muhammad, who are the heralds of revelation.

As previously mentioned, Al-Buni uses the figure of the triangle quite frequently in his work. The triangle is a symbol of great esoteric significance and figures prominently in Islamic art and architecture. The triangle, which represents nexus and the power of three, is employed to explain how forms came into existence. This figure is also an important symbol in Western esotericism. It is the Triad of Pythagoras and its sacredness is derived from the fact that it is made up of the monad and the duad. Triangles were believed to represent the balance of opposites and their eventual synthesis. Some occultists also use the triangle as a summoning symbol in order to call in specific

entities and energies having spiritual power.⁸⁶ Al-Buni’s frequent use of the triangle and other esoteric symbols in his corpus incorporates many of these meanings.

“The Universe,” as Helena Blavatsky understood, “is guided, controlled, and animated from within outwards by an almost endless series of Hierarchies of spiritual and divine beings.”⁸⁷ This idea is in accord with the Islamic tradition of Angels (*Malā’ikah*), which are created from light, and *Djinn*,⁸⁸ which are comprised of smokeless fire. These unseen spiritual entities and creatures are said to exist in a parallel world to humans, but interaction between them is indeed possible. The triangle, in addition to other charm and talisman symbols is used to invoke these spirits who then serve as intermediaries between humans and God. Such beliefs and practices in Islam and in the other esoteric traditions reveal the universality of the esoteric sciences.

Analysis

From the dawn of time human beings have needed shelter, safety and peace from a world that was largely beyond their comprehension. Religion, in one form or another, has provided humanity with meaning and an explanation of the energies and forces at work in the world. Furthermore, religion has given humanity a means of acquiring a measure of power over the world of invisible energies and forces that would otherwise seem to be beyond their control. Religious practice, as the Polish

anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) explained, “is an active organized effort to remain in touch with supernatural powers, to influence them, and to respond to their bid-dings.”⁸⁹ Individuals have empowered themselves through these “organized efforts” in an effort to control or collaborate with supernatural powers. Al-Buni’s corpus perfectly exemplifies this effort with its focus on the esoteric or inner knowledge (*batin*) within the Islamic faith.

Al-Buni’s esoteric/occult methods of religious practice provide a gradual, multi-layered model for purposefully invoking and directing supernatural energy and force. This model can be visualized as a pyramid-like system. The base of the pyramid is comprised of humanity’s unending need for such things as protection, health, power, authority, love, friendship, peace and wealth. The underlying motives that fuel humanity’s needs and longings are as varied as the many different needs and desires themselves.

The sides of the pyramid are represented by the charm and its related rituals. The visual design of the talisman or charm utilized different geometric forms, colors and materials, such as, stone, metal or wood, as these were associated with certain planets and numbers. Certain practices also involved burning, melting and or burying as a means of strengthening the charm’s power. The vast majority of Al-Buni’s charms must be made by a specialist practiced in the occult arts. Those who intend to put the charm to use may also require the guidance of a specialist.

The upper point or apex of the pyramid serves as a gateway between the one who needs the charm or talisman and a power at a higher level. In most instances, this would be the specific angel who is responsible for facilitating the work. However, between these two layers there are multi-faceted connections taking place either on a parallel level or a much higher plane. This is especially the case with respect to the use of the Names of God (SWT), since their specific use not only provides protection, but a pathway to the highest supreme power or Allāh (SWT). In Islam, Allāh’s (SWT)

Ninety-Nine Names signify the many different attributes of the One. In Al-Buni’s corpus, when the Names or *Asma’ul Husna* are written or spoken the specific attribute or some preternatural or magical effect can manifest in the user’s life. But it should be noted there that from an Islamic perspective any change or transformation that results can only happen through the Will of Allāh (SWT).

As mentioned above, from an anthropological perspective humanity necessitated a religious support for dealing with these problems.

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim, who established the academic discipline of sociology and the social sciences, held that there are strong connections between religion and humanity’s need for social stability and equilibrium in the face of the challenges that they endured in their contacts with the world.⁹⁰ Durkheim also maintained that: “people experienced a fundamental need to create and experience the sacred because of their innate sense of being part of a greater whole.”⁹¹ Therefore, both mainstream and esoteric religious practice served as a means of achieving stability, protection and integration within a given society and the greater whole. Religious and occult rites also provided a sense of empowerment and security in a world full of ambiguities. This is especially the case with respect to the application of “secret knowledge” due to its more exclusive character. The power acquired through access to hidden knowledge has, in many instances led to fame and notoriety. Such attention, through the centuries, inevitably led to the blending of hidden knowledge with different forms of “folk religion” and to syncretic belief systems. This is precisely what happened with respect to certain facets of Al-Buni’s esotericism, which gained widespread appeal in the popular culture of Islam. It must be noted again that the specific details of the certain esoteric technologies are still more or less hidden from the non-initiate.⁹²

Different forms of religious culture have provided various levels of compatibility with societies. It is suggested that “the form of religious culture which is perhaps most compatible with modernity is that which grants a lim-

ited scope to the sacred and which promotes a low degree of integration between corporate and individual value systems.”⁹³ According to Richard Fenn,

It is occult and esoteric religion which best exemplifies this type of religious culture. It can be practiced without coming into conflict with everyday occupational roles since it confines itself to particular times, places, objects, and issues. It provides an ecstatic and magical form of activity and an opportunity to indulge in the irrational against the enforced rationality of formal and bureaucratically structured organisations and roles of everyday life.⁹⁴

Because of this compatibility, Al-Buni’s charms and esoteric practices have survived for centuries and are used widely today in modern societies, such as Turkish society. These practices have multidimensional, anthropological and sociological functions, which even today serve to help people meet personal and societal needs.

