INITIATE SECTION

Degree 9 Nos. 6–8

Know thyself, and thou shalt know the universe and the gods.
As this monograph is devoted to the study of fire, we will introduce this topic with an appropriate quotation taken from *Essai sur le Feu Sacré et sur les Vestales* (Essay on the Sacred Fire and the Vestals) a work found in the archives of our Order. It offers a unique insight into the mystical use of fire and the symbolism that has been associated with it since the dawn of humanity. Unfortunately, only a few copies of this rare work are still in existence.

Since the most ancient times, Fire has been an object of humans’ veneration. How did the idea of such veneration enter their mind? Fire was used in all religious ceremonies, because to them, Divinity Itself was, in their eyes, attired in a luminous body: the Sun. A multitude of titles would render this principle respectable! When witnessing these dazzling appearances and convinced of their Creator’s spirituality, humans did not dare make an image of the Divine, because they did not know what form they could give It. Thus, they searched through the most magnificent objects in the Universe to find one that would best represent the Divine in their imagination. The Sun, which filled Heaven and Earth with its rays, warming and fecundating Nature, ripening fruit, soon was looked upon as the blazing symbol of this beneficial Divinity. The Moon and Stars, which projected their fires during the darkness of night, appeared to be destined to beautify Its dwelling and Throne. Humans then turned toward these heavenly bodies every time they felt the need to worship the Supreme Being. Their brilliance and majesty uplifted the soul and inspired admiration for the magnificence of their Author.

Such was undoubtedly the first religion, the simplest and most suited to the limited human intelligence. But soon, celestial bodies that were only accessible to their gaze seemed to be too far away. Humans searched nearby to find something resembling the Sun.

(continued on page 9)
Dear Fratres and Sorores,

Of the four principles of nature, fire is traditionally considered to be the most important, for its symbolism relates to the spiritual dimensions of humans as well as visible and invisible Creation. In the First Atrium Degree, we devoted one monograph to the study of this symbolism. However, there remain certain interesting points that we will examine more closely.

**FIRE:** On the visible plane, the greatest natural manifestation of fire is the Sun. This star, located approximately 150 million kilometers from Earth, constitutes the heart of our planetary system. According to astrophysicists, the Sun is composed primarily of hydrogen atoms. The nuclei of these hydrogen atoms are constantly combining, and this nuclear fusion is expressed in the Sun’s gigantic emission of light and heat. The heat of the Sun is close to 6,000 degrees on its surface and from 16 to 20 million degrees in its center. As we will recall in the monograph dealing with the study of air, the Sun is also the center from which radiates that cosmic essence indispensable to plant, animal, and human life. While this fact has yet to be proven by science, we are convinced that the day will come when this will happen. At that time we will have scientific confirmation of a mystical truth taught by Rosicrucians for several centuries.

In prehistoric times, the Sun was thought to be the source of life and it became an object of adoration. For early humans it was the supreme nature spirit. From the beginning, people worshiped the Sun and lived in fear that it would not reappear on the horizon, for they were unable to understand why it moved across the sky to disappear every evening behind the hills or at the edge of the plains. After they realized that it would return regularly every morning, the Sun then came to symbolize life, death, and resurrection. In fact, all the great civilizations of the past incorporated the Sun into their religious practices. This is particularly true of ancient Egypt, where the Sun was deified under the name of RA, giving rise to the very powerful Amon-Ra priesthood. With the appearance of monotheism, established by Akhnaton in the fourteenth century BCE, the daystar gained a new mystical dimension, for this inspired pharaoh made it the visible symbol of the one Deity that he worshiped. Yet it should be noted that he in no way worshiped the Sun itself, despite what certain historians claim.

The symbolism of the Sun is still present in the great modern-day religions. Thus, in Parsiism, derived from
Zoroastrianism, the Sun represents Ahura Mazda, angel of light and good. In Hinduism, it is the symbol of Vishnu, thought to be the Organizer of the universe and the Protector of the world. We find the Sun in Judaism as well, where it is referred to as the earthly expression of the Divine Fire. In the past, the High Priest of the Hebrews wore a golden disk on his chest in veneration of this Fire. In Christianity, the Sun symbolizes Heavenly Light, and Jesus himself was called *Sol Justitiae* (“the Sun of Righteousness”) or *Sol Invictus* (“the Invincible Sun”). As for Buddha, he is often designated by the name *Sun Buddha* in many Chinese texts. And finally, in Islam, the Sun represents the Source of Light, reflected onto Earth by the Moon, symbol of hidden Knowledge. Note also that in astrology the Sun represents the shining forth of the purest of human virtues.