Al-Buni’s corpus can be seen as a part of the general “gnostic” circle of religion. When we scrutinize these kinds of religious identities, we see that;

Manipulationist or *Gnostic* sects emphasize a body of esoteric knowledge, which, it is alleged, enables members or followers to attain important goals, often material as much as spiritual, in this life. The knowledge involved is often of a mystical kind requiring long study through which enlightenment slowly comes.⁹⁵

The above description is more or less applicable to Al-Buni’s model as well. The knowledge provided by him requires a long study under proper tutelage, however its purpose is not only enlightenment, but the fulfillment of material/physical aims. Regardless of his intentions and religious identity, his followers are highly engaged with his work due to its material aspect. Hence, when we compare Al-Buni’s work with traditional methods of Sufism (which are based on the purification of the soul and the truth of divine love and knowledge), his esotericism and magical

method open more earthly doors with strategies aimed toward winning in the world. This is the picture we see when we look at Al-Buni’s works and practices through the prism of sociology of religion. Where he fits in the history of thought, and what his real intentions are, are entirely different issues, which are best studied by Islamic historians.

Conclusion

Chaos is the unknown circle that human beings and societies are not keen to enter. Order is the safe environment in which all the values of civilization have sprung. But, as the ancient Latin expression *Ordo Ab Chao*⁹⁶ indicates, without chaos or disorder there would never be order. Hence, understanding “Order” requires an understanding of “Chaos.” They are the two ends of a continuum. Different schools have different teachings as to how to understand and establish Order. But the most important place to create Order is within; within the emotions, the mind, and the soul. Doing so allows us to equitably manage the full spectrum of life, with all of its unpredictability and to find the real source of illumination and enlightenment.

However, the journey towards purification, spiritual fulfillment, and wholeness is a life-long task—one that requires persistent, self-initiated effort. The highly exclusive esoteric methods are not for the majority of people who are held captive by personal and material interests, or who, for other reasons, are simply not at the needed stage of inner development. Throughout history, as we have witnessed in all the civilizations of the East and West, many people have resorted to shortcuts or immediate fixes rather than undertake the necessary spiritual work and arduous philosophical study. Many magical and occult practices serve to meet this demand.

Today, Al-Buni’s work functions as an alternative for meeting the everyday, immediate needs of life in Muslim societies. His magic squares, talismans and charms are used for such things as love, protection, economic benefits, health, safety and success. Those who utilize Al-Buni’s occult practices are aiming

for direct and quick solutions. This can be generalized for usage of charms in other civilizations as well.

There is a pyramidal model in Al-Buni's work: it starts from the most material base, with humanity's material needs and demands, and reaches to Allāh (SWT) or God, the highest, most supreme power. Despite the invocation of *Djinn* and other supernatural powers, Al-Buni understood, as do all Muslims, that all creation, power, healing, accomplishments and the solution to every problem comes only from Allāh (SWT). For if Allāh (SWT) says: Kun! (كُنْ)⁹⁷ or "Be", then it is, it exists!⁹⁸ From the Islamic perspective, Al-Buni's charms and prayers can only be answered if the user holds this realization in his or her heart and mind. Therefore, "All Praise belongs to Allāh."⁹⁹

We may ask, if success comes only from God, why there are so many different means and methods of reaching the final and highest aim. As Sufis frequently say: "*al-turuq ila'Llah bi'adadi anfas al-khala'iq* (there are as many paths to God as there are human breaths)".¹⁰⁰ Pluralistic and diverse religious beliefs and practices have existed since the beginning of Islamic history. Al-Buni's esoteric model and its practices are among the diverse socio-cultural aspects of the religion.

In our analysis of Al-Buni's work we learn that letters and numbers have hidden meanings and powers. This is reminiscent of the significance of numbers in Hinduism, Greek isopsephy and especially in the Kabbalah, which has similar theories and applications based on hidden meanings. When we admit "the one source" for religion, esoteric traditions and mystical paths the similarities cannot surprise at all. These similarities can be seen in the architecture of temples, various rituals, social and cultural beliefs and practices. As noted previously, "Al-Buni also made regular mention in his work of Plato, Aristotle, Hermes, Alexander the Great, and obscure Chaldean magicians. In one of his works, he recounted a story of his discovery of a cache of manuscripts buried under the pyramids, that included a work of Hermetic thinkers."¹⁰¹ So, interchange and exchange of knowledge between different intel-

lectual worlds exists as the basis of these "similarities." Ancient masters were more open than their descendants to give and receive from the "others!"

Semiology and symbology reveal important new dimensions not only within the context of Al-Buni's corpus, but in esoteric systems in general. A detailed semiological analysis of Al-Buni's works is beyond the limits of this article. However, in addition to a semiological analysis, a comprehensive understanding of the Abu'l Abbas Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Yusuf al-Buni's multi-layered magic squares, talismans and charms, must also be studied within their various socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts. Further sociological research into Al-Buni's fascinating corpus will allow us to better understand how his works address certain human needs that are not satisfied by the more secular solutions of the modern world.

***Note:** The authors of this article wish to emphasize that they do not support the use of magic. The investigation of Al-Buni's images is for scholarly purposes only. Neither does this article provide sufficient information for their use.

¹ *Encyclopedia Iranica*, "Magic in Literature and Folklore During the Islamic Period." <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/magic-ii-in-literature-and-folklore-in-the-islamic-period>. (accessed June 12, 2017).

² In this co-authored article one of the writers, M. Kubilay Akman, wanted to emphasize his strong belief to the following hadith (saying) of Prophet (SAW): "There are three who will not enter paradise: one who is addicted to wine, one who breaks ties of relationship, and one who believes in magic." (Al-Tirmidhi Hadith, Hadith 1031, <http://www.alim.org/library/hadith/TIR/1031>). Hence, the quotation here is used solely for scholarly reasons and not used to defend nor support any kind of magical practices.