If the Sun is the greatest natural manifestation of fire, the flame is its most elementary earthly expression. As such, it has been associated for thousands of years with the same symbolism. In other words, the flame traditionally represents Divine Fire and Divine Light. This is why most religious ceremonies include the use of candles or tapers. The same is true of the rituals carried out in our Order, for these rituals, while neither religious nor sectarian, are directly connected with the spiritual life. The same holds true of the two lighted candles on your sanctum altar. These candles have no dogmatic significance, but their combined light simply represents your desire for inner enlightenment while you study. Moreover, we ask that you extinguish these candles with a candle snuffer, for their flames also symbolize life. Rosicrucians believe that breath is an expression of the Vital Life Force; thus we do not use it to make the very symbol of life disappear.

By nature, fire is a principle which consumes that which it burns. In other words, it reduces combustible substances to ashes and it purifies those substances which are not combustible. Because of this, alchemists used fire in the course of their successive operations. This special property of fire has symbolic relevance for humans, because the goal of our spiritual evolution is regeneration on all planes as we contact the Divine Fire animating our being. This Fire corresponds to the Philosopher’s Stone, the jewel of Spiritual Alchemy. Moreover, it is in this alchemical sense that we should interpret the letters INRI inscribed on the cross of Jesus. These letters are an abbreviation of the Latin phrase *Igne Natura Renovatur Integra*, which means “Nature is wholly regenerated...
by fire.” As applied to humans, this esoteric phrase means “Human nature is wholly regenerated by Divine Fire.” Moreover, Christians believe that Christ came to Earth to “consume the sins of all humanity,” and to “deliver humanity from past, present, and future evil.”

In addition to those properties inherent in its heat, fire is also a source of light, for the smallest flame illuminates. Thus, fire quite naturally has become the symbol of good, as opposed to darkness, which represents evil. For mystics, fire also symbolizes Divine Light and that state of consciousness attained by those who receive illumination. For that very reason, Messiahs, Prophets, and Masters are always described as beings who have beheld the Divine Fire or who have been consumed by it. One of the most significant examples of this is given to us in the Biblical account of how the Divine appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush. Furthermore, the apostles are often depicted in Christian iconography with a flame above their heads, the flame symbolic of their having been enlightened by the Holy Ghost. The same holds true in other religions for personages thought to have a divine filiation.

In the previous monograph, we saw that water possesses a purifying power when used in a mystical context. This purification, however, does not permit regeneration of all aspects of our being, but rather it allows us to rid ourselves of bad habits or negative tendencies in our personality. Only spiritual fire can bring to us this regeneration and bestow upon us Absolute Purity. In this sense, baptism constitutes only a preparation for the interior state we must attain if we hope to receive Illumination and to benefit from the resulting Wisdom. While it is possible to be baptized by other persons within a religious ceremony or a mystical ritual, only the Master Within is capable of making us an Enlightened One, in the traditional sense of this term, for the Master Within is perfect and possesses Knowledge of all the mysteries. Thus, it is in the most profound depths of our being, in our inner temple, where we must seek the Greater Light.

EXPERIMENT: To conclude this series of monographs devoted to the study of the four principles of nature, we suggest that you perform a simple experiment which will allow you to communicate with the essence of these principles and to regenerate the action they are continually exerting on your physical and psychic bodies. As we have previously explained, humans are, in fact, a microcosm of nature. As such, we are a harmonious combination of the material and immaterial elements of which earth, air, water, and fire are composed.
Sit in the position you normally use for your experiments. Relax for several moments while taking a series of deep neutral breaths.

When you feel perfectly relaxed, resume your normal breathing and begin to concentrate on the bones of your skeleton, your muscles, your tissues, and your organs as material substances drawn from earth. As you concentrate, intone the sound MA.

Then concentrate on the regular rhythm of your breathing and on the continuous movement of air in and out of your lungs. During this concentration, intone the sound EHM.

Now imagine yourself inside a blood cell. Visualize it as a reddish sphere composed mainly of water and kept alive by a continual electromagnetic influx from its nucleus to its outer membrane. As you carry out this visualization, intone the vowel sound MEH.