³ Esoteric practices refer to those that form the "inner" dimension of a religion or spiritual tradition. Occult practices are those that are deliberately "hidden" or "concealed," that are only made available and understood by a select group. The occult sciences also tend to

- deal with the so-called “supernatural or paranormal activities.”
- 4 Thomas Gale, *Magic in Islam*. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/magic-magic-islam> (accessed June 19, 2017).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 See for example, *White and Black Magic in the European Renaissance*, by Paolo Zambelli (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 193.
- 7 The term, *Qur’anic theurgy*, is a term coined by Dr. Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, from the Department of Islamic and Arabic Studies at the American University in Cairo, to describe occult practices that have their basis in the Qur’an.
- 8 In certain Arabic and Persian orders, strict rules were applied when Allāh’s greatest names were used or invoked for magical purposes.
- 9 Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Magic and the Occult Islam: Ahmad b. ‘Alī al-Būnī and the Shamsal-ma’ārif*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/148669437/Warburg-Institute-Magic-and-the-Occult-in-Islam> (accessed June 28, 2017).
- 10 Yasmine F. Al-Saleh, “Licit Magic”: The Touch And Sight Of Islamic Talismanic Scrolls. Doctoral dissertation presented to the Committee for Middle East Studies, Harvard University, 2014, 3.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 The Islamic Golden Age is traditionally dated from the mid-7th century to the mid-13th century at which Muslim rulers established one of the largest empires in history. During this period, artists, engineers, scholars, poets, philosophers, geographers and traders in the Islamic world contributed to agriculture, the arts, economics, industry, law, literature, navigation, philosophy, sciences, sociology, and technology, both by preserving earlier traditions and by adding inventions and innovations of their own.
- 13 See for example: *Forbidden Knowledge? Notes on the Production, Transmission, and Reception of the Major Works of Ahmad Al-Buni*, by Noah Gardner, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 87.
- 14 Denis MacEoin, “Nineteenth-Century Babi Talismans,” *Studia Iranica*, 14:1 (Belgium: PeetersPublishers, 1985), 77-98.
- 15 Ahmed Al-Buni, *Berhatiah: Ancient Magic Conjunction of Power* (Vancouver: Ishtar Publishing, 2010), 30.
- 16 Jean Canteins, “The Hidden Sciences in Islam,” in *Islamic Spirituality* (ed; S.N. Nasr; New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1997), 449.
- 17 Edward A. Tiryakian, *On the Margin of the Visible: Sociology, the Esoteric, and the Occult*. Contemporary Religious Movements: A Wiley-Interscience Series (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1974), 3.
- 18 As quoted from *Theories of Religion: A Reader*, edited by Seth Daniel Kunin and Jonathan Miles-Watson (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 231.
- 19 Helena Blavatsky, “The Science of Magic: Proofs of its Existence — Mediums in Ancient Times,” *Spiritual Scientist*, Boston, Vol. III, October 14, 1875, pp. 64-5, <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/bcw/b75-10-14.htm> (accessed June 12, 2017).
- 20 Found in a review of Thomas Kearney, www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/226070 (accessed June 23, 2017).
- 21 Matthew Melvin-Koushki, *The Occult Sciences in Islamicate Cultures* (13th-17th Centuries), workshop synopsis, Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Frank Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (State College, Pa: Penn State University Press, 2013), 187-188.
- 24 See Nineveh Shadrach’s commentary on Al-Buni’s *Berhatiah*, i-iv.
- 25 Yasmine F. Al-Saleh, *Licit Magic: The Touch And Sight Of Islamic Talismanic Scrolls*, <https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/12274637> (accessed July 17, 2017).
- 26 Noah Gardner, *Esotericism in Manuscript Culture: Ahmad al-Buni and His Readers Through the Mamluk Period* (Dissertation, Univ. of Michigan, 2014, xvii.
- 27 Ibid., 23.
- 28 Ibid., 28-29.
- 29 Islam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 6, p. 416, <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/pdf/c06/c060281.pdf> (accessed April 7, 2017).
- 30 About Ashab al-Suffa: <http://www.lastprophet.info/ashab-al-suffa> (accessed February 02, 2018)
- 31 Islamic honorifics are words that M. Kubilay Akman uses frequently in his individual arti-

cles. Many Muslim scholars use neutral names without adding any honorifics. Since this is a coauthored texts you can see both approaches in terms of honorifics.

32 Marc Steven Bernstein, *Stories of Joseph: Narrative Migrations Between Judaism and Islam* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 9.

33 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Menbai Usulu'l Hikmet* (Turkish translation: M. Varli-S; (Istanbul, Oguz, Esma Publications, Istanbul: 2011), 814.

34 For more on the origins and esoteric significance of the Seal of Solomon see: <https://blavatskytheosophy.com/esoteric-symbolism/> (accessed June 28, 2017).

35 *Subhanahu wa ta'ala* or SWT, trans.; as "Glory to Him, the Exalted." When using the name of Allāh, the shorthand of "SWT" indicates an act of reverence and devotion toward God.

36 See for example: www.questionsonislam.com/article/what-does-amantu-mean-what-are-fundamentals-belief-included-amantu, (accessed October 12, 2017).

37 (AS) *Alayhis Salaam*, trans.; Peace be upon him.

38 (SWT) *Subhanahu wa-ta'ala*, trans.; glorified and exalted be He.

39 As quoted from, *Sufi Thought and Action*, by Idris Shaw.

40 Unver Gunay, *Din Sosyolojisi* (Istanbul: Insan Publications, 2014), 315.

41 Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/madhab> (accessed October 28, 2017)

42 Necdet Subasi, *Din Sosyolojii* (Istanbul: Dem Publications, 2014), 165-166.

43 Samiye Hassab, *Islam Sosyolojisi* (Turkish translation, A. Coskun-N. Ozmen; Istanbul: Camlica Publications, 2010), 66.

44 Ibid., 66-68.

45 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maarif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 1, 19-39

46 Ibid., 238.

47 Ibid., 236.

48 Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Occult Science*, The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2009, 228.

49 Herbert Silberer, *Hidden Symbolism of Alchemy and the Occult Arts*, The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2009, 284.

50 For further information on the *Hadith Qusdi* or sacred sayings of Allāh as related to the

Prophet see: www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e760.

51 www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/addas1.html.

52 Yasmine F. Al-Saleh, *Licit Magic: The Touch And Sight Of Islamic Talismanic Scrolls*.

53 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Menbai Usulu'l Hikmet*, 215.

54 See for example: Eugenia Victoria Ellis, *Geomantic Mathematical Creation: (re) Magic Squares and Claude Bragdon's Theosophic Architecture*, Published in Nexus V: Architecture and Mathematics (June 2004), 84. Also, Annamarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30.

55 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maarif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 3, 200.

56 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Menbai Usulu'l Hikmet*, 649.

57 Ibid., 648-652.

58 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maarif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 3, 212.

59 See for example: the Chisti website, http://www.chishti.ru/s_m.htm. (accessed Oct 3, 2017).

60 Annamarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers*, 104.

61 The Laws of Affinity and Antipathy are two of the great laws of magic and are related to the idea of vibration, to attraction and separations respectively. The Laws of Affinity or Sympathy meant that things acted upon or cured what they resembled or had some *affinity* for. In other words, "Like cures like." Antipathy was based on things that were diametrically opposed. For example, if two animals were antagonists in the natural world, then a remedy from one could help cure wounds caused by the other.

62 Annamarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers*, 212-213.

63 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Menbai Usulu'l Hikmet*, 159-160.

64 Ibid., 159.

65 Robert Abdul Hayy Darr, *Abjad: The Numerological Language of Spiritual Insight and Guidance as Employed in Sufism*. Presented at the Temenos Academy at the Royal Asiatic Society, London, July 2008, 4.

66 Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Menbai Usulu'l Hikmet*, 159.

67 Ibid., 366.

- ⁶⁸ See for example, *Semiotics for Beginners*, at: visualmemory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem03.html (accessed July 20, 2017).
- ⁶⁹ Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maa-rif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 4, 10.
- ⁷⁰ "A system of notation in which each of the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a numerical value. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/defined/abjad> (accessed May 29, 2017).
- ⁷¹ <https://786balasisufi.wordpress.com/2014/05/22/comparison-of-the-arabic-letter-ra-in-relation-to-kemetic-medu-ntr-glyph-ra-2/> (accessed August 2, 2017).
- ⁷² Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maa-rif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 4, 75-76.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 130.
- ⁷⁴ Frithjof Schoun, *Sufism: Veil and Quintessence* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, Inc., 2008), 107.
- ⁷⁵ Wali Ali Meyer, Bilal Hyde, Faisal Muqaddam, Shabda Kahn, *Physicians of the Heart: A Sufi View of the Ninety Nine Names of God*, San Francisco: Sufi Ruhaniat International, 2011), 2.
- ⁷⁶ *Hadhrat*, *Hadrat* or *Hazrat* is an Arabic honorific title that conveys the idea of charismatic presence.
- ⁷⁷ Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maa-rif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 4, 128-132.
- ⁷⁸ Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maa-rif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 1, 384.
- ⁷⁹ Sinasi Gunduz, *The Role of Prophets in Religion*. <http://www.lastprophet.info/the-role-of-prophets-in-religion>. (accessed February 25, 2018).
- ⁸⁰ Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maa-rif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 1, 385.
- ⁸¹ Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Menbai Usulu'l Hikmet*, 371.
- ⁸² Mehnaz Sahibzada, *The Symbolism of the Number Seven in Islamic Culture and Rituals*, http://s-wadsworth.cengage.com/religion_d/templates/stripped_features/symbols/islamic.html. (accessed November 1, 2017).
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers*, 156-157.
- ⁸⁵ Imam Ahmet Bin Ali El-Buni, *Sems'ul Maa-rif'ul Kubra*, Vol. 3, 209.
- ⁸⁶ *Geometric Shapes and Their Symbolic Meanings*, <https://www.thoughtco.com/geometric-shapes-4086370> (accessed August 28, 2017).
- ⁸⁷ *Golden Keys to The Secret Doctrine*, <https://blavatskytheosophy.com/golden-keys-to-the-secret-doctrine> (accessed August 28, 2017).
- ⁸⁸ Djinn or Jinn: "any of a class of spirits, lower than the angels, capable of appearing in human and animal forms and influencing humankind for either good or evil." <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/jinn> (accessed August 28, 2017).
- ⁸⁹ Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (New York: Galaxy Book, 1961, 27).
- ⁹⁰ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, (Trans.; Karen E. Fields; New York: The Free Press, 1995, 225).
- ⁹¹ Gordon Lynch on Emile Durkheim, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2013/jan/14/emile-durkheim-religion-sacred> (accessed June 10, 2017).
- ⁹² Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Magic and the Occult Islam: Ahmad b. 'Alī al-Būnī and the Shamsal-ma'ārīf*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/148669437/Warburg-Institute-Magic-and-the-Occult-in-Islam> (accessed June 28, 2017).
- ⁹³ Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), 209.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 209-210.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 237.
- ⁹⁶ *Ordo Ab Chao* (Latin, Order out of Chaos).
- ⁹⁷ Kun (Arabic, Be!) Allāh's (SWT) Order for anything to exist, to be.
- ⁹⁸ Kun Faya Kun (كُنْ فَيَكُونُ): Be and it is! http://www.islamfrominside.com/Pages/Articles/Be_and_it_is.html (accessed June 15, 2017).
- ⁹⁹ The Qur'an, "Surah Al-Fatihah," Verse 2.
- ¹⁰⁰ Abdal Hakim Murad, *Islam and the New Millennium*, www.sunnah.org/audio/millen.htm
- ¹⁰¹ <http://www.esotericonline.net/group/dramatis-personae-the-prominent-occultist/forum/topics/ahmed-al-buni-622-1225-a-d> (accessed November 14, 2017).