Next concentrate all the heat of your body around the pituitary gland in your head. See this gland as a ball of fire which does not burn, but from which radiates a soothing and regenerating light. During this visualization intone the vowel sound RA.

When you feel the need or desire, you may bring this experiment to a close by saying mentally or in low voice the following invocation:

*My whole being is strengthened by earth, vitalized by air, purified by water, and regenerated by fire. It is done!*

Then remain for several moments in the silence, attentive to any impressions which may arise in your consciousness.

With practice, you will find that this experiment works quite effectively in harmonizing you with the physical and psychic functions of your being and in stimulating the activity of these functions. For this reason, we advise that you perform this experiment as regularly as possible, preferably in the evening before retiring. In this way, its effects will continue during sleep and contribute to your general well-being.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER
Practical Application

“Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.”—Unto Thee I Grant

The symbol appearing on the cover of Liber 777 is one of the most esoteric of all Rosicrucian symbols, as it combines the symbolism of the four principles and represents the ultimate goal of all initiatory endeavor. The oval shape of this symbol represents earth and, by extension, the material world in which our spiritual evolution takes place. The cup corresponds to the Holy Grail, whose Sacred Water purifies the sincere seeker. The light (fire) arising out of this cup symbolizes regeneration, the necessary condition for receiving Illumination, represented by the descent of the dove, traditionally associated with the symbolism of air.

The goal of our spiritual evolution is to realize within ourselves Divine Perfection. To attain this goal, we must free ourselves from the grip of the physical senses, elevate our thoughts toward increasingly noble ideals, purify our emotions from all discordant passions, and regenerate our spiritual Self. These four steps correspond respectively to the initiatory symbolism of earth, air, water, and fire.
Summary of This Monograph

After carefully reading this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major principles on which you are to reflect and meditate in the coming days. If any of the points are difficult to understand, refer to the explanations given in this monograph. Moreover, we advise you to read this summary again immediately before your next sanctum period.

- On the visible plane, the greatest natural manifestation of fire is the Sun. According to astrophysicists, the Sun is composed primarily of hydrogen atoms. The nuclei of these hydrogen atoms are constantly combining, and this nuclear fusion is expressed in the Sun’s gigantic emission of light and heat.

- In prehistoric times, the Sun was thought to be the source of life and it became an object of adoration. For early humans it was the supreme nature spirit.

- The symbolism of the Sun is still present in the great modern-day religions. Generally speaking, it traditionally represents Divine Fire and Divine Light.

- By nature, fire is a principle which reduces combustible substances to ashes and purifies those substances which are not combustible. Because of this, alchemists used it in the course of their successive operations.

- Symbolically, the goal of humans is self-regeneration on all planes upon contact with the Divine Fire animating our being. This Fire corresponds to the Philosopher’s Stone, the jewel of Spiritual Alchemy.

- In addition to those properties inherent in its heat, fire is also a source of light. Thus, it has become the universal symbol for good, in opposition to darkness, which represents evil.

- From a mystical viewpoint, fire symbolizes that state of consciousness attained by those who receive Illumination. For this reason, Messiahs, Prophets, and Masters are always described as beings who have beheld the Divine Fire or who have been consumed by it.
They could only find Fire; they kindled it everywhere, and it became the visible sign of the invisible Being who was then revealed by this symbol. It was carefully kept up; it was looked upon with respect. It was known that in days of old, the Divinity had shown itself by this aspect. If by chance the fire stopped burning, it seemed that the Divine had removed Itself from the place, and it was hastily rekindled. Thereafter, zeal hurriedly fed this belief which soon brought about the notion of keeping a perpetual Fire that became sacred. According to Varro, Fire is the soul of Nature. Plutarch adds more precisely: “Fire is the most glorious image of that immortal power whose hand arranges and upholds the Universe; it is the origin of All, the soul of the world.” What more can be said?

—JEAN GASPAR DUBOIS-FONTANELLE (1737–1812)
In the following quotation from Traité Elémentaire de Science Occulte (Elementary Treatise of Occult Science) Gérard Encausse (who used the pseudonym of Papus) speaks of the symbolism of the number three in terms that agree fully with the explanations given in this monograph.

From whence comes the usage of Three, so widespread in Antiquity, a usage which spread by way of their writings to their metaphysics, and which over the centuries is found again in one of our most renowned authors: Balzac? It comes from the use of a special language which is completely lost to present-day science: the language of numbers.

Thus, two seemingly opposed things always share a common intermediary point between them. This intermediary results from the action of both opposites one over the other and it partakes of both. If this law is truly generalized, it must apply to many phenomena, because what characterizes a law is that it can explain many facts by itself. Let us then take two opposites of varied categories, and let us see if the law applies. To illustrate the facts stated above more clearly, we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVE</th>
<th>PASSIVE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>Liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Holy Ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Darkness</td>
<td>Penumbra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Lukewarm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attraction</td>
<td>Repulsion</td>
<td>Equilibrium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acid</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Salt</td>
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Indeed, we could not hope to name all the ancient and modern authors who have spoken of this law in terms of its triune expression.

—GÉRARD ENCAUSSE, M.D. (1865–1916)
Dear Fratres and Sorores,

We cannot study the symbolism of the four principles without also examining the symbolism which mystics have assigned to certain geometric figures—notably the triangle, cross, square, and circle. We will continue our Ninth Degree studies by examining what Rosicrucian Tradition teaches on this subject. As you will see, not only do these figures illustrate mathematical principles; they also represent laws of the spiritual world.

**THE LAW OF THE TRIANGLE:** Of all geometric symbols, the triangle is the one to which Rosicrucians refer most often because it represents a law whose application is universal. In accordance with what you learned in the Neophyte Section, this law states that a perfect manifestation cannot be produced without the union of two conditions of opposite polarity. For example, we explained in the First Atrium Degree that every child owes his or her existence to the uniting of a male cell and a female cell, called respectively a spermatozoon and an ovum. We also showed you that the phenomenon of electricity results from the union of a positive charge and a negative charge. In every instance, the third point, while distinct from the first two, manifests the sum of their respective qualities. This is why the Law of the Triangle is expressed in certain Hermetic texts as \(1^+ + 1^- = 3\). Most mystics, however, use the formula: \(1 + 2 = 3\). In this transcription, similar to ordinary addition, each number represents in reality a principle at work—in this case, the principles of unity, duality, and trinity.

In keeping with the foregoing explanation, it will be seen that the Law of the Triangle is based on the existence of another fundamental law: the Law of Duality. To prove this, we have only to recall briefly its major application. Thus, in the First Temple Degree, we saw that Spirit extends itself throughout the whole universe in the form of positive and negative vibrations. We find this bipolarity in every atom of matter, for every atom possesses negative electrons and positive electrons, or what are presently called protons. When we studied human consciousness in the Second Degree, we saw that it comprises two complementary states: objective consciousness and the subconscious. You will recall that the first state has to do with perception and our interpretation of the material world, whereas the second is responsible for the direction and control of all our internal functions. In the Third Degree, which is concerned primarily with the study of Vital Life Force, it was explained that this force likewise has
two polarities, one of which is linked to the food we eat and the other to the air we breathe.

In the Fourth Degree, where we studied the major laws of Rosicrucian Ontology, we saw that Ether, the Primordial Emanation from the Divine, separates itself into two complementary energies, Nous and the Universal Soul. From these two energies, negative and positive respectively, proceed all other emanations of Creation. As we explained in the Fifth Degree, the science of philosophy exhibits a double nature, for it contains two inseparable steps. The first consists of studying the visible world in an attempt to understand the invisible world. The second is based on the opposite principle and has its starting point in the unknown so as to come to a better understanding of the known. Rosicrucian healing, the principal theme of the Sixth Degree, is a special application of the Law of Duality. It is based, in fact, on the application of negative and positive treatments, according to the illness involved.

In the Seventh Degree we studied the psychic body of humans. We saw that it results from the uniting of the physical body and the spiritual body at birth. As we stated in the Eighth Degree, this spiritual body is dual in nature. It is a balanced combination of the human soul and the soul personality, with the former being perfect, as it is an emanation of the Universal Soul, and the latter gradually evolving toward this perfection. And finally, in the first monographs of this Ninth Degree, we have emphasized how Spiritual Alchemy allows action in the two apparently opposing realms of the physical world and the metaphysical world. In the first case, it deals with negative and positive vibrations of Spirit, and in the second, to a harmonization with higher planes of Cosmic Consciousness.