Did Unconsciousness Evolve from Consciousness?

Vijay Srinath Kanchi

The debate as to whether Consciousness created the unconscious inanimate world, or the unconscious inert physical world evolved over a million years into life and subsequently into consciousness is a dilemma that puts the scientists and spiritualists at loggerheads. The irrefutable evidence, science points out, that is unmistakably apparent from the geological history of the earth as well as planetary evolution across the cosmos clinches the argument in favor of the unconscious material world being the cause of the consciousness. The events mapped on the geological timescale of earth point to the inhospitable conditions that existed for about two billion years on planet earth before they finally evolved into an environment that is conducive to the occurrence of life. According to current scientific theory, this earliest life form culminated into the present day human beings, the most advanced of the sentient beings, over a course of evolution that has been perpetuating for over three billion years on this planet.

On the contrary, the spiritual schools, particularly of India, assertively argue that consciousness predates the unconscious *prakirti*.¹ These schools point to the logical necessity, a kind of compulsion the reason imposes on us, that calls for admitting consciousness as the cause of the inert *prakirti*. How can the unconscious *prakirti* produce a feature called consciousness that is diametrically opposed to it? A cause cannot produce an effect which is not inherent in it. A neem seed cannot produce a mango tree. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*.² According to the spiritual philosophical schools of India, consciousness is the essential feature of existence, and unconsciousness is only an anomaly. To the counter question of how consciousness could produce unconscious *prakirti*, a state that is in complete contradiction to its essential nature, the aforementioned schools generally

keep mum or call existence a mere appearance and not real transformation, as is the case in *Advaita Vedānta*.

With the mounting proofs from the multiple disciplines of the science, it seems the spiritual schools are losing the battle and are forced to concede to the idea of the unconscious physical world as the cause and consciousness as its effect. But these apparently contradictory views can be reconciled with a different approach.

Let's assume that consciousness sprouted from the unconscious world of inanimate objects and evolved to the present level of human consciousness. Human beings are endowed with the capacity to meditate upon themselves and unfurl their dormant dimensions. This meditative focus on the Self is called *yoga*, which is extolled as capable of hastening the process of evolution of consciousness within. According to the yogic schools, some human beings called *yogis* developed and devised yogic practices that hasten this process of evolution so that the consciousness reaches its highest state within one's lifetime, a claim attested by Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Even many Gnostic and esoteric schools with allegiance to the Abrahamic religions also vouchsafe to this idea. It is logically deducible that consciousness, when it reaches its pinnacle, transcends temporal and spatial limitations, and experiences what is called non-locality. Now, even if the consciousness of one person had attained that transcendental supreme conscious state,

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which is highly eulogized as enlightenment, and which the Buddha and others are claimed to have attained, it would imply that consciousness would have reached all the past and future states, finding its presence even at the very verges of time-scale, even before the unconscious world was created. This means, since conscious is *already there* before the advent of the unconscious inanimate world, that it is the unconscious that was produced from the consciousness and not vice versa. In other words, the conscious state that was produced from the unconscious physical world (as claimed by the science)

transcends its very cause and attains a state that precedes its very causal agency. Several Vedic passages seem to allegorically point to this. In the Upanishads, we find for instance, Indra credited with the miracle of generating from his own body his own father and mother (x.54.3); or Aditi spoken of as producing Daksha, and being herself in turn produced by him (x.72.4). This seemingly enigmatic Vedic conception of being the producer of the causal agency of the self was later explained away as *bijānkura-nyāya* or the maxim of the seed and the sprout.³

Another corollary that can be drawn from this view is that consciousness attained the state of transcendence only because it was already inherent in it, as that which is not latent cannot be produced. That is to say that consciousness, which transcends time and space limitations, was already present *before* time and space evolved, thus becoming the causal agency for the physical unconscious world. This dormant lying of consciousness with all its infinite potential as the unconscious material world is termed in philosophical parlance as *Māya* and *avidya*.

How can the unconscious prakriti produce a feature that is diametrically opposed to it? A cause cannot produce an effect which is not inherent in it. A neem seed cannot produce a mango tree. . . . According to the spiritual philosophical schools of India, consciousness is the essential feature of existence, and unconsciousness is an anomaly.

Thus, if attainment of transcendence by consciousness can be admitted, it would imply that consciousness is the cause of the unconscious *prakirti* and not vice versa. *Nyāya*, the Indian

system of logic and argumentation gives several logical arguments that necessitate admission of the possibility of spatial and temporal transcendence. Since such transcendence can be proved, at least theoretically, it is logically valid to argue that consciousness precedes unconsciousness. The experiential wisdom of yogis and even logical reasoning also point out to the precedence of consciousness to that of unconsciousness and as the cause and *not* as the effect.

When we begin to recognize consciousness as the essential feature of existence, this enigma gets resolved.

¹ Prakirti (Sanskrit: “nature,” “source”) is the primal material energy of which all matter is composed. It is matter in its germinal state, eternal and beyond perception.

² The Latin *Ex nihilo nihil fit* is translated as: “Out of nothing, comes nothing.”

³ “The maxim of the seed and the sprout takes its origin from the relation of mutual causation (which subsists between the seed and the sprout (seed being the cause of the sprout, which in turn is the cause of the seed); and is used in those cases where two things stand to each other in the relation of both cause and effect.” From *The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by Vaman Shivram Apte (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 306.