When the Law of the Triangle pertains to the material world, we represent it by a triangle whose point is directed upward. In this case, the first point is determined to be at the lower right-hand corner and it corresponds to a negative condition. According to the reasons provided in the Fourth Degree, this is the condition predominating on the Earth plane. When this same law is applied to the spiritual world, the symbol is a triangle with its point directed downward. In contrast to the previous application, the first point is determined to be at the upper right-hand corner and it stands for a positive condition, the condition predominating on the cosmic plane. Nonetheless, we must always remember that the
terms *negative* and *positive* are only relative, as they designate two polarities of equal importance in the process indicated. To illustrate this fact, we will cite two examples used previously: a man and a woman are equally necessary to produce a child, just as neither of electricity’s two phases, positive or negative, is sufficient by itself.

**THE SYMBOLISM OF THE TRIANGLE:** The triangle represents more than the law we have just recalled. It also symbolizes the three-part division of the universe—of Earth, nature, and humanity—and of the cycles generally characterizing the manifested world. Thus, creation comprises a macrocosm, mesocosm, and microcosm. Our earthly globe is composed of the lithosphere, asthenosphere, and core. Nature has three living kingdoms: plant, animal, and human. Humanity is made up of men, women, and children. The human body has three parts: the head, trunk, and limbs. The divine virtues are three in number: faith, hope, and charity. The existence of every living being is determined by three fundamental steps: birth, life, and death. A day is marked by three periods: morning, midday, and evening. Space is defined by three dimensions: length, width, and depth. The same is true of time, which is characterized by the past, present, and future. As you can see from these examples, all universal natural manifestations are governed by a ternary principle.

Among those symbols which are based on the triangle, the Seal of Solomon, also called the Star of David, is certainly the most complete. It is formed, as you know, from two interlacing triangles and it represents the union of the material world and the spiritual world—that is, Creation in its entirety. A deeper study of this symbol, however, shows that it also contains the traditional representation of water, fire, air, and earth, called _Immin, Nour, Rouach_, and _Iebeschah_ in Hebrew, thus revealing a little-known Hermetic interpretation of the letters INRI. In addition, these two interlaced triangles are often depicted with a point in the center and surrounded by a circle. This point represents Divine Unity from which proceeds all that exists. The surrounding circle symbolizes the allegorical limits of the universe and the perfection of the laws governing it. If you will refer to this week’s Practical Application, you will find a diagram illustrating these descriptions.

In all traditions, the triangle is associated with the number three. It also symbolizes the Divine Triune, represented by Osiris, Isis, and Horus in the ancient Egyptian religion; Sat,
Chit, and Ananda in Vedic literature; Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva in Hinduism; Kether, Hochmah, and Binah in Judaism; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in Christianity; and Light, Life, and Love in the Rosicrucian Tradition. No matter what terminology is used, this Trinity corresponds to the Thought, Word, and Action of the Divine. This means that the whole of Creation was first conceived in Divine Intelligence, made manifest through Its Word, and is held in place by the body of Its laws. Of all the creatures on Earth, humans are the highest expression of these three divine attributes, for humans are able to think, speak, and act purposefully. In this respect, humans are a virtually perfect personification of the Holy Trinity.

We will continue our study of symbolism in the next monograph when we examine the symbolism of the cross. Therefore, you may wish to concentrate on this symbol in your meditations.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER
Practical Application

“Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.”—Unto Thee I Grant
Summary of This Monograph

After carefully reading this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major principles on which you are to reflect and meditate in the coming days. If any of the points are difficult to understand, refer to the explanations given in this monograph. Moreover, we advise you to read this summary again immediately before your next sanctum period.

¶ Of all geometric symbols, the triangle is the one to which Rosicrucians refer most often, because it represents a law whose application is universal. This law states that a perfect manifestation cannot be produced without the union of two conditions of opposite polarity.

¶ When the Law of the Triangle pertains to the material world, it is represented by a triangle whose point is directed upward. In this case, the first point is determined to be at the lower right-hand corner and it corresponds to a negative condition.

¶ When applied to the spiritual world, the Law of the Triangle is represented by a triangle with its point directed downward. The first point is determined to be at the upper right-hand corner and it stands for a positive condition.

¶ The triangle, associated traditionally with the number three, symbolizes the three-part division of the universe—of Earth, nature, and humanity—and of the cycles generally characterizing the manifested world.

¶ Among those symbols which are based on the triangle, the Seal of Solomon, also called the Star of David, is certainly the most complete. It represents the union of the material world and the spiritual world—in other words, Creation in its entirety. In addition, it contains the traditional representation of water, fire, air, and earth.

¶ In all traditions, the triangle symbolizes the Divine Triune. Whatever terminology is used, this Trinity corresponds to the Thought, Word, and Action of the Divine. This means that the whole of Creation was first conceived in Divine Intelligence, made manifest through Its Word, and held in place by the body of Its laws.

¶ Of all the creatures on Earth, humans are the highest expression of the Divine Triune, for humans are able to think, speak, and act purposefully.
As this week’s monograph concerns the symbolism of the cross, we present below a quotation from *Le signe de la croix avant le Christianisme* (The Sign of the Cross before Christianity) by Gabriel de Mortillet, a French anthropologist. As you will note in reading this excerpt, the cross is not Christian in origin. In fact, as we will explain, its usage existed in remotest antiquity, many centuries before the advent of this religion.

From earliest childhood we are told that the sign of the cross is the sign of the Christian. Under the influence of this teaching we quite naturally come to believe that everything bearing a cross is Christian. This idea has become so widespread and so implanted that it has been accepted as an archaeological truism that the cross is an excellent criterion for identifying that which comes after Christ—that is, pertaining to our era. This criterion is not valid, however. The cross is to be found on numerous objects which were in existence well before the coming of Jesus Christ. Since remotest antiquity it has been used as a symbol or religious emblem.

In Egyptian hieroglyphics, we see the Greek cross, formed by two arms of equal length intersecting in the middle at right angles, and the Latin cross in which the lower portion of the vertical arm is longer than the rest. Among hieroglyphics is found a far more commonly used sign—the “Egyptian Tau” or “looped cross.” It was employed not only in writing, but it was used alone as a symbol, especially so placed between the hands of all deities and important personages. This Tau was incontestably the symbol of life, and consequently, of the greatest power.

In research carried out on Christian monuments in Egypt, M. Letronne indicated most convincingly that the first Christians in this country adopted the cross, either to show Christ as the life principle par excellence, or as a prophetic symbol. This borrowing

*(continued on page 26)*
Dear Fratres and Sorores,

Having studied the symbology of the triangle, we will now turn our attention to that of the cross. Certainly the most well known of all symbols, the cross is used in various forms in many religions. Currently, about four hundred variations exist. Of that number, most are purely ornamental in nature and possess no esoteric value. In our study today, we will limit our examination to those which present a particular interest in the mystical realm.

**THE CROSS:** To begin with, we should remember that the cross, contrary to popular opinion, is not Christian in origin. To be sure, it now constitutes the official emblem of all Christianity and may be found in Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches. However, as numerous archaeological discoveries on many continents confirm, it existed several centuries before the appearance of the Christian religion. In fact, even though we have no proof, the cross was probably the first graphic symbol to be used by humans, mostly because it is simple in form and easily drawn, carved, or sculpted. For these same reasons we may also presume that it was the first religious symbol employed by early humans to mark the sites of tombs, to indicate important locations, to represent certain divinities, etc.

Among the most ancient crosses are the two forms of the swastika shown in the Practical Application of this monograph. Today they are used in Hinduism and Buddhism. Their origin goes back still further in time, however, for the Aryans were already using them in their religious practices. The first of these two crosses suggests a clockwise motion, and for this reason it is symbolic of the principle of evolution. The second cross, which faces the opposite direction, may be said to represent the principle of involution. Nevertheless, these two symbols are complementary, as they correspond to two phases of the same cycle—the cycle of Cosmic Evolution. Their complementary character becomes evident when they are superimposed, for the figure thus obtained is a single cross within a square. It is interesting to note that the word *swastika* is a Sanskrit term meaning “happy life” or “good omen.” The word *swasti* signifies “well-being.” This is why the swastika is always drawn on the forehead of Buddhists when they are initiated into the community, as a sign of welcome. Unfortunately, the esoteric use of this cross was perverted by the Nazis, who made this form of the cross, the *gammadion*, the emblem for their evil ideals.
In ancient Egypt, the cross was found primarily in the form of a looped cross, called the *ankh* in Egyptian and *crux ansata* in Latin. It was the symbol of eternal life. In carvings found in Egyptian temples, Isis is often represented holding such a cross in her hand, for it was thought that she possessed the secret of immortality. In certain funeral scenes she holds out the cross to the face of the deceased so as to transmit to this person the vital breath that will allow him or her live eternally in the kingdom of the dead. In a similar manner, numerous stelae show the pharaoh holding a looped cross up to his forehead, around the level of the pineal gland. In this instance, it symbolized that he was capable of predicting the future, that he had the power of life and death over his subjects, and that he was immortal by virtue of his title, function, and divine affiliation. In addition to this special symbolism, the ankh also represented the union of the masculine and feminine principles, the law of duality, as it manifests in nature.