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Great Esotericists

Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983)



Geoffrey Hodson in 1953

Arguably, the most accomplished clairvoyant of the twentieth century, Geoffrey Hodson also made major contributions to multiple areas of esoteric philosophy. During his ninety-six years he authored more than fifty books and gave lectures on every continent. His mild manner and unpretentious lifestyle, free from the controversies that rocked the careers of some other leading esotericists, commend him as a role model for all disciples.

Hodson was born on March 12, 1886, under the sign of Pisces, an influence that explains much about his life's work and demeanor. The eldest of five children, he grew up in "a family of landowners and gentlemen farmers" in Wainfleet-St-Mary's, Lincolnshire, England, and enjoyed "a happy and wholesome childhood" on a large estate that afforded "peace, beauty, and happiness."¹ Geoffrey attended Bishop's Stortford Grammar School in Hertfordshire,² but at age fifteen the family fortunes collapsed, forcing him to drop out and find a job.

Hodson's clairvoyant gifts first became apparent when he was five or six years old; he had a

frightening encounter with an entity, which he later determined to be a kundalini deva. Sporadic experiences of etheric or astral vision continued throughout his childhood and teens. In his twenties he gained a theoretical understanding of his experiences from the teachings of Annie Besant, president of the Theosophical Society, Adyar. At one of Besant's lectures in Manchester in 1912, Hodson saw the several auras surrounding her body. He was inspired to join the Theosophical Society and was admitted to the Manchester City Lodge. Besant and Charles Leadbeater had already introduced clairvoyant research into the Theosophical Society, sadly resulting in the decision by William Q. Judge and his followers to secede from the Adyar branch and form their own American Theosophical Society.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 put Hodson's esoteric work on hold. He enlisted in the Army and, since he could ride a horse, joined the Cavalry Regiment. Later he was selected for officer training and was commissioned as a tank commander. Deployed to the front lines in 1918, he and his tank crew distinguished themselves in heavy fighting in Belgium and

France. For battlefield skills and bravery Lieutenant Hodson was recommended for the Military Cross.

Following demobilization in 1919, Hodson married the former Jane Carter, and the couple settled in Preston, Lancashire. Geoffrey worked for the YMCA and took on the task of rehabilitating boys discharged from Borstal institutions—detention centers for delinquent minors. Civilian life also enabled him to resume his esoteric work.

On their vacations Geoffrey and Jane Hodson toured the back roads of England on a motorcycle. Those trips provided opportunities for Geoffrey to make clairvoyant studies of the nature spirits in rural areas. His early books: *Fairies at Work and Play* (1925) and *The Kingdom of Faerie* (1927), present the results of those studies. The former book contains this description of brownies on the beach:

Playing on the shore, amongst the seaweed and the stones, are queer little elf-like forms. They have large heads, elfish faces, large ears, little rounded bodies, and short, thin legs ending in a foot which appears almost web-like. They are from three to six inches in height. They are familiar with human beings, and are in no way disturbed by their presence. They do not appear to go into the sea.³

In 1925, Geoffrey Hodson was contacted by an angelic being who offered to provide information on the higher ranks of the deva evolution and their relationship with humanity. Hodson gave voice to the telepathic impressions he received, and Jane wrote down what he said. The work resulted in several books, including *The Brotherhood of Angels and of Men* (1927), *The Angelic Hosts* (1928), *Angels and the New Race* (1929), and parts of the much later *The Kingdom of the Gods* (1952). This last, one of Hodson's most influential books, elaborates on the forms taken by nature spirits:

On the lower rungs of the ladder of the Angelic Hierarchy are to be found the nature spirits of the four subtle elements of earth, water, air and fire.... My observations suggest that nature spirits use two distinct forms. One of these is the permanent astral

body and the other a temporarily materialized etheric vehicle.⁴

The angelic being, later identified as the Archangel (or Maha Deva) Bethelda,⁵ communicated with Hodson for many years. But he also received communications from the Masters Morya, Kuthumi, Rakoczy, Serapis Bey, and Polidorus Isurenus, and other sources. To judge by the number of encounters, he had a special relationship with Polidorus, a third-ray master of the Brotherhood of Luxor. Hodson's willingness to name the sources, at least after his death, was intended to reassure the esoteric community "that the Great Masters of the Wisdom have not withdrawn Their interest in the profoundly important movement established under Their Adeptic inspiration" [i.e., the Theosophical Society].... May it not reasonably be presumed that this will be continued for the 'amelioration of the condition of man.'"⁶ Hodson never wavered in his belief that the Theosophical Society remained the favored channel for the revelation of esoteric knowledge.

In the late 1920s, Geoffrey Hodson was invited to use his clairvoyant abilities to study a variety of other phenomena, including the subtle workings of the human body. Observations of the formation of a human embryo were reported in his book *The Miracle of Birth* (1929). To illustrate, the child's mental body was constructed during the fourth month of pregnancy by devic builders working under the direction of the Solar Angel:

The whole phenomenon was surrounded by dazzling and blazing light which increased in intensity towards the centre of the causal body. The down-poured force kept the atoms of the mental body in constant motion, and as it struck the matter of which the mental body was composed, it formed a vortex into and through which the rest of this matter was continually being drawn. This movement, however, did not affect the general shape, which remained ovoid, as previously described. Although the human form was visible within the ovoid it must not be thought of as hollow, but rather as a solid though translucent mass of rapidly moving matter.⁷

Hodson also provided insights into certain medical pathologies in *New Light on the Problem of Disease* (1930). These latter studies stimulated an interest in spiritual healing, which would expand in later years.