Before continuing we must indicate that often there is some confusion between the looped cross and the knot of Isis which royal persons wore on their belt. Even though the symbolism of each hearkens back to the same concept, a definite distinction may be made between them. While the first represents immortality itself, the second, in fact, symbolizes only the means by which one may become immortal. According to the *Book of the Dead* this means consisted of “loosening the buckles of Nephthys,” sister of Osiris and wife of Seth. In a general way, this allegory means that humans must learn to free themselves from their earthly bonds if they wish to raise themselves up from their mortal condition and achieve perfection, the condition necessary for them to be free from the need to reincarnate. This same allegory, applied to the mystical process of death, symbolizes the breaking of the silver cord, which systematically results in the transition of the soul personality to the cosmic plane corresponding to its level of evolution. This point was considered in more detail in the last degree.

Numerous passages in the Old Testament, notably those found in the Book of Ezekiel, affirm that the cross was also used in early Judaism. According to some writers, this cross was in the form of the Tau. Our own references state that it more closely resembled an X. However, the word *sign*, pronounced “taw” in Hebrew, was wrongly written as a “Tau,” that is, as the equivalent of the letter *T* in the Greek alphabet. In any case, this cross corresponded to the sign which the Jewish High Priests traced on their foreheads during certain rituals. It symbolized the fact that they had been anointed in the name of Yahweh and it constituted a mark of divine recognition. By virtue of this recognition,
they were invested with the Divine’s authority and were entitled to teach and to make certain that Divinity’s commandments were carried out. Some rare interpretations of this sign imply that it represented the cross which Isaac bore on his shoulders as he was about to be sacrificed by Abraham. However, we feel that these interpretations cannot be justified.

Down through the centuries the Christian cross has known many forms, the most common being the Latin cross. Its symbolism derives essentially from the crucifixion of Jesus and from the suffering he endured during that ordeal. Furthermore, to emphasize this symbolism, his body is shown crucified on the Catholic cross. Without wishing to pass judgment on this symbol, we feel, nevertheless, that it perpetuates an erroneous concept of the Christian message. It implies, in fact, that people must suffer to evolve spiritually and to achieve that state of grace whereby they may attain Paradise. As we have explained on numerous occasions in previous degrees, there is no basis for this point of view. It even runs counter to the teachings of the Master Jesus himself, for he always preached a life of faith, and he never recommended mortification in any form. On the contrary, all during the course of his ministry, he encouraged people to live in harmony with natural laws and to seek happiness in the joys to be found in an existence devoted to things spiritual. Unfortunately, his message has been distorted through the centuries, thus giving rise to dogmas which no longer have any mystical connection with his philosophy. Thus, his crucifixion has become the basis of Christianity, while it was only the outcome of a series of events which he himself would not have wished to deify or to glorify.

For mystics, the cross is not limited to its religious applications. It symbolizes universal laws and principles as well. Traditionally, the upright branch represents heaven, space, and the masculine polarity of life, while the horizontal branch designates Earth, time, and the feminine polarity of nature. Taken together, these two branches express the law of duality associated with the number 2. The four arms formed by their intersection evoke all the correspondences to be established with the number 4, among which are those we have spoken of in relation to the four principles of nature. This quaternary symbolism, to which we will return at greater length in the next lesson, is particularly evident in the Greek cross, for it is perfectly symmetrical and is contained within a square.

Unlike the square, the cross does not correspond to a precise number. As the previous explanations indicate, it may be related to
the number 2 or the number 4, according to the symbolism under consideration. For alchemists, it also represented the number 5, since it is composed of four arms and a central point. As such, they used it to symbolize humanity incarnate. At other times, it was for them a symbol of the Quintessence, the source of the four principles. On the other hand, when we consider the Latin cross, which has the proportions of the Golden Number, we see that it may enter into the development of the cube and would then correspond to the number 6, for the six faces of the cube. From the Rosicrucian viewpoint, the cross consists rather of two branches intersecting at the center. This is why we prefer to associate it with the number 3, meaning that it constitutes a special representation of the Law of the Triangle, one which has as much to do with the material world as with the spiritual world.

THE ROSE CROSS: In the Rose Cross, the traditional symbol of our Order, the cross transcends all the preceding explanations, and at the same time includes them all. Applied to our Tradition, the branches, vertical and horizontal, correspond respectively to the visible and invisible Hierarchy of our Order. The arms symbolize the four sections of our teachings—Postulant, Neophyte, Initiate, and Illuminati. In addition, the twelve small chambers at the extremities of the arms stand for the twelve chambers of the allegorical Temple of the Rose Cross, or the twelve Rosicrucian Temple Degrees. Seen in relation to humans, the cross represents the physical body, and, in a general way, the earthly world in whose contact humans evolve over many lifetimes.

As you know, the rose, situated at the center of the cross, symbolizes the soul personality and its progressive unfolding in the course of successive incarnations. Having said this, it is interesting to note that the rose has always been linked to spirituality. For example, in Hinduism and Buddhism, it represents Tripurasundari, the Cosmic Rose, symbol of the Divine Mother. In Christianity, its chief association is with Mary, the mother of Jesus. Sometimes it designates the Christ himself, as the son of the Divine. David, the king of Israel, evokes the rose of Sharon in his psalms, likening it to Heavenly Jerusalem. In certain prayers, Muslims speak of the Rose Garden as the Paradise of Contemplation. The alchemists used a red rose to designate the final step in the Great Work. Moreover, many of their treatises were entitled Rose Trees of the Philosophers.

In its most noble expression, the cross of the Rose Cross is made of gold, symbol of material perfection. In relation to
humans, this metal represents absolute purity of the physical body, a purity we must strive for by endeavoring to live in harmony with natural and cosmic laws. As for the rose, it may be likened to a ruby of five or seven facets. In the first case, it manifests the Quintessence permeating the whole universe. This is the Ether from which our soul issues and with which it will finally reunite when it has attained perfection. When the ruby has seven facets, it symbolizes the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) and the four cardinal virtues (courage, justice, prudence, and temperance)—in other words, the seven fundamental qualities we must learn to exemplify in our behavior. Thus, the Rose Cross represents both the duality of human nature and the archetype toward which we are physically and spiritually evolving.

With best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER
Practical Application

“Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.”—Unto Thee I Grant

Swastika

Sauvastika

Looped Cross

Tau

Greek Cross

Latin Cross

Rose Cross
Summary of This Monograph

After carefully reading this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major principles on which you are to reflect and meditate in the coming days. If any of the points are difficult to understand, refer to the explanations given in this monograph. Moreover, we advise you to read this summary again immediately before your next sanctum period.

Contrary to popular opinion, the cross is not Christian in origin. As numerous archaeological discoveries on many continents confirm, it existed several centuries before the appearance of the Christian religion.

Although we have no proof, the cross was probably the first graphic symbol used by humans, mostly because it is simple in form and easily drawn, carved, or sculpted.

Among the most ancient crosses we find the two forms of the swastika, currently used in Hinduism and Buddhism. The first of these two crosses symbolizes the principle of evolution. The second represents the principle of involution. Together, they correspond to two phases of the same cycle—the cycle of Cosmic Evolution.

In ancient Egypt, the cross was found in the form of a looped cross. It was the symbol of eternal life. It also stood for the union of the masculine and feminine principles, or the law of duality.

Numerous passages in the Old Testament affirm that the cross was also used in early Judaism. According to our references, it resembled an X and corresponded to the sign which the Jewish High Priests traced on their foreheads during certain rituals.

Down through the centuries the Christian cross has known many forms, the most common being the Latin cross. Its symbolism is drawn principally from the crucifixion of Jesus.

According to the symbolism being considered, the cross corresponds to the numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. From a Rosicrucian viewpoint, the cross constitutes a special representation of the Law of the Triangle. For this reason, we prefer to associate it with the number 3.

There is much to be learned from the traditional symbolism of the Rose Cross. In general terms, it represents both the duality of human nature and the archetype toward which we are evolving, physically and spiritually.
Concurrence (continued)

by Christianity from the old mythological systems of ancient Egypt bears only indirectly on our subject. It very clearly shows, however, that the first Christians had no qualms about borrowing from ancient beliefs. Therefore, there is nothing surprising in the fact that elsewhere they should have appropriated the cross, as they did the looped Tau in Egypt.

—GABRIEL DE MORTILLET (1821–1898)
Consecrated to truth
and dedicated to every Rosicrucian

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