The Kingdom of the Gods includes profound esoteric teachings as well as a wealth of information about the deva evolution. For example, Hodson commented on the role of sound in the cosmic creative process:

True music is a temporary, physical expression of the sound of the ever-uttered "Word." Throughout creative Day, the Great Breath is breathed upon the Great Deep, which responds as an aeolian harp of myriad, vibrant strings. As creative Night draws near, the Great Breath is breathed in.... When at the dawn of Creative Day the Voice first speaks, the innumerable lesser breaths contribute the component notes of the creative chord, which is the "Word." When at creative Eve the Voice is stilled, the lesser voices die away. Thereafter silence broods over the face of the Deep.⁸

Other notable works on esoteric philosophy and the path of discipleship are *The Soul's Awakening: Talks on Occultism and the Occult Life* (1963), *Man's Supersensory and Spiritual Powers* (1964), and *The Call to the Heights* (1975). In this last, he offered another sweeping view of the creative work of the Solar Logos and his angelic assistants:

The Lord of the universe, the Solar Logos, together with choirs and orchestras of angels and archangels, cause to sound forth from the heart of existence the divine theme and all its variations. In terms of human consciousness, these may justly be regarded

as proclamations of the beauty and the power of love—the one great theme.⁹

Hodson's only controversial book was *The Seven Human Temperaments* (1952), which, in the view of some commentators, may have plagiarized material from Alice Bailey's more-extensive work on the seven rays.¹⁰

In addition to his work in the church, Hodson attained the 32nd degree in the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry, in which both Besant and Leadbeater had played leading roles. The EOICF, still in existence, is a worldwide body of men and women who profess to "work the traditional rights of Freemasonry with a conscious awareness of their spiritual content."

Geoffrey Hodson visited South Africa in 1937, and in due course Australia, New Zealand, and many other countries. He remained active in the Theosophical Society throughout his adult life. He served as Director of Studies of the School of the Wisdom at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, India, for two sessions in 1953–1955, and again in 1961. In 1954, Hodson was awarded the Subba Row Medal for his contributions to Theosophical literature.

Hodson, whose mother had been organist and choir director at the local church, was brought up in the Anglican tradition. His early devout faith was shaken in early adulthood, but he found answers in Besant's landmark book *Esoteric Christianity or the Lesser Mysteries* (1902), which had ushered in the "christianization movement" in the Theosophical Society. In 1913, Theosophists James Wedgwood and Charles Leadbeater, both former Anglican clergy, founded the Liberal Catholic Church, which served as a kind of religious subsidiary of the Theosophical Society. Hodson joined the church and in due course was ordained a priest. The high-church liturgy provided new opportunities for clairvoyant observations. In *The Inner Side Of Church Worship* (1930) he described the transformations associated with the Eucharist:

From the moment of the Consecration His [the Lord's] Presence descends closer and

closer into the church. A marvelous change takes place in the Host, which is visible to any who have even the slightest extension of vision. The Host becomes glowing and wonderful, and the matter of which it is composed seems but the finest of films, enclosing the radiant, golden splendor of the Christ-life which is manifest within. And then, at the act of communion, it seems as if, in a way that is indescribable down here, the Christ and His devotee become one. Transubstantiation seems to occur in the communicant himself as the spiritual body and blood of Christ is received.¹¹

Hodson's ongoing commitment to Christianity was expressed in the four-volume book: *Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible* (1963–1980). No scriptural literalist, he viewed the texts in allegorical terms whose value extends beyond the historical context in which they were written:

The authors of the scriptures saw eternal truths mirrored in events in time. For them, illumined as they were, every material event was alight with spiritual significance. They knew the outer world for what it was—the shadow of a great reality.... The spiritual teachers of long ago, by using historical events as well as allegories and symbols, proved themselves able to overcome the limitations of time [and reveal] the deeper truths of life.¹²

In addition to his work in the church Hodson attained the 32nd degree in the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry, in which both Besant and Leadbeater had played leading roles. The EOICF, still in existence, is a worldwide body of men and women who profess to “work the traditional rites of Freemasonry with a conscious awareness of their spiritual content.”¹³ Hodson wrote of Masonic symbolism in *At the Sign of the Square and Compasses* (1976).

Hodson never lost his interest in studying and communicating with the devas. But over time his focus changed from lowly nature spirits to mighty archangels. Following is his description of “the Golden Deva” seen over Mount

Tongariro, in the North Island of New Zealand:

I am aware of the presence nearby of a very remarkable golden Deva which hovers near a fellow student and myself. At the formless levels it pours into us a force resembling liquid sunlight and also focuses a special ray upon the centers of solar power in the middle of our physical and superphysical heads, causing them to glow as if on fire. The Deva's form appears as molten gold, and rays of life-force and light flow out beside and behind it. The whole of the Deva's aura is formed of pointed beams or tongues of out-flowing One Life.¹⁴

Hodson's descriptions of angelic beings were translated into iconic paintings by various artists, including Ethelwynne Quail and Frank Eden.

Not surprisingly, given his comments about “true music” and “choirs and orchestras of angels and archangels,” Hodson was interested in devas' response to sound. Of special interest were the Gandharvas, or music devas; and we recall that the epic poem, the *Mahabharata*, relates that the Gandharva king taught Arjuna to sing and dance. Hodson explained that devas of various orders are drawn to familiar melodies like “Greensleeves” and to the sacred music of the Christian liturgy. For instance, he observed their attraction to the Agnus Dei (“Lamb of God”) in the Mass:

Some time after the singing ceases, I become aware of the presence and attention of an order of Devas almost entirely of the same shade of blue.... They also are chanting, notably at the higher mental and upper subplanes of the formal mental level, and not much lower. One angel is attracted almost immediately by the chanting. It is located some forty feet up in the air, a little to the right of one of the singers. In some way this particular chant is related to this angel and the order of Gandharvas or music angels to which it belongs. The work of this order is almost entirely devotional, having been associated with such music in ancient days.¹⁵

Hodson's wife Jane had suffered from multiple sclerosis from 1929 onward, and her condition progressively worsened. While in Australia, Geoffrey hired Sandra Chase to look after her. Chase accompanied the Hodsons when they relocated to New Zealand in 1940. Although Jane was paralyzed, her condition stabilized when she moved into a nursing home. Under Geoffrey's and Sandra's care she lived another two decades. After Jane passed away in 1962, Hodson married Sandra Chase, and Sandra supported his work, as Jane had been able to in the early days of their marriage.

Geoffrey Hodson made his transition in Auckland, New Zealand, on January 23, 1983—under the sign of Aquarius. Sandra published two books based on notes left by her husband: *Light of The Sanctuary* (1988) and *Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition* (1992). The former, subtitled *The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson* is undoubtedly the most important of Hodson's works.

Among the many topics covered in *Light Of The Sanctuary* are insights into the nature and work of the World Mother. He affirmed that a number of individuals have held that exalted office over the millennia. Currently the office is held by Mary, whom we know as the mother of Christ. But Mary “did Herself attain to Adeptship, took the Fifth Initiation in the Egyptian Mysteries, having also been trained in their Chaldean form as a woman.”¹⁶ As World Mother Mary now pursues a ministry of compassion and love:

The Blessed Lady Mary, incarnation of the Maternal Spirit of the Godhead, moved by purest compassion and love, holds the whole of humanity in Her arms and at Her breast, nourishing it with spiritualizing life for the purpose of quickening the evolution of all sentient beings. . . . The World Mother shares Herself with every mother—human and animal—throughout the period of gestation and delivery of her offspring. . . . Impersonally, She also is present and helps to bring about the mystical “birth” of the Christ consciousness within the Inner Self of every initiate when admitted to membership of the Great White Brotherhood.¹⁷

Hodson would not permit *Light Of The Sanctuary* to be published during his lifetime, no doubt because it revealed too much about his spiritual status. Very revealing is the record of an encounter in 1975 in which Mary addressed Hodson:

I knew you in Nazareth when you came with your servant to visit My Son, Jesus. . . . I heard My Son's promise and saw you as a young boy, departing dutifully for your home and duties awaiting you there. In this present life, I first knew you as an infant baptized in the church dedicated to Me at Wainfleet-St-Mary; next, in that small church in the little square in Manchester, where you used to come to meditate and where I caused you to see My aura shining through and around My statue.... Now in your ninetieth bodily year we have communed, you have opened the mental lines of communication by your talk with its reverent references to Me. This has drawn Me much closer to you.¹⁸

Writing a few months after Hodson's death, Joy Mills, director of the Krotona School of Theosophy (an Adyar affiliate), California, commented on what motivated his work:

[H]is search and study were centered on a profound conviction of the unitary nature of all existence. The concept of an ‘Absolute, Unknowable, Infinite and Unchanging Source and Foundation’ ... was no mere concept to him, but a conviction deeply rooted in his own perception of life. His intuitive vision an Ultimate Reality was always grounded in a logic derived from his own clairvoyant investigations.¹⁹

While Mills attached greatest importance to his clairvoyant research, she also described him as “one of the finest exponents of the theosophical philosophy which the Theosophical Society has ever known.”²⁰

Christian esotericist, Freemason, clairvoyant, writer, lecturer, and amanuensis for the receipt of Hierarchical teachings, Geoffrey Hodson clearly was an initiate of some standing. It is not our place to speculate on what level of initiation he had attained by the time of his death

in 1983, but we rejoice that he lived, served, and shared his wisdom with us for nearly a century. Of no small significance, his most recent incarnation began in the sign of Pisces and ended on the cusp of Aquarius. We can be assured that his work is not yet finished; he remains with us and will be back, perhaps to play an even bigger role as the Aquarian Age unfolds.

Contributed by John F. Nash
Johnson City, Tennessee

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- ¹ Hodson's early reminiscences were recorded before his death and published posthumously as "A Life Remembered" in Sandra Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson* (Manila, Philippines: The Theosophical Publishers, 1988), 1-10.
 - ² In Britain a "grammar school"—a term originally implying the study of Latin and Greek grammar—is equivalent to an American high school, or perhaps more closely to a charter school because of selective admission policies.
 - ³ Geoffrey Hodson, *Fairies at Work and Play* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925/1982, 33.
 - ⁴ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Kingdom of the Gods* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House 1952), 98.
 - ⁵ S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, 16.
 - ⁶ Geoffrey Hodson, "Introduction," S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, xxiv.

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- ⁷ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Miracle of Birth* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1929/1981), 30.
 - ⁸ Hodson, *The Kingdom of the Gods*, 231.
 - ⁹ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Call to the Heights: Guidance on the Pathway to Self-Illumination* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House 1975), 50.
 - ¹⁰ Although his work overlapped with Bailey's, Hodson—like many other Theosophists—never acknowledged her writings. Nor, to our knowledge, was he ever contacted by the Master Djwhal Khul.
 - ¹¹ Geoffrey Hodson, *The Inner Side Of Church Worship* (London: St Alban Press, 1930), 81.
 - ¹² Geoffrey Hodson, *Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, vol 1 (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1963/1993), 8.
 - ¹³ Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry Online at: <http://comasonic.net/>.
 - ¹⁴ Geoffrey Hodson, *Clairvoyant Investigations* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1984), 61.
 - ¹⁵ Ibid., 90-91. Misspelled word corrected.
 - ¹⁶ S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, 267. It is unclear whether Mary attained the fifth initiation during the lifetime in Palestine or in another.
 - ¹⁷ Ibid., 414-415.
 - ¹⁸ Ibid., 266. Mary also contacted him in 1945; see pp. 115-116.
 - ¹⁹ Joy Mills, Foreword to *Clairvoyant Investigations*, ix-x. The Krotona School is allied with the Adyar branch of the Theosophical Society.
 - ²⁰ Ibid., x